

The Lighthouse

October 2021

God with Us

by Andy Bagby

God's plan for mankind is that he be a God who resides in our midst. He met with Adam and Eve in the garden; He tabernacled with the Israelites in the wilderness; His glory was present in the temple; His Son dwelt among the Jews; today, His Spirit lives in our bodies; and in the future, God will live among His people in the new heavens and earth: "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them." And with that presence comes all the blessed effects: no more mourning, no more crying, no more pain, no more death, and no more darkness (Revelation 21:3-4,25).

One of the names of Jesus---Immanuel---actually means God with us. His coming was prophesied by Isaiah 700 years before He appeared. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." The fact that God gave Jesus this name demonstrated that God, when Jesus appeared, had started to dwell with His people.

In spite of our sin and the rift that sin caused between God and us, He still chose to reside with us. However, He cannot reside with us without dealing with and releasing us from sin and its effects. Sin has brought bondage to mankind: "Anyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). Sin has brought sorrow to mankind." Our sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them." (Ezekiel 33:10). Sin has brought death to mankind. "You must not eat from the tree-- for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:17). Sin has brought separation between God and man: "Your iniquities have separated you from your God"(Is. 59:2). Sin has brought the wrath of God upon mankind: " [We] were by nature children of wrath..." (Eph. 2:3). Truly, sin has brought a great darkness upon mankind, which has not yet been totally destroyed. We are still in bondage, being prisoners of our own sin. We still have the covering of death over us. We still live in the land of the shadow of death. We still live in deep darkness.

A great darkness warrants a great light to dispel it. Isaiah again prophesies about Jesus: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined." (Isaiah 9:2) Jesus has come and conquered, and just like dispels darkness, Jesus dispels sin and its effects. Jesus, claiming to be the light of the world, has come to release us from our darkness. He will release us from the bondage of sin and bring us into the freedom of righteousness:" He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us" (Rom. 8:3-4). He will release us from death and bring us to life: "Jesus Christ ... has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light..." (2Tim. 1:10). He will release us from misery and bring us into a joyous relationship with Him: "turn to God that time of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19). Truly we are a people called out of darkness into His marvelous light (1Peter 2:9).

MINISTRY TO STATE NORTH CAROLINA

Ministering to Those Serving in Government

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What's happening with MTS - North Carolina?

The summer has drawn to a close and it has been a busy one for Ministry to State - North Carolina. Here are some snap-shots of what I've been up to over the past few months:

- **Preaching and/or presenting the MTS at different churches:** Two-to-three times a month, I've had the privilege of travelling throughout North Carolina to preach, teach on Christian citizenship, and build awareness about the work of MTS. I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve the church in this manner.
- **Nearing completion of a weekend seminar for churches on "Christian Citizenship and Cultural Transition":** My desire is to help



believers develop a Biblically-shaped and Christ-defined understanding of what faithful Christian living looks like under secular authority. Lord willing, I will have opportunities to bring these four, 45-minute sessions to churches for a weekend seminar or Sunday School series.

- **Developing relationships with elected officials and staff in our state's executive branch:** God has providentially provided opportunities to get to know high-ranking elected officials in our state, to minister to them, and pray with them. These men and women are profoundly influential and under a great deal of scrutiny and public criticism. Listening to them, bringing the Scriptures to bear upon them, and bringing them to the Lord in prayer has been a tremendous joy.



- **Ministering to legislators and staff in times of personal loss:** This summer, a member of the House of Representatives died following a short and very rare illness, a Senator's dad passed away, and a beloved Senate Sergeant-at-Arms died unexpectedly. While wrangling over policy issues, our elected leaders and legislative staff were also dealing with the pain of losing friends, family members, and colleagues. And by God's grace, I've been there to minister to them in the midst of their grief.

- **Retreating with fellow MTS ministers for refreshment and training:**

Although our MTS staff meets monthly via ZOOM, it's hardly the same as being together in person. So last week, we were all able to get away for three days and two nights at a wonderful



retreat spot in Pennsylvania to enjoy each other, and to be encouraged, refreshed, and challenged in our respective personal lives and callings. I couldn't ask for a more gifted and enjoyable group of fellow ministers with whom to work.

How you can pray

- **Pray for opportunities as my ministry focus shifts:** North Carolina's legislative "long session" should be wrapping up within the next month, which means the General Assembly (i.e. House and Senate) will not return to session until May. Pray for opportunities to meet with legislators in their home districts and for gospel-inroads to be made into the executive and judicial branches of government.
- **Pray for our family:** My wife and kids are most important earthly relationships and my greatest area of ministry. We want to lean into the love and grace of Jesus at home and I want to lead my family well in this area.
- **Pray for your elected officials in state government:** Look them up. Pray that I would have the opportunity to minister to them. Pray that they would repent and believe in Jesus. Pray for their families. Pray that they would govern with wisdom, integrity, and truth. Reach out

to them with a friendly email and tell them you are praying for them.
It will mean the world!

Upcoming schedule

October 3: Preaching at Meadowview Reformed Presbyterian Church in Lexington

October 9: Grace Presbytery (ARP) meeting in Burlington

October 10: SouthLake Presbyterian Church in Huntersville

October 15-16: Meadowview Reformed Presbyterian Church Missions Conference in Lexington

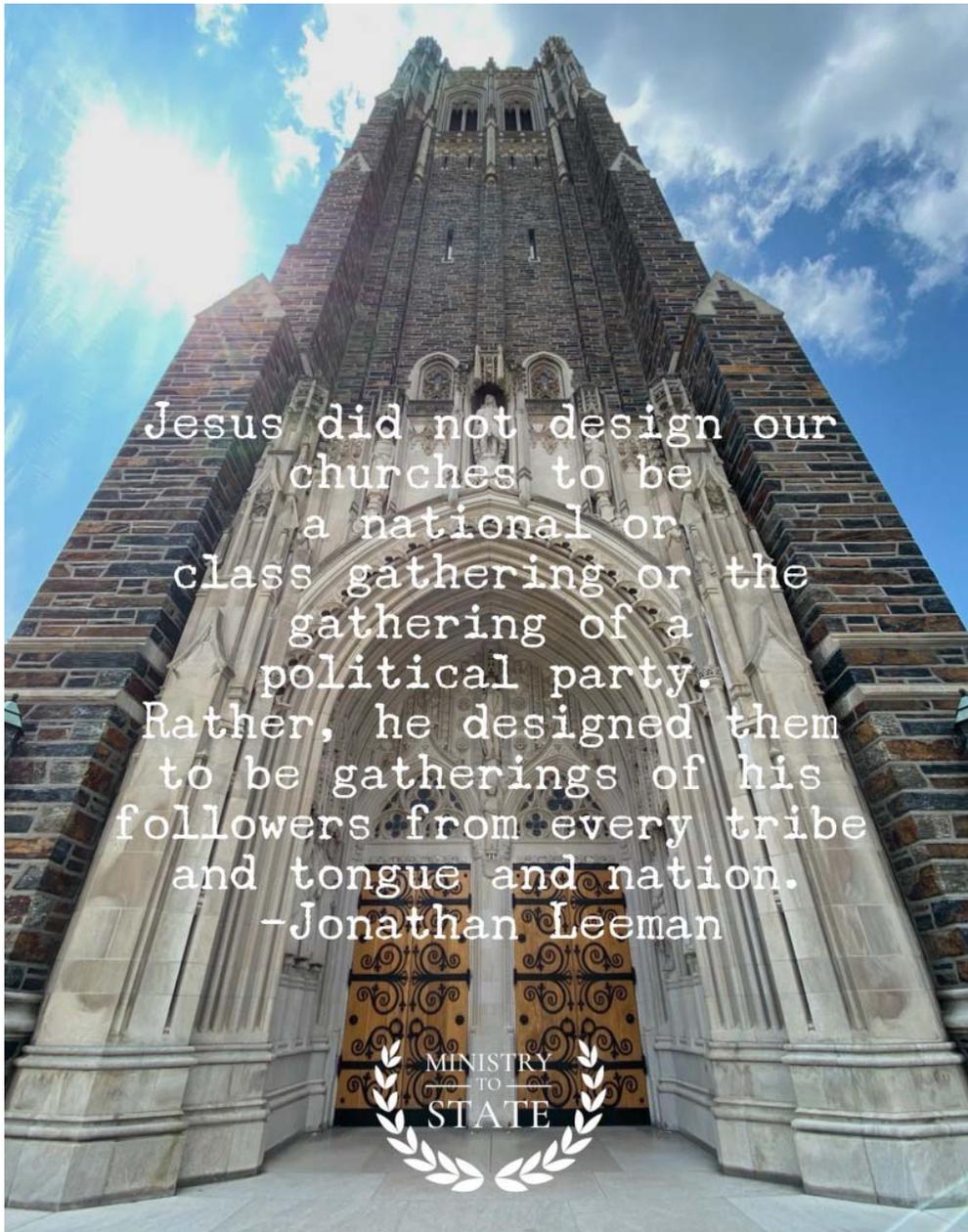
October 16: Eastern Carolina Presbytery (PCA) meeting in Durham

October 23: Piedmont Triad Presbytery (PCA) meeting in Winston-Salem

October 31: Preaching at Grace Fellowship (PCA) in Asheboro

November 6-7: Speaking at men's breakfast and presenting MTS at Christ Church (PCA) in Houston, Texas



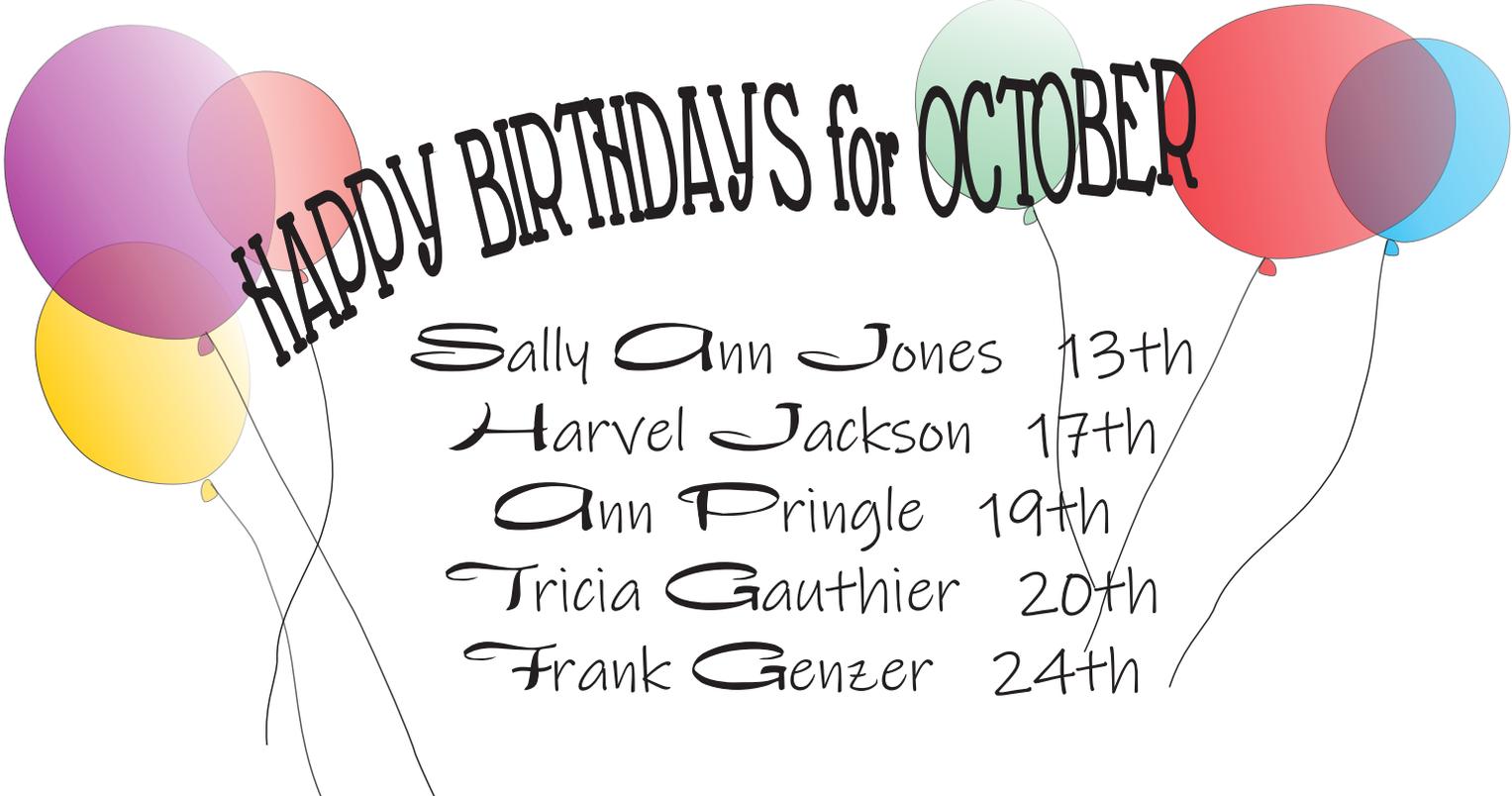


Jesus did not design our churches to be a national or class gathering or the gathering of a political party. Rather, he designed them to be gatherings of his followers from every tribe and tongue and nation.
-Jonathan Leeman



Keep up with MTS - North Carolina

To learn more about MTS North Carolina, check out our website at [mts-nc.org](https://www.mts-nc.org) and our Facebook page at [facebook.com/mtsnc](https://www.facebook.com/mtsnc).



HAPPY BIRTHDAYS for OCTOBER

Sally Ann Jones 13th
Harvel Jackson 17th
Ann Pringle 19th
Tricia Gauthier 20th
Frank Genzer 24th

Dates to Remember for October

October 3 Communion

October 6 Ladies Circle at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall

October 8 Cruisin On the Lawn

Join us for Cruisin' the Coast picnic, Friday, October 8th at 6:00pm on the front lawn of the church. Grills, will be provided. Please bring your own lawn chair, your own prepared food and anything you would like cooked on the grill.

October 10 Monthly Luncheon after the worship service. Please bring a dish to share.

October 16 Baby Shower for Stephanie Dollahite

Ladies join us for a baby shower for Stephanie who is due to have a baby boy December 22nd. Meet at Pat Pennell's home, 454 Channel Mark Drive, Biloxi, Saturday, October 16th, 10:00am. Stephanie is registered at Target.

<https://www.target.com/gift-registry/gift-giver?registryId=eef5c4d0ae7-11ec-acca-812be860a0c8&type-BABY>

and any brand diapers/ wipes are also great.