



The Pursuit of God

I love my bicycle. I have a mint green 1970's Bianchi Celeste Italian racing bike and I enjoy my summer days by riding whenever and wherever I can. Typically by mid-summer, after my muscles and lungs are in shape and accustomed to the effort, I'll pursue longer and longer rides, with more and more challenge. One of my annual standards in Missouri is a 40-mile section of the KaTy Trail between Washington (MO) and St. Charles. This pursuit of a long, beautiful ride led to my all-time favorite - a twenty mile section of the Blue Ridge Parkway with its long uphill climbs and around-the-bend slowly-revealed colorful vistas.

We are often called to engage in a pursuit of God. Just the mention of "pursuit of God" leads me to pull my bicycling experience forward to think about what such a pursuit would take. A pursuit of God would require a season of serious preparation the way I might condition my muscles for the mid-summer long ride. There would be days of aggressive effort followed by days of simply maintaining consistency. And there would be finding the right blend of water, electrolytes and quick energy, that is, the right blend of "sustenance". And then, of course, there would be study so that I know something of the route ahead of time. All of these pieces would seem to apply directly to my pursuit of God.

Except that, I'm reluctant to pursue God and left to myself, would likely never do it. Like Adam, we have more of a tendency to hide in shrubs when we hear the Lord approaching than we do of pursuing him.

It's right about this time that I begin to understand "pursuit of God" doesn't mean my pursuit of him, but rather God's pursuit of me.

God's love is persistent, tireless, undistracted, devoted and unfading. When he places his love upon us, he will move heaven and earth to accomplish in us what he intends. He won't be thwarted if we hide in the shrubs or shrink back skittishly. Though we are slow of heart and slow to respond, though his whisperings and woings seem to fall upon our deaf ears, he continues his pursuit to awaken our love to his kindnesses. Like a mother who hears our cry and responds instantly, God listens to our cries for help and then draws close to

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Upcoming Events

- **May 2nd – AWANA Awards Night**
- **May 8th – Deacons/Session**
- **May 20th – Fellowship Meal**
- **May 27th – Rockin' Seniors**
- **June 10th – Ladies Tea**
- **June 17th – Fellowship Potluck**
- **June 19th – Deacons/Session**
- **June 24th – Rockin' Seniors**
- **June 25th – 29th - VBS**

comfort and provides what we need. When we get distracted or run away he does not give up on us, but draws ever closer with his warnings and promises to make certain we do not miss his grace. As one poet put it,

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue
(Fear does not know how to evade as Love knows to pursue.)

God, who is love and who is infinitely eternally unchangeably good is never exhausted in his pursuit of us.

You cannot escape his love. Ignore him, alter what he means, pretend he doesn't speak . . . it doesn't change the reality of what the Beloved Son said, "all that the Father has given to me, I will lose none." If the Father has given you to Christ, then he will lovingly pursue you into Christ's arms.

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and gave his son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10

Taking Every Though Captive To Christ,



May 2018 Interim Update

The winter months saw a slowdown in the interim process, at least in outward activity. But several things have been done to strengthen the church. The sermon series in 1 John has continued with brief interruptions for Palm Sunday, Easter and AWANA Sunday. We are now looking at the practical aspects of "love among the brethren" to supplement what the apostle John has been teaching. A communicant's class has also been completed to prepare 7 young people for taking communion, which will happen on May 6.

While it might not have looked like much was going on with the Search Committee, they took up some transitional tasks which will help to clarify for them the kind of pastor that will best fit into our setting. These tasks included 1) a reassessment of our demographic and how our location places special expectations on a pastor, 2) a restatement of our Core Values so a new man has a clearer idea of what we believe and how our community shapes what we do, and 3) a reconsideration of some personal qualities in the pastor who will come here so that he will be comfortable in the work. In the meantime we have received a few applications from possible candidates with whom we have communicated to hang on until May when we finish our rework. Pastor Baker has administered Gifts and DISC assessments to some members of the congregation, from which he has learned the leadership style of the church and the kind of leader who will be most effective for leading our church forward.

As the transitional work moves forward steadily and deliberately we covet your continued prayers.

May Birthdays

1st – Brayden Freres

3rd – John Meuser

Sophie Noonan

4th – Connor Webber

6th – Eli Keighin

12th – Chris Meuser

15th – Olivia Potter

19th – June Peterson

20th – Kirk Potter

30th – Libby Dwyer

Chad Freres

Prayer Ministry

Please continue to lift up the following people in prayer:

Mary Scott

Connor Webber

Eli Keighin

Kuntz Family

Bob & Denise Elwell

Don Wilson Family

Church Elders & Deacons

W.O.W Ministry

AWANA Ministry

Sunday School Teachers

Fellowship Team

Pastor Search Committee

Transition Team

Our Missionaries:

Jeff & Marilyn German

Paul & Elizabeth Branch

**If you would like a loved one added or taken off, please contact the office.*

Women's Leadership Training – Part 1

In the darkness of the icy, bitterly cold early morning, I boarded a plane to Atlanta. My stomach was in knots at the anticipation that had been built up over the previous few weeks. Am I really going to a women's leadership conference? Am I really going to meet these great ladies that have written such life-changing Bible studies? How will I ever be able to bring back all that I have learned and share it with other women? I sat quietly, watching the plane being de-iced, and thought about all that the next 50 hours would hold. I thought about my Sister in Christ sitting next to me, and the sacrifice at work that she had made to come with me. Would it live up to her expectations? I began to pray that the Lord would open my heart and my mind to receive all that He had planned for me.



The ride was short and before I knew it, I was navigating the airport in search of MARTA (Atlanta's transportation system). The process was quick and easy and I was soon on my way downtown on a train. One could easily overlook the train ride as just par for the course; however, it fascinated me greatly. Here I was, dressed to go to a conference, suitcase and winter coat in hand, while others entering and exiting the train were wearing shorts and sandals and going about their everyday lives. Some were headed to work. Others were merely grocery shopping or going out to eat. There was a great mix of people. Clearly, Teresa and I were the visitors.

As the scene outside of the window flew by, I noticed that we went from the busy airport, to suburban family homes, through the rundown neighborhoods, underground with graffiti decorated walls, and then back above to closed down factories and abandoned store fronts, all before reaching our destination in downtown Atlanta. Small town-rural living this was not. I LOVED it! The quick progression through these areas reminded me a lot of my own life; the hustle and bustle of everyday life, the times when I have been undesirable and run down, the many times when I have been broken and closed off. I could see the beauty of things as they were and the brokenness and destruction that sin had led to. As we pulled up to our stop, the sunshine had become warm and inviting. The buildings stood tall and the city traffic could be heard.

It was only a brief walk to the hotel where I would be staying, and even though I had all of our stuff in tow, nothing seemed to matter. I was here. I had made it. The Lord had already begun to stir my heart and open my eyes and I hadn't even checked in yet...

As I walked into the hotel, it all began to feel real. Women, women, and more women. Some had southern accents; some were from the East Coast, some from the West, even many from Canada and other foreign countries. After realizing that I could not check in until the afternoon, I stored my bags and headed to registration. While I stood in line, I talked with other women about where they were from and if this was their first conference. After receiving my name tag and materials, I headed downstairs for coffee. I had a little time before the "Newcomers" luncheon so I headed to what I call one of the most fabulous places, the bookstore! What an overwhelming array of devotions, studies, novels, and curriculum. I knew that I would definitely be back when I had more time to look carefully. I only had a little room in my carry-on and I knew then, that the trip home would be heavier than the trip down.

I headed up to the 25th floor to the newcomers luncheon and was greeted by a whole host of women milling around. This was a first time event for many ladies. We ate lunch, played a few games, and then prayed before heading downstairs to what was to be the first of many amazing talks and workshops over the next few days.

The main events of the conference had not yet begun and yet the Lord had already shown me that He was about to teach me some pretty amazing truths. It was my prayer that I would not only hear the words being said, but that I would allow them to change me for His Glory.

To Be Continued.....Amanda Keighin~~

May 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 WOW @ 6pm	2 AWANA Awards Night @6:15pm	3 Food Pantry @5pm	4	5
6 Communion/ New Communing Members	7 Prayer Group @ 9:30am	8 Deacons @6:30pm Session @ 7pm	9	10	11	12 Food Pantry @8-9am
13	14 Prayer Group @ 9:30am WOW @ 10:30am	15 WOW @ 6pm	16	17 Food Pantry @5pm	18	19
20 Fellowship Meal	21 Prayer Group @ 9:30am	22	23	24	25	26
27 Rockin' Seniors	28 Prayer Group @ 9:30am	29	30	31		

12 Ways to Kill Your Church from 1 Corinthians

1. (1:10-3:23) Pick sides and bicker. Especially in the presence of visitors.
2. (4:1-21) Criticize God's servants.
3. (5:1-13) Fail to be ashamed of sin.
4. (6:1-8) Pick fights with one another; especially in front of unbelievers.
5. (6:9-20) Make no effort to be sanctified.
6. (7:1-40) Treat your marriage carelessly.
7. (8:1-13) Be arrogant about your liberties.
8. (9:1-27) Stop giving God his tithe.
9. (10:1-33) Grumble about God's providence.
10. (11:17-34) Be piggy. Go first and take the most.
11. (12:1-14:40) Be arrogant about your gifts as though you generated them
12. (15:1-58) Forget or ignore the hope and power of the resurrection