



THE NEW COVENANT CONNECTION

New Covenant Presbyterian Church

Dear friends,

Well, we're in the thick of summer and you just can't think of this season without thinking of baseball. I haven't attended a game this summer, but I imagine that many of you have. I read an article about what constitutes a "perfect" baseball game, and I thought you might be interested in what it says and how it relates to our life as Christians.

Do you know what makes for a "perfect" baseball game? It takes no hits, no walks, no hit batsmen, and no errors. Amazingly it has only happened about 25 times in the history of major league baseball but it happened twice in May of 2010 when Dallas Braden of the Oakland A's and Rob Halladay of the Philadelphia Phillies each pitched a perfect game. And it almost happened a third time in June of that year when pitcher Armando Galarraga of the Detroit Tigers had only one more out to achieve.



What happened? The batter for the Cleveland Indians came to the plate. Galarraga's first pitch – strike; next pitch – a ball; third pitch – a groundball to the first baseman. Galarraga left the pitcher's mound to cover first. His teammate threw him the ball and he caught it, stepping on the base and turning to celebrate. In his mind, he had achieved his ultimate goal – a PERFECT game! Unfortunately, the umpire, Jim Joyce, called the batter safe even though replay after replay showed the runner was out. It was a bad call but it held and Galarraga's perfect game became a one-hitter, his goal being shattered.

Can you imagine how Armando Galarraga felt? It simply wasn't fair. He deserved the honor he had earned but it didn't come. Why? It was because of a mistake on someone else's part. Can you imagine Armando's anger or the feeling of disappointment and frustration that must have welled up inside of him? And what about Jim Joyce, the umpire? He must have had a pretty heavy dose of guilt land on him. And yet, what happened next is why I share this story with you.

Jim Joyce went to the locker room to apologize to Galarraga. And, the young pitcher responded with class, accepting the apology with grace. So, what does this have to do with how we are called to live the Christian life? Is there something we can learn from this encounter? Did Armando achieve "almost perfection" himself? Of course not! It took all nine players of the Tigers each racking up and out, each of them using their particular gifts to create this "almost perfect" game.

~ continued ~



AUGUST 2023

A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR.. 1

CALENDAR.....3

(EVENTS, BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES)

FELLOWSHIP.....4

WORSHIP & OUTREACH.....6

WILJ.....7

CLERK'S REPORT.....8

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.....9

MISSION REPORT.....10

FROG CORNER11

TRUSTEE REPORT.....12

DEACON REPORT.....12

STEWARDSHIP MINUTE.....13



We've heard the scripture from Paul many times, *"But to each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift...The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers."* We could add – "some pitchers, some outfielders, some needleworkers, some ushers, some sound technicians, some greeters, some people who handle building repairs, some officers, some who beautify the church through painting, and some who shepherd others..."

Unfortunately, even though we know in our heads that it takes a village to raise a child and that it takes all of us within the church to faithfully seek and answer God's call to ministry, our thoughts don't always translate into action. Many of us insert ear plugs because we don't want to hear what God is asking of us; we only want to hear God's call to others who certainly must be better qualified or have more time and talent than we do.

This happens for a variety of reasons. We're too tired, too busy, have too many other responsibilities. We truly don't believe ourselves to be able or worthy, etc., etc. Or, when we do accept a leadership position, we see no need for others to get involved or to share their gifts. It's just easier to do it ourselves and, besides, we have all the gifts that are needed to do the job. And the result is that we wear ourselves out trying to be the "whole" body rather than just one part. Perhaps we never considered that by doing it all ourselves we were denying someone else the opportunity to be blessed by using their God-given gifts. Some people won't ever volunteer but they would gladly help out if asked to do so.

Is this God's plan for the BODY OF CHRIST? I don't think so and yet it keeps happening. And we wonder why so many officers are burned out at the end of their terms and we have a hard time getting enough people to serve the following year. When are we going to learn to do things according to God's plan rather than our own?

Did Ron Halladay or Dallas Braden Armando Galarraga (almost) achieve their "perfect game" by themselves? Did they say to themselves "In order to pitch a perfect game, I need to strike out every batter." And if someone hits the ball, I must field it all by myself and get the batter out. No need for teammates. I can do it all by myself!"

This is a crazy idea for a baseball field and an even crazier one for the church. God calls particular individuals to leadership in the church according to their gifts. But God doesn't call them to do it all by themselves. If we keep reading Paul's words we find that leaders are to *"equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."*

My friends, God is the One who has provided each of us with our gifts and talents and we are called to use them to serve God and the church. God has gifted people within our congregation to serve as elders, deacons, teachers, etc. so that TOGETHER we might build up the body of Christ and draw others to the One True God. We've each got to recognize our gifts and WILLINGLY share them (not begrudgingly or ignoring them, resolutely closing our ears). No one of us can do it alone and when we join together as the body, as God's team at NCPC, trusting each other and supporting and encouraging one another, then nothing is impossible to achieve.

God has provided all that is needed, especially the grace that we need to serve and give of ourselves with the right attitude. No, we will never attain perfection but we are called to strive for it, becoming more like Christ each and every day. So, join your teammates and trust in God and one another that we might be surprised what talents appear before us that will bless this congregation. When we do these things God will bless us with a bright future, but not without commitments and hard work.



Your partner in ministry,

Carol



AUGUST 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 OUR DAILY BREAD	5 BRENDEN KIRK'S PARTY 1-5
6 COMMUNION & SPECIAL COMMUNION OFFERING for ODB; DEACONS MTG	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 CE CLASS 8:30 AM; TRUSTEE MEETING; MOVIE & ICE CREAM NITE 6:30 PM	14	15	16	17	18	19 PEACH FESTIVAL IN MIDDLETOWN
20 CE CLASS 8:30 AM; SESSION MEETING	21	22	23	24	25	26 POSSIBLE TRIP TO FT. DELAWARE
27 VITAL CONGREGATIONS MEETING 5 PM	28	29	30	31		

EVERY SUNDAY—WORSHIP AT 10 AM FOLLOWED BY FELLOWSHIP

8/2 Jason Easter's Birthday

8/4 1st Friday @ Our Daily Bread

8/6 Deacons' Meeting

8/12 Earlene Kelter's Birthday

8/14 Ken Hudson's Birthday

8/15 Bill Shields' Birthday

8/17 Carol Fisher's Birthday

8/20 Session Meeting

8/23 Jay Fisher's Birthday

8/27 Betty Lou Schafer's Birthday

Vital Congregations Meeting

CHOIRS ON SUMMER BREAK



CE CLASSES AT 8:30 ON 8/13 & 8/20

Fellowship

JULY

ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY WAS HELD ON JULY 15TH AT 4:30 PM



The Shields hosted their annual Garden Party on the 15th and many people enjoyed the fellowship, food and fun. It was too warm to gather outside but their home was very welcoming as were the people. Much fun was had by all.

AUGUST

ICE CREAM SOCIAL + A MOVIE ON 8/13 AT 6:30 PM

You won't want to miss our **ICE CREAM SOCIAL AND MOVIE NIGHT**. There will be lots of ice cream in different flavors, along with chocolate sauce, cherries, nuts, and whipped cream. If you'd like to bring anything else, it would be welcomed and appreciated. After ice cream, we will watch **the movie - *Jesus Revolution*** which is based on a true story. It is about flawed, broken people who find themselves at the face of a movement far greater than themselves evolves; it also points out the origins of many elements of faith that have metastasized into problems for the Church such as the megachurch culture.

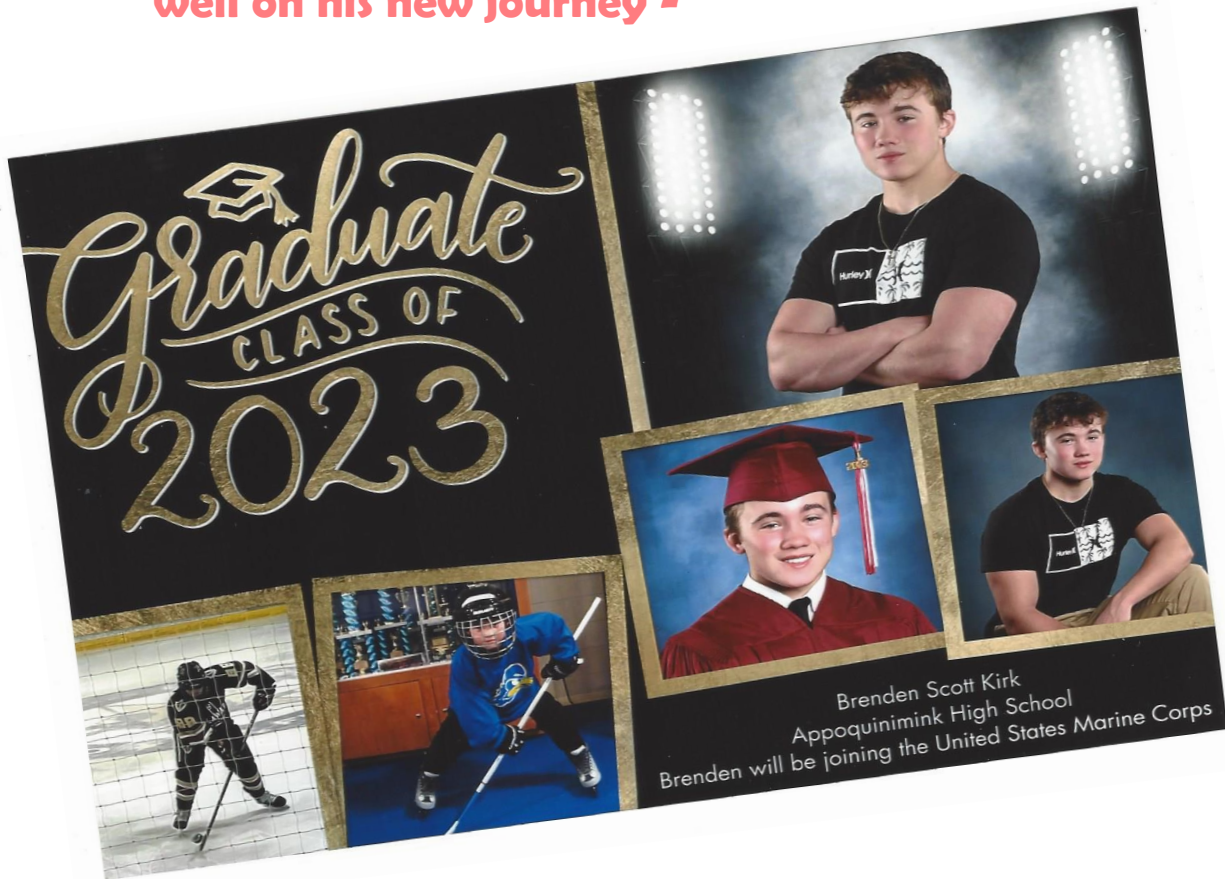
FORT DELAWARE EXCURSION

We invite you to join us in a church trip to Fort Delaware on Pea Patch Island off the shore of Delaware City. They have several programs going on daily, including artillery and musketry demonstrations, tours and interactive activities. We can also visit with our costumed interpreters, who will show you what we believe life was like in the 1860s. Fort Delaware is a great experience for visitors of all ages. Closed toed walking shoes are required!



Fellowship Continued

Come join the Kirks as they wish Brenden
well on his new journey -



*Please join us for a going away
party for Brenden Kirk before he
leaves for boot camp in the
United States Marine Corps*

Date: Saturday, 8/5/23

Time: 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

*Location: Townsend Church; 4519
DuPont Parkway; Townsend, DE
19734*

Hosted by his parents, Scott and Amy

*RSVP by 8/1/23 {Scott (302) 528-
2390 or Amy (302) 528-2393}*

***Please Note: Smoking and alcohol
are NOT permitted on the premises***

Worship & Outreach

What is “Ordinary Time” in the Church Calendar?

New Covenant follows a Common Lectionary which provides specific scripture readings for each Sunday and festival in a three-year cycle. These texts were selected by an ecumenical group of scholars (The Consultation on Common Texts-CCT), and provide for a disciplined use of the whole range of scripture in the church’s worship. It also creates a greater sense of connection-ism to the greater Church. On any given Sunday, churches which observe this common lectionary hear the same scriptures read and proclaimed in many parts of the world and in many different denominations.

The use of the term “ordinary” in this manner means that which is standard, normative or typical. In our observance of the Christian Year (Liturgical Year), Ordinary Time includes two distinct segments which together comprise the majority of the Christian Year: the time between Epiphany (Jan. 6th) and Lent (from four to nine weeks), and the time between Pentecost and Advent (23 to 28 weeks following Pentecost). Both of these segments are calculated from the variable date of Easter.

Week after week, Sunday ordinarily celebrates the resurrection and the unfolding of the new creation. The standard for worship is, therefore, the ordinary time of Sunday in the week-to-week progression of time. Ordinary Time presents us with an ongoing opportunity to witness to the living Lord who makes all things new.

Twice each year Ordinary Time is heightened by the **extra-ordinary** time of the Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter cycles. They are **extra-ordinary** in that they intensify the foundational doctrines of incarnation and resurrection. The liturgical contribution of these cycles is to supplement the “ordinaries” of worship with additional or seasonally reflective elements.

Each liturgical season is designated by a particular color to be used on the church’s paraments (cloth draped over the pulpit and communion table). We hope this explanation of our church’s seasons will help you better understand how our church seeks to follow and serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

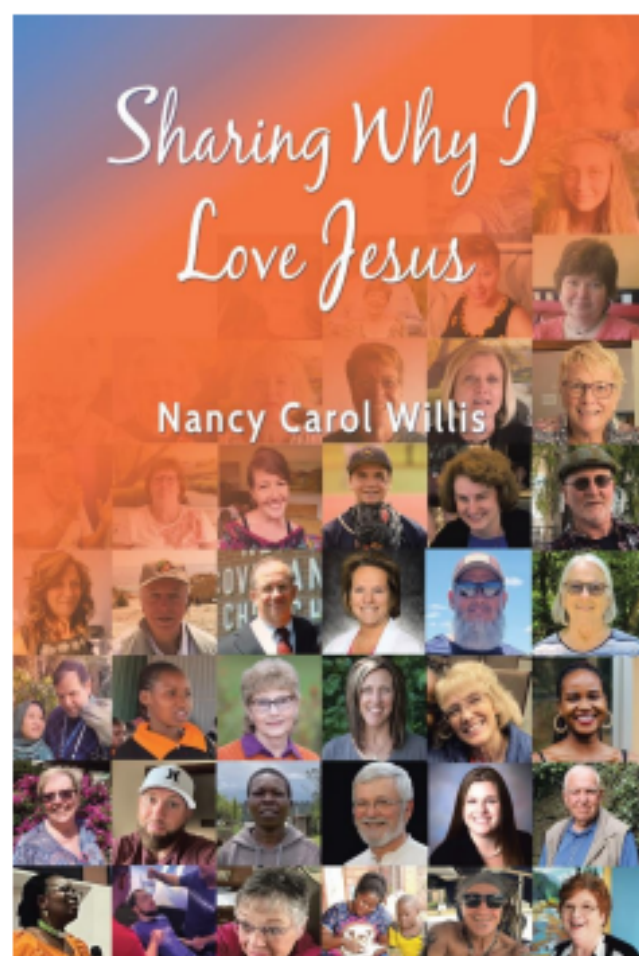


OUTREACH TO OUR COMMUNITY ON 8/19

NCPC will join Church on Main to provide delicious PEACH ice cream and hospitality for festival goers.

If you would like to contribute or help out, let Beverly Cook know. Hope to see you there, and stay COOL!

Study Guide Published!



“Sharing Why I Love Jesus” from Christian Faith Publishing author Nancy Carol Willis is an enjoyable opportunity to reflect, grow, and celebrate your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Have you ever wondered about your faith story? Do you even have a faith story? Why do you have a faith story? Where did it come from? How does it work? How do you grow your faith? Should you share your faith story? How do you share your faith story?

Perhaps you're like me—an “ordinary Christian.” You look forward to joining your church family for Sunday worship. You greet people at the door, ring bells, or bake cookies for fellowship time. You pray often, enjoy your daily devotional, and look forward to the next Bible study. Fantastic!

But if you're like most ordinary Christians, the thought of sharing your faith story with others makes your stomach churn.

You're not alone!

The Sharing Why I Love Jesus study guide is more than a how-to book about writing your faith story. It lays a biblical foundation for faith and illustrates faith through stories and examples. The study questions will prompt you to explore your own faith in greater depth. Then you will write your faith story and practice sharing it in today's world.

The study guide can be used individually or in a small group setting.

Let's get started!

Published by Christian Faith Publishing.

Order your copy TODAY!

**[https://whyilovejesus.org/
study-guide/](https://whyilovejesus.org/study-guide/)**

**ISBN 979-8-88751-859-6
on Amazon**

\$14.95

Cash or check - see Nancy



Clerk's Report

The Session normally meets on the third Sunday of each month, but that was not our pattern this past month. We did not meet in July in order to give ourselves a bit of a summer break. We did, however, have an email discussion and vote regarding the recommendation from the Trustees to have our Treasurer set up a designated fund to receive and disburse money to purchase food to be used at Our Daily Bread. We also had a Congregational Meeting on 7/9 to elect Bob Megonigal as a trustee, Class of 2023.

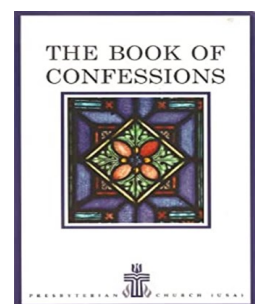
We do continue with our monthly meeting with our Vital Congregations facilitator, Nate Phillips. In July we met on the 9th and our topic was considering where we stand financially. We took an honest look at our meager funds, realizing that we can not continue spending more than we take in. But, we were very thankful that our Year-to-Date figures were better than expected. Our Income through June of this year is \$61,257.18 and our Expenses have been \$62,275.62, thus giving us a deficit of \$1,018.44. It has been much worse in the past, so we give thanks that the deficit was less than it could have been. Many thanks to all who are contributing when possible.

We are pleased to let you know that the Lees, who have begun forming the Korean Church in Middletown, have been meeting early on Saturday mornings for prayer and for worship/fellowship following our service on Sundays.

Yours in Christ,

Pat Wright

Clerk of Session



Christian Education Report

Regular Christian Education Classes On a Summer Break

BUT

That Is NO Reason to Stop Learning and Growing

Typically, in the summer months, our regular classes take a break. But this summer we were approached with a new opportunity:

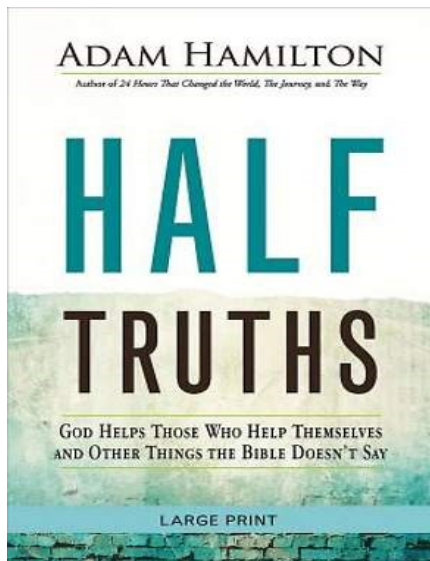


Cheryl Shields is leading a class based on *Prophecy Watcher* videos. This series offers a variety of presenters such as Gary Stearman, Mondo Gonzales and Brandon Holthaus. They explore current events and relate them to Biblical Prophecy.

The presenters weave scripture into their talks and these videos can be found on their official YouTube channel – Prophecy Watchers. These leaders have an important message to share about the plans and purpose of their organization. They try to provide a message of hope and encouragement, grounded in the soon return of Jesus Christ.

Two classes were held in July and two are coming up in August on 8/13 at 8/20 at 8:30 AM. We meet in our Fellowship Room. See you soon!

After Labor Day, we will resume our regular schedule of Christian Education and we will resume our study and discussion of Adam Hamilton's *Half Truths* which discusses what the Bible really says about common misinterpretations.



Mission Report

Our Daily Bread: We served 160 meals on First Friday, July 7th.

The Board of Trustees and the Session approved the establishment of a new fund to provide the monies for the cost of purchasing the supplies needed for the First Friday meal at Our Daily Bread. We decided to have a **special collection each month, on Communion Sunday, for the Our Daily Bread/First Friday meal mission.** The first collection was held on July 2nd and the support was over whelming. God Bless everyone in this most generous congregation. Look for the *Breadbox* on our next Communion Sunday., August 6th.



New Covenant meal on First Friday consists of a grilled ham and cheese sandwich, pasta salad (in the summer) or soup (in the late fall and winter) and a small bag of potato chips or raw vegetables.



Neighborhood House: We continue our regular donations of non perishable food items to the community organization that services the Middletown-Odessa-Townsend area. As August approaches and the thoughts begin to turn to “Back to School” let us consider providing a few backpacks to Neighborhood House for distribution in the community.

Mission: Nancy and Paul arrived home safely from their mission to Kenya. From all accounts so far, it was a great success and they have been requested to return again next year. God Bless you both and we hope to entice them to do a presentation to the congregation sometime later this fall.



Frog Corner

F.R.O.G. CORNER: *Forever Rely on God*

Don't forget the meaning behind the acronym **R I B B I T** :
Revere, **I**nvoke, **B**less, **I**nspire, and **T**rust in the Lord.

Out of the mouths of God's "kids":

Elizabeth asked her Sunday School class to sketch a picture of their favorite Bible stories. She was puzzled by Bert's picture which showed four people sitting in a plane, so she asked him which Bible story it was meant to represent.' The flight to Egypt,' said Bert. 'I see ... and that must be Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus,' Elizabeth said, 'But who's the fourth person?' Oh, that's Pontius - the Pilot.'



The Pastor and His Son

Andrew was watching his father, a pastor, write a sermon. 'How do you know what to say?' Andrew asked. 'Why, God tells me', the father replied. 'Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?'

Latest News from the Church Pews

- Tonight's sermon: 'What is hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- This afternoon, there will be a meeting in the south and north ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.
- Tuesday, at 4pm, there will be an ice cream social. All ladies giving milk come early.
- Thursday, at 5pm, there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All ladies wishing to be Little Mothers please meet with the pastor in his office.
- This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Richards to come forward and lay an egg at the altar.
- The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind and they maybe seen in the church basement on Friday afternoon.
- The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of Roderick James Hillman, the son of Revd. and Mrs. Hillman.



*I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you
and your joy may be complete. John 15: 11*

Trustee & Deacon Reports

The Trustee Meetings are open to all and they are normally scheduled each month on the 2nd Sunday after worship. There will not be a Trustee Meeting held in the month of August 2023 due to conflicts.



Another special fund is being set up to support the expenses of food for *Our Daily Bread*. Donations to cover the cost of food to make and serve a meal on the first Friday of each month are appreciated. A Special Offering will be taken for this purpose on communion Sundays.

We are still looking for someone(s) to help maintain the weeds in our church parking lot, since it is very expensive to have it done by an outside source. We also want to thank Bob Megonigal for stepping up to fill the Trustee position left vacant with the departure of Fred Noll.

In addition to Transformation Church using our facilities on the last Saturday of each month, we now have another Church using our buildings. The “Middletown Korean Church” is using our facilities for their Saturday morning prayer time and Sunday afternoon for their Worship Services each week. This is just another way our Church is helping our Lord and Savior with his mission.



We are open to welcoming one and all in the name of Christ.



At the request of some of our congregation members, we are in the process of getting ready to order and install a higher toilet in one of the stalls in our Lady's Bathroom.

We are happy to consider any requests or needs from our congregation.

Your Friendly Trustees,
Al, Bill and Bob



DEACON MINISTRY

The deacons are taking a bit of a break this summer. We do, of course, continue to care for our sheep. We will be meeting on August 5th and we hope to visit and tour Fort Delaware on August 26th. Please let us know of any needs our sheep may have.

NCPC STEWARDSHIP

Titled and Entitled

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” Ps. 24:1

The first car I ever owned was a 1978 Chevrolet Monza station wagon. I was in graduate school and I struggled to make my \$67 a month payment but it served me well. Finally, after several years, I obtained my “title” indicating that the car was officially MINE. Among the many things people own, only a few - cars, houses, real estate - are so valuable that the owner keeps a piece of paper called a “title” to prove that (s)he is the true owner. And a title holder is “entitled” to do whatever (s)he or (s)he wants with the things (s)he owns.

Each month, we will explore a different aspect of STEWARDSHIP, but we must begin by thinking about OWNERSHIP. To “own” something is to have the right to decide how it is to be used, how it might be altered, and, ultimately, what its fate will be. A STEWARD, on the other hand, works on the owner’s behalf to protect and enhance what belongs to the owner. The owner decides the responsibilities and duties of a steward.

Scripture has a straightforward answer to the basic question of ownership - EVERYTHING BELONGS TO GOD. As Psalm 24 states, *“The earth is the Lord’s.”* This phrase, or a variation of it, occurs so often that we might call it the basic creed of the Old Testament. And to leave no doubt as to what is included in this ownership, a verse is added, *“and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”* And when the Bible says EVERYTHING, it means everything. God is Creator of all things, visible and invisible. There is nothing and no one - no thing or person - that is not God’s.

The effects of this scriptural premise are far-reaching and dramatic. We may “own” something and believe that we are entitled to do with it as WE please, but the claim of Psalm 24 is so far-reaching that such statements are simply not possible for a disciple of Jesus Christ. My house? NO, God’s house, so I will do with it as God pleases. My car? NO, God’s car, so I will do with it as God pleases.

To truly understand what this means, we must start with the HUMILITY OF PLACE. To be human is a grand thing, but it is not the ultimate thing. Only God is the Source and Creator of all there is. Psalm 100 reminds us, *“Know that the Lord is God. It is God who made us, and we are God’s.”* God’s title to ALL things originates in God’s creation of all things.

To profess Jesus Christ and acknowledge God is to forgo any claim we might want to make to absolute ownership over anything. God may entrust us with the care of the earth, of things necessary for life, of family, of ideas and stories and history and even life itself. But NEVER can we claim that these things are ours to do with as we please. They ALL BELONG TO GOD. Even a 1978 Chevrolet Monza station wagon that I worked and sweated for so diligently. In truth, it was NEVER really mine.

- Carol

