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Slusser's Chapel Celebrates Christmas with a "Festival of Nativities"

Step back in time
 to experience the
 story of
 Bethlehem—a
 humble manger,
 a young couple
 on a remarkable
 journey, and a
 newborn child—
 brought to life
 through
 beautifully crafted



nativity scenes.

Join us at Slusser's Chapel to view over
 150 nativity displays showcased in our
 Fellowship Hall. This FREE, FAMILY-
 FRIENDLY EVENT offers a peaceful
 space to reflect upon Christ's sacred birth
 as we usher in the Christmas season. Light refreshments will be available.

Location: Slusser's Chapel Church of God, 1543 Mt. Tabor Road, Blacksburg

Contact: 540-951-1757 www.slussers-themount.org

Dates for this event are :

Friday, December 5th & Saturday, December 6th | 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Sunday, December 7th | 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Monday, December 8th | 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm



**Dr. Bob Neace COGVA
State Minister**

Neace's Pieces

There is an adage that says, “Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.” In an effort to give credit for that quote, the great theologian, Google, attributes it to several people, and thus, not only will I not take credit for the adage, but will refrain from allowing my name to be associated with some to whom it has been accredited. (Right about now, I imagine some of my readers are checking to see what names appear 😊.)

Numerous times in his ministry, Jesus addressed this specific issue. It was important enough to Him that Matthew recorded Jesus' words when instructing His disciples to pray in a specific manner. In other words, a model prayer, (often confused with “The Lord's Prayer” found in John 17). This basic teaching is one with which many Christians struggle. There is so much information out there concerning unforgiveness that this missive will hopefully, at the very least, simply challenge us to look at our own lives, and address unforgiveness in our own lives.

One might ask if Christians can walk around with unforgiveness in their heart. I suggest the answer is yes, but only until the time when the Holy Spirit challenges us to address the issue, and then, if we refuse, we may find ourselves in a precarious situation concerning our eternal souls.

Our forgiveness from Christ for our own sins seem to relate to our willingness to let go of the things that others have done to us. In the model prayer, Jesus uses the phrase “and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (Matt. 6: 12 ESV) Again, this implies the relationship between ourselves and fellow man affects our relationship with Holy God to the extent that He has serious expectations of us in this realm. Even after giving the model prayer to the disciples, he comes back to that specific point, and says “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6: 14-15 ESV)

Many of the parables spoken by Jesus, and even actual interactions with people in general reenforce the importance of forgiveness. Parables such as the Unforgiving Servant in Matthew 18: 21-35, which begins (Continued on page 8)

Staunton Avenue CHOG Wants to Bless Another Church



Recently the leadership of the Staunton Avenue Church of God decided to close their doors. Rev. Dr. Rawleigh Quarles is still ministering via ZOOM on Tuesday at 7:00 pm. To join those meetings, please contact him at 540-871-4337.



As these decisions have been made, they have found themselves in a position to bless another congregation with about 25 Choir Robes (assorted among the samples shown) and a plethora of hymnals, some brand new. In addition, Dr. Quarles has five or six Clergy Robes with Doctoral Bars on the sleeve.

Any church interested in any of these items should call Dr. Quarles at the number given above.



Exciting News From Our National Offices

The James Earl Massey Center for Compelling Preaching (J.E.M.C.C.P.) and Church of God Ministries have planned two events back to back and announced “Anderson Camp Meeting returns for one special weekend!”

The J.E.M.C.C.P will conduct it’s preaching clinic June 1-4, 2006 on the campus of Anderson University. This is a powerful four days of intensive training, and COGVA believes in the integrity of this mission, as well as the benefits to be reaped from the event that ten scholarships were approved to send some of our pastors and ministerial candidates. Two have been spoken for, and there are eight left to distribute of a first come/first serve basis. To acquire one of the scholarships, please contact Dr. Bob Neace at brobob4691@gmail.com. **Please do not register with the clinic first if you are wishing for a scholarship.**

Information about Camp Meeting comes from: Jesusisthesubject.org: “Join us June 3-5, 2026 to gather as generations before us have done—to rejoice, remember, and give thanks. We invite you to come home to worship, to learn and grow through shared conferences, and to celebrate as one family—uniting our past and present in gratitude, faith, and the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit.”

There will be more information forth coming and we will share it as it becomes available. Just a word of encouragement, dorm rooms will be available for little cost, but if you plan to stay in a hotel, booking early might save some serious funds.



NATIONAL PREACHING CLINIC JUNE 1-4, 2026, ANDERSON, IN

The James Earl Massey Center for Compelling Preaching is pleased to announce:

- The **2026 National Preaching Clinic** hosted at Anderson University, Monday, June 1 through Thursday, June 4. Registration is open. See QR Code below.
- Cost: \$125 Registration fee which includes, opening night banquet, daily lunches, books, and all materials. On campus housing available at additional pricing.
- **Featuring:** Daily sessions on exegetical methods and helps for growing preachers. Sessions will be led by the Director of the Massey Center, Dr. Jeffrey W. Frymire and AUSOT Homiletician Dr. Leanne Ketcham.
- **Guest Preachers:** Special guests sharing about preaching, structures, exegetical methods, and development of the sermon.
- **Featuring:** Opportunities for each clinic participant to preach an 8-10-minute sermon in front of a mentor and a small group of preaching peers and receive valuable and encouraging feedback.
- **Worship:** Nightly worship services with outstanding preaching and worship to help inspire, model, and motivate preachers in their calling to "Preach the Word!"



LEGACY NIGHT, MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2026

HONORING DR. HORACE SHEPPARD, SR.;
FEATURING REV. HORACE SHEPPARD, JR.

- Rev. Horace Sheppard, Sr. was one of the most unique and popular preachers of his time. A pastor in Philadelphia for 45 years, he was the founding pastor of the West Oak Lane Church of God.
- Known for his exuberance and unmatched humor, Pastor Sheppard was not only a powerful evangelist, successful pastor, and a speaker in demand, he was a tremendous example of using one's gifts in the pulpit. Initially intending to become a comedian and actor, the Lord called Brother Sheppard to the preaching ministry but used his natural comedic skills to create a style of preaching that was embraced by all ages and adapted itself to all situations. His rendition of "I Feel Constrained to Say, I Love This Narrow Way" still resounds in the minds of all who heard him.
- Horace Sheppard, Jr. followed his father as pastor at West Oak Lane. Recently retired, Pastor Shepherd is an on-demand speaker in his own rite and a powerful preacher and teacher.

ANDERSON UNIVERSITY

anderson.edu/CCP | 754-641-4535 | masseycenter@anderson.edu



COGVA Bible College Continues Fall Schedule

The Bible College will resume classes for semester 1 on the 2nd Saturdays beginning in October and ending in January from 9-11 am. The Bible College is open to all. Pastors, lay leaders and lay people. The better equipped you and your people are the better we will serve. Serving Christ is a lifelong learning process you and each student is strongly encouraged to participate in.



Rev. Dr. James B. Milner

Class 1 will be instructed by the Reverend Dr. Jim Milner, focusing on the life and theological contributions of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer was a German pastor in WWII who was martyred for his faithful resistance to Hitler. His life and writings are still shaping the Church today with a Christ centered theology and practice.

Class 2 will be instructed by the Reverend Dr. Donn Sunshine, focusing on reading the Bible through different lenses

(Biblical Hermeneutics). This class will coordinate with Class 1 by taking an aspect of Bonhoeffer's theology and applying that "lens" to understanding the Bible.

As an example, Jim may teach about how Bonhoeffer ran an underground seminary to train pastors of the Confessing Church (resistance to the national Nazi church) and how they formed family and practiced unity in Christ. From that we may look at scriptures from a Christ centered relational lens. For example, we might consider the relational aspect of being born again as being born into Christian family. Or the relational family aspect of the prodigal son or Jesus eating with Zacheus.



Rev. Dr. Donn Sunshine


If you wish to receive credits toward a degree from the COGVA Bible College, please use the link below to pay the \$30 per class fee. Three credit hours are issued per completed class. You may also mail checks to the state office. Certificates for classes with and without credit will be mailed to you. Certificates from last semester are coming soon.

Class Registration <https://tithe.ly/event-registration/#/10455506>

The zoom link below will be the same for all classes.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81836882767>

Mountain Empire Churches of God Celebrate Indoor Camp Meeting at Chilhowie FCOG



Rev. Dr. Jeannette Flynn

Jeannette was born and raised in NE Ohio. Married to Charles, they have two grown children and four grandchildren. She grew up in the Church of God in Ohio, holds a degree in Education from an Ohio state university, a degree from Mid America Christian University in Theology, and a Master of Divinity from Anderson Theological Seminary. Jeannette has served in pastorates in the states of Indiana, Washington, and Florida and as an interim pastor in Indiana, Ohio, and Oregon. She served at the Florida state level as Associate Regional Pastor as well as the national offices in Anderson, Indiana. From 2011 until 2023, Jeannette served as the developer and Executive Director for Leadership Focus, the North American training program for Credentialing in the Church of God. Her greatest passion is the clear and compelling proclamation of God's word, investing in the development of leaders, and assisting congregations in discovering and fulfilling their calling, mission, and vision as the Body of Christ. Please be in prayer for Jeannette and for our Indoor Camp Meeting.

Rev. Jodi Bates Poorman

Jodi was born and raised in the Church of God, and accepted Jesus at a very young age. After attending Mid-America Bible College, she began full-time ministry in 1997, and has served on staff at several Western PA churches. Jodi exercised her calling for many years by leading worship weekly, teaching classes, filling pulpits, as well as sharing at retreats, revivals, camp meetings, etc. While she continues to minister through worship regularly, she is currently fulfilling her calling as the Senior Pastor of the Tionesta Church of God in beautiful Tionesta, PA. Jodi is passionate about truth and longs to encourage individual growth by clearly conveying God's Word through teaching, sharing music, preaching, and building relationships. She continually endeavors to walk in step with the Spirit, point to Jesus, and keep her hand firmly held in God's mighty hand. She enjoys ministering with the support of her husband, Paul, and loves the adventure of being a Mom to their 9-year-old miracle, Ethan!

(Neace's Pieces continued) with Peter asking the question about how many times must we forgive, seven times? Peter's response to that which Jesus had been teaching concerning forgiveness might show him being generous in his own mind, due to the rabbinical teaching of three times for forgiveness was sufficient. But when Jesus told him seventy times seven, it was in indication of unlimited forgiveness, and not something for which we should keep record. I would also point out the last words He spoke concerning this parable. "And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." (Mathew 18: 34-35).

The unforgiving servant, the prodigal son (which is a story more of the forgiveness and restoration offered by a loving father more than the debauchery of the wayward sons), the Old Testament episodes of God's grace being exhibited in the

life story of Joseph, and even the promise of a Messiah who would ultimately forgive sin as early as Genesis 3: 15 are only a few examples of forgiveness offered.

But why is forgiveness of others so important? In addition to the mandate from the Lord, we know that harboring grudges and unforgiveness does nothing to the one to whom forgiveness is offered. Unforgiveness prevents us from living victoriously in Christ and relegates one to operate with a victim mentality that hinders our spiritual and mental health.

Unforgiveness toward another person has often been described as a self-imposed prison and it takes a lot of time and energy away from those things that are important, such as a healthy relationship with Christ.

Forgiveness is the release of ill will toward another person. It is not forgetting the hurt, disappointment, and anger, but it is the release of those things in order to foster better spiritual and mental health for ourselves. Remember, forgetting is not a process of forgiveness, but forgiveness is a conscious decision to no longer harbor animosity toward another and a refusal to allow the offense to be a defining factor of our relationship with another person

I don't know any person's situation other than my own. But it has been my experience as a pastor to help people come to a place of forgiveness toward those who have offended them. I am reminded that forgiveness is often a process, and is not always an instantaneous event. It can take time, but it will never happen accidentally. It must begin with a conscious decision to start the process.

This Christmas, is it possible there is someone in your life you need to forgive? I can think of no better gift to give than the gift of forgiveness for those who have hurt us, and I surmise that, though the gift of forgiveness is given to others, it will also be a gift to yourself in that time and energy that would otherwise be wasted can now be spent on positive aspects of better relationships with God and man.

COGVA Budget

Annual Income: The Church of God in Virginia 08/01/25 -11/30/2025					
Church	Budget	Other	Kitchen Fund	KB	Total
					Giving
Abingdon	\$ 1,350.69			\$ 270.21	\$ 1,620.90
Atkins					\$ -
Big Stone Gap					\$ -
Birdsnest					\$ -
Blacksburg First	\$ 4,507.88		\$ 450.00		\$ 4,957.88
Blacksburg Slussers	\$ 333.32				\$ 333.32
Bluefield	\$ 1,016.00				\$ 1,016.00
Boones Mill	\$ 75.00				\$ 75.00
Boykins					\$ -
Bristol	\$ 585.16				\$ 585.16
Chesapeake					\$ -
Chilhowie	\$ 1,419.75				\$ 1,419.75
Christiansburg	\$ 1,913.21				\$ 1,913.21
Dublin		\$ 1,474.31			\$ 1,474.31
Emporia					\$ -
Forest/Cardinal COG					\$ -
Fredericksburg					\$ -
Glade Spring					\$ -
Goodview					\$ -
Hampton Joynes Rd	\$ 500.00				\$ 500.00
Lynchburg Greenview					\$ -
Lynchburg Mnt. View	\$ 250.00				\$ 250.00
Marion					\$ -
Martinsville					\$ -
Newport News Cmnty					\$ -
Norfolk Bellamy Ave	\$ 1,064.00				\$ 1,064.00
North Tazewell					\$ -
Norton	\$ 1,065.62				\$ 1,065.62
Pearisburg	\$ 250.00				\$ 250.00
Reedville	\$ 1,556.64		\$ 200.00		\$ 1,756.64
Richmond 21st	\$ 800.00				\$ 800.00
Roanoke First	\$ 1,083.38				\$ 1,083.38
Roanoke Staunton Ave					\$ -
Rural Retreat	\$ 859.33				\$ 859.33

“...I will keep watch to see what he will say to me... Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets...” Habakuk 2: 1b-2a.

Salem	\$ 25.00				\$ 25.00
Saltville Allison Gap	\$ 644.00				\$ 644.00
Saltville Broadford	\$ 150.00				\$ 150.00
Saltville Chatham Hill					\$ -
Saltville MtnView					\$ -
Spotsylvania	\$ 1,000.00				\$ 1,000.00
Staunton	\$ 1,269.80				\$ 1,269.80
Suffolk					\$ -
Wise	\$ 6,900.00				\$ 6,900.00
Wytheville	\$ 320.00				\$ 320.00
Investment Fund					\$ -
CD Interest	\$ 1,443.96				\$ 1,443.96
Credit Card Cashback	\$ 125.69				\$ 125.69
Individual Reimbursement					\$ -
Individual Giving	\$ 400.00				\$ 400.00
Camp Christi Rental					\$ -
Camp Bedford Rental					\$ -
Verizon Refund/Bedford					\$ -
Commonwealth of VA Refund					\$ -
Remediation Refund/Truist					\$ -
Total	\$ 30,908.43	\$1,474.31	\$650.00	\$270.21	\$ 33,302.95

Summary of COGVA Expenses			
August 1, 2025 – November 30, 2026			
		Aug-Oct	Nov-Jan
Categories	Budget	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr
		Expenses	Expenses
1000 State Office			
1100 Business Office	\$ 4,900.00	\$ 1,001.99	\$ 390.04
1200 Insurance	\$ 18,400.00	\$ 4,378.25	\$ 4,615.75
1300 Office Manager	\$ 17,942.80	\$ 4,485.72	\$ 1,495.24
1400 Income Taxes	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 465.53	\$ 147.86
Subtotal	\$ 44,842.80	\$ 10,331.49	\$ 6,648.89
1500 Chair	\$ 400.00	\$ -	\$ -
2000 State Minister			
Salary	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
Reimbursement Fund	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 469.44	\$ 25.05
Subtotal	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 4,969.44	\$ 3,055.80

“...I will keep watch to see what he will say to me... Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets...” Habakuk 2: 1b-2a.

3000 Executive Board/Standing Ministries			
3100 Executive Board	\$ 50.00		
3200 Ministry of Church Service/Credentials	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 501.90	
3300 Ministry of Christian Education	\$ 2,000.00		
3600 Ministry of Program	\$ 50.00		
3800 Ministerial Fellowship	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 500.00	
3900 Church Property Team	\$ 500.00		
Subtotal	\$ 5,950.00	\$ 1,001.90	\$ -
5000 Property and Maintenance			
5110 Camp Bedford			
5110 Caretaker	\$ 5,250.00	\$ 1,312.50	\$ 437.50
5120 Campground Expenses (Maintenance)	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 702.83	\$ -
Capital Improvements	\$ 1,000.00		
Camp Bedford Mkt/Advertising	\$ 250.00		
5140 Utilities	\$ 6,200.00	\$ 657.72	\$ 159.17
Subtotal	\$ 13,200.00	\$ 2,673.05	\$ 596.67
5200 Camp Christi			
5210 Caretaker	\$ 26,565.12	\$ 6,641.28	\$ 2,213.76
5220 Health Insurance	\$ 5,000.00		
5250 Utilities	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 6,821.05	\$ 1,717.63
5260 Maintenance	\$ 1,500.00		
5270 Capital Improvements	\$ 24,000.00		
5280 Vehicle Maintenance	\$ 250.00		
5300 Legal Fees	\$ 600.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 128.84
5400 Ministry Expenses	\$ 200.00		
Christmas Bonus	\$ 1,500.00		
Subtotal	\$ 73,115.12	\$ 13,487.33	\$ 4,060.23
Total Expenses	\$ 159,507.92	\$ 32,463.21	\$ 14,361.59
Total Income		\$ 21,250.77	\$ 9,657.66
Kingdom B. Transfer for State Minister Salary		\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
CD Interest		\$ -	\$ -
Transf from Kingdom Bldrs		\$ 11,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Christmas Bonus		\$ -	\$ -
Investment Fund		\$ -	\$ -
Difference		\$ 2,787.56	\$ (1,203.93)