

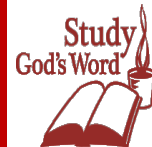
Christ Community Church of Blackstone
Proclaiming Hope through the Good News of Jesus Christ since 1822

February 2023 Newsletter



A Message from Pastor Marc

"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." -Matthew 4:1-2 NIV



*Virtual Bible
Study Tuesday
morning
at 10 am via
zoom.com.
Contact Lynne
for a link.*

We are now heading into our second month of Winter. For those of us who were hoping for large snowfalls, there is understood disappointment. However, for those of us who pay the heating bills, we are grateful for the mild temperatures so far. I am looking forward to the next major event in our Christian calendar, the season of Lent. This year Lent starts on Wednesday, February 22 and ends on Thursday, April 6.

I chose the above Scripture for perhaps two reasons. The first is that this event in the ministry preparation for Jesus was important enough to be mentioned in all three of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) as well as John. Jesus exemplified what He told us, He only does what the Father tells and shows Him. Jesus tells us in John 5:19, "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." Jesus, being challenged three times by Satan, does not call down legions of angels. No, He rebukes Satan by citing exactly what His father told Him.

Lent is a time for you and me to prepare, just like Jesus did in the wilderness. We need to look inward and reflect upon our relationship to our Savior. Has our relationship taken a back seat to worldly temptations? Is Sunday the only time we reach out to God or only in times of trials? Do you take time to thank the Lord for the small things like the newness of life each and every day? Do you treat God like an ATM machine? Always seeking to take but giving little in return to further His kingdom or maybe ignoring opportunities to be His hands and feet?

This is the second reason I chose this scripture. As many of you know, I have undergone what some consider the most challenging surgery one might have. For me, my Lent has started early. I continue to take the time to reflect on just how wonderful God has been to me. From the amazing church family and colleagues at work who prayed for me to the outstanding medical care I received. In this life I have come to realize that my relationship to Jesus is more important than anything. My past is prolog, and my future is not guaranteed. Each new day of my life is not promised. But each new day that God grants me is the best day of my life. I need to live it as if it was my last!

I also thank God for my wife Barbara who has been my rock and love, even in times of stress, and I thank God each and every day for her. We all will go through trials in this life that shake us to our very core, yet we can count on a God that never leaves us or forsakes us. I pray that no matter what your circumstances may be, take time to reflect on your relationship to the Lord who loves you. Like Jesus, let us all strive to do what the Master has shown us to say and do for others. Let the love of Christ emanate from your hearts to others.

God bless you all!
-Pastor Marc

Members Anniversary

Sheila Robeau – February 1, 2014
Bill Wronski – February 1, 2014

February Birthdays

Lynne Cignarella – February 18

Happy Anniversary

Bob & Joyce St. Jean – February 13, 1971



Senator Ryan Fattman to Visit Our Church

On March 6 at 8:30 am, we are expecting a visit from Sen. Fattman who is coming to view our historic church.

The Events' Committee is working on applying for Grants and his department has agreed to come, check the church and help us get some state funding.

We will serve refreshments after the meeting.

All church members and associates are invited to attend.



We are planning a Hymn Sing in February or March. Date to be determined.



February 19, 2023

Jordan Heersink will be our pianist for our church service.



WILL YOU COMMIT TO PRAY?

The Pastor Search Committee has been entrusted with the weighty responsibility to identify the person that God is calling to be the church's next pastor. Pray that they may be unified and practice godly wisdom and discernment.

If church members will make the commitment to be prayer warriors throughout the search process, it could make this season one of the greatest displays of God's power that you ever experience as a congregation. Indeed, prayer is one of the most powerful weapons at your disposal during this season.

While you may not know the identity of the next pastor, God does. As you pray for your next pastor, pray that God will give him the strength to leave his current ministry; that God will give him a deep love for your church and community. Pray that the Lord will give him a strong desire to teach and preach the whole counsel of God and to fulfill the other biblical roles of a shepherd.

Prayer is such an important component of any pastor search. The church that fervently prays together during this season will witness God answers their prayers in amazing ways. If your church is currently searching for a pastor, will you commit to pray?

This post is adapted from material in Week 4 of the book, The Church During the Search by Jason Lowe.



There are times when our church service will be moved to zoom.com, cancelled or delayed due to the weather.

If moved to Zoom, a link will be sent out via email and text to all.

If Delayed, the service will be moved to **10:30 am.**

Jackie will send emails and texts to all. Phone calls will be made to those who do not have technology.

If Cancelled

Jackie will send emails and texts to all. Phone calls will be made to those who do not have technology

You can also check our website at www.cccob.org or Facebook

For God

so loved the world,
that he gave his
only
begotten
Son,
that whosoever
believeth
in him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.

John 3:16



I said a Valentine prayer for you
and asked the Lord above
to fill your heart and bless your soul
With the precious gift of love.

I asked Him for sincere love
The kind that's meant to stay
Just like the generous love
You give to those you touch each day.

I prayed for love from family
And from every cherished friend
Then I asked the Lord to give you
His love that knows no end.



Please pray for:

Bob - shingles
Joanne, Sheila, Nancy, Bunny - ongoing issues
Jackie & Ron - healing
Cindy, Vicky, Lorraine - cancer
Sandy's Dad - RSV
Student that died and her family
Trista & family who need a place to live
Robin - healing
Baby Aubrielle - recuperating from surgeries
and her family
Christine - she is homeless and in the hospital
with breathing issues

O Lord, Hear Our Prayer

*"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."
Romans 12:12*

Anthony - immune therapy
Jean needs healing;
she is bleeding internally

Pastoral Search Committee

Those who are mourning
Our **Unsaved** Loved Ones
Our **Country**
Wisdom for our **Leaders**



**"To get nations back on
their feet, we must first
get down on our knees."**
~ Billy Graham

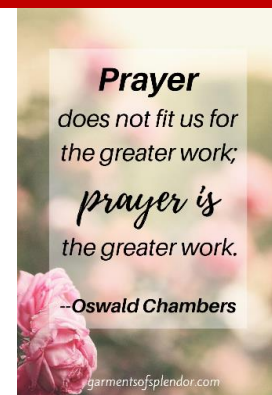


Prayer

is the rope that pulls God
and man together. But, it
doesn't pull God down to
us: it pulls us up to Him.

~ Bill Graham ~

familyshare.co



Prayer

does not fit us for
the greater work;

prayer is
the greater work.

--Oswald Chambers

garmentsofplendor.com

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO 'PRAY WITHOUT CEASING'?

by John Piper

1 Thessalonians 5:15-18

¹⁵ See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

I start here with verse 15 just so that we can see that Paul's burden is not just a kind of private piety when he comes to speak of prayer. This is a radical call to counterintuitive, countercultural love. Don't repay people evil for evil. Do good to everyone always.

Do good always to everyone, even when they don't do good to you. How?

Rejoice always. Find your joy in something other than the way you are treated. How? Pray without ceasing. How? Be in a continual disposition of thankfulness to God.

So, in those contexts, what does "pray without ceasing" mean? I see at least three things here that it means.

SPIRIT OF DEPENDENCE

First, it means that there is a spirit of dependence that should permeate all we do. This is the very spirit and essence of prayer: dependence. So, even when we are not speaking consciously to God, there is a deep, abiding dependence on him that is woven into the very essence of our faith. In that sense, we are praying. We are experiencing a spirit of dependence continuously, and that kind of disposition is, I think, right at the heart of what God creates when he creates a Christian.

REPEATED AND FREQUENT

The second meaning that it has (and I think this is probably the one that is foremost in Paul's conscious intention here) is that praying without ceasing means praying repeatedly and often. I base that on the way he used the word *unceasing* (Greek *adialeiptōs*) in Romans 1:9. Listen to how he uses the same word for *without ceasing*. He says, "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing [*adialeiptōs*] I mention you."

Now, we can be sure that Paul did not make mention of the Romans in every minute or second of his prayers or his days or his preaching. He prayed and he spoke about lots of other things besides the Romans. But he mentioned them over and over. He mentioned them often. He mentioned them regularly. So he says, "I mentioned you without ceasing."





It doesn't mean that he was verbally and mentally always, every second, mentioning them. It means that over and over, always, repeatedly, without fail, when I get on my knees, you are in my prayer. That is basically what I think he means by "pray without ceasing" — repeatedly and often.

STAYING STEADFAST

The third thing I think he means is this: not giving up on prayer. "Without ceasing" means you should never come to a point in your life when you say, "Prayer doesn't work. I am done. I am giving up on prayer." That would be the very opposite of "without ceasing." It means, "Don't ever do that. Don't ever get to that point."

So, the key to rejoicing always is to pray continually — that is, to lean on God all the time and to call to him repeatedly and often. Never give up looking to him for help. Come to him repeatedly during the day and come often. Make the default state of your mind a Godward longing and a Godward thankfulness.

John Piper is founder and teacher of DesiringGod.org and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. For 33 years, he served as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

	<p align="center"> ~ February 2023 ~ Christ Community Church of Blackstone (508) 883-7885 </p> 					<p align="center"> <i>Love one</i> ANOTHER <i>as I have</i> LOVED <i>you</i> <small>-JOHN 15:12</small> </p>
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 7pm Prayer Mtg	2	3	4
5 Sunday Service @ 9:30 am	6	7 Virtual Bible Study @ 10 am	8	9	10	11
12 Sunday Service @ 9:30 am	12	14 Virtual Bible Study @ 10 am HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY	15	16	17	18
19 Sunday Service @ 9:30 am	20	21 Virtual Bible Study @ 10 am	22 	23	24	25
26 	27	28 Virtual Bible Study @ 10 am All-Church Meeting @ 7pm	John 3:16 <i>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.</i>			

About us: We are a bible-based, Christ-centered Christian church, located on the corner of Church and School Streets in Blackstone, MA. We are affiliated with the 4Cs – Conservative Congregational Christian Conference.

Guest Speakers: Denis Hardy / Gil Bourquin

Associate Pastor: Marc Greenwald



Christ Community Church
PO Box 487
Blackstone, MA 01504
508-883-7885
