



October 4, 2020

Weekly Newsletter

The Preacher's Post – *Darin Kennedy*

Let me tell you about something that has been going on behind the scenes for the last 3 months. Representatives from Blue River have been going over to the Roswell congregation, along with representatives from several other congregations, to talk about racial unity in the church in the Kansas City area. From the congregations that have attended, we do not have any major divisions or fights between primarily white churches and primarily black congregations, but we want to have a better fullness and witness to unity found in Christ. Currently our unity is found once a quarter, at least it was before COVID, when preachers exchange pulpits on 5th Sundays and an area-wide worship service is happening among a small group of congregations. While these keep us friendly toward one another, we want to accomplish more together, displaying more to the public and to future generations what the church united can be and do. Currently, we have looked at projects like a metro-wide youth chorus, a lectureship or workshop with invited speakers, women's events like a retreat, combined service projects, and a website and social media to help us communicate better. I am proud to say that some of Blue River's leadership of ministers, elders, and deacons and their wives, along with other interested parties, are leading in these projects.

While we are friendly toward one another, there are significant differences that need to be faced. These differences have the potential to make us stronger, but they also have the potential to keep us segregated. It will take the Spirit of God to bring us and keep us closer. Anything from culture to politics to health concerns to worship styles to theology to history to ministries, etc., etc., etc., can create more division, but we can use these differences to complement one another and to fulfill the larger purposes of the kingdom of God that we cannot do as individual disciples or congregations.

What can you do personally? 1) *Keep the work of unity in your prayers.* In John 17, Jesus prayed for the unity of his disciples, not only those who walked with him in his earthly ministry, but also all those who would respond to their testimony (that's us).

Follow Jesus' example, and pray that his unity would be perfected among us.

2) *Take advantage of every opportunity of worship, fellowship, and work.* It's going to take each individual disciple taking initiative to attend and engage whenever possible. Just because the preachers are friendly with each other, that does not mean we have unity. Just because we don't mind sitting in the same worship service together once a quarter, that does not mean we have unity fulfilled. It's going to take depth of welcome, conversation, prayer, partnership, and blessing to bring about unity. Just because we send a check for a good work, that will not be the same as side-by-side service. Perhaps, you might like to work at Kid's Kitchen or another ministry like it. You will be extraordinarily blessed by the relationships that are created there.

3) *Create opportunities for building community.* One of the reasons for these monthly meetings is to come up with new ideas for growing, enjoying, and displaying unity. We need creative inspiration that will excite disciples to worship, work, and fellowship together. We need creativity especially in times like these when things like COVID continue to prevent the large events we are used to.

4) *Have an empathetic period of learning.* See from someone else's perspective. Look behind the superficial differences, and search for the heart that has been formed by those differences and has found those differences beautiful and helpful, or perhaps burdensome and harmful. Grow in both your appreciation and compassion. These powerful interactions with the broader family of God will be life-changing.

I wish everyone could come to these monthly meetings on the third Saturday of each month. We are moving in that direction to getting more and more participation, but we are still concerned about space in these COVID times. That does not mean we are being exclusive, so if you are passionate about this and want to show leadership in this area, please let me know so we can get you fully involved.

Prayer Requests

Hannah Guntert's cousin (Grant Funderburk) – is 7 years old and will be traveling from Arkansas to Ohio twice next month for a serious colon operation, **Mary Ellen Myers's** friend (Matt) – has COVID and is in the hospital with complications, **Frank Stewart's** daughter in law (Sherry) – is in ICU and in critical condition, **Dave and Susan Foster's** daughter (Sara) – is scheduled for surgery on October 7, **Debbie Peerson's** niece – died tragically, **Jurhee Bench** – has recovered from pneumonia. She is quarantined to her room because of cases popping up at her facility. Please continue to pray for her during this difficult time, **Buddy and Sharon Self's** daughter (Lisa Self) – has a blood clot and fluid in her lungs. She is slowly regaining her strength, **Shirley Simmons** – had open heart surgery. **UPDATE:** Surgery went well. She is home and has about a 6-week recovery ahead of her. She is requesting no visitors at this time, **Kelly Seuferling** – has been diagnosed with breast cancer. She will have surgery on October 6, **Bonnie Hamby** – had cataract surgery, **Dave Nash** – seems to be getting a bit stronger, **Devastation of Hurricanes and Bill and Marlene** as they work with Disaster Relief, **Roger DeLoach's** sister in law (Colleen DeLoach) – had surgery for a paraoesophageal hernia and seems to be doing well. Please continue to pray, **Lillie Ramage** – has stage 4 pancreatic cancer, **Cathy Eldridge** – has some internal bleeding and some upcoming tests on her heart, **Linda Hyde's** mother (Willa Dean Haley) – is currently in hospice care, **Marina Belekonnij** – from Ukraine has Hodgkin's lymphoma, **Jeannie Ewens's** daughter (Emily) – **UPDATE:** thyroid biopsy showed that the nodule was benign and they are not expecting to do surgery, **Flora Swartz's** friend (Joanie Green) – is still taking chemo pills, David Church – **Ben Church's** brother, **Andy Hester, Joel Morehead, Bruce Keeton, Will Kreisel, Lena Bramlett**

A Note to the Church:

Roger and I want to thank everyone for the cards, texts, and prayers we received at this time of grief and travel. We have been very blessed to have such a loving church family!

Thanks
Stormy, Roger Cook and family

Birthdays: October 4th – October 10th

Debbie Jones – 4th

Abby Eaton – 4th

Maria Ore – 5th

Marlene Haley – 7th

Caleb Walker – 8th

Aubrey Hudkins – 9th

Josi Olas – 9th

Roman Martin – 9th

Bruce Sewell – 9th

Beverly Campbell – 10th



Abby Eaton is turning 20!!!

Maria Ore is turning 15!!!

Aubrey Hudkins is turning 15!!!

Josi Olas is turning 14!!!

children read a bible on the bed – [Volodimir Kalina © 123rf.com](https://www.123rf.com)
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