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HARVEST OR NO HARVEST

The following is taken from the most recent issue of The Wesleyan Covenant Association Newsletter. It is particularly eye opening and challenging to all who seek to faithfully follow Jesus:

A reckoning is upon us.

Jim Davis and Michael Graham, in their recent book *The Great Dechurching* (Zondervan Reflective, 2023), have done the large-scale research and data collection to confirm what many have experienced at the local church level within the USA:

We are currently in the middle of the largest and fastest religious shift in the history of our country (p. xxii).

Forty million (yes, that is 40,000,000) adults in America today used to “go to church” but no longer do, which accounts for about 16% of the adult population. For the first time in eight decades that the Gallup

Organization has tracked religious membership, more adults in the US do not attend church than attend church. This is not a gradual decline...this has taken place in the past 25 years.

And before we point fingers at the “others” who have caused this rapid disengagement with religious communities, we should note that the research of Davis and Graham found no theological tradition, age group, ethnicity, political affiliation, education level, geographic location, or income bracket escaped the dechurching in America. Though some “groups” leave church faster than others, the researchers learned that every possible category of people is leaving.

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Thom Ranier, well-regarded church researcher, consultant, and strategist, indicated in a recent podcast that the research of his organization indicates something like 100,000 congregations in the US would close in the near future and another large number would slip into terminal decline. That will amount to more than one-third of all churches everywhere in the US.

Davis and Graham go on to sketch out the implications when religious communities collapse: relationally for the people involved, religiously for the mission of those congregations, and culturally since, they contend, religious congregations are the great mediating communities which have measurable impact on the common good. One study notes that religiously affiliated nonprofit organizations comprise 40 percent of the social safety net in America (Davis and Graham, p. 19). Dechurching will undoubtedly diminish resources that provide relief, care, aid, and community for the poor, disenfranchised, sick, hurting, and otherwise needful. Forty million American adults leaving their worshiping communities will, without doubt, result in a major loss to local communities and the larger culture.

Scripture tells us that as the time of the Lord's return nears there will be a great falling away from the faith. I am convinced we are in that time. However, I am also convinced that what Jesus taught in John 4 is equally true: "The fields are ripe for the harvest." (John 4:33) All that is lacking are workers to go out into the fields.

If we don't want to find ourselves counted in this group of congregations that face permanent decline or worse we must and can act. Each of us needs to learn how to share our faith with other people and introduce them to our Lord and Savior. In truth our greatest concern must be not primarily for the continuation of our church (This is secondary.) but for the salvation of individual people, people whom God loves deeply.

For this reason we will be launching an emphasis on **EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP** over the next couple of months. On Sunday, March 17, I, Pastor Paul, will be continuing in our sermon series *A Journey Through John* with a message entitled, "I Too, Am Working." (John 5:17) We'll look at what drove Jesus and what must drive us as His followers. We plan on having a **PRAYER WALK/DRIVE** following worship too and will encourage these to continue through the subsequent four weeks or so. Then in mid-April and May we will have two brief Saturday training events (TBA). The first (April 20th 9:30-11:30) will help us focus on relationship-building with those who do not yet know Jesus, and challenge people to discern who God has for them to personally build a relationship with.

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The second (May 18th 9:30 – 11:30) will focus on identifying a personal life issue where Jesus has made a difference in our life.

This is first step toward developing a personal Faith Story to share with those who need to encounter Jesus. Please, make plans to join us for this important training.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

PALM SUNDAY: We will have our regular services on **Palm Sunday, March 24th at 8:30 and 10:30** with Sunday School in between.

GOOD FRIDAY: On Good Friday we will have our **PRAYER & WORSHIP NIGHT at 7:00 pm**. Communion will be offered at this service.

EASTER SUNDAY: There will be a time of fellowship beginning at **9:30 am in Fellowship Hall**. The youth will be offering their Cinnamon Rolls to raise funds for the upcoming Summer Mission Trip to Georgia. In addition, we will serve Coffee, Tea, and Juice along with bagels and cream cheese and other treats. So come early and then join us for the celebration of our Lord's resurrection and triumph over death. For this we'll have a **Combined Service at 10:30 am**.

Praying that you have a blessed Holy Week and a glorious Easter,

Pastor Paul



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Pastor Paul McCullough

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Connect with us on
Facebook!

facebook.com/bellpoint

Church Office Hours:

Monday - Friday

8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Upcoming Events

March 20
Children's Council Meeting
7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

March 24
Palm Sunday

March 29
Good Friday Service -
Worship & Prayer Night
7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

March 31
Easter Sunday - Combined
Service
10:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning Worship Services

Traditional Service - 8:30 a.m.

Sunday School - 9:35 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Contemporary Service - 10:30 a.m.

K-4th graders, come join us in Bible Adventures during second service, 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Bellpoint Community Church Groups

(all groups meet at church unless otherwise stated)

- **Adult and Youth Sunday School:** Sunday Mornings, 9:35 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
- **Men's Bible Study:** Every other Monday, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Contact Pastor Paul for additional information.
- **Book Study Group:** Every other Thursday at 6:30 p.m.
- **Women's Bible Study:** Mondays, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- **Women's Bible Study:** Every other Sunday, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Contact Lori McCullough for additional information.
- **Teen Disciples** (6th - 12th grades): Sundays from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- **Emerging Adults** (high school seniors through early 30s): Second Friday of the month, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. at the Solli home. Contact Kelly Solli at 740-816-9383 for additional information.
- **Young Family:** Biweekly at the Kraick home. Contact Holly Kraick at 317-670-5725 for additional information.

March Birthdays

Mar 1	Amy Harding
Mar 3	Todd Miller
Mar 14	Alexander Kraick
Mar 15	Roberta Vangundy
Mar 18	John L. Davis Daren Lehman
Mar 19	Izzy Michael
Mar 21	Virginia Finley
Mar 22	Mya Ritchie Deborah Carpenter
Mar 24	Logan Kelleher
Mar 25	Carrie Stevens
Mar 26	Bob Himes
Mar 27	Brody Counts
Mar 28	Benjamin Chapa

Happy Anniversary

March 27

Matt & Cheri Maxim

Married 31 years

Children's Council

- ♦ **Bible Adventures** - Kiddos in K-4, after the opening worship music during second service we head down to our room. Anyone interested in helping in any capacity can see Susan Ritchie for more details. It is not your average Children's Church, it's an Adventure!
- ♦ **Nursery Volunteers** - Thanks to all who have stepped up to play with and minister to our littlest ones! If you are not yet on the list and would like to be, please see Susan to sign up.

Teen Disciples

6th - 12th grades - Meets Sundays at Church from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

March 3: Teen Disciples 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

March 10: Teen Disciples 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Mission Trip Meeting to follow, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

March 17: Teen Disciples 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

March 24: Teen Disciples 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

March 31: No Meeting - Spring Break, Easter

Friendship Table

Don't forget about our Friendship Table on the **second** and **fourth** Sundays each month! Enjoy some coffee, juice or milk, and a donut, etc. during Sunday School or before the worship services. Please keep all food and beverages in the Fellowship Hall or in your Sunday School room (if your teacher is okay with it). There will be a sign-up sheet available if you'd like to sign up to provide for the Friendship Table in the upcoming months. It is intended to be just a light snack, not a full breakfast, so anyone could do it!



BELLPOINT COMMUNITY CHURCH AND THE BUCKEYE VALLEY CHAPTER OF LIFEWISE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY INVITE YOU TO

THE REALITY *of Healing*

PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, & MENTORS WORKSHOP

MARCH 9, 2024 | 9:00AM - 12:00PM
BELLPOINT COMMUNITY CHURCH
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS SERVED

REGISTRATION
IS FREE!

TEEN WORKSHOP (7TH-12TH GRADERS)

MARCH 16, 2024 | 9:30AM - 1:30PM
BELLPOINT COMMUNITY CHURCH
LUNCH PROVIDED!



The Reality of Healing is...

A 2 part workshop exploring practical insights and tools to help you and your community increase your intentionality in helping each other becoming healthier in mind and soul. This program is clinically informed and biblically grounded. Each Session is 45 minutes long with a 15 minute break in between sessions and a 15 minutes Question and Answer time at the end (2 hours total). You can expect to participate in both small and large group discussions, as well as activities for individual reflection. We will be providing a notebook for you as well as tools to write with.

Below, is a summary of both sessions.



Session 1 - Getting Ready to Heal

Session 1 helps us take stock of where we are in our readiness to start restoring broken areas of our lives. Understanding where we are can help us understand what we may need to start moving toward readiness.



Session 2 - The 5 Fingers of Healing Actions

Session 2 explores how we can begin to truly begin to take hold of healing. These 5 principles are meant to help guide you to discover personal strategies, resources, and tools that work for you. The intention is to give you a framework that you can personalize to fit your unique healing journey.

RSVP TODAY

✉ kellysolli@realityofhealing.org

Deadline to register is March 4th



Prayer Requests

- * **Mary Anne & Duane** – health and recovery (Jaudzems)
- * **Jim** – having trouble moving one of his legs
- * **Lee Daugherty** – still in the hospital after having two strokes
- * **Gail Aumend** – his carotid artery is narrowing
- * **Michelle Shelly** – receiving treatment for thyroid cancer
- * **Buzz** – experiencing health issues and lost his job (Spellman)
- * **Trisha** – kidney issues
- * **Corinne** – she and her husband are experiencing health issues (Webb)
- * **Janet Artz** – ovarian cancer (Kidd)
- * **Avah's Aunt** – colon cancer
- * **Ron** – recurrence of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- * **Vicki** – battling lung cancer
- * **Lanie** – undergoing radiation



Prayer Chain

Are you looking for a way to serve Bellpoint Community Church and our community? Prayer is a powerful way to make an important difference in someone's life. The Prayer Chain is always looking for new members for this vital ministry, so please call the church office if you are interested.

If you hear of a concern or praise there are multiple ways to share the information with our Prayer Chain:

- ◆ Complete a paper prayer request located on the back of each chair and drop in an offering bag or one of the clear boxes in the entrances to the fellowship hall and sanctuary.
- ◆ Contact Brooke Williams, the church office manager, by phone at 740-369-5956 or by email at office@bellpointchurch.com.
- ◆ Post to the online prayer wall at bellpointchurch.com/prayer-wall.

2023 Donation Statements

Donation statements for last year are now available. Just let the church office know if you'd like one.

The Peal

If you do not have access to the internet or email, or simply prefer to have a hard copy mailed to you each month, please contact Brooke Williams, the church office manager at 740-369-5956 or by email at office@bellpointchurch.com.

Just a Reminder...

Please email all articles, pictures, and content for the April Peal to Rachel Kapraly at peal@bellpointchurch.com by Friday, March 22nd.

Thank you in advance for your assistance!