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try to go where our people are? Since you are already there online (for hours every day), and since so much conversation, evangelism, apologetics, and even discipleship, happens in those mediums, we want to offer a voice you can trust and share. We have no grand ambitions in this venture outside of serving our members and community in their daily lives, but we do pray that these videos will be used by the Lord in meaningful ways. Our working mission statement for this ministry is *to extend the teaching ministry of our church into the everyday lives of our members and friends.*

What will this look like? You will start to see videos posted on our church social media accounts in different formats (from 30 seconds to 30 minutes). The content of these videos will include answers to common questions about Christianity, the Reformed faith, and our church, as well as longer discussions on topics we hope are relevant to your daily life. These will not be video clips from sermons or lessons, but rather original material prepared for this format. And unlike our weekly church podcast, *Watering Seeds*, which is targeted specifically for our members who have previously listened to the morning sermon, these videos are designed for both our members and your friends.

And it is that last part where we need your help. We request that you follow our church social media accounts on whatever social media platforms you already use (please do not get a new account for this, enough is enough!) We plan to post on Instagram, YouTube, and our Facebook page. In addition to following, we ask that you like and share the videos. This does two things. First, it helps us gauge engagement on the various platforms and learn which topics and videos are most helpful to you. Second, it helps us extend these resources to those who might be exploring Christianity, wrestling with hard questions, or looking for a church home. Social media algorithms can get complicated, but the principle is simple: the more engagement a post receives, the wider its reach will extend. We make no money from this and have nothing to gain from “likes” and “shares” except to help you grow in your faith and serve as a resource for you to help others as well.

Our church’s mission is to gather and grow disciples in Asheville and around the world, so join us in praying for God to do that among us in 2026, and to use these two ministries to that end if he so pleases.

The Sacred Desk

By Rev. Sean McCann



During a membership interview this past year, one of our new members mentioned appreciating our church because – unlike their previous church that only preached topical sermons – we preach exegetical sermons. And while that comment warmed my preacher-heart, it also caused a drop in my stomach because I knew we were soon going to take a break from Romans for not one, but two, brief topical series! (In addition to our December series, *Precious Promises*, I have also outlined a three-sermon series to start the new year, *For the Church*, in which we will explore how Jesus leads his church through church officers.) I assure you, we will get back to Romans soon, but it is looking like that will not be until February. As our long-time members can attest, these topical series are an exception to the norm, as for almost ten years now, I have been preaching expository sermons through books of the Bible (21 books and counting!)

With these distinctions in mind, I thought it might be helpful to share my philosophy of preaching when it comes to these categories. When I am preparing an expository sermon, I aim to shelve my preconceived ideas on what the given text might say or mean so that I might approach it as “freshly” as possible. My goal is to exegete the text to the extent that I truly understand it and then seek to apply its main point(s) to my own heart. Then I write a sermon that presents some of that exegesis (with the help of illustrations) and presses home the points of application. Essentially, I am trying to expose (“expository”) and apply the passage.

A topical sermon – at least how I understand it – requires a different process. When I am preparing a topical series, I plan certain texts that I already know will emphasize and highlight the topic at hand. Then, when I sit down to prepare the individual sermons, I approach each text with a preconceived notion of what it says (informed by exegetical, theological, and historical interpretation) and tease out the points from that text that support the topic.

In my preaching philosophy, both types of sermons have their place, but the main diet of the preaching ministry is the expository sermon. Expository preaching keeps me focused on the main points of God’s word, not the main points that I want to get across. It ensures that I will stay on track and “not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Certain topics are worthy of consideration and emphasis, and I will continue to carve out space for them in the preaching calendar, but nine times out of ten when you worship with us you will sit under an expository sermon.

| Preaching Schedule | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Date | Morning | Evening |
| Jan 4 | Ephesians 4:7-12 | |
| Jan 11 | 1 Timothy 3:1-7 | 1 Kings 20:1-25 |
| Jan 18 | 2 Timothy 1:3-7 | 1 Kings 20:26-43 |
| Jan 25 | Guest Preacher | 1 Kings 21:1-29 |
| Feb 1 | Romans 4:1-12 | |
| Feb 8 | Romans 4:13-25 | 1 Kings 22:1-40 |
| Feb 15 | Romans 5:1-5 | 1 Kings 22:41-53 |
| Feb 22 | Romans 5:6-11 | TBD |

Bible Reading

By Rev. Jim Curtis

As a new year begins, so also a crop of new resolutions is sown in earnest. This special time of year invigorates us with renewed enthusiasm for new discipline. You will be unsurprised, of course, that I want to utilize that new energy to recommend something old to you. Perhaps you have already faithfully engaged in this practice each year; perhaps you have done so in the past but have more recently neglected it due to the demands of your busy lives; or perhaps you simply have never tried! Wherever you find yourself in this new year, let me urge upon you the blessing of an annual Bible reading plan for two simple reasons.

First, reading the Bible daily gives you opportunity to behold your savior each day. This meets the need you have for endurance. How can you endure another year of temptation, of the burdens of your job, your family, your hopes, and your dreams for a better life? Only by *laying aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith* (Heb 12:1–2). How can you keep running the race, if not for Jesus washing your feet (Jn 13:1–20). And how does he wash you? By the Word (Eph 5:25–26).

Second, reading the Bible daily gives you opportunity to behold your savior in his *fullness*. Some may think in order to get the great blessings of the Scriptures, we must study them intensely, squeezing them like a sponge until every drop of blessing has been extracted. There is much to say of Bible study, of course, but it is no substitute for daily Bible reading. In the first place, the Word is living and active; can we reasonably expect to extract every drop from any passage, much less all passages, in our lifetime? I suspect not. But secondly, prioritizing intense study over daily reading necessarily limits our exposure to the whole. We miss the forest for the trees. Far better to have the whole, and repeatedly!

Now, let me preemptively strike against any notion of not having time to read your Bible each day with some statistics. According to the publishers of the ESV, Crossway, we all have more time than we think to read the Bible (in fact, if you search “You Have More Time for Bible Reading than You Think,” Crossway’s excellent article will show up—read it!). They have estimated the amount of time it takes to read each book of the Bible, and the results routinely surprise Christians.

Take as our first example the book of Psalms. That the second longest book of the Bible (yes, *second* longest!) takes the most amount of time to read is likely not surprising to you. But how long do you think it would take if you sat down and read it in one sitting? Crossway estimates just under five hours (4:51, to be exact). Granted, that’s a long time! But consider, you could finish the book of Psalms in the same amount of time as five hour-long TV shows. How fast do you think you could do that?

Broaden this out to the entire Old Testament and we get 56 hours and 44 minutes. That appears daunting at first, but then you realize an hour a day in the Old Testament has you finished on February 26. But the aim is not to finish it

as fast as possible; what about the whole year? Well, 8,760 hours in a year...

It only takes 9 minutes of your day to finish the Old Testament in a year.

But wait, what about the New Testament? Well, this is where things become downright shocking. The shortest book, 3 John, is tied with 2 John at two minutes. In fact, of the 27 New Testament books, only the Gospels and Revelation take longer than an hour, and 19 of the 27 books take 20 minutes or less of your time. This means you could realistically finish the New Testament in 17 hours and 44 minutes. So do the math again: 8,760 hours in a year...

It only takes 3 minutes of your day to finish the New Testament in a year.

Christian, if you give a meager 12 minutes a day over to reading your Bible, you will finish it in a year.

Let me offer one more thought before concluding; is this discipline counteractive to sincere faith? Do annual reading plans turn genuine zeal for God into passionless formalism? In a word, is all this just *legalism*? I deny all of these propositions. While sinful humans certainly have the capacity to turn any good thing into a rote, legalistic practice, there is only one antidote for such formalism: *Jesus Christ*. The Scriptures are a means unto salvation, and the Word of God is the only rule given to us to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God (WSC 2). I urge us all to consider this discipline, then, to counteract legalism! Some days will feel rote, yes; especially when you do “catch up” on Sunday afternoons. But this is why it is a *discipline*: you do it when you do not want to, trusting it will shape you regardless of your present desire.

In conclusion, permit me some ambition; let me assume I have convinced you to give this practice of annual Bible reading a sincere effort. Where do you start?

1. Pick a reading plan. Here’s a few I recommend:
 - M’Cheyne’s Reading Plan – My personal favorite! This plan takes you through the Old Testament once and the New Testament and Psalms twice in a year.
 - Crossway’s *Daily Plan* – This plan splits the major genres of the Bible: Wisdom books, History, Gospels, etc.
 - The Chronological Plan – This plan is unique in that it organizes the year’s readings in order of earliest to latest. This plan is a great choice for those looking for a new plan to shake things up.
2. Pick a podcast app – Yes, *podcasts!* Of course, you are already subscribed to *Watering Seeds*, so this should be easy. Crossway has made both the Daily and M’Cheyne plans available as *free* podcasts. Each day, that day’s reading is released in audio format.
3. Pick a partner – Bible reading plans take relationships deeper when you use them with others. And if no one will join you, then join me on M’Cheyne’s plan!

THE SALTSHAKER

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New Year Ministry Focus

By Rev. Sean McCann

As we begin a new year, I want to highlight two church ministries that arise out of our mission *to gather and grow disciples in Asheville and around the world*. These ministries are not new but will receive a renewed focus this year. First “around the world,” then “in Asheville.”

Global Missions

We have always been a mission-focused church, and we hope to renew and build upon that focus in 2026. For most of the last decade, we have consistently supported the same 5-7 missionaries, but that will be changing this year. We have had a few of our missionaries come off the field lately, particularly Scott Brinkerhoff retiring from his work in South Sudan, and Mary marrying and leaving her work, though remaining in Southeast Asia. Our elders have been insistent that we keep supporting mission efforts, so we are working to evaluate and add new missionaries to our support budget, and we look forward to introducing them to you in the new year.

We have taken this moment to renew our focus on the vital work of church planting in our mission support. We aim to support the start of new churches by focusing our giving on church-planting pastors and their families. A prime example of this focus has been our support of Jake and Melissa Hunt and their church plant in Prague, the Czech Republic: Do Slova. Jake and Melissa moved to Prague in 2010 to serve on the pastoral staff of one church plant, Faith Community, then left in 2017 to start Do Slova. We regularly pray for the Hunts and have appreciated sitting under Jake’s preaching ministry several times when he has visited us. We hope to replicate this type of relationship with additional planters, their families, and churches.

I am often asked why we focus on church planting when there are so many other valuable types of works around the globe. One reason is that we have limited resources, and we have to have some sort of rubric to decide whom to support. We do not exclusively support church planters, but have decided they are a worthy priority. Second, church planting seems to be the focus of the expansion work in the New Testament. Paul starts churches wherever he goes, then he visits them to

strengthen them, and when he cannot go himself, he sends a partner (like Titus) to check on them that he might “put what remained into order” (Titus 1:5). Third, churches are best suited to plant more churches, and eventually Presbyteries. Organisms reproduce, and if churches do not reproduce churches, then who will? And finally, when a church (or Presbytery) is started in a certain area, they can band together to start other worthy initiatives like clinics, schools, seminaries, etc. Churches function like beachheads in a new land from which all sorts of new ministries can start and grow. So, while we are not focused exclusively on church planting, it is our priority during this season.

In addition to funding new missionaries, we hope to support them by highlighting their ministry, praying for them regularly, and even visiting them. I have long wanted to travel to our mission sites to encourage our missionaries and see the work firsthand, and the session has set aside some funds for that purpose. We have also dreamed of what a mission trip for our members might look like, and ask you to join us in praying for that end. As far as highlighting our missionaries, we will soon start publishing a “Missionary of the Month” for focused prayers, and we will continue to invite our missionaries to come visit us so that you can get to know them. If you have additional ideas or desires for world missions, please let us know - maybe the Lord is calling you to be the next missionary sent out from CRPC!

Video Ministry

The second initiative that I am excited to announce is a video ministry. We have partnered with Matt McQuade (he was here in May filming the video for Reformed Theological Seminary) to produce video content from our church to provide resources for your daily walk.

Social media is a mixed bag. We are all on it all the time, but we also recognize the need to not be on it so much! The decision for us came down to this: should we avoid social media and pine for the old days when pastors wrote columns in the local paper and hosted radio programs on the AM dial, or bite the bullet and

January – February

Upcoming Events

For additional information about any of these events, please refer to our website (covenantreformed.net), or contact the church office at 828-253-6578; office@covenantreformed.net.

The Lord’s Supper

Please prepare your hearts in advance to take of the sacrament together.

Morning Worship:
January 4, 18; February 1, 15

Fellowship Meal:

February 1

Women’s New Year’s Gathering

January 5

Men’s Second Breakfast

January 10

Weekly Events

Sunday:
Sunday School 9:30 am
Morning Worship 10:45 am
Evening Worship 6:00 pm Except on 1st Sunday

Wednesday Nights 6:00 pm
(resumes 1/7)

Bible Study

For Men:
ROMEOS 7:30 am Every Thursday
(Retired Old Men Eating Out)
at Cornerstone Restaurant
Norm Bomer’s Home 7:00 pm 1st & 3rd Thursdays

For Women:
Gail Albee’s Home 9:30 am Every Tuesday
Mark Bible Study at Church 10:00 am Every Tuesday
(resumes 1/27) 6:30 pm Every Tuesday

Watering Seeds Podcast

Be sure to check out our church’s weekly podcast, *Watering Seeds*. Each week our pastors review, discuss, and apply the previous Sunday’s sermon. You can find the podcast on any major podcast platform, such as Anchor, Spotify, or Apple Podcast, by searching for our church name or the title, “Watering Seeds,” or by scanning the following QR code:

