

In my view, it is important for Christians to realize the grave nature of this new threat. What is at stake is our freedom to participate in the public life of our nation while upholding our religious convictions and our fidelity to Jesus Christ. The book of Revelation speaks of the "mark of the beast" without which "no one can buy or sell" (Rev. 13:17). This mark was given to those who bowed and worshiped the image of Caesar, and those who received it are judged by God (Rev. 14:11). I would not say that the Affordable Care Act is the mark of the beast, nor that our government leaders are intending to serve the Antichrist. Yet the principle informs Christians that we must not obey civic leaders who command us to disobey Christ, whether they intend this or not, at the expense of our jobs and businesses. With this in mind, Christians should be praying not only for the Christian lawsuits seeking protection of our religious liberty, but also that business leaders like David Green of Hobby Lobby would not give in when their companies are threatened. If the time has come for Christians to prove our faith by suffering for our convictions, then let us pray that Christ would give us the strength so that our generation would receive a witness of Christian fidelity and courage.

It is also important for Christians not to over-react. I know of no evidence for instance, that the purpose of the Affordable Care Act is to deny Christians their freedoms or that President Obama is bent on persecuting Christians. Rather, he and others believe that contraception is essential to women's liberty. Once they have argued that health care is a basic human right and that contraception is a woman's basic liberty, they put this together to insist that all employers provide for these. In their view, it seems, Christians are imposing our views on others in such a way as to deny their basic rights. This shows that there are complicated pieces in this situation. What does it mean that health care is a right? Is contraception necessary for women's freedom, and what kind of contraception? Do business owners have a moral obligation to provide health care? Does the federal government have the right to dictate these matters to private organizations? These are among the issues debated in this situation. The question of religious freedom is also somewhat complicated. There are many actions that our society considers immoral even if they are supported by private religious belief. So where does the Roman Catholic prohibition of contraception and the Christian rejection of abortifacients fit into this picture?

The question of the Obamacare contraception mandate has a simple answer for Christians: we must obey God instead of man. At the same time, we should realize the question of communicating our position to non-Christians is not so simple, and requires us to maintain a calm, gracious, and thoughtful demeanor in making our case before our secular society.

One thing the mounting conflict over the Affordable Care Act shows is that the cultural divide between Christians and pagan America is growing wider. Increasingly, Christian convictions do not "make sense" to hardened secularists. In such a situation, our commitment to live boldly according to God's Word is greater, even under persecution. Simultaneously, the need for us to give a clear, gracious, and steadfast testimony to the gospel is more greatly needed now than ever before. May we not be found wanting in courage and faith, or in mercy and love, in the year of conflict between Christians and culture that 2013 is likely to be.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Rick Phillips

CHURCH INFORMATION

Website: www.spcgreenville.org
Telephone: Office (864) 232-7621
Fax: (864) 232-7622 * Email: info@secondpca.org
Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Upcoming Events

| | |
|---------|--|
| Jan. 13 | Worship & Music Committee Meeting |
| Jan. 14 | Joint Session/Diaconate Meeting |
| Jan. 15 | WIC Tuesday morning Bible Study resumes |
| Jan. 19 | WIC Shower for Lee Wills Early |
| Jan. 20 | The Lord's Supper at the morning services |
| Jan. 21 | Young At Heart |
| Jan. 23 | CE Committee Meeting |
| Jan. 25 | Sr. and Jr. High Fellowship with parents at the church |
| Jan. 26 | Calvary Presbytery |
| Jan. 27 | Evangelism/Church Growth Committee Meeting |

Mark Your Calendars

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| February 3: | New Members' Class begins |
| February 7: | Jessamines |
| February 15: | Annual Valentine's Banquet |
| February 27: | Annual Sports' Banquet |
| March 24: | New Members' Reception and Luncheon |
| May 8: | Graduation Banquet |
| May 15: | CAT Kids Program |
| June 9-13: | Hartsville, SC Mission Trip |
| June 10-14: | Flute Camp |
| Week of June 17: | General Assembly in Greenville, SC |
| June 21-29: | Peru Mission Trip |
| June 24-28: | Vacation Bible School |
| June 28-July 8: | Scotland Mission Trip |
| July 16-19: | Richmond Hill, GA Mission Trip |
| July 22-26: | Jr. High Trip to Ridge Haven |
| July 29-Aug. 3: | Sr. Trip to Edisto Island, SC |

2013 Mission Trips

REMINDER OF COSTS AND DEADLINES:

Trip 1: Hartsville, SC, June 9-13, \$50 per person by February 1
 Trip 2: Richmond Hill, GA, July 16-19, \$50 per person by February 1
 Trip 3: Trujillo & Cajamaraca, Peru, June 21-29, \$1,250 deposit due by January 6
 Trip 4: Dundee, Scotland, tentatively June 28-July 8, \$1,200 deposit due by Jan. 6

To All Women In the Church: Phone or Email?

The prayer chain is an effective way to communicate our urgent prayer requests with one another in real time. For the prayers of a righteous man availeth much! If you are not already on the prayer chain, please let us know your preference of either joining the telephone chain or the email chain. Come and join with the host of praying saints at Second as we continually pray for one another in times of need. To be added to the prayer chain contact Lynda Duncan at Irduncan@charter.net or leave me your phone # for the phone chain at 864-350-2693.

2013 Offering Envelopes

There are still some 2013 offering envelopes remaining on a table outside the church library. Please stop by and pick up your envelopes this week. If you do not have a box of envelopes please call the church office, ext. 18.

Memorial Service

Memorial Service for Mrs. Kennon Patton, former SPC member, will be Saturday, January 19th at 2pm at Woodruff Road PCA.

WIC Baby Shower



All ladies are invited to a WIC Baby Shower for
Lee Wills Early
 Saturday, January 19, 2013
 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall
 Lee is registered at Babies 'R Us, Buy Buy Baby and Target.

Young At Heart

The monthly luncheon of the Young At Heart will be Monday, January 20, 11:45 am in the Fellowship Hall. The catered meal this year will be **\$7.00 per person**, payable at the door. This month our intern, Mr. Jim McCarthy will be our guest speaker. Start your New Year by joining us for wonderful fellowship, delicious food, and a very good program.

Jr. and Sr. High Fellowship

Jr. and Sr. High Fellowship together with parents
 Friday, January 25th
 6:30 pm
 at the church.

Precepts Bible Study

Ladies: The next Precepts Bible Study begins Thursday, February 7 in the Conference Room of the church. We will be studying First John every Thursday from 9:30—11:30 am for 11 weeks. Please notify Mary Russell (329-1670) by January 25 if you plan to join us as books need to be ordered.

Christian Sympathy

We offer our Christian love and sympathy to the family of Kathleen Cleveland who went home to be with the Lord on Sunday, January 6, 2013. We are thankful for the life and service of Kathleen and pray for her family during this time of grief and sadness.

Sunday School Class Changes

The Westminster SS class (taught by John Duncan) has moved its meeting location to the Fellowship Hall. The Fellowship SS class (taught by Tim Crunk) has moved upstairs to room S-308 (3rd floor behind the balcony.)

New Members' Class

Begins Sunday, February 3, 2013
 (Meeting Place to be announced.)
 Taught by Pastor Phillips
 The class will meet each Sunday for 7 weeks.
 Attending the class does not obligate one to join the church,
 however, you are requested to take the class before joining the church.

Jessamines

The Jessamines will begin the New Year with their first meeting of 2013 on February 7th, 6:30-8:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. The guest speaker will be Mrs. Barnetta Stephens, speaking on "Serving our Seniors and Shut-ins." Girls will make Valentine cards for our shut-ins with Mrs. Jenny Spears. Dinner theme is soup and salad. Please bring a generous portion to share. See Cindy Duncan if you have any questions.

Church Calendar

Sunday, January 13

- 8:30 AM **MORNING WORSHIP**
- 9:50 AM Children's Chapel
- 10:00 AM **SUNDAY SCHOOL**
- 11:00 AM **MORNING WORSHIP**
- 4:45 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal
- 5:30 PM Season of Prayer in the Chapel
- 6:00 PM **EVENING WORSHIP**
- 6:00 PM Wee Worship Choir
- 7:15 PM Worship & Music Committee Meeting

Monday, January 14

Joint Session/Diaconate Meeting

- 6:00 PM Supper
- 7:00 PM Meeting
- 6:00 PM Sr. High Girls' Team 1 Basketball game at home
- 7:00 PM Sr. High Girls' Team 2 Basketball game at home
- 7:00 PM Sr. High Boys' Basketball game at St. George

Tuesday, January 15

- 10:00 AM WIC Bible Study
- 6:00 PM Boy Scout Troop 828

Wednesday, January 16

- 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study
- 5:45 PM **FAMILY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP SUPPER**
- 6:15 PM Covenant Choir
- 6:15 PM Youth Choir
- 6:45 PM CAT Kids and Covenant Kids
- 6:45 PM Youth Bible Study
- 6:45 PM **PRAYER MEETING AND BIBLE STUDY**

Thursday, January 17

- 9:00 PM Men's Basketball game at OLR

Saturday, January 19

- 8:30 AM Jr. High Girls' Basketball game at 1st Pres.
- 9:30 AM Jr. High Boys' Basketball game at St. George
- 10:00 AM WIC Baby Shower for Lee Wills Early
- 11:30 AM I-Mites Basketball game at Finlay
- 12:30 PM Mites Basketball game at W. Pres. II

Remembering One Another

Remember in prayer this week the following shut-in member.
Also, send her a note of encouragement.

Sara Edwards
3 Ila Court
Greenville, SC 29611

Praying For One Another

Remember in prayer this week the following members.

Scott and Sarah Grubbs
Daniel, Beth
Jon and Ann Guest
Andrew
Elizabeth Guest

The Second Presbyterian Church

105 River Street
Greenville, South Carolina 29601-2537

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WORSHIP AT SECOND THE LORD'S DAY JANUARY 13, 2013

MORNING WORSHIP
8:30 & 11:00 AM

THE FIFTH SEAL

Revelation 6:9-11

Anthem:

Behold Now, Praise The Lord

Hymns: 32, 358, 449

Dr. Richard D. Phillips preaching

EVENING WORSHIP

6:00 PM

THE THRONE OF GRACE

Hebrews 4:14-16

Hymns: 176, 308, 629

Psalter: Psalm 10 (verses 1-11)

Dr. Richard D. Phillips preaching

Letter from the Senior Minister 2013: A Year of Christian Conflicts

Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge" (Acts 4:19).

It is possible that historians will look back on 2013 as a watershed in the relationship of Christianity to American culture. I say this because, while Christians have always needed to face what we might call "soft persecution" in the form of social and career consequences, it seems that starting this year we may experience official and legal persecution for upholding basic Christian values in the face of intolerant government demands. If this is true, it is essential that Christians not shrink back from facing this affliction. If the time has come for believers to accept the kind of persecution experienced elsewhere in the world - China, the Middle East, and Africa - then true disciples of Christ must embrace this challenge with courage, conviction, and prayer.

The First Amendment to the US Constitution prohibits Congress from passing any law that infringes the free exercise of religion. The question today is whether or not this freedom will still be permitted when it comes to the public life of Christians. The conflict is arising over the matter of contraceptives in health care plans. The Roman Catholic Church holds that all contraceptives are immoral. Most Evangelical Christians (including us) do not forbid all contraceptives, but hold that abortifacient contraceptives are sinful. (These are contraceptives that destroy a fertilized embryo, which we regard as destroying a human life.) The current issue is the mandate under the Affordable Care Act (popularly known as "Obamacare") for businesses, including those owned by Christians and formed to uphold Christian values, to provide abortifacient contraceptives in the insurance plans of their employees.

There are two things happening in this conflict for Christians to be aware. First, we should be praying for Christian businesses such as Hobby Lobby and Dominos Pizza, who are seeking legal protection from the demands of Obamacare. These are private businesses whose Christian owners refuse to obey a federal requirement that they believe violates God's law. They are joined by religious-based colleges such as Roman Catholic Belmont Abbey and Evangelical Wheaton College, who are also seeking legal protection through lawsuits. Christians should be praying that our courts will uphold the freedom of Christian organizations not to engage in actions they regard as sinful. (At present, churches like ours are exempt from providing contraceptives in our insurance.) If the courts decide against these Christian cases, then legal precedent in America will permit the federal government to enforce laws that require Christian organizations to violate God's law. Second, starting on January 1, Christian businesses have faced heavy government fines for refusing to obey the Obamacare mandate. Hobby Lobby, for instance, faces \$1.3 million per day for refusing to provide abortifacient contraceptives to its 13,000 employees. These and legions of other Christians organizations, including seminaries, book publishers, and Christian schools, may be forced out of business, with thousands of jobs lost, by the government fines.



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