

There are many opportunities for service here at West Side. One of the newest is the Grief Response Team (GRT). After reading the article below, please consider your own personal talents and sign up on the lists in the foyer to take an active part in this work-

thy effort. If you have talents that are currently not being used, let one of us know so we can find a place to put them to good use. — The Elders

Here Is What You Can Do

Congregations grow (spiritually and numerically) because of a working membership. Do not misunderstand! Although God gives the increase, there must be the planting and watering (I Corinthians 3:6). When the membership works together with God, great things will happen (I Corinthians 3:9).

The body of Christ is made up of different members with different functions or abilities (I Corinthians 12). Each of us should locate the areas of service where we can be useful and then begin to serve.

If you have wondered, "What can I do?" consider the following:

- When it is announced that someone is sick, send them a card and, if possible, visit them in the hospital or at home.

- When it is announced that someone has lost a relative, send them a card expressing your sympathy, and let them know that they are in your prayers.

- When we have a visitor to our services, make a point to meet them and introduce yourself to them. Show them to classes. Ask them if they would like to sit with you, and invite them to return.

- Get a list of our visitors and send them a card expressing your appreciation for their visit.

- When someone is baptized, visit them and encourage them.

- Offer to help with teenager activities or with some other activity of the church.

- Invite a non-Christian relative or friend to services.

continued

"Let's Keep 'Christ' in Christmas"

**(unless
it happens to be on Sunday)**

There is, of course, no authority for the religious observance of any special days (Christmas, Easter, etc.). The New Testament is void of any such days of special prominence. The one day of significance is Sunday, the first day of the week. It was on that day that Jesus was raised from the dead (Mark 16:9), that the Lord's church began (Acts 2—Pentecost always occurred 50 days after Passover, which always occurred on Saturday, the Sabbath), that the early church ate the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7) and gave of their means (I Corinthians 16:1, 2).

As have I, I'm sure you have heard of the numerous religious groups (claiming to be "Christian") who have either canceled or in some other fashion altered their services today, just because it happens to fall on Christmas day. These are the same people who constantly clamor this time of year that we should "keep Christ in Christmas". They are some of the same ones who have protested the loudest when the ACLU or some other such group wants to have "manger scenes" and all other such representations of the birth of Christ removed from public display. Yet, because it might inconvenience them or interfere with "family time," they cancel their worship services on one of their most sacred days. I'm sure I'm not the only one to whom this appears as hypocritical.

On the other hand, we can find those of our number who would oppose the observance of this day in some special, religious fashion, yet who are themselves absent from Bible study and/or worship this morning (and likely again this evening) just because it's Christmas day. (Perhaps you are reading this at a later date and find yourself in this number.) I'm sure there are also congregations claiming to be the Lord's body who have (just like many of their denominational neighbors) altered or canceled their services to make it more convenient for families to get together today. Are these actions not just as hypocritical? Where

."Let's Keep Christ..." (continued)

than gathered with God's people to worship God on the very day (Sunday) God has set aside for such? How much better we would be if we would keep Christ in every day of our lives. Eddy

Here's What You Can Do (continued)

- When a brother or sister is absent from the assembly, call them and find out why. Let them know you missed them, and offer to help.

- Send a note to a delinquent member of the church expressing your love and concern. Or, better yet, call them or visit them and encourage them.

- Speak words of encouragement to the elders, and let them know you appreciate them and the work they do.

- "Exhort (encourage) *one another*" (Hebrews 3:13)
Jimmy Ferguson
via Bellview c/C "Beacon"

Ten Guidelines for New Year Resolutions

In your relationship to...

GOD: Be prayerful. Remember, dependence and helplessness in your relationship with God are prerequisites for spiritual health. How about a thorough spiritual check-up this year (II Corinthians 13:5)?

OTHERS: Be helpful. Make a commitment to show love and encouragement to someone every day (Romans 14:19-22). Challenge yourself to be kind and helpful especially to those who least expect it (Ephesians 4:32).

YOUR MIND: Read and think about something noble and creative every day (Philippians 4:8). Start the day with the Bible. Let the words of life fill your heart and mind before anything else gets to them!

FEELINGS: Express them with love and honesty. Whether fear, guilt, grief, rage, shame or anxiety, express your feelings to God, self and a trusted friend (Proverbs 27:5; I Peter 3:7).

ACTIONS: Be generous. Without thought of reward or praise, be extravagant in your giving to others (II Corinthians 9:7). Give freely of your love, time, money, spirit, creativity, encouragement and praise. Don't be stingy with the most important and powerful gifts in your possession. Let your actions reflect the startling love of God!

SUCCESSSES: Be thankful (Colossians 3:15). Most, if not all, of our successes are the result of God's grace, not our cleverness or hard work. Count your blessings regularly.

TROUBLES: Be trustful. For some mysterious reason, many times, God has chosen to make us mature through trials and hardships (Hebrews 12:6-10). Look for the hand of God in every circumstance, and trust His guidance in the highs and lows of life.

HEART: Be careful (Proverbs 23:7). Focus your love on the Father and Savior Who reside within you. Be careful what allow to creep into (continued, p. 3)

It's a Brand New Day

The anticipation and excitement of beginning a new year is upon me. I find it refreshing to begin a new project. The spark of energy and the bounce in my step help me to accomplish more than I would have just a few days ago. As I thought about beginning my workout this morning, I was filled with mixed emotions. The work I tried so hard to accomplish the past two years seems to be reaching fewer results than I had hoped. My self-control over the holidays was lacking. It would have been easy to get down on myself and think that I will never win this battle with my health. But this is a brand new day and a brand new year.

Taking out my daily planner and charting the course of the next day set off a spark plug. This morning when the alarm clock went off I jumped out of bed at the first sound. Once in the gym, my heart began to pump and my visualization of what I can accomplish in 2006 filled my thoughts. In just a blink of an eye my workout was complete. I almost felt saddened to leave the gym for the day...but only long enough to start thinking about tomorrow and the possibilities for further advancement.

Who knows what tomorrow will bring? One thing I do know: I will plan to do my best. When I lay down my head at night to rest, I will not be thinking of my shortcomings, but of the possibilities of tomorrow. Each day is a brand new day, in essence a brand new year, and a gift from God. I am not going to worry about what will happen tomorrow...or next month...or next year (Matthew 6:34). No, just thinking about tomorrow with anticipation (not anxiety) and the excitement of a new day is enough. As one writer has penned, "Yesterday is a cancelled check. Tomorrow is a promissory note. Today is a blank check. Spend it wisely." Therefore, I will focus on today and make it the best it can be. If I accomplish this goal, my "tomorrows" will take care of themselves.

In similar fashion, one who is obedient to the gospel of Christ (belief in Jesus, repentance of sin, confession of faith in Christ and baptism for the remission of sins) begins a brand new day. As Paul stated, "*Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new*" (II Corinthians 5:17-ASV). The new life of a Christian is filled with excitement. The possibilities abound for growth through study and application of the Word. One who begins to think of the enormity of God's Word and the difficulty of fulfilling all that God would have us accomplish may begin to feel overwhelmed. Rather than worry about what has happened in the past, or what one does not know or cannot do, if each Christian would make each day the best it could possibly be through study and through living each moment for Christ, growth would occur, and tomorrow would be a bright and exciting day. We will make mistakes on occasion, but we can be forgiven of our sins and begin each day fresh and clean, washed of our sins when we confess and repent of those sins (I John 1:5-9), making it a brand new day. Exciting, isn't it!

Denny Wilson

SICK

At home: **Patsy Boyd** (pneumonia; is scheduled for surgery on Jan. 4), **Willard Campbell** (saw the doctor yesterday), **Kristie Jearls** (virus), **Oliver Majors**, **Melissa Rogers** (virus), **Evelyn Scott** (stomach). **Joe Myers** is in VAMC, Bldg. 110; abdominal tumor. **Jerry Ulrey's** tumor is growing. **Lucelle Hall**, mother of Darlene Phillips (C'burg.), is recovering from surgery. **Ann Warrick**, friend of John Black, Greenville, SC, has suffered a stroke. **Betty "Nanny" Robertson**, friend of Dee House, ICU, Community Hospital, recovering from surgery to remove abdominal aneurysm. **Melvin Lutz**, retired Salem police officer, RMH, possible stroke. *Continue to remember:* **Mary & Lynn Anderson**, **Bobby & Eugene Argabright**, **Norma Biller**, **Betty Buckner**, **Marguerite Charles**, **Jim Dorsett**, **Collin & Luetta Gregory**, **Luke Guard**, **Patti Gwaltney**, **Jo Hartman**, **Dan Hudgins**, **Lyn Miller-Jones** (mastectomy), **William Keesee** (was able to go home for the holiday), **Lisa Knott** (at home, recovering well from surgery; awaiting test results), **Margaret Kratz**, **Miriam Majors**, **Donnie Mountcastle**, **Jo Musgrove** (hopes to be back in services soon), **Joe Myers**, **Steve Myers**, **Karen Nutt** (back surgery scheduled for 1/6 in Dallas), **Truman Parker** (recovering from surgery), **Becky Phillips**, **Ruby Riffle** (condition deteriorating), **Lacy Rowe**, **Murphy Scott**, **Annette Shrader**, **Sandra Speir**, **Ruth Stanton**, **Linda Stull**, **Evelyn White**, **Effie Wimmer**, **W.J. Wood**.

SYMPATHY: We extend our love and sympathy to **Eloise Murray** in the loss of our dear Brother Ralph whose memorial service was on Tuesday; also to the **Poff family**, neighbors of the Bakers, whose son Dale (43) died this week.

MISSIONARIES: the **Pearsons** (doctors have advised Mark not to return to Haiti for health reasons); the **Staffords** and the TZ2000 team.

MILITARY: **Ty Stricklin** (to be re-deployed soon); **John Shannon** (son of Bill Shannon whom we support at MSOP) and his friend **Gabriel Hayes** who are in Iraq. We are grateful for the safe return of **Allen Crawford & Chris Stevens** with the 1173rd Transportation Company who returned from Iraq this week.

THANK YOU!

Eric Earnhart & Caleb Guard for two fine lessons last week on "Worst Case Scenario" and "Does God Understand", respectively. We appreciate you, guys..

THIS WEEK AT WEST SIDE

Today: Merry Christmas! Happy birthday to **Sandra Neighbors!**

Tuesday: Happy anniversary to **Oliver & Miriam Majors!**

Wednesday: Bible Study, 7pm.

Thursday: Happy birthday to **Kay Anderson!**

Friday: Teams 1 (Duff) & 3 (Brown) fellowship, 7pm in the fellowship room. Everyone is welcome. Happy birthday to **George Mellon & Melissa Rogers!** Happy anniversary to **Shawn & Jenni Sprouse!**

Saturday: Youth devo/pizza & game night, 7-10pm in the fellowship room. Happy birthday to **Squeaky Valentine!**

Sunday, 1/1/06: Happy birthday to **Donnie Mountcastle!**

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER STAFFORD ITEMS

Sugar-free pudding, bacon bits, Slim Jims/beef jerky

GRIEF RESPONSE TEAM

Sign-up sheets for food-providers and those to take care of other needs are on the table in the foyer. Please sign up TODAY to be a part of this effort. — the Elders

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please review your directory sheet for updates, corrections. Make the changes on your directory sheet and put them in the box on the Audio Room door TODAY. Thanks for your help.

CALLING ALL COOKS

We have a group of four ladies who take turns bringing meals to some of our older members, and we want to expand our ranks. What a great way to be of service to a very special group of people! It'll brighten your day for having done such a good deed. See **Rebecca Durham** or **Jeanny Gilpin** to join in; we'd love to have your help.

FELLOWSHIP TEAM 2 (GARBY) MEETING

For 12/30 has been cancelled. New date later

FELLOWSHIP TEAMS 1 (DUFF) & 3 (BROWN)

Finger-food fellowship, Friday, 12/30, 7pm in the fellowship room. Everyone is welcome!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Men's Retreat hosted by Lake Drive, March 10-11, at Camp Tuk-a-Way.

IT'S COMING...

"RESTORE 2006" — Be watching for details!

Ten Guidelines... (continued)

this sacred space which belongs to God.

WORSHIP: Be still (Psalm 46:10). Expressing your love and adoration to God isn't reserved for Sundays only. Don't get too busy throughout the week to make continual offerings of praise to God. Jesus is Lord of every day!

SIN: Be repentant. Don't let any sin harden your heart or break the connection between you and God. Confess your sins to the Father every day (1 John 1:6-10). Claim His promises that forgive you and make you pure and clean by the blood of Jesus!

Dean Fitch
via "Glad Tidings of Good Things"

*"Through every period in my life
Thy goodness I'll pursue;
And after death, in distant worlds,
The glorious theme renew.
Through all eternity to Thee
A joyful song I'll raise;
But, oh, eternity's too short
To utter all thy praise."
Addison*

