

MARCH 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Wednesday Night Activities 5:30 pm CHOIR 7 PM	2 Ladies' Bible Study 1:00 pm WIC Prayer Time 7 pm	3 <i>Against the Flow Retreat</i> Readers Game Night 6 pm (Hill Home)	4
5 <i>Against the Flow Retreat</i> Sunday School 9:30am Morning Worship 10:30am SACRAMENT OF THE LORDS SUPPER Evening Service 6 pm	6 Men's Book Study 7 pm	7 Men's Prayer Breakfast 6 am Women's Book Study 9:30 am Women's Book Study 6:30 pm (Wellt Home) Session Meeting 6 pm	8 Wednesday Night Activities 5:30 pm CHOIR 7 PM	9 Ladies' Bible Study 1:00 pm	10	11
12 <i>Spring Forward 2am</i> Sunday School 9:30am Morning Worship 10:30am Evening Service 6pm	13	14 Men's Prayer Breakfast 6 am <i>Spring Break - No Activities</i>	15	16 Ladies' Bible Study 1:00 pm WIC Prayer Time 7 pm	17 Parent's Night Out 6 pm	18 Grammer Baby Shower 10 am
19 Sunday School 9:30am Morning Worship 10:30am Evening Service 6pm	20	21 Men's Prayer Breakfast 6 am Women's Book Study 9:30 am Women's Book Study 6:30 pm (Wellt Home)	22 Wednesday Night Activities 5:30 pm CHOIR 7 PM	23	24	25 Men's Monthly Fellowship Breakfast 8 am
26 Sunday School 9:30am Morning Worship 10:30am Evening Service 6pm	27 Youth Fellowship 6 pm	28 Men's Prayer Breakfast 6 am Women's Book Study 9:30 am Women's Book Study 6:30 pm (Wellt Home)	29 Wednesday Night Activities 5:30 pm CHOIR 7 PM	30 Ladies' Bible Study 1:00 pm	31	

NORTHPOINTE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



March 2023

From the Pastor

Right Thinking on True Revival

Last month, we finished our series on the biblical covenants. We turn our attention this month to consider the topic of true spiritual revival. In choosing to address this topic, I am partly prompted by a recent event being reported in the news of what many are calling a revival breaking out at Asbury University in Wilmore, KY. Reports are that on February 8th, during a regularly scheduled chapel service at Asbury, the Spirit broke out in a powerful movement among the students at the school. Over the course of the following two weeks, daily, and near continuous, worship services were held in the school's chapel. Tens of thousands of people gathered to the small town of Wilmore and to the campus of Asbury during these two weeks either simply to observe or to join in what was taking place. Some news reports state that a strong emphasis on passionate prayer, singing, the sharing of testimonies, and the reading and teaching of the Scriptures has dominated the weeks of services. Reports such as these serve as a good catalyst for Christians to think carefully about the nature of true revival.

In the mid-18th century, a powerful outpouring of the Spirit known as *The Great Awakening* saw many thousands of people come to faith over many years stretching across much of the original American colonies. A central figure in *The Great Awakening* was Jonathan Edwards, a man considered by many to be the greatest American Puritan pastor and theologian. During the years of this outpouring, Edwards preached many sermons used by God to call many believers to himself, and Edwards wrote numerous tracts and books on the nature of what was taking place—specifically, the nature of spiritual revival.

Not every pastor or thinker of that time agreed on what exactly was taking place and whether or not it should be considered true revival. There were those in Edwards' day that saw too much (or focused on the wrong parts) in what was taking place. And conversely, there were others who were tempted to see far too little in what the Spirit was doing. But in Edwards, we find a balanced voice within the debates and discussions taking place. It will be helpful to our purposes to consider a distillation of Edwards thoughts on true revival.

Before we do that, let us seek to define what we mean by *revival*. J.I. Packer has offered this definition for true revival: "Revival is an extraordinary work of God the Holy Ghost reinvigorating and propagating Christian piety in a community." From this definition, and from the word itself, it is worth noting two key elements. First, true revival is the work of God the Holy Spirit. Revival is not a manmade work. It is not something for which we can plan or schedule. It is not something we produce in our own strength. The Holy Spirit does the "extraordinary work" internally in the heart most often by the ordinary means of the Word. Second, revival most strictly means not new conversion but the restoration, the renewal, the repairing to spiritual health of one already made alive. Surely, a great revival can and often does lead to much new regeneration of those spiritually dead. But, at its core, revival is a "reinvigorating" of those once made alive who have cooled, dulled, or wandered away. Now let us consider some helpful thoughts from Edwards on the nature of true revival.

Edwards wrote a treatise called "The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God" in which he outlines five marks that distinguish a true work of the Spirit. As we'll see, judgment of true revival is based on fruit that may or may not be readily apparent amidst the occasion of the revival itself. Edwards says that the first mark of the true work of the Spirit is that it always increases reverence in people for the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God. In short, revival shows itself in the fruit of love for Christ. Second, true revival shows itself in decreasing love for the self, for the flesh, for sin as it grows love for godly righteousness. Third, true revival produces heightened regard for the Scriptures. There is no revival without the Word. Fourth, and related to the third, true revival yields increasing conviction for what is true as found in the Word. For the Word to be central, it must be ever increasingly trusted as being the only source for right knowledge of God, of self, and of the world. And fifth, true revival bears itself in a renewed and growing love for God and for neighbor.

Edwards offers these five marks based on his close study of 1 John 4:1-21. There, John instructs believers to "not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God." Every report of a revival should be tested against what Scripture says of the work of the Spirit—how he works and what his work produces in men and women. Regarding Asbury, it is too early to label it a true revival. The fruit of what has taken place there will bear itself out in the years and even generations to come, either with the fruit of true revival or in lacking any or all of the marks outlined above. Yet, might we, as the people of God, earnestly yearn for and plead with the Father for more and more true revival where it is needed, in ourselves and in the church broadly.

Pastor Kevin Vollema

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God is telling His story in Ocean Springs

Stephanie and I moved to Ocean Springs last April, but we really have only been “on the ground” and starting this ministry for a little over six months now - and God has done so much. This past Sunday, a new core group gathered in our home for the first of what we hope will become twice monthly Bible studies - time in the word together toward becoming a community of believers gathered around the gospel and building it into each other. In the meantime, God is adding almost daily to the “parish” of people that I am meeting, building conversations with, and gaining their trust toward “pastoring” these lost people toward the gospel. There is much to celebrate!

Yet, what is happening in Ocean Springs is not our story. It began over ten years ago, when people in local churches here on the coast began to pray for a gospel-centered ministry to the lost in Ocean Springs. And then took flight when Phillip and Lori Sealy answered the call and moved their family to Ocean Springs to begin building an evangelistic based church plant here. This an amazing part of the story, for even when Phillip got sick with the cancer that would eventually take his life, when it surely would have been easier for them to pack up and go back home - Phillip and Lori so believed in the story God is telling in Ocean Springs that they doubled down - working faithfully and frantically, giving themselves to see the gospel come to this town. They believed in that so much that Phillip is even buried here, as a way of “claiming this territory” for Jesus Christ. But, in Lori’s own words that she shared with me recently, “Our story isn’t ours, but God’s. And may it be used for His glory and for the gathering in of sinful, suffering sheep in need of a saving, sanctifying Savior!”

And now, we are here, trying to take up the pen, to write a new verse, all to plant an evangelistic church plant, one that we pray will some day include many people who, at the time you are reading this, do not yet know Jesus Christ as their Savior, but whom God has called and claimed as His own.

For all of this is His Story. It is a story that we are praying will bring the Great Commission in power to the lost of Ocean Springs. That will see us discipling believers in a new church to own and step up into their part in the Great Story. And we are praying that his story will spread far from here - to new church plants up and down the coast, and even echoing and reverberating back to other churches, established churches, churches that are partnering with us in this story, and that we pray will in turn be blessed with evangelistic revival, conversions, blessings in their own midst and to their own parishes.

But, through it all - make no mistake: While there is much to do, and even much fruit to celebrate already, and more stories that we hope to tell in the years to come - From the beginning, to now, and to eternity itself - This is God’s story, and He is the One telling it here in Ocean Springs!

So, please pray with us for God’s unfolding story

- ◆ Praise God with us for the new community of believers that is now meeting in our house twice a month for Bible study. Pray that they will be rooted in and grow in the gospel of grace.
- ◆ Pray for my “Fishing Trips” to the lost around town and especially to Government Street. I am seeing some of the people there start to look forward to when we can talk next - That is an encouraging sign for my opportunity to come alongside their lives as a trusted confidant and pastor.
- ◆ Carnival season (Mardi Gras) is in full swing. There is craziness, wildness, and all the things that come with this celebration. The enemy does not cede territory easily, and he comes in like a flood. And I plan, like a medic on the battlefield, to be right in the middle of it. Please pray for my opportunity to shine light into darkness!

Stephanie and I rejoice and thank God for each of you who have given to this ministry. Thank you so much!

Mark Horn
Hope Presbyterian Church

REMINDERS

- The Readers Game Night will be **March 3**, at 6 pm in the Hill home. [7989 Poplar Springs Dr]
- The Session will meet on Tuesday, **March 7** at 6 pm.
- Women’s Prayer Time dates this month, beginning at 7 pm, are **March 2 and 16**, in the home of Carmel Madeja. [420 Eastwood Street]
- Men’s Prayer Breakfast dates for this month are: **March 7, 14, 21, & 28 @** 6:00 am.
- Parents’ Night Out will be **March 17**, from 6-9 pm. Please make sure to pick up your children by 9 pm.
- Men’s “Behold Your God” study dates are **March 6**, at 7 pm in the Madeja Home. [420 Eastwood St]
- Men’s Saturday Breakfast Discussion is **March 25**, at 8 am.

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

We will be observing the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper on Sunday, **March 5**, during the morning service.

AGAINST THE FLOW YOUTH RETREAT

Against the Flow, the Spring Youth Retreat that our church has attended in the past, is scheduled for **March 3rd-5th**. This is for youth grades 7th-12th. The theme this year is from 2 Timothy 2:15 - Not Ashamed! The main speaker will be the RUF Campus Minister from Ole Miss, Austin Braasch.

The retreat meets at Twin Lakes Camp in Florence, MS. We’ll leave the afternoon of Friday, March 3rd @ 4:30 pm, and return around lunch time on March 5th. Please see Kevin Vollema should you have any questions.

GRAMMER BABY SHOWER

There will be a baby shower for Stacey Grammer in the home of Carmel Madeja (420 Eastwood St; Meridian) on Saturday, **March 18**, from 10 am to noon. Please RSVP to Emily Elliott hardeemily@gmail.com by March 12. Please pick up an invitation from the lobby.

MARCH WEDNESDAY NIGHT ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

Due to Spring Break there will not be any scheduled activities on Wednesday, **March 15**.

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Hello Northpointe Youth!! We will be getting together **March 27** from 6-9 at the Elliott's (5323 Linmoor Drive). We will be covering Acts 25-26. We will have food, games, then discuss Acts together. Looking forward to seeing you there!

EASTER CHOIR PRACTICE

Easter is approaching, and we do have some opportunities to be involved in leading worship musically this year. There will be a song to prepare for a multi-generational choir: adults, youth and children. The choir (adults and youth) will meet over the following Wednesdays: **March 1, 8, 22, 29, and April 5**. Easter is April 9 this year. I will send out emails for the children’s rehearsals, but tentatively I have scheduled those for Sunday, **March 26**, and Sunday, **April 2**. Please consider using your voice to bless our church family Easter Sunday! If you weren’t able to sing at Christmastime, please consider singing for Easter! Youth, please consider singing. There are many beautiful voices from our youth that I would love to see up there!

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Rebekah Thaggard
- 6 Mason Kiefer
Wesley Presnall
- 10 Gary Morrow
- 12 Micah Hoskins
- 18 Kary Whitehead
- 19 Mary Claire Whitehead
- 21 Becca Tulip
- 22 Eloise Jones
- 23 Macyn Aull
- 30 Susan Thaggard
Eber Germany

