



# THE GATHERING

## CONNECTING PEOPLE AND CHRIST

### Cell Groups

(2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays)

**Springbrook:** 9:30 AM at the Springbrook Municipal Building, call Kevin and Kelly Kehoe (613) 395-4346

**Stirling:** 10:00 AM at 25 Demorest Rd, call Beth and Bill Devries at (613) 395-0227

**Belleville:** 9:30 AM at 39 Cooke Crt, call Jack and Jan Harris at (613) 967-6419

**Kingston:** (Sunday evenings) 1338 Princess St, call Terry and Dawn Harris at (613) 531-5283

**Youth:** (Wednesday evenings), 7:00 PM at the Hub, downtown Stirling, call Beth Devries at (613) 395-0227

### Other Opportunities

**Study of Daniel,** Tuesdays 7:00 PM, 38 Mount Pleasant Rd, Stirling, call Esther Noel at (613) 395-3402

**Men's breakfast at the Hub,** Every Saturday, 7:30 to 9:00 AM, call Barry Cooper at 613 395-5990

## The 4Cs: Covenant...Living out the promises together

How many of us have made promises we couldn't keep or that, for one reason or another, didn't keep. Yet, promise keeping is a key component of anybody's list of attributes that build trust. Go to any leadership seminar and you'll hear people say that they want leaders who walk the talk, who do what they promise. Some of us also are experiencing an unprecedented degree of mistrust of politicians due to the gap between what is promised versus the reality of delivery. Broken promises are a source of disappointment and in some cases, profound pain.

What does all of this have to do with our fourth C? Well, we follow a God who, over the course of millennia, kept his promises. When we read the Bible, God begins to reveal himself as a God of Covenant in some of the earliest stories of His walk with mankind. Think of His dealings with Abraham, in Genesis chapters 15 to 17, God makes a series of agree-

ments with Abraham. God promises him land, children and eventually descendants as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore. Abraham, a homeless, itinerant elderly person filled with doubt, decided to bank on God's declarations. Abraham saw some of those promises



come true, at 86, he fathered his son Ishmael. We have the benefit of hindsight and see the effect of the covenant God made with him. We know from the texts that the covenant God made became more and more concrete over time.

What strikes me about God's approach of using covenants

throughout the old testament, everlasting covenants, is that he chose to make them with people who would invariably mess up and drop the ball. He knew Abraham would lie and fall short, he knew David would commit murder to satisfy his lust, he knew the people of Israel would be pulled into idolatry, yet he kept his end of the bargain despite their inability to follow through. To top it off, He sent his son, Jesus as the fulfilment of our end of the deal. His covenant with us required obedience to his will on our part. Knowing we couldn't do it, he prepared the ultimate solution; to have His son complete what we could not.

As you read through the book of Hebrews with the word covenant in mind, you'll see that Jesus is the fulfilment of God's faithfulness and his promises.

As a group of followers of Jesus, *(continued on page 3)*

### Upcoming Events

**January 21:** Teen coffee house, 7:00PM at the Train Station in Stirling, for info: Ashley Vader (613) 395-2228

**February 20-22:** Men's weekend getaway at Pinecliff Resort in Combermere, contact Barry Cooper (613) 395-5990

### Prayer Challenge

Pray for your friends, family and neighbours, ask God to give you opportunities to listen to them and hear what concerns them.

## Reading The Bible Prayerfully *by Lisa Barber*

As the fresh cool winds of January blow in I am not tempted at all to make “New Year Resolutions”. However, the melancholy of winter together with the excitement of a new beginning draws me into a time of reflection. I cannot resist asking myself: Where am I at in life? What is good? What is lacking?

All my answers to these questions lead me to the core of my desire: To know and love God more fully.

Deep down I know that in order for my life’s desire to be fulfilled I need to learn a lot more and I need to change and mature in many ways – But how? Where do I go from here in this pursuit? I am reminded of some solid advice I was given years ago when I had many decisions to make and obstacles to overcome: “Read Your Bible and Pray”!

Planning can be very effective for growth and accomplishing good things. I personally have benefited from goal setting. But nothing has been as effective in helping me sort through day-to-day living

than the encouragement and counsel I receive from the Spirit as I meditate on God’s Word.

Praying the Scriptures for the purpose of receiving guidance and wisdom from God requires a number of things:

1. Active Listening. This is a skill that will improve with practice. It includes the ability to focus attention, to wait patiently and to ask honest questions.
2. Complete surrender to what God wants. If I am open to hear only what I want to hear then I may not hear from God at all – or badly interpret what I do hear.
3. Time and quietness. Deep conversations are held, and intimacy grows, in the stillness of unhurried time.

Reading the Scriptures prayerfully is a simple practice but the results can be profound.

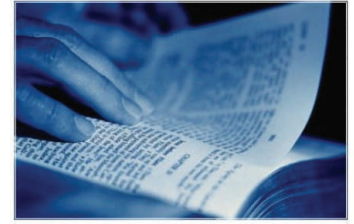
For those who are beginning I would recommend the following steps as a guide:

1. Read Slowly. Whether following a reading guide, a study guide, or reading passages at random, God is able

to speak as long as we are actively listening and responding. Quantity is not important. Sometimes the Spirit will engage us in conversation through just one verse, while at other times we may need to read whole passages.

2. While reading quietly ask the Spirit to speak.
3. Stop to meditate on the words, phrases or verses that stand out.
4. As thoughts and images come to mind, submit them to the Spirit and continue to ask clarifying questions.
5. Be patient and do not rush the conversation. Go as far and as deep as the Spirit allows before moving on.

There are times when it is extremely hard to focus on the Word and to listen to the Spirit. This morning was one of those times for me. Not only was my mind on the things I needed to do today, but I also was experiencing a deep sense of anxiety about my future compounded by feelings of worthlessness. Needless to say – I was restless. When I found my mind



wandering I would simply ask Christ’s forgiveness, confess my need for the Spirit to enlighten me and return to the verses that I had been reading. I struggled in this place of prayer for some time before experiencing a breakthrough. But wow – was it ever worth it! The Spirit spoke to me specifically about the things I needed to know and to do in order to throw off the fear and condemnation that was plaguing me.

There may also be times when God seems silent. Do not be dismayed by this. There are many things that can keep us from hearing, or God may have reasons for not speaking at that moment. The main thing is that we continue to read our Bibles and pray. We are developing ears to hear God’s Voice and He truly delights in making His ways and plans known to us.

### Men’s Weekend Getaway

**Date:** February 20th through to 22 **Location:** Pinecliff Resort Combermere Ontario Age of Majority Event Currently have space for 12 people (6 booked already) Meal groups to be assigned Indoor pool, hot tub, games room, winter outdoor sports, snowmobile trails, fellowship. Bring your instruments for the Saturday night jam secession! Deposit required to hold place, expected cost \$40.00 per night for more resort info :

[www.pinecliff.com](http://www.pinecliff.com) Contact Barry Cooper at (613) 395-5990

### Who is doing what at The Gathering?

Working with the youth: Beth Devries, (613) 395-0227

Intercession: Jane Aman (613) 395-3869

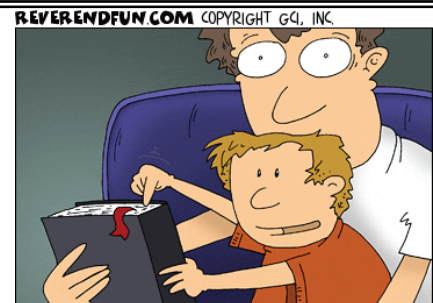
Pastoral care: Alicia Lott (613) 395-5342 , Jan Harris, (613) 967-6419

Phone Chain: Avril O’Brien (613) 478-6461, Esther Noel (613) 395-3402

Worship/Music: Sandy Norman (613) 398-8695, Bill Devries (613) 395-0227

Technical Gear: Kevin Kehoe (613) 395-4346 , Barry Cooper (613) 395-5990

Projection and computers: Vince Brintnell (613) 395-0613



Thanks to Richard Gerroan 10-27-2008  
I REALLY LIKE YOUR BIBLE, DAD ... HOW DO YOU TURN IT ON?

## Covenant (continued from p. 1)

by faith, we see ourselves as part of the fulfilment of the promises God made to Abraham. We see ourselves as part of the covenant God spoke again in Jeremiah (see 31v31-34), we see ourselves as part of the covenant God whispered to Isaiah (see chapters 61 and 62). Not only this, but we see ourselves as agents of the covenant as Jesus lives in us as the Holy Spirit breathes the life of God into us. We are part and parcel of the history of God accomplishing his promises. We could call ourselves, with other followers of Christ, people of the promise.

If you have a Bible handy, pick it up and read through Hebrews 10, verses 1 to 17. The author paints a compelling picture of Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promise. We live in the shadow of the sacrifice of Christ who kept us in the promises of God by paying for our violations of the covenant with his own life. This is what we call Grace...undeserved favour. Our part in being carriers of God's promises and commitments came at the highest price and wasn't the product of our ingenuity or goodness. It was provided to us despite what we deserved.

How are we to respond? We could probably think of many ways. The author of Hebrews follows up his declarations about Christ in chapter 10 by adding the following thoughts in verses 19 to 25. The first reflects what was stated earlier: Because of the New Covenant, let us draw near to God. The second: Let's latch on the hope that we proclaim, in other words, let's base our lives on this hope. The third: Let's think about how to encourage one another in these realities and keep on meeting to do so.

It's interesting to see the association in these ideas: Get close to

God, hold on to hope and band together to keep on speaking encouragement into each other's lives. I think the author is moving his readers to consider that an outcome of the covenant of Grace is mutual commitment to supportive, ongoing relationships. This plea flies in the face of a consumer culture that is also averse to pain and conflict. It seems that the very messages we get from society is that when the going gets tough, the tough go elsewhere. The trickle effect has led to many followers of Christ becoming spiritual migrants, never finding a suitable spiritual home that will meet all of their needs or, conversely, pulling up stakes when relationships become more challenging to maintain.

Notice how the author frames the last part of his recommendations: Encourage one another, keep on meeting. He implies taking action to move into the lives of fellow followers of Christ, not a passive waiting to have personal needs met. He also implies a "stick to it" approach to relationships...keep on...don't give up, press in. However we read it, the passage seems to indicate a need for mutual commitment within the context of relating to a God who has met our most profound needs. The outcome is an active engagement on our part in maintaining encouraging connection with one another while we commit to living out grace in our broader networks of relationships. We look to God as the keeper of promises and to each other as contributors to the journey of being promise carriers to our friends, families and broader communities.

To summarize our Cs, we grow close to God through **Communion**, we build ongoing supportive relationships through **Community**, we reach out with the truth and love of Jesus through **Commission** and we see ourselves as people of the promise, committed to working together in all of the above through **Covenant**.

*Mark Norman*

## From the Kingston Cell

Hi Prayer partners,

In reflection of the New Year and our goals for 2009, Terry and I have decided to switch our prayer cell from Monday night to Sunday night as we both need to be able to work on Monday nights but don't want to give up prayer.... so we are inviting each of you to join us as often as you can. Please let us know sometime that day whether you can attend. We will be launching the new cell this coming weekend, **January 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm** for approx 2 hours. We would like to start on time and finish as close to 9pm as possible so we can all get a good nights sleep. If you would like to socialize ....tea/coffee and dessert will be available around 6:30pm.

We look forward to what the Lord has in store for us this year. This week we will be praying for 2009 and all that is before us as well as the 48-hour city-wide prayer this coming week and personal prayers for each other. Why not come and

pray together. Each week we will have worship and prayer and occasional prayer teaching to grow in our walk with the Lord. We want to say Thank-you for your continued support of our cell and your faithfulness to partner with us over the last two years. I believe that it has made a difference in our lives and we have enjoyed getting to know each of you more intimately with our Lord. Blessings on each of you this coming year! Our prayer belief is set on the verse below....we proclaim it often. No matter what we see before us ....God has a plan to prosper us for the future!

### **Jeremiah 29:11 (New International Version)**

11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Blessings,

Dawn & Terry Harris

## **Don't throw out your aluminum pop cans**

André Froment is on a mission, he wants to help fund our next project in Kenya by collecting aluminum cans and your loose change. Bring your empty pop cans when we get together and empty your small loose change in the container at the back of the gymnasium. All funds will be contributed to the building project in Kenya.