



Century Meadows Baptist Church

Weekly Newsletter January 10, 2021

To Our Century Meadows Family



simple yet vast mercies, love, and faithful character. Knowing and believing God's promises to me equals faith rest. Within faith rest I have a correct grid of thinking to answer questions that challenge my faith and me. Through this process God is glorified. His Word and Holy Spirit is a lamp unto my feet as I stumble through the race He has marked out for me. I have found myself to be humbled by His mercies in my life as I seek to answer this question.

I want to encourage you to actively pursue God, so you can answer some of your own hard questions during this weary time. So that you too can passively enjoy God's gift of peace to you when the world tells you otherwise.

CHURCH FAMILY ENCOURAGEMENT This Week: Heather Pickard

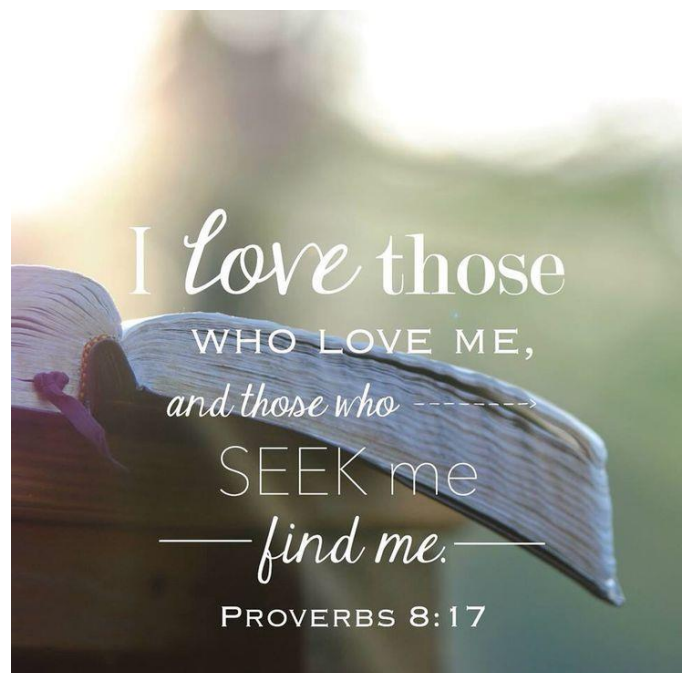
Do I believe God is using the trials in my life to refine me?

To find the answer to this question for myself I have actively pursued God. I know that I must actively pursue God so I can passively enjoy His peace; understand His will for my life in the moment and circumstances I am currently living.

A privilege we have as Christians is knowing our positional truth. Our faith rests not in a religion or ceremonies but in the foundational Word of God; a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. My current fears and weariness have been an easy distraction for me from the reality of my eternal truth. I have had to remind myself who my God is on a regular basis. To be honest, some days a moment by moment basis. I feel like most can relate to this feeling within our world's current realities.

Actively reading the bible and studying God's attributes and promises have reminded me of His

I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. John 14:27



PRAYING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

- **Rick Leonard** – bypass surgery scheduled for Monday, January 11; pray for God's hand of protection and healing.
- **Mark Schneider** – back pain is somewhat better; pray for a timely consult with surgeon.
- **Those who are discouraged/anxious/hurting** – that God would bring His great comfort and hope.

PRAYING FOR OUR MINISTRIES

- **Life Groups** – pray that they would follow God's lead; that they would be wise and inclusive in each setting; for creativity and energy during ever changing regulations.

PRAYING FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

- **Calmar Church Plant** – pray for peace/direction while they continue providing church services during this time; for Pastor Keith who is undergoing chemo treatments for lung cancer; pray for healing, trust, and relief from pain.

**WE CAN'T WAIT TO WORSHIP WITH YOU**

**Kids/Family service *online only for now,*
beginning at 9:40 am Sunday**

AND

**Regular Worship Service
online only for now
@ 10 am Sundays.**

*Watch our live-stream via our website,
www.centurymeadows.ca, under Messages.
Or watch via our Youtube - subscribe to our
Century Meadows Baptist Church channel
to see all of our services.*

CHURCH HAPPENINGS ...

Young Adults- Join us Thursdays at 7 pm (via Zoom) for a time of Bible Study and great community together!
Contact: Karlina (780-781-4894)

Youth (Gr 7-12) – We will resume in January 13!
Stay tuned for details.

Wednesday Prayer Group – Our prayer group is currently praying from home. Let the church office know of prayer requests for this group (they're kept confidential).

Ladies Bible Study (on Zoom) – We will resume Jan 21. Join us Thursdays (via Zoom) from 9-11 am. All ages welcome! Contact Amy for info (780-678-6052).

Primetimers – Stay tuned for news about our next Primetimers.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR PASTOR/SPEAKERS!

Sunday, Jan 10 – Laurie Kennedy

Communion Sunday

Message: "Biblical Leadership is..."

Scripture: *Matthew 20:25-28*

Sunday, Jan 17 – Pastor Rob

Message: "What is *Church*"

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

ENTRUSTED
A STUDY OF 2 TIMOTHY

Thursdays 9-11 am, begins Jan 21

*Led by Char Kennedy
In person or Zoom depending on restrictions*

CONTACT AMY TO REGISTER (\$20)
780-678-6052 OR thriveyouth.amy@gmail.com

Let's pray:

My Mother taught me how to talk to God in prayer. Her method was kneeling beside my bed, folding my hands and closing my eyes. It seemed that the position and physical characteristics were critical.

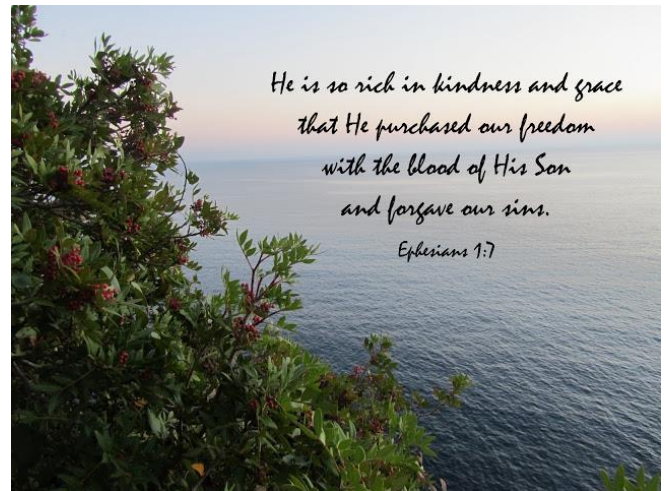
I read a novel this Christmas. I rarely read novels, but, the book was recommended by a trusted friend. A quick download to my Kindle and I was into it. The key figure in the story became a Christian when she was older and wondered what role God had in mind for her. As she read, prayed and talked to friends it became clear that her role was to pray. She had time so started prayer walks. She walked several blocks from her home each day praying for the people who lived in each house. Some folks she knew, most she didn't but would make a mental note about what she noted the family. One car or two, neatly mowed lawn, toys left outside, bicycles for teens. That's all she needed. God would know the rest. She would pray for anyone she met, heard about or knew. As she read her daily paper, she would pray for the people noted, people in other countries and people in the news. As she drove by the hospital she would pray for the Doctors, Nurses, staff and patients. Sometimes, she would simply pray for anyone worldwide who was having surgery that day. Fascinating, no physical posture required. She just prayed. This novel ends when she dies and is carried to Heaven. She then realizes the world wide impact of her prayer.

"Pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17 KJV)

What did I learn from this novel? Yesterday I was driving home from downtown. I took the author's example and prayed. While I drove I prayed for Humpty's and Boston Pizza restaurants and staff who were currently without jobs. As I passed the Gas station and the Registration office I prayed for them. As I passed the Police station, I prayed for the family of the police officer who was killed on duty last week in Calgary. I also prayed for the cars and trucks that passed.

I will do my best to continue this new habit. Yes, still pray with eyes closed when Char and I pray at home daily. But, does this idea of continual prayer make sense? One day we will all find out.

Yours in Service,
Laurie D. Kennedy
Pastor of Congregational Care



FINANCIAL REPORT – YEAR END

OUR GIVING	Dec 31/20	YTD
Giving for Budget	\$30,702.00	\$528,231.80
Budget Requirement	\$11,338.30	\$589,591.60
*YTD Giving 90% of Budget		

THANK YOU TO ALL for your gracious donations and support to our church and community in 2020!

Your faithful giving continues to support ongoing ministries in our church, our city, our nation or around the world. Here's just a reminder of the different ways to give:

- Cheque mailed to: Century Meadows Baptist Church 3720 66 Street Camrose AB T4V 3N4
- Cheque dropped off at the above address (mail slot is to the left of the glass foyer doors toward the office)
- E-transfer – donate@centurymeadows.ca. No need for a security question.
- Automated debit transactions – contact the church for the form or download from our website: www.centurymeadows.ca.



TRANSITIONS WITH PASTOR ROB

Philippians 3:12. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Knowing What is Time-Less and What is Transient

At the risk of stating the obvious, CMBC is experiencing a time of transition (that's why I'm here, it's right in my job title!). What is equally true, though maybe not as immediately obvious, is that CMBC has **always** been in transition. For those of you who have been around for 21 years or more, think of all the ways this church is different today than in 1999, you know, last century (and last millennium!). Or think of all the ways church in general is different today than in the 1800's or 800's, or 80 years after Christ's birth. Or think about how the church is different from one denomination to another, or from North America, to Europe, to Asia, Africa, and South America. You get the point. There has been tremendous change in the church over time, and change is never immediate, it always takes a time of transition. I learned this when I bought 'transition' glasses - I'm always a bit blind for awhile when I move from bright to dim light, and vice-versa. That's not a bad metaphor for the 'in-between time' of transition, when we feel like we are a bit blind, but hopefully not for too long!

I think there are two things that can help us navigate any transition: knowing what is non-negotiable and never changing, and what can and should change. We have two committees working on those very things right now. The Revisioning Committee is focusing initially on our mission and vision statements. While every church will frame those in their own words, essentially these try to capture God's mission and vision for the church, and while specific churches may have some specific calling, generally every church's mission and vision is the same, defined by God through scripture.

We can tweak the language, but every church throughout the world and the last 2000 years should share the same basic identity, purpose, mission, goals, and vision. Those things don't change. So what we are doing, and always need to do, in times of change, is to refocus on and remind ourselves of the core things that don't change. A true-ism I've heard many times is 'the mission never changes, the methods always change.'

The other committee has the difficult task of focusing on one area that always changes, namely church governance systems, structures, and policies. I should mention that there is a third committee focusing on another area that also always changes, namely our physical building (but I'm not on that committee, and it isn't the focus of my role at CMBC). I'll write more on these topics in the coming weeks, and our next sermon series will focus on these 'what is the church?' questions.

Please pray for all of these committees. They each have the mandate of helping CMBC recognize and reaffirm the high calling for which Christ has taken hold of us, and of 'forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.'

Pastor Rob

CONTACT US

We're Here For You!

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PASTOR ROB McLAREN

Transitional Pastor

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AMY KOWAL

Youth Assistant

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Email: thriveyouth.amy@gmail.com

SONG OF THE WEEK

Start Right Here (by Casting Crowns)

We want our coffee in the lobby
 We watch our worship on a screen
 We got a Rockstar preacher
 Who won't wake us from our dreams
 We want out blessings in our pockets
 We keep our missions overseas
 But for the hurting in our cities
 Would we even cross the street?
 But we wanna see the heart set free and the tyrants kneel
 The walls fall down and our land be healed
 But church if we want to see a change in the world out there

It's got to start right here
 It's got to start right now
 Lord, I'm starting right here
 Lord, I'm starting right now

I'm like the brother of the prodigal
 Who turned his nose and puffed his chest
 He didn't run off like his brother
 But his soul was just as dead
 What if the church on Sunday
 Was still the church on Monday too
 What if we came down from our towers
 And walked a mile in someone's shoes

'Cause we wanna see the heart set free and the tyrants kneel
 The walls fall down and our land be healed
 But church if we want to see a change in the world out there

We're the people who are called by His name
 If we'll surrender all our pride and turn from our ways
 He will hear from Heaven and forgive our sin
 He will heal our land but it starts right here
 We're the people who are called by His name
 If we'll surrender all our pride and turn from our ways
 He will hear from Heaven and forgive our sin
 He will heal our land

It's got to start right here
 It's got to start right now
 Lord, I'm starting right here
 Lord, I'm starting right now

CCLI Song # 7122288 Bernie Herms | Mark Hall | Matthew West | Seth Mosley © 2018
 CentricSongs (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) My Refuge Music (Admin. by
 Capitol CMG Publishing) These Tunes Go To 11 (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)
 Be Essential Songs (Admin. by Essential Music Publishing LLC) Highly Combustible
 Music (Admin. by One77 Songs c/o Kobalt Songs Music Publishing (ASCAP)) House of
 Story Music Publishing (Admin. by One77 Songs c/o Kobalt Songs Music Publishing
 (ASCAP)) One77 Songs (Admin. by One77 Songs c/o Kobalt Songs Music Publishing
 (ASCAP)) Remaining portion is unaffiliated



Pastor Brett's Weekly Update:

The Dangers of Christian Nationalism

2021 is upon us and unfortunately, it appears that some craziness from 2020 has followed suite into this new year. It took only six days for something outrageous to happen. On January 6th, a small portion of the massive turnout for the Trump rally in D.C., fueled by persistent political rhetoric, successfully stormed the capitol building. To put this into perspective, during the Civil War in America the Confederate flag never once reached the Capital. A few days ago, the confederate flag made its way into the Capital building. Previous to the Civil War, the Capital had not been breached since the War of 1812. Nearly all news sources, church leaders, and politicians have called this event an "act of terrorism" or at minimum, "wrongful political violence." Four people were killed and many others seriously injured in the chaos. Honestly, I was hoping for a more peaceful start to 2021.

"What on earth is Pastor Brett doing writing about American politics in a church newsletter?" you ask. Good question! To be clear, I actually have not said anything political to this point. I have simply conveyed some events from recent history. The main reason in writing this article is hopefully to help us as a church to be a people that is able to think critically about events like these in our world and come to God-honoring conclusions. We need not all agree politically, but we do need to be able to view events like these through a unified and healthy theological lens. In other words, we must uphold the essential doctrines of the Gospel above political ideologies. The Gospel needs to inform our politics not vice versa. When politics informs your faith, you are doing it wrong.

There are 3 main reasons why our response to the unfortunate events of January 6th matters. Here they are...

Firstly, there is the plain and simple reason that our witness to Jesus and His Kingdom matters. How we respond to radical events in our world affects our witness to the world. I am on social media and see several church-folk who are very passionate about American politics. There is nothing inherently wrong with this. As a History minor in University, I enjoy a good political discussion or debate as well. However, sometimes people's passions for American politics can pose a problem to our witness. If your passion for politics fuels anxiety, anger, or dishonesty, and you are spewing those negative feelings on social

media, you are certainly not acting in a God-honoring way. The church is called to display to the world a “better way” which is the Kingdom of God. This is important! When we participate in the political culture’s infinite outrage, we are merely reciprocating back to the world a mirror of its unhealthy self. We must do better. Whenever you consider participating in political discussions online, please use the following questions as a filter:

1. *Is this going to be helpful to me or others? (Is what I am saying causing myself and others to be filled with hope, joy, peace, and love?)*
2. *Is this the best channel for me to direct my energy, time, and passion? (Or is this simply a waste of my time...)*
3. *Are my actions and conclusions God-honoring? (Am I a healthy witness to Jesus right now?)*

Secondly, our response to Jan. 6th matters because we need to understand the dangers of *Christian nationalism*. Again, there is nothing inherently wrong with being mildly proud of your country or thankful to be able to live in freedom. We have so many freedoms in Canada it is truly enviable by most other humans on this planet. However, it is impossible to develop a New Testament theology that supports extreme Christian nationalism of any kind. History has proven itself over and over that when we marry our politics to our religion, disaster strikes. For example, Christianity has been used politically to wield all sorts of disasters is history – the crusades, slavery, prosperity gospel, abuses of the catholic church from 400’s-1500’s... - we could go on and on. Simply put, if God wanted his grand plan of redemption to be by collaborative orchestrated human force, he would have come to earth as a powerful warlord and not as a baby. He would have been a King much more like King David than the Jesus we read about in Scripture. He came as a baby and he willingly gave up his life on a Roman cross! These essential doctrines totally eliminate any argument for the church to feel the necessity to wield power over others using force. We are called to live as Jesus did, showing this world a better way – the way of the Kingdom.

When our politics and our Christianity become one and the same, we lessen the Kingdom of God to a flawed political party. In essence we position an open/inclusive Kingdom where Jesus says, “come to me all who are weary and burdened and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28) against those who think differently than you do. Christian nationalism is dangerous because quite frankly it does not align with the teachings of Jesus, the actions of Jesus, or God’s intended plan for His church. Christian nationalism is dangerous because it takes our focus off of what our prescribed role is – to be Jesus’ church; the set apart, called-out representatives of Jesus that follow under His government – in this world.

Thirdly, we need to be able to discern what is good from what is bad. When people succumb to stirring and supporting conspiracy theories, the fruit is really ugly. Regardless of what caused the storming of the capital, what transpired was bad. Extreme right-wing thinking is dangerous. And, of course extreme left-wing thinking is dangerous too. As Christians, we must practice extreme caution in what political ideologies we choose to follow. As a best practice, we must always start with the Gospel and with Jesus’ intended design for his church – those folks who follow under His government. I do empathize with those whose political party lost. Losing is never fun. However, anarchy in the name of Jesus is a grotesque display.

When I saw the videos and images of the storming of the capital building, I was truly in shock. Amidst the chaos, I saw a lot of anger and hostility. And, somehow among it all, there were signs making it onto national news saying “Jesus saves” right alongside confederate flags, violence, and idolatrous support of a particular political leader. The fact that Jesus’ name and reputation was attached to this event actually made me sick to my stomach. It upset me as I hope it does you.

Conclusion

In all of this, I am reminded of something simple and beautiful. The first thing that comes to mind is Paul’s instructions to his protégé Timothy. *“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— ²for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness”* (1 Tim. 2:1-2). May we take these instructions seriously and earnestly seek to live peaceful and quiet lives as Christians in 2021. And, may we earnestly pray for the church in America to desire to do the same. We should also be praying for our political leaders here in Canada, the church in Canada, and for CMBC too. This crazy thing happens when we pray: I once challenged a youth leader to pray for some particularly “difficult” students by name every day. Within a matter of days this youth leader retorted that “wow, this has totally changed my attitude toward those kids!” Were the kids still difficult? Of course, they were still difficult. However, even though the kids didn’t change for the better right away, this youth leader was able to build a healthy relationship with them which has stood the test of time and has been helpful for these students in making important decisions at a key time in their lives. The lesson learned is that in prayer, often God will reveal our attitudes and help us to see things His way. By praying for our leaders and the situation in our world, I hope that we learn to seek to live peaceful and quiet lives.

God Bless you this day as you prayerfully seek to live peaceful and quiet lives.

-Pastor Brett