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Pruning can be dangerous when it is done by an amateur like me. One website warned, "In most cases, it is better not to prune than to do it incorrectly." Another advised that you not prune while "angry." I'm sure that many an angry gardener has taken out his frustration through overzealous pruning! But God is not an amateur. He is the wisest and most experienced of gardeners. He isn't too timid to prune a fruitful branch, because He wants the vine to flourish. The next time you realize that God is pruning something in your life, expect that He has beautiful and glorious things He wants to produce in you, if you wait and allow Him to bring forth His fruit in its season.

Pastor Mullinax

NURSERY SCHEDULE

July 27

- 9:30** *Infants:* S & T Helton
Creepers/Toddlers: A Creamer & S Spalding
Toddlers: D & T Holland
- SS** *Infants:* S Choi, M Johnson
Creepers: K Lambeth, P Plucker
Toddlers: H Harris, P Johnson
- 6 PM** *No Evening Service:* Shepherding

August 3

- 9:30** *Infants:* L Swan & J Trask
Creepers/Toddlers: M & M Krieg
Toddlers: L & P Spotts, D Trask
- SS** *Infants:* S Nicely, P May
Creepers: R & B Roop
Toddlers: J Mauroner, L Hobbs
- 6 PM** *Combined:* T & P Brown

Please note: If you are unable to find a replacement for your nursery duty, call Peg May at 423-894-1538.

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8451 East Brainerd Road Chattanooga, TN 37421 (423) 899-5377
www.covenantchattanooga.org

Dr. J Render Caines, Senior Pastor
Rev. Eric Mullinax, Associate Pastor
Jeremy Gaines, Director of Music Ministries
Mark Wilson, Dir. of Christian Education & Administration

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



THE NEWSLETTER

Vol. 21, No. 29

Covenant
Presbyterian Church

July 23, 2008

From the Associate Pastor...

I planted some "Knock-Out" rose bushes this spring near the front corner of my house. I needed some cover for an area that I thought was rather bare. Len Williams suggested this type of hearty and fast-growing rose bush. He also gave me some counsel about caring for them. He advised me that if I wanted the plants to bloom to their full potential, I should regularly prune them rather than let them simply follow their natural course.

Now, I am a willing but inexperienced (ignorant . . . might be more accurate) gardener. So, I was glad that he prompted me to think about pruning the bush, because pruning seems counter-intuitive to me. I wanted the bushes to spread and grow; cutting them back seemed like it would work against this purpose. But experienced gardeners know that pruning most bushes or shrubs will in the long run enhance their beauty and productivity.

Jesus used pruning as a metaphor for the way God interacts with us: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful" (John 15:1-2). In this statement, Jesus makes it clear that there is more than one reason to prune; God cuts off branches that don't bear fruit, but He also prunes branches that do.

Cutting off what is dead makes a lot of sense. But you have to understand a bit more about plants and the way they grow to understand why cutting off what is fruitful makes sense, too. As I understand it, once a blossom has died, a plant will continue to send nourishment to it; if you prune back the branch, the plant can store up its energies to produce more new blooms. So, in that sense, pruning is the "kindest cut" because it is cutting back in order to have more. Pruning literally rejuvenates by allowing the vine to produce new growth rather than spending its nourishment on gangling branches that are no longer fruitful.

Sometimes it can be really confusing when God ends something that has been truly fruitful. Such a conclusion can make one second-guess the good work that has been accomplished or doubt God's faithfulness. If a work is bearing fruit, why would He allow it to end?

The best answer seems to be that God is the one who "changes times and seasons" (Daniel 2:21). He doesn't let good things go on forever just because they are good things. He prunes our lives, our vocations, our ministries, and our relationships so that they can become even more fruitful in a new season.

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FAMILY & YOUTH MINISTRY

The youth will not meet this Sunday because shepherding groups are meeting.



SUNDAY SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Two helpers are needed in the 2-year-old class beginning in September. A husband/wife team would be ideal, but the most important thing is a willing heart. Contact Mark Wilson if you would like to help.

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

Please contact Patsy Pressley (423.476.6265) as soon as possible if you do not have a scheduled appointment to have your picture made for our new directory. Sitting dates are August 7-9.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

CONTACT of Chattanooga is a faith-based crisis call center with offices located on Vance Road across from AAA Women's Ministry. They need volunteers to work at least 2 shifts each month. CONTACT is offering on-site training for anyone interested in being a volunteer "counselor." For more information, call 423.899.5719.

SHEPHERDING GROUPS

The shepherding groups meet this Sunday, July 27. Your elder will contact you with the details.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The session will meet with anyone desiring membership on Sunday afternoon, August 17. Call the church office (899-5377) to schedule a time.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Ladies, be sure to mark your calendars now for the Women's Ministry Fall Retreat scheduled for September 19-20. Brochures are available in the lobby.

MUSIC MINISTRY Sunday Worship

This Sunday, July 27, we will focus through worship on our *OMNISCIENT* God. Two of the hymns we will sing are "For The Beauty of the Earth" and "Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim."

Choir Practice Resumes

The Sanctuary Choir will begin again **Sunday, August 3**. We will meet at **9 AM** and will perform a familiar anthem. Practice begins on **Wednesday, August 6**, at **7 PM**. This is a great time to join the choir, so if you are interested contact Jeremy or just come on!

Handbell Ensemble

Handbell ensemble rehearsal will begin **Sunday, August 10**, at **4:30 PM**. There are still a couple of slots open, so if interested, please contact Jeremy.

Children's Choirs

Both ages of children's choirs will begin meeting on **Sunday, August 17**, at **6 PM**. These choirs are open to any child from 3ish to entering the 5th grade. There is a need for a couple of adult helpers with children's choirs this year. If you are interested in assisting, please let Jeremy know.

HANDBELL DONATIONS

We have received some donations to cover the cost of refurbishing our handbells but we are still about \$1600 short of what is needed. If you would like to contribute, make your check payable to CPC and indicate on the memo line that it is to go to "handbells."

For Your Information...

NEW MEMBERS

Listed below are the names of those who joined CPC this month. Add their names and addresses to your membership directory. Check out their snapshots on the New Member Bulletin Board outside the Visitors Classroom. Help make these new folks feel welcome at CPC when you see them!

Randy & Yvonne Cornell
5005 Browntown Road
Chattanooga, TN 37415
423.595.2748

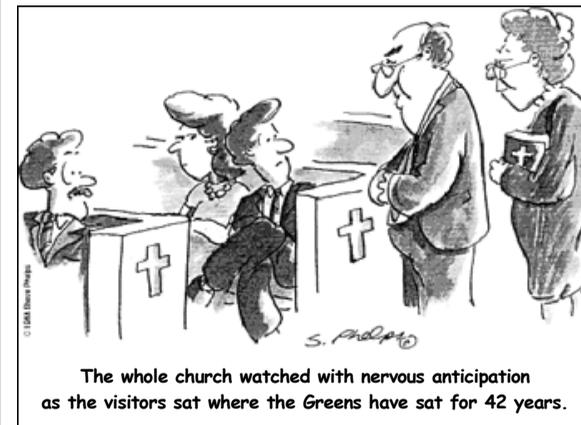
yvonnec@aol.com

Randy & Yvonne are a retired couple coming to CPC from Woodland Park Baptist. Yvonne's sister, Beverly Middleton, is a new member to CPC.

Don & Tommye Manning
9749 Stone Mist Lane
Chattanooga, TN 37421
423.894.0161

tommyemanning@comcast.net

Don & Tommye are a retired couple who live in the East Brainerd area. They are coming from First Baptist Church.



HELPFUL MATERIALS

Pastor Mullinax and Pastor Caines have created a wonderful tool to help parents teach their children to worship. This booklet is called *Teaching Your Children to Worship*, and it is available on our website. The address is <http://www.covenantchattanooga.org/Files/TeachingYourChildrenToWorship3.aspx> and in the narthex. Also there are children's bulletins available in the narthex each Sunday morning that your child may use during the service.



LOOKING AHEAD AT CPC

July 27	Shepherding
Aug. 3	Lord's Supper
Aug. 7-9	Sitting Dates for Pictorial Directory
Aug. 9	Ironman's Breakfast
Aug. 10	Deacons Meeting
Aug. 12	Session 7:15 PM
Aug. 27	Wed. Suppers resume
Aug. 31	Shepherding
Sept. 1	Office Closed-Labor Day
Sept. 14	Joint Service at Trinity Pres. Cleveland
Sept. 19-20	WM Fall Retreat
Oct. 5	Church Picnic No evening service
Oct. 19	Shepherding
Oct. 26	Joint TVP Service at CPC
Oct 29	Haiti Mission Trip
Nov. 14-16	Missions Conference
Nov. 26	Thanksgiving Service
Nov. 27-28	Office Closed
Dec. 12	WM Christmas Dinner
Dec. 14	Children's Choirs Christmas Program
Dec. 21	Adult Choir Christmas Program
Dec. 24	Lessons & Carols Service