

CHATHAM CHRISTIAN CHURCH
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Sunday Worship Service 9:15 AM
Bible School 10:45 AM

We called them locust shells, and hung them on our shirt in the hopes of scaring girls. Now we know they aren't locusts, but cicadas. Still, when they emerged by the thousands under our maple tree I couldn't help but think of the warning Moses gave to Pharaoh. "For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. And they shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one shall be able to see the land."

Yes, cicadas were crawling all over our tree and covered the ground under it. I don't know if they are the 13 or 17 year variety, but they are smaller than the ones that appear in small numbers annually. They are no doubt the offspring of the ones that attacked our maple when it was a sapling a couple of generations ago.

They had inserted their eggs on the delicate branches, leaving scars that took years to disappear, and then burrowed under ground to feast on sap from the roots before heading back up the tree. I know I can't stop them, because after brushing thousands of them off of the now mature maple, they start crawling back up before I can get around the tree.

While thinking about their emergence from the ground, I started thinking about my emergence back into the pulpit. My seven week absence from the pulpit is the longest I've gone without preaching in 53 years. Not that I haven't enjoyed it. I've enjoyed hearing Mark preach, and got pretty good at filling out his outlines, even managing to fill in a blank or two before he got there.

I have discovered, however, that I really do like being in a pulpit more than being in a pew. And I certainly hope my reappearance isn't viewed as the return of a noisy cicada, but as a preacher who's excited to get back to doing what he still feels called to do.

God Bless, Rick

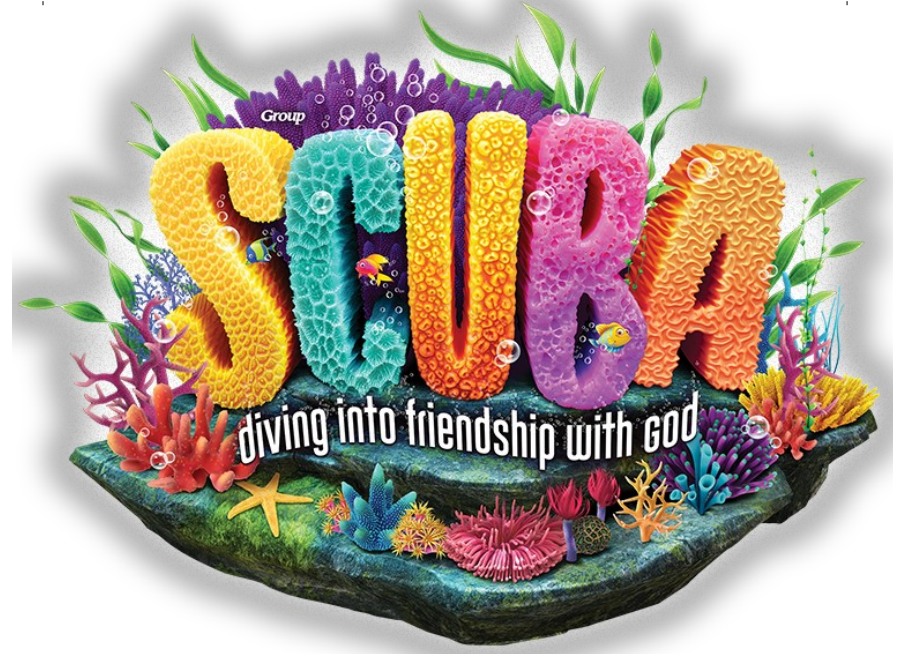


THE CHATHAM MESSENGER

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JUNE 10-13
6:15-8:30



| STATISTICS | | |
|------------|------|-------------|
| | 5/5 | |
| Worship | | 104 |
| Offering | | \$12,141.00 |
| | 5/12 | |
| Worship | | 120 |
| Offering | | \$3,713.27 |
| | 5/19 | |
| Worship | | 125 |
| Offering | | \$4,450.24 |
| | 5/26 | |
| Worship | | 114 |
| Offering | | \$4,990.80 |



All ladies are invited to a Bridal Shower for Grace Hunley on Sunday, June 2nd, at 2:00 in the church fellowship hall.



Our high school graduates were honored last Sunday morning. Congratulations to Alison Crowe, Lily Divjak, Bethany Estell, and Cooper Formea.



A big thank you to Jason Divjak for painting the pillars, trim and front of the church, and Cory Moore and Tyler Hulcher for painting the gazebo.

OPEN DOORS

by Kellie Willey

As many of you know, my husband Bryne and I have recently returned from a chiropractic mission trip to Colombia. We traveled to Colombia with Health Missions, a nonprofit organization that travels to areas of the world where chiropractic care is limited or non-existent. By no accident, the Sunday we returned, Mark preached about the ancient city of Philadelphia. We learned about Christ's letter to Philadelphia in which he says: "I know your deeds. Behold I have put before you an open door, which no one can shut." Revelation 3:8a.

Why is this message so timely? To understand this, let me rewind a bit. I got involved with Health Missions about a year and a half ago. We spent months planning a mission trip to Ecuador in the fall of 2023 for what would be the organization's first trip since Covid. About a month out from that trip, we learned about political unrest happening in the areas we had planned to travel to. We made a difficult decision to cancel that trip. Christ opens some doors and shuts others.

As difficult as this was, Health Missions switched gears and started planning a mission trip to Colombia. When Bryne and I committed to go on this trip we received a lot of worried looks and thoughts about us deciding to go to Colombia; all out of love and concern for our family. We prayed about it and felt convicted to see it through. We knew that this trip was a chiropractic focus but we also knew that it was an opportunity to show God's love with a servant heart. This door remained open and it is a door that I am so grateful and humbled that we were able to walk through together. Through this door I have learned that things are not always as they seem. Colombia is painted as this dangerous country that we should not travel to because of drug deals and dangerous criminals. I can assure you that the people we met in this country were nothing but welcoming, warm, and the most joyful and gracious people. I have taken many notes on hospitality from them.

When I close my eyes and think back on our trip, a flood of images fills my mind. But there is always one that I stop and hover on.

(Continued next column)

It is of my husband, Bryne, in the very small village of Puerto Sumaria. A town where there is one road, that is made of dirt, where the chiropractic tables were lined on a hot and sticky day. Everyone in the village gathered to be cared for on this dirt road. This particular image is of a man laying on his stomach on Bryne's adjusting table. His feet are thick with calluses and dirt from the hard work that he does on the hilly terrain. And when I look over, Bryne is holding his feet without any judgment or hesitation as he assessed this man with care. All I could think about at that moment was Jesus. Jesus before the resurrection dinner washing the feet of his disciples. It is moments like this and many many others during this trip that I know that we were exactly where we were supposed to be.

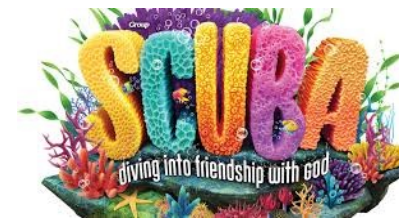
It is hard. Really hard, sometimes, to walk through the door. It is inconvenient. It requires a lot of planning or maybe patience. It requires calling on others for help. It means you have to trust and take a step out in faith. But it is worth it. Oh so very worth it because on the other side of that door you will find that you can see glimpses of God everywhere.

The last part of Revelation 3:8 talks about how the people in Philadelphia were small, but they kept his word. Jesus opens the door for them. God can use the least of these to accomplish great things for his Glory. Jesus has indeed opened the door for us here in Chatham. Mark said, "We have an opportunity just like the church in Philadelphia. The thing that is preventing us from sharing the gospel and making disciples is US." Christ wants to use us. We just have to be willing to walk through the open door.



High School

We have a great group going to the MOVE conference this year! So far, there are 12 students and 4 adults making the trip on Monday, July 15th to Warrensburg, Missouri. I would like to collect registration fees over the next few weeks, so let's establish Sunday, June 16th as final day to collect the registrations so we can settle up our bill with CIY. Everyone registered in time to get the early bird price of \$379.



Kindergarten—5th Grade

Thank you to all the volunteers for this year's VBS! If your schedule doesn't allow you to participate in a specific role, feel free to come by the church anytime and experience some of this year's program.

Remember, VBS will run nightly at the church from June 10th through June 13th. We will begin each evening at 6:15pm and wrap up around 8:30pm. I can't stress enough how important it is that we all reach out to a few people and invite their children to VBS. The registration link can be found on our webpage. In case they ask, in addition to all the activities, below is a brief breakdown of the daily themes.

Monday: God is a friend who is real. The Bible story of the day centers on Elijah hearing from the Lord. He experienced the reality of God through fire and later in a whisper. Kids will learn truth that God, who you can't see or hear, desires a friendship with them!

Tuesday: God is a friend who loves. The Bible story of the day centers around the people of Nineveh. Jonah seemed to view the Ninevites as unredeemable, unworthy. On this day, God's overwhelming love for all people will be the focus.

Wednesday: God is a friend we can trust. The Bible lesson of the day will be when Jesus calmed the storm. He demonstrated His power when He commanded the harsh wind and waves to be still. Kids will learn that God is a friend we can trust to comfort, guide, listen and love us when we face challenges in our own lives.

Thursday: God is a friend forever! The resurrection of the Lord in the focus on our final day. Because Jesus paid the price for all of our sins once and for all, kids will learn they can have a forever friendship with God.