

CLEVELAND CHURCH OF CHRIST

Vol. 26

January 2008

No. 1



THE UNFAILING LOVE OF GOD

By David Kester, Minister

Recently, I came across this phrase while I was reading the Bible. “We meditate on your unfailing love.” (Psalm 48:9) Three Psalms later, I read, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love.” (Psalm 51:1) After I read that, I thought, I remember reading the phrase “unfailing love” a couple days ago too. So, when I went to the office that morning, I did a computer concordance search on the phrase “unfailing love” and discovered that scriptures mention God’s unfailing love thirty-two times, twenty-six of which are found in the Psalms. Psalm 33 says, “The earth is full of his unfailing love.” Psalm 36 says, “How priceless is your unfailing love.” Psalm 52 says, “I trust in God’s unfailing love forever and ever.” Four times, Psalm 107 says, “Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.”

It was exciting to read about God’s unfailing love. Then, my mind returned to the words Psalm 48:9, “We meditate on your unfailing love.” I was not sure that we do meditate on his unfailing love, at least not often. In fact, I could not remember the last time I had truly meditated on God’s unfailing love. Now I want you to understand that by meditating, I do not mean emptying yourself of all rational thought. Rather, I mean filling your heart and mind to overflowing with the unfailing love of God. I mean focusing so fully on the unfailing love of God that every doubt, fear, feeling of inadequacy and shame is pushed aside, at least for a time, because we are completely focused on God’s unfailing love.

The apostle Paul reminds us, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8) Think about, meditate, on these things. I can think of nothing that is nobler than the unfailing love of God. I can think of nothing purer, lovelier, more admirable or excellent than God’s love that never fails. So, meditate on the unfailing love of God. Do not fill your heart with thoughts of your sin and failures. Instead, fill your heart with the unfailing love of God. Do not let fear overwhelm you, but allow the unfailing love of God to crush your fears. Do not allow the words of others define you. Rather, define yourself by the unfailing love of God. Do not waste time recounting the woes and troubles of this life, but revel in the unfailing love of God and His wonderful deeds for man.

The economy may slide into recession, friends may betray us, our health may fail, the shadow of death might hang over us. We will fail. Remember, however, should everything and everyone else fail us, God’s love will never fail. When you are heartbroken, meditate on the unfailing love of God. When you are racked by shame and guilt, meditate on the unfailing love of God. When you are lonely, afraid, meditate on the unfailing love of God.

The apostle Paul must have done so often. For he wrote, “I’m absolutely convinced that nothing — nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable — absolutely nothing can get between us and God’s love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.” (Romans 8:38-39, The Message Translation)

Meditate on the unfailing love of God.

THREE WAYS TO GROW IN THE NEW YEAR

READ THE BIBLE. There are a number of Bible reading guides in the tract rack in the foyer of the church building. Prayerfully spend time in God's word each day. It is okay to read only a few verses each day, especially when God is speaking to you through those verses. Remember, the goal in reading the Bible is hearing God speak to you, not how many chapters you read.

SPEND TIME IN PRAYER. Prayer is conversation with God, speaking to Him and listening to Him. Spend time in His presence each day. Set a goal of 20 minutes in prayer each day. If you want to stretch yourself, spend 20 minutes praying in the morning and 20 minutes praying in the evening. This will help you continue to grow in the Lord. Make Bible reading a part of your prayer time. Pray over and through the scripture you are reading. Ask God to speak to you through His Word. Consider keeping a prayer journal to record prayer requests, answered prayers, and ways God has spoken to you through His Word.

JOIN A SMALL GROUP. Small groups provide opportunities for encouragement and fellowship. We plan to create a number of small groups of approximately six people (no more than eight) in each group. Initially, these groups will meet once a week for eight weeks. At that time, they can decide to continue or disband. At each meeting, the group will share what they have learned in prayer that week, what has happened at work (good or bad), and fraternity (that is how the group is doing as brothers and sisters in Christ). If you are interested in being part of a small group, sign the list in the foyer. We will help you find a group. Each group will set its own meeting place and time.



Calendar of Events COMING IN JANUARY 2008

- Jan 8 — Dorcas Fellowship at church at 1:30pm
- Jan 8 — Board Meeting at 7:30pm, Gregg G will host.
- Jan 13 — Monthly Building Fund Offering
- Jan 17 — Ladies Nite Out at Ooodles Café in St. Peter at 6:00pm
- Jan 20 — Movie Night featuring **Amazing Grace** at 6:30pm
- Jan 21 — Church Elders' Meeting at church at 7:30pm
- Jan 23 — Wednesday Program at 5:45pm Meal and 6:30pm Bible Study
- Jan 24 — Bible Study at Centennial Plaza in Le Center at 6:30pm
- Jan 27 — 7th-12th Grade Youth Group at church at 6:00pm

COMING LATER THIS YEAR

- Feb 3 — Special Offering for Pine Haven Christian Assembly to help restore the lodge
- Feb 24 — Gideon presentation during the worship service
- April 4-5 — Minnesota Christian Convention at Rochester, MN

BUILDING UPDATE

We will receive our monthly building fund offering Sunday, January 13, 2008. In November, \$8,980.13 was given to the building fund, including gifts of \$3,000 designated towards surfacing the parking lot. \$359,702.93 remains to be paid on our building loan. As of December 1, 2007, we have received approximately \$16,000 towards surfacing the parking lot.

SPECIAL CAMP OFFERING

On Sunday February 3, we will receive a special offering to help Pine Haven Christian Assembly restore the Lodge. Since Pine Haven Christian Assembly began, the Lodge has been the center point of the camp's facility. During the past sixty-seven summers, thousands of campers have gathered in the Lodge to sing, to pray, to worship and to learn. Many campers have had the pleasure of bunking upstairs in the Lodge.

Fireside in the Lodge has been and is a treasured part of the Pine Haven Christian Assembly experience. The Lodge has served Pine Haven well. However, after many decades of faithful service, the Lodge needs some major repairs in order for it to continue to serve the camp for decades to come. Due to rot and insect damage, eleven logs need to be replaced. Seventeen crowns (the exterior corners where logs overlap) also need to be replaced. The logs on the exterior of the building must be sandblasted to remove all old paint. A borate preservative must be applied to the logs and then the Lodge must be completely re-stained. In addition, the emergency exit stairs on the north side of the Lodge must be replaced.

Pine Haven and the Lodge have been a blessing to this congregation, so we have decided to help restore the Lodge by receiving a special offering on Sunday, February 3.

REBUILDING TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS

Begin to plan now for a rebuilding trip to New Orleans in October of 2008. Tentative dates are October 11-19 and the cost will be approximately \$400-425. Cost includes: roundtrip by coach bus, 6 night hotel accommodation, complimentary hotel breakfast, worksite lunches, group t-shirt, shrimp boil or some other group activity. This trip is open to those in grade ten or older. Younger children may come, if accompanied by a parent.

INDIA MISSION TRIP

David Kester and Katie S will be in India, January 3-14. Pray that their ministry would be fruitful and honoring to God. Pray also for the people of India. There are almost a billion people in India who do not yet know Jesus. While David is gone, Monte Ball, Vice-president of Advancement at Crossroads College will preach on Sunday, January 6, and Brad Dewing, from Christian Student Fellowship will preach on Sunday, January 13. Welcome these men. If you have special needs in David's absence, please contact one of elders: Graydon D, Wayne F, Gregg G, Mark H or Sherm R.

CLEVELAND FOOD SHELF

Cleveland has a local food shelf to help those in the Cleveland Area. The food shelf operates on an appointment basis to help with short term or emergency needs. Requests can be made to David Kester at (507) 931-5924 or (507) 931-4044, or Cindy F at (507) 420-2817. The food shelf is generously supported by the local churches, food drives from the local school, the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, the Community Club and other organizations as well as many individuals. If you are in need of food, or know someone who is, contact the Cleveland Food Shelf.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- Almost 200 people attended one or more of the sessions led by Brennan Manning, December 7-9. Approximately 80 books and 15 sets of CDs were sold. Gallons of ice cream were eaten. The reminder of the enduring, unconditional love of God blessed all in attendance.
- 10 individuals met for pizza and then went Christmas caroling at Central Health Care, Country Neighbors and Centennial Plaza in Le Center on December 19.

THANK YOU'S

Thanks to Mary H, Pam A, Julie K, Judy L and Mary N for their help with the all-church Christmas Program. Thanks also to all the participants. The program was a great reminder of the true significance of the Christmas season.

Thank you to the church board for the Christmas gift. Thanks to the congregation for the reception given in recognition of my twenty years of ministry with the Cleveland Church. Your gracious words during the reception deeply moved me. The kind gifts from many of you will go a long way towards helping fund my trip to India in January. Mere words cannot express how you have blessed my life during the past twenty years. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your lives and things God is doing here.

Thank you, David Kester

To the Cleveland Church of Christ:

Thank you so much for the recent gift for the upcoming mission trip to India. I feel blessed to go and am excited to see what the Lord will teach me and how he will touch the people of India. I have had a desire to go to India for a few years now so when the chance came up, I couldn't pass it by. It has also been exciting to see how God has provided the money to go. Thank you so much for the opportunity and resources to help me go on this trip. You will hear many stories when we return.

Many blessings and thanks. Katie S

SNACKS are needed for the Sunday 10:00am Fellowship Time. Bring 8-10 dozen snack items. Coffee will be made. Volunteers are responsible for setting up, serving and cleaning up on your service day.

CASSETTE TAPES of the worship service are available upon request. **PRINTED COPIES** of each Sunday's sermon are also available. Contact David K if you are interested in a copy of the sermon. You may also receive a copy of the sermon each week via **EMAIL**. Send your request to office@clevelandchurch.net



PRAYER is an important ministry of the church. We have many people who are willing to pray for you if a special need arise. To activate our prayer chain, call David K at the church office (507) 931-5924, or the parsonage at (507) 931-4044, or (507) 380-1985, with your request. If you are unable to reach David, please call Carrie M at (507) 357-6296 (H) or (507) 357-6444 (W) or (507) 261-0279 (C).

BIRTHDAYS: January 1-Ethan M, 2-Ryan C, Lois L, Patti Z, 4-Sandy S, 5-Izze C, Andrea Hof., Asia K, 7-Becca D, 8-Noah S, 12-Ciara G, 13-Mary M, 18-Jolene C, 19-Laura D, Art P, 24-Troy M, 29-Selena E, 30-Gunnar J, Matthew P, Michael P

ANNIVERSARY: January 8-Dale & Liz R

SERVING LIST

A PDF file of our December 2007–March 2008 Serving List Chart may be downloaded from www.clevelandchurch.net. This hyperlink → <http://www.clevelandchurch.net/view/?pageID=332085> ← will take you straight to the page.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

900 State Hwy 99, Mail to: PO Box 307

Cleveland, MN 56017

David Kester, Minister

Minister/Office Email: office@clevelandchurch.net

Newsletter Email: newsletter@clevelandchurch.net

Website: www.clevelandchurch.net

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:00am – Bible Classes for all ages

10:00am – Fellowship Time

10:30am – Worship Service

Office Phone: (507) 931-5924

Parsonage Phone: (507) 931-4044

If you wish to no longer receive our email newsletters **or** to update your email address, please reply to this address: newsletter@clevelandchurch.net
 If you wish to email our minister and / or the church office use: office@clevelandchurch.net
 Thank you, Church of Christ meeting at Cleveland, Minnesota, USA