



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.” 16 When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the Lord was merciful to them. don’t stop anywhere in the plane! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!” Gen.19:15-17 (NIV)

Sometimes things that we are familiar with will keep us from pursuing things that are in our future. If you are not growing, it may be because you are satisfied with what you have. I am content with my natural possessions, but I’m not satisfied with my pursuit of God. I want more! Our desire should be to have more of God in every area of our lives. We should thank God for where we are and where He has brought us from, but we should want to go to deeper in the presence of God. As for me and my house, going back to what was is not an option!

God will give you partial insights into something that are coming. This is totally up to God how He prepares us for shifts that may occur in our lives. When God gets ready to make another shift in our lives, there is always a shaking. What we think comes to consume us is only to make us move forward. You can’t stay where you are if you expect God to take you higher. The angels of the Lord warned Lot that something was going to happen, and they could not stay where they were. They had to move and go higher!

As for Annie and myself, it is my belief that God will raise someone up to help our church to move forward. The move toward my retirement was not made with haste, but with much prayer. In these last months of my ministry among you, I hope not only to help this church move forward, but also for my family.

Whenever we move into uncharted ground filled with uncertainty, it is normal to stay the same. As I was reflecting on the account of Lot, there is for all of us a time in life that we must move forward without looking back.

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As I make an account of the ministries that God placed me in each one holds a special place within my heart. I have over the years have grown to appreciate the presence of the Lord within them all. In my 36 years of ministry, I have learned so much in following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. For the church I know that this transition for the church is difficult, it is the same for Annie and I. It is my belief that how we approach the future will determine its outcome.

I heard a pastor once say, "God will allow you to get to different places so He can give you revelation." God is positioning you for your next level up. As you and I go through each season, it should reveal something about us, and it should reveal a deeper revelation about God.

There is another level coming. God will bring us out of one level to take you to the next. When you are not making progress means that God is trying to get your attention so you can make the right move.

Lot hesitated because of what he was familiar with. I believe there was a small part of Lot that wanted to move forward and do the right thing. But there was something about Sodom. There are some areas in our lives that are familiar.

To move forward, we must acknowledge God in everything we do without hesitation. Moving forward requires one to remember what happened. Moving forward will require you to move when God says move. Moving forward will carry you into your destiny.

When you and I place our trust in the Lord, He will give you what you need. When you are obedient to the Lord, He will also give you desires of your heart. I am determined to not go back to what was, but I am determined to follow Jesus until the end. What the future holds no one knows, but we can be confident that God knows, and he will take us to where He wants us to be.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Don



### **Warm up with Soup & Salad !**

On Sunday, March 3 from 12:30-2:30 PM, there will be a Soup & Salad Bar at the Fellowship Hall. Delicious soups, all kinds of salads and sweet desserts will be offered.

The cost will be \$10 for Adults, \$5 for kids 4-12, and Free for kids 3 and under.

## Who Is St. Valentine?

It is believed that St. Valentine served as a priest in third century Rome.\* At that time, Emperor Claudius II had a standing decree that young single men were not to marry. The Emperor thought that marriage and children were a distraction to men of fighting age who were needed to serve as soldiers (with their full allegiance given to Rome).

It was perhaps similar thinking that led Claudius to persecute Christians. The Emperor (rightly) believed that Christians devoted their strongest allegiance to something and someone other than Rome.

St. Valentine, believing that Claudius was interfering with matters of the Church and of God, is said to have married young lovers in secret. Tradition holds that he also assisted many Christian martyrs, helping some to escape the harsh Roman prisons.



For one or both of these reasons, Valentine himself was imprisoned. Yet, difficult conditions did not hinder his very evident commitment to the Lord. He preached his faith to his prison guard Asterius, who was converted and baptized along with his whole family. And, it is said that St. Valentine restored sight to the blind, adopted daughter of Asterius, with whom he fell in love (remember, priests were allowed to marry before the fourth century).

When word of these events reached Claudius, he ordered that if Valentine would not immediately deny his faith, he should be beaten and afterwards beheaded. Far from being intimidated by Claudius' command, Valentine apparently tried to convert the emperor — an action which secured his fate.

Just before his death on February 14, around 270 A.D., Valentine is said to have penned a tender farewell letter to the daughter of Asterius, who had visited him regularly during his confinement. He signed the letter, "From Your Valentine."

## How Did St. Valentine's Day Begin?

In 496 A.D., Pope Gelasius officially set aside February 14 to honor St. Valentine. It is believed that Christians came to associate Valentine's Day with romantic love because they were trying to take the place of a popular pagan Roman festival called Lupercalia, celebrated on February 15.

For the Lupercalia celebration, Roman boys would choose a partner by drawing the name of a girl from a box or urn; the couple would then exchange gifts. The partnership would sometimes last until the next Lupercalia celebration, or it may even result in marriage.

Christian leaders tried to replace this custom by encouraging believers to draw saints' names from a box. The saint would then be your patron saint for the year. But this tradition never quite caught on. Rather, Christians chose to celebrate the virtue of love, particularly romantic love, on St. Valentine's Day. By all accounts, St. Valentine's life modeled this virtue (in the pure and selfless way described in [1 Corinthians 13: 4-8](#) of the Bible). It seems fitting that the day set aside to remember him would be a day to celebrate love!

***Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.***





# CBC Comes To Operation Christmas Child

Over 130 Covenant Brethren Youth and adults made the trip to three locations in early December to help process shoe boxes with Operation Christmas Child this year. The largest group came out of the Southern Region under the direction of Scott Kinnick, where they processed boxes at both the Boone and Charlotte locations. There is a group of them shown here that made the trip. They enjoyed a blessing of fellowshiping together and the enjoyment of seeing God's working through the lives of so many people to touch the lives of so many children. Everyone in all the groups had the blessing of praying over the boxes and asking God to use them to bring people to Jesus.

**Pastor Leslie and the  
Center Hill team are pictured  
on the far left.**



There was also a group that traveled to the Baltimore location and saw all that God was doing there in that enormous facility. 70,000 boxes or more were processed there every day and the youth of the CBC had the privilege of being a part of that. The picture below is not the full group, but most of them.



This has been one of the most successful things we have done as a denomination, partnering with Samaritan's Purse and Operation Christmas Child. As part of the trips, two of the groups took \$1,000 each from CBC to give to help support "The Greatest Journey" part of the OCC ministry.

If you have never been a part of one of these trips, you should plan for it next year. We will aim at the second weekend of December we think. More information will come out at the time. But surely you will smile and will be blessed by having a part in changing lives!



**Ingredients:**

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/3 cup shortening
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 6 tablespoons margarine, melted.

**Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease 12 muffin cups or line cups with paper muffin liners.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, and nutmeg. In a separate bowl, cream together 1/2 cup sugar and shortening. Beat in egg. Stir flour mixture into shortening mixture alternately with milk. Beat well. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups.
3. Bake in preheated oven for 20 to 25 minutes. While muffins are baking, combine 1/2 cup sugar and 1 teaspoon cinnamon.
4. Remove muffins from oven and muffin pan. Immediately, dip the tops of the muffins into the melted margarine, then into the sugar cinnamon mixture. Repeat with each muffin, until all muffin tops are covered. Serve warm.



This letter is coming to you from the Stewardship Committee of the Covenant Brethren Church (CBC). The purpose of this letter is to keep you well informed of the financial activity and resulting financial situation of our young and growing church. As of the last report we have a total of 122 congregations and over 9,000 members. Praise God for our steadily growing denomination.

Here are some financial figures from 2023 and a comparison from 2022:

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| • Giving to the General Fund was \$154,481.14.   | Compared to 2022 the giving was \$156,474.64 |
| • 10% tithed to the Mission Fund \$15,448.11     | Compared to 2022 the tithe was \$15,647.46   |
| • Designated giving to Mission Fund \$119,018.15 | Compared to 2022 the giving was \$89,705.52  |
| • Total of all giving in 2023 was \$273,409.29   | Compared to 2022 the total was \$246,180.16  |

A few of the major expenses in 2023 included part time salaries, office supplies and tech support-\$36,243.91, Regional start up grants-\$43,761.79, Office rent-\$13,596.00 and all leadership travel expenses including the Executive Committee--\$24,091.26. Some of the outreach projects included various ministries of Samaritan's Purse, African pastor's support, Congo School Fund, Congo Church Fund, Rwanda School Fund and Disaster Projects.

Wow! For all this generosity we need to say a big, big THANK YOU!! We believe this is an indication that you all are being blessed with what it means to be a part of CBC. Happy people tend to be generous. And grouchy people tend to be stingy with their money.

To God be the Glory.

The Stewardship Committee—Graver Duling, Jerry Funkhouser, Jim Myer, Fred Shank



## **BREAKFAST IS READY !!**

The All U Can Eat Breakfast will be **Saturday, February 17, 7-11 AM.** Our breakfasts are sponsored by Men's Fellowship. Prices are: Adults is \$12, Kids- 5-12 is \$6 and kids 4 and under is free. Please come out and join us for our breakfast. You will not be disappointed!

We invite you to join us for the Lenten season for our special services starting Sunday, February 18 at 7 PM with Ron Shafer. There will be a pie social following this service at our Fellowship Hall. The other services will be held Feb. 25, Mar. 3, 10 and 17th. The speakers for these services are to be determined along with what church will be hosting.



## **YOUTH FUNDRAISER**

**SUNDAY, February 25** from 2-7 PM the Youth will hold a fundraiser at the Valley Dairy. A portion of your total check will be donated to our Youth group. Don't forget to take your flyer that was in your bulletin so that our youth can receive 20% of your total check. Thank you for supporting the youth in this way.



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