

Macedonian Call

February 2023



Perhaps you've heard, as January was wrapping up, that the "Doomsday Clock" advanced 90 seconds to midnight. The "Doomsday Clock," which was created 76 years ago by atomic scientists to warn the world of impending doom is the closest it has ever been to midnight. Midnight, of course, represents an anticipated apocalyptic event that will wipe mankind off the face of the earth. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, an organization of scientists and policy experts, are the ones responsible for the hands' movement on the clock. Among the leading reasons why, in their opinion, the clock should move ahead 90 seconds closer to midnight (it has been at 100 sec. to midnight for the past three years) include: Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, biological threats (like the COVID-19 pandemic) and, of course climate change. Rachel Bronson, president and CEO of BAS said, "We are living in a time of unprecedented danger, and the Doomsday Clock time reflects that reality. 90 seconds to midnight is the closest the clock has ever been set to midnight, and it's a decision our experts do not take lightly. The US government, its NATO allies and Ukraine have a multitude of channels for dialogue; we urge leaders to explore all of them to their fullest ability to turn back the clock." The scientists and policy experts are right, we are closer to the apocalypse than we were last year or even a few weeks ago. I'm no atomic scientist—I'm not sure what that is anyway—but I am a student of Scripture. And, biblical prophecy, using vivid language and mysterious imagery, tells us in great detail of coming times of extraordinary and dramatic destruction and devastation. In addition (and this is something I'm sure the BAS doesn't know), the Scriptures also assures those who belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ, that there will be a great deliverance. The Bible at once warns and

encourages us about things to come and instructs us to watch with eager anticipation for their fulfillment. These times will begin with Christ's return for His church. After that, apocalyptic events, much more devastating and destructive than the BAS anticipates, will begin to take place on this planet. All of the suffering and death left in their wake will be beyond the brilliant minds of the BAS to comprehend. But, as terribly painful and catastrophic as those events will be, that's not the end of God's story because Christ will come again first, to defeat Satan and his minions and second, to rule and reign on the earth for one thousand years. So, as intelligent as this small group of atomic scientists and policy experts may be, they literally have no clue when God will put things into motion to wrap it up here—none of us do. However, they should know that no leader anywhere, certainly not in the US government, can turn back the hands on "God's Clock." So, it isn't a matter of when the clock strikes midnight; it is a matter if we all are ready before it does! ~ Pastor Randy (Matt. 16:27-28; 24:36; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 4:1—22:21)

¹ Ben Turner, "Doomsday Clock Advances to 90 Seconds to Midnight — the Closest to Apocalypse It's Ever Been," 01/24/23 (livescience.com, accessed 01/24/23).

² Robert Lightner, *Last Days Handbook* (Thomas Nelson: Nashville, 1997), 2.



The Gideons
International

We will have a guest speaker from Gideons International on Sunday, February 19th during our morning worship service.



A Note From Ashley

Happy February! Often the first thing that comes to mind when we think of February is Valentines Day. We picture flowers, chocolates, thoughtful gifts, and time spent with those we love most. Most of the time when we pray we pray for those we love most: spouses, siblings, parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, etc. But who else are we called to pray for? I'm sure many types of people flash across one's mind. Did the word enemies? In Matthew 5 Christ calls us to rethink our prayer time in verses 43 through 48, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect". Now when we consider the word enemies there is most likely someone we are reminded of. Or maybe even multiple people. Jesus equates praying for our enemies to God sustaining the evil/unrighteous just as He sustains the good/righteous. Forgiveness is something that may never be asked for by those that have hurt us. But who is that lack of an apology ultimately harming? When we allow grudges to grow inside us instead of grace and forgiveness, we become bitter. However, when we begin to pray for those that persecute us, those that have done us wrong, and those we consider to be an enemy our hearts are the ones that change. As we go into February, the month when love is "in the air", remember to offer your adversaries over to God during your prayer time. ~ Ashley

A Note From Pastor Joe



Believe it or not, I can remember as a teenager how excited I would get when February rolled around. If I wasn't dating anyone in particular, I would start. Why, you may ask? I enjoyed buying a box of chocolates for a girl, always in a heart shaped box. Again why? Well, she would always give me a kiss on the cheek then tell all the other girls, "Joey gave me a box of chocolates." In reality it was for one thing, attention!

Paul describes this type of thinking in 1 Corinthians 13:5b as self-seeking, or as we would say today "self-focused." "We are not to do things to draw attention to ourselves. Society becomes self-focused when individuals do. In a marriage relationship, in a family and in a church. When one person is always focused on self, i.e. what they like, what they want, without considering others, problems are on the way. Yes, I know that is a little deeper than wanting all the other girls to know that "Joey bought his girl chocolates." But remember, tsunamis start with a small physical event, but bring big destruction. 1 Corinthians teaches that our love is to be others focused, after all isn't that what John 3:16 teaches about God's love? In Christ Love ~ Pastor Joe



Weekly Bible study, Thursdays at 11:00 am in the JOY Classroom. This is a very special time of fellowship, prayer and Bible study. We invite all senior adults to join us.



Student Ministry Bible Study
Wednesdays @ 6:30 pm in the Youth Room



Friday, Feb. 3rd @ 5:30 pm
Come enjoy some Pizza, snacks and lots of fun games & Fellowship



Sunday, February 26th
7th—12th Grade



Uniting the community to end homelessness

Join us Thursday, Feb. 23rd for an Interesting tour of the Roof Above Homeless Shelter in Charlotte. We will leave the church at 9:00 am.

Music

A Note From Susan

"How Deep the Father's Love for Us"

How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss—
The Father turns His face away,
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.

The past few months we have taken a look at older hymns and the history behind them. This month, we take a look at a more modern hymn. How Deep the Father's Love for Us was written in 1995 by English Christian worship leader Stuart Townend. Stuart says he decided to write this hymn to shift the focus from our emotions to a focus on God. He says that the focus should be on our Lord more than on ourselves. Townend gave the following reason for composing this hymn:

"The danger now is that we are so focused on the experience, our worship can become self-seeking and self-serving. When all of our songs are about how we feel and what we need, we're missing the point. There is a wonderful, omnipotent God who deserves our highest praise, and how we feel about it is in many ways irrelevant! I want to encourage the expression of joy, passion, and adoration, but I want those things to be the by-product of focusing on God – I don't want them to become the subject matter. I'm trying to write songs that refer to us as little as possible, and to Him as much as possible!"

Christ should be the center of our worship no matter the situation. Whether we are happy, excited or sad let us make Christ the center and we will never be disappointed. ~ Susan



Choir Practice
Sundays at 5:00 pm
New members are always
welcome!

You are invited to join us for
Sunday School each week at
9:45 am. We have classes
available for everyone from
nursery to senior adults!!

**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE.**

Ephesians

WHO WE ARE
IN CHRIST

Winter Bible Study
Wednesdays @ 6:30 pm
in the JOY Classroom



CARE Night
Wednesday, Feb. 1st
Meal @ 6:00
Ministry @ 6:30
Project: Valentine Gift
bags for homebound members & caregivers

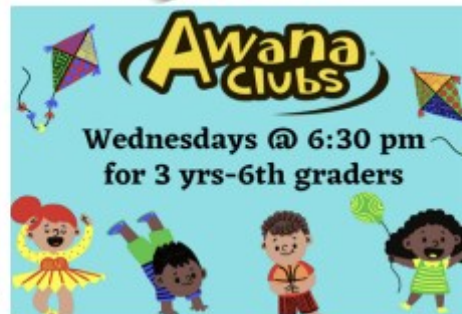
ladies' SOUP & SALAD FELLOWSHIP

Thursday, Feb. 9th at 6:30 pm in the
Fellowship Hall

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Saturday, Feb. 25th
7 am in the
Fellowship Hall

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



Wednesdays @ 6:30 pm
for 3 yrs-6th graders

Bible — Drill —

Sundays @ 5pm in
the Fellowship Hall

You're invited... JESUS LOVES ME PARTY

Games | Food | Fun
February 11th at 2 pm

Pre-K through 6th Grade

*Pre-K students must be
accompanied by an adult*