

The West End Herald

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC



Can God Bless America?

by John MacArthur

In this era of terrorism, poverty, oppression and a few less-distinct enemies, waves of patriotism occasionally revive the slogan “God Bless America.” Sadly, though, the sentiment long ago became a cliché to which people rarely give serious thought. The phrase is even seen, ironically, on bumper stickers adjacent to other bumper stickers expressing humanistic and atheistic sentiments. One assumes that even those who don’t believe in God want His blessing on our nation.

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Anti-God philosophies and worldviews now clearly dominate most of Western society. God has been removed from public discourse; prayer has been virtually banned from the public arena; agnosticism and humanism dominate public policy. So it is remarkable that the slogan “God Bless America” is still in vogue. We have to wonder what most people have in mind when they repeat it.

Originally, “God bless America” was a prayer for divine blessing. In its current form, it sometimes seems nothing more than a patriotic battle cry— usually intoned without much serious reflection. Perhaps it is sometimes recited with the superstitious belief that merely invoking God’s name can garner His blessing. One thing is clear: while Americans universally want God’s favor, as a whole, they do not want God.

Some apparently believe that America enjoys God’s blessing by divine right. After all, God has blessed America throughout history to a remarkable degree. But His blessings are not measured—as most people believe—by material affluence, power, and world dominance. The greatest blessings God has graciously given America have been spiritual blessings—freedom for the gospel to be propagated, sweeping revivals like those of the Great Awakenings, and growth and spiritual prosperity for the church in our nation. The sad truth is that all those blessings were in serious jeopardy long before the terrorist strikes reminded us that our freedom and material prosperity hang by a fragile thread.

Does our nation really desire God’s blessing? Do Americans truly long for the spiritual awakening that would be the necessary condition for true blessing, or would the policy-makers and media moguls in our society be as hostile to such a revival as they are to the threat of terrorism?

And what are the means by which the people of God should seek to have God’s blessing on our nation? Can we help position modern society to receive God’s blessing merely by influencing public policy through politics and protest, or is something more needed to fulfill the conditions under which God will bless our nation? Can external moral reform alone make America fit for God’s blessing, or is something even deeper needed in the lives of most Americans?

To ask such questions is to answer them. Scripture is clear that a wholesale spiritual renewal, brought about through the preaching of the



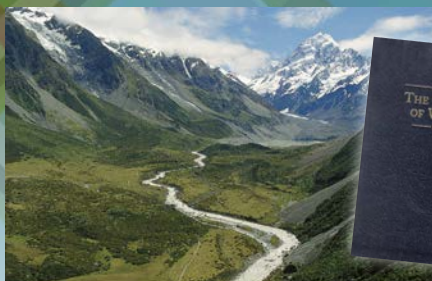
CHURCH LIBRARY

Ministry of the Week

The church library is a resource and a respite for all ages. From toddlers through seminarians and the young at heart, the library offers edification, enlightenment, and entertainment for all. Families can pick up free *Catechism for Young Children* on the small table under the calendar. The library is “open” at all hours and all are welcome to come in and browse. To check out a book, just fill out the card in the back of the book and put it in the card container located on the same small table as the catechism books. The library staff includes, Kip & Mott Altman, Cindy Mann, Sarah Madison Roy, and Meredith Smith.

Make good use of this valuable resource! ♦





A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions

The prayers in this book are drawn from the largely forgotten deposit of Puritan spiritual exercises, meditations, and aspirations. They testify to the richness and colour of evangelical thought and language that animated vital piety in an important stream of English religious life. ~Arthur Bennett

O GOD,

I bless thee for the happy moment
when I first saw thy law fulfilled in Christ,
wrath appeased, death destroyed, sin forgiven,
my soul saved.

Ever since, thou hast been faithful to me:
daily have I proved the power of Jesus' blood,
daily have I known the strength of the Spirit,
my teacher, director, sanctifier.

I want no other rock to build upon than that I have,
desire no other hope than that of gospel truth,
need no other look than that which gazes on the cross.

Forgive me if I have tried to add anything
to the one foundation,
if I have unconsciously relied upon my knowledge,
experience, deeds, and not seen them as filthy rags,
if I have attempted to complete what is perfect in Christ;
May my cry be always, Only Jesus! only Jesus!



at the corner of

River & Rhett



SEE YOU THERE!



CHURCH PICNIC



Friday

July 3, 2026

Church Gym & Grounds

5:00 – 8:00 P.M.

BBQ and Beverages provided.

Please bring generous portions of sides and desserts.

Bring lawn chairs and towels.

Great Food

Great Fellowship

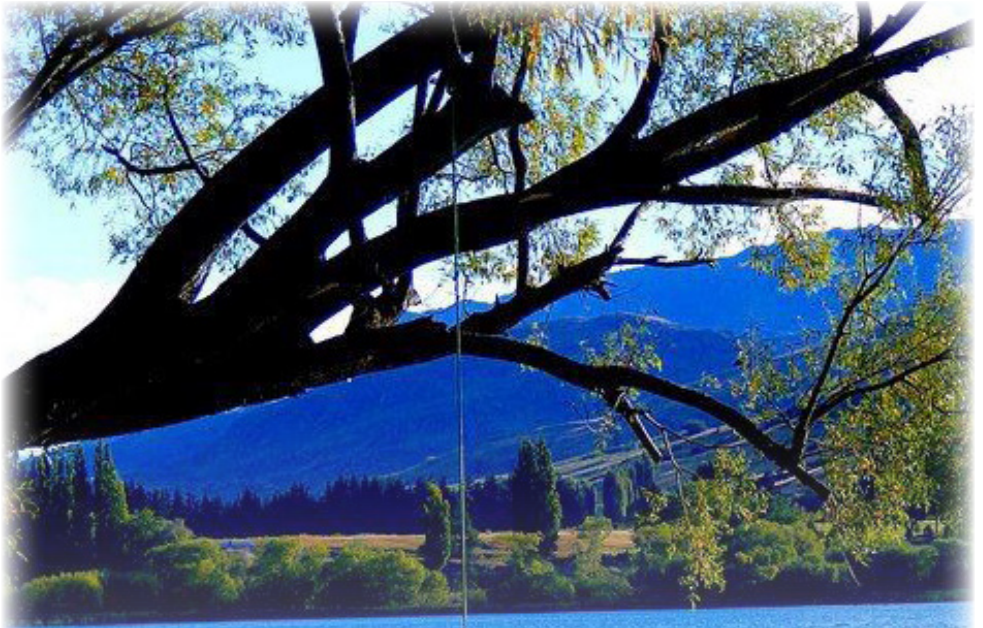
Inflatables (with water)
Starting at 3:00 p.m.

Games in the Field

Rain or Shine!



CITY FIREWORKS WILL BE ON THURSDAY, JULY 2.



28 **Marty Safford,
Pat Tyner**

29 **Joy Boudreau
Lee Early**

1 **Chip Johnson
Trystan Scoggins**

2 **Ed Butler**

3 **Janice Leathers**

happy
**June
July**
birthdays

This Week

MORNING SERMON

Dr. Richard D. Phillips

MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT
2 Corinthians 12:1-10

EVENING SERMON

Rev. Jeffrey M. Early

THE LOVE OF GOD
John 3:16

Sunday, June 28

- 8:30 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 9:55 A.M. Children's Chapel (*Sanctuary*)
- 10:00 A.M. Children/Youth Sunday School
- 10:00 A.M. All-Adult Sunday School (*Gym*)
- 11:00 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 5:30 P.M. Season of Prayer (*Chapel*)
- 6:00 P.M. EVENING WORSHIP
- 7:30 P.M. Ice Cream Social (*Gym*)

Wednesday, July 1

No Meal, Activities, or Service

Thursday, July 2

- 6:30 P.M. Mission to Main (*Conference Room*)

Friday, July 3

- 5:00 P.M. Church Picnic (*Gym, Church Grounds*)

Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a reproach to any people.

Proverbs 14:34



Upcoming Events

spcgreenville.org/calendar

June 28	Baptism Sunday
July 3	Annual Church Picnic (Friday)
July 6–10	Vacation Bible School
July 13	Joint Diaconate/Session Meeting
July 20–24	Jr. High at Ridge Haven Camp (Brevard, NC)

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gospel, is the true pathway to divine blessing. What is needed is not merely moral reform but spiritual regeneration. And unless this occurs on a widespread scale that deeply impacts all of society, we will continue to forfeit the true blessings of God for our nation. Merely reciting the slogan “God bless America” will do nothing for us until it becomes a heartfelt prayer for spiritual renewal and regeneration.

The remedy to our nation’s moral and spiritual woes must begin at the house of God. The process starts with personal repentance. If Christians truly want to see God’s blessing on our society, we ought to be models of genuine contrition and humility rather than merely pointing fingers of blame at the evils of secular society.

The church today is in a serious state of spiritual decline. Many churches are apparently more willing to imitate the world’s fashions and opinions than to confront them with biblical truth. Meanwhile, Christians concerned about the moral evils of society often opt for all the wrong remedies—as if the only thing needed to cure the spiritual malaise of our nation were some kind of federal legislation against abortion, sexual promiscuity, pornography, or other forms of corruption.

I am by no means opposed to legislative efforts to outlaw abortion, drug abuse, and similar abominations. But political remedies to our nation’s moral ills are no cure for the underlying spiritual problems. Of all people, Christians ought to know that, and the preponderance of our efforts ought to be focused on proclaiming the truth that can genuinely set people free. In other words, the majority of our energies ought to be invested in preaching the gospel and living the kind of life that gives testimony to the redeeming power of Christ.

Lives, not just laws, need to be transformed before America will be in a position to ask for and expect God’s blessing. The blessings of God cannot be



**Attention
Passengers!**

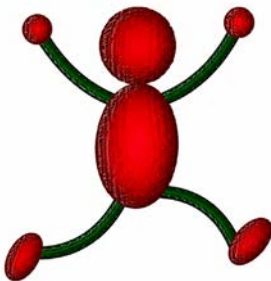
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2026!

This is your boarding call for an unforgettable adventure around the world! So register below and prepare for takeoff as we travel to countries great and small while learning to share the good news of the gospel.

FLIGHT DATES: July 6 - 10

DEPARTURE / ARRIVAL TIME: 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

All travelers who have completed K4 through 6th grade are invited aboard for this exciting first-class adventure around the world! If you have any questions, please contact Caroline Mobley.



**VBS 2026
Child Registration**



Sheriff Hobart Lewis had the honor of presenting Distinguished Service Awards to Deputy Jordan Stevenson (*left*) and Deputy Connor O'Shields (*right*) for their extraordinary actions that exemplify the very best of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office.



Recently, these two deputies responded to a critical incident involving a 10-month-old child who had fallen into a swimming pool and stopped breathing. Through their quick thinking, decisive actions, and commitment to their training, they were able to provide life-saving care until additional medical personnel arrived.



*SPC member
Connor O'Shields*

Because of their efforts, a family was spared the unimaginable. There is no greater calling in law enforcement than protecting life, and Deputy Stevenson and Deputy O'Shields answered that call when it mattered most.

Their actions that day undoubtedly helped save the child's life, but what makes this recognition even more meaningful is that the professionalism, dedication, and servant-hearted attitude they displayed are the same qualities they bring to work every single day.

We are incredibly proud of Deputy Stevenson and Deputy O'Shields. Please join us in congratulating them on this well-deserved recognition and thanking them for their service to our community.

acquired by any legislative process. Law cannot make people righteous. Scripture is clear on this. No one is justified by works of law, but by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16). And saving faith is an individual matter; it cannot be imposed by legislative force.

In other words, society as a whole cannot be delivered from moral bankruptcy unless individual lives are transformed by the power of Christ. If that conviction does not frame the priorities of the people of God and drive the activities of the church on earth, we can forget about God's blessing on our nation. ♦

Dr. John MacArthur (1939–2025) was pastor/teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, Calif., and chancellor and professor of pastoral ministry at The Master's Seminary.



Ladies, if you are planning to join the Rafiki class this Fall, please contact Sylvia Long right away. She needs to know how many are coming to finalize room location.



GOOD NEWS CLUB!

Crosswell Elementary School in Easley

This new Club will begin on Tuesday, September 15 after school, running from 2:30–4:15 P.M. Jimmy and Tammy Looper have been asked to coordinate this Club, but they can't do it alone. They need a team of at least ten people to commit to making it happen. You will be trained for any job you are willing to do. If you'd like to help or need more information please contact Tammy Looper. You can also register for the annual Back2School Children's Ministry half-day Conference at: CEFGreenville.com/training