

SERMON SERIES

More: The Gospel's Guide to Being Greater  
January 7 through February 11

SHPC Family,

This time of year is full of invitations to new starts, new efforts, or new disciplines in our lives. You know the usual rhythm of “new year’s resolutions,” of course. Start in January; drop in February.

But that impulse to start fresh in a new year can be a good one. What are ways we might improve our lives? Could I be kinder? Could I be more present? Could I be more productive? Could I be more attentive to family, friends, work, health, you name it?

Even in our lives of faith, it can be quite a good thing to assess how we might dedicate and rededicate our time and effort toward making faith in Christ more central in our daily and weekly rhythms.

Is it possible to take it too far?

With every impulse toward improvement or self-betterment is something more potentially detrimental: an ever-present insecurity that we could or should be *more or greater* than someone else.

How easy is it to compare ourselves to others? How easy is it to let our sense of “greatness” be defined by things other than God?

Christ taught about this often. As his disciples followed him, they increasingly became concerned with how they stacked up in comparison to one another and would ask their Lord and Teacher just who would be the greatest among them.

It was to that that Christ turned everything on its head: “Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant” (Mark 10:43). Become greater by becoming a servant, by lowering yourself, by putting others’ interests and well-being above your own.

Such a mindset runs counter to everything they had heard otherwise, and it’s revolutionary even today.

This month, as we gather in the new year, I invite you to consider, yes, how you might improve. Embrace those resolutions. Embrace new disciplines. But may we temper all that drive to better ourselves with Christ’s topsy-turvy call that all our efforts toward greatness be geared toward serving all.

In Christ,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Howell'.

Dr. Jay F. Howell  
Pastor | Head of Staff

January 2024 | at a Glance

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
	<b>1</b> Church Office Closed	<b>2</b> 9:30a Staff Meeting	<b>3</b> 9a WWW Group 10a Yoga 10:30a Dotterweich 4p Knitters/ Crocheters/Stitchers 5:45p Couples Disciple 6p Dotterweich 7p Saunders	<b>4</b> 8a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study	<b>5</b> 7a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study (G2) 10a Tai Chi	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 8:45a Worship in Barron Hall 9:45a Sunday School 11a Worship in the Sanctuary   Livestream	<b>8</b> 12p L.I.F.E. Group   Blackwell 1p JOY Fellowship Meeting in FCR	<b>9</b> 9:30a Staff Meeting 6p Session Meeting	<b>10</b> 9a WWW Group 10a Yoga 10:30a Dotterweich 4p Knitters/ Crocheters/Stitchers 5:45p Couples Disciple 6p Dotterweich 7p Saunders	<b>11</b> 8a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study 12p Church & Community Luncheon in Barron Hall	<b>12</b> 7a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study (G1) 10a Tai Chi	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> 8:45a Worship in Barron Hall 9:45a Sunday School 11a Worship in the Sanctuary   Livestream	<b>15</b> Church Office Closed	<b>16</b> 9a FISH Ministry 9:30a Staff Meeting	<b>17</b> 9a WWW Group 10a Yoga 10:30a Dotterweich 4p Knitters/ Crocheters/Stitchers 5:45p Couples Disciple 6p Dotterweich 7p Saunders	<b>18</b> 8a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study	<b>19</b> 7a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study (G2) 10a Tai Chi	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 8:45a Worship in Barron Hall 9:45a Sunday School 11a Annual Meeting 11a Worship in the Sanctuary   Livestream 5:30-7:00p Youth SNF	<b>22</b> 10a Yoga 12p L.I.F.E. Group   Blackwell	<b>23</b> 9:30a Staff Meeting 6:30p Deacon Meeting	<b>24</b> 9a WWW Group 10a Yoga 10:30a Dotterweich 4p Knitters/ Crocheters/Stitchers 4:30p KidsPraise Choir 6p Dotterweich 7p Saunders 7p Chancel Choir	<b>25</b> 8a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study	<b>26</b> 7a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study (G2) 10a Tai Chi	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 8:45a Worship in Barron Hall 9:45a Sunday School 11a Worship in the Sanctuary   Livestream 5:30-7:00p Youth SNF	<b>29</b> 10a Yoga 12p L.I.F.E. Group   Blackwell 2p Monday Movie Matinee	<b>30</b> 9:30a Staff Meeting	<b>31</b> 9a WWW Group 10a Yoga 10:30a Dotterweich 4p Knitters/ Crocheters/Stitchers 4:30p KidsPraise Choir 5p Gale/Kimmey 5:45p Couples Disciple 6p Dotterweich 7p Saunders 7p Chancel Choir			

MARK YOUR CALENDARS  
for Sunday, February 11  
| Staying Connected Brunch

Christian Formation and Congregational Life are hosting a brunch on Sunday, February 11, during the Sunday school hour in Barron Hall. This is an opportunity for everyone, regardless of which worship service or Sunday school class you attend, to connect.



YOU DON'T  
WANT TO  
MISS THIS!

February 18-19  
| Our Annual Winter  
Speaker Series with  
Rev. Steve Cuss

Rev. Steven Cuss will lead our series focusing on managing anxiety and stress and how to

increase wellbeing and connection to our most precious relationships: with ourselves, our people, and with God. Find out more about Rev. Cuss on his website <https://www.stevecusswords.com/>

MEN'S  
RETREAT

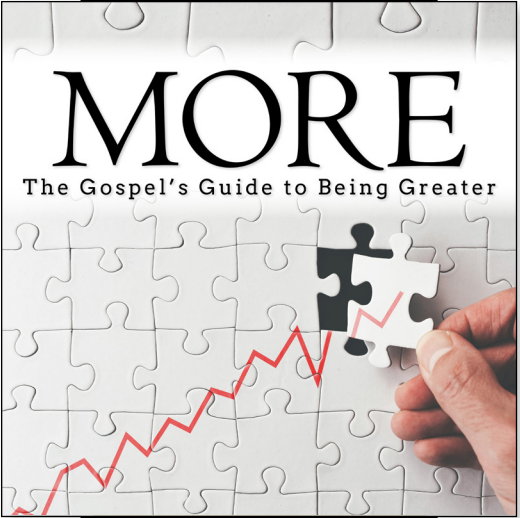
February 16-18 | Blowing Rock, NC | at the Green Park Inn

Fellowship Time, Meals in the Chestnut Grille, Large and Small Groups, Hiking, Fishing, Skiing, Beverage Tasting, “Holy Smokes” on the patio, and more. During our time together we’ll take a closer look at “Anger, Strengthening our daily walk with God in relationship to family, friends, and life without constraining ourselves.”

The cost is \$204/person and includes Saturday and Sunday breakfast, and lodging (double occupancy; each guy has his own queen bed). Registration and a \$100 deposit are due by January 15. The final payment is due by January 30. Space is limited so sign up now: <https://rb.gy/bo98iz>! Contact Rev. Ben Garris at <mailto:bgarris@sequoyahchurch.org> for more information.



JOIN US  
JANUARY 7 THROUGH  
FEBRUARY 11 FOR  
OUR SERMON SERIES,  
“MORE: THE GOSPEL’S  
GUIDE TO BEING  
GREATER”



The Last Must Be First  
& The First Must Be Last

How easy is it to compare ourselves to others? How easy is it to let our sense of “greatness” be defined by things other than God?

Christ taught about this often. As his disciples followed him, they increasingly became concerned with how they stacked up in comparison to one another and would ask their Lord and Teacher just who would be the greatest among them.

It was to that that Christ turned everything on its head: “Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant” (Mark 10:43). Become greater by becoming a servant, by lowering yourself, by putting others’ interests and well-being above your own.

Such a mindset runs counter to everything they had heard otherwise, and it’s revolutionary even today.

This month, as we gather in the new year, I invite you to consider, yes, how you might improve. Embrace those resolutions. Embrace new disciplines. But may we temper all that drive to better ourselves with Christ’s topsy-turvy call that all our efforts toward greatness be geared toward serving all.



## Help Us Welcome Recent New Members



Pictured alphabetically above from left to right: Davis and Mary Emily Berry | Chris and Rachel Hill (Jack and Beth) | Mark and Cathy Layne | Andrew and Carol Seamons | Will Sterchi and Jessica Brinkley | Mary Cioffi-Welsh and Joseph Welsh (Gia)



# Women's Retreat

March 2-3 | Dream More Resort in Dollywood with Laura Miller leading us in a study of the Beatitudes.

The retreat includes Saturday meals, Sunday breakfast, snacks, and one night's lodging! Pricing is \$175 for double occupancy; \$275 for single occupancy. Registration and a \$100 deposit due by January 5. The final payment is due by February 15. Scholarships are available. Contact Janna Preston at 522-9804, ext 123. Please register by January 5, use direct link now: <https://rb.gy/1ygwao>  
Questions? Rev. Janna Preston <mailto:jpreston@sequoyahchurch.org>  
or Bonnie Marret <mailto:bmarret@att.net>.

# JOY Fellowship

**JOY Fellowship brings a lot of Joy to our “more mature” members of the church.**

I recently came across a card from the past, from one of our members who thanked the staff and all who “give their time and talents to the senior members to make their lives more meaningful and exciting.” She continued saying, “the church is a very important part of my life and I am sure that I express the feelings of other seniors.” So, thank you Joy Fellowship Committee, for making others’ lives meaningful, exciting, and connected to others. -Rev. Janna Preston

Joy Fellowship found great JOY during this Advent Season with a presentation by SHEEP Preschool's Bluebirds, Yellow Ducks, and Orange Tigers as they brought us beautiful Christmas music for our special December Community Luncheon. Thank you, SHEEP children and teachers! You filled our hearts with Joy and Peace! (If you weren't able to come, you can see some of it on our new church app.) See photos to the left of the December luncheon.

**On Thursday, January 11, at noon in Barron Hall, JOY Fellowship invites you to a luncheon with Ashlind Bray from Restoration House.** We will have a boxed lunch from Firehouse Subs. The cost of lunch is \$10. RSVP by January 9 by calling the church at 865.522.9804 to make a reservation and to let us know if you need a ride. Questions: email Janna Preston at <mailto:jpreston@sequoyahchurch.org>. We will look forward to seeing you.

**On January 29, we will enjoy our Movie Matinee at 2:00 in the Fowler Conference Room.** The featured movie will be “Ticket to Paradise,” with Julia Roberts and George Clooney. It should be a lot of fun, and we’ll have popcorn and drinks. Come and invite a friend!

**December brought the Advent Family Workshop, Chancel Choir Concert: A Celebration of Christmas, Annual Trip to Roses Creek, Out of Darkness: Service for Hope and Healing, KidsPraise Concert, SHEEP Christmas Pageant, Lessons and Carols Service, Candlelight and Communion Christmas Eve Service, Happy Birthday Jesus Party with the two and three year-olds, and much more.**





# Almighty God,

We come before You in praise and adoration for Your name alone is Holy, Holy, Holy. From the Beginning, You knew we would need a Savior (Genesis 3:15). We have just celebrated Your most precious gift to us as You promised (Numbers 24: 17; Isaiah 9:6) with the birth of Christ Jesus (Matthew: Luke). We give thanks daily for Your willingness to leave the glory of Heaven so each and every one of us could have everlasting life through belief in You. “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us; We have seen His Glory, the Glory of the One and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). May we continue to embrace and share with others Your Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy throughout this New Year.

We ask that You renew our wonder at the miracle of Christmas as the Holy Spirit guides and teaches us of Your ways and that we may continue to be transformed into Your likeness until You lead us home.

We will soon have the opportunity to celebrate Ash Wednesday on February 14, 2024 (true love John 15: 13) and to deepen our faith through repentance and belief in the Gospel. As Reverend Andrew Murray shared, may we “Yield yourselves in simple childlike surrender to the cleansing work of His Word and Spirit, and you may count upon it that His purpose will be fulfilled in you.” As we have been blessed, may we welcome all and serve in His name. “For even as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10: 45)

Dear God, during this wintertime, may we be like the buds preparing for Spring and thanking You always for the gift of eternal life. May the gift of the Holy Spirit grow within us so we may do Your will.

- As Marian Wright Edelman expressed: we pray
- “To see You in everyone I meet today.
- To sense You in all I hear today.
- To reflect You in all I do today.
- To pray to and trust You in all I experience today.
- To struggle to be like You in all I am today.
- To speak of and for You in all I say today.
- To thank You for everything every day.”

In Jesus’ Name we Pray, Amen. -SHPC Prayer Committee

# Youth Ministries



**We are thrilled to kick-off the 2023-24 Confirmation Class, with seventeen students strong.** Confirmands are listed below alphabetically with their sponsors, not as shown in photo above.

- Anna Benko | Meg Lampley
- Alex Lindsay | Vance Link
- Emory Carter | Randy Fields
- Weston Daniel | Cliff Rodgers
- Emma Doiron | Lauren Hall
- Anna Doiron | Stephanie Daniel
- Edward Brabham | Johnathan Fortner
- Chloe Dye | Dorothy Moseley
- Jackson Dye | Mark Benko
- Madeline Martin | Karen Lampley
- Mac Kuester | Matt Reed
- Caroline White | Katie Culvern
- Charlotte LeRoy | Cammy Glover
- Quinn Saunders | Burt Bagley
- Luke Bacon | Ned Babb
- Lila Melson | Ginny Lyon
- Caroline Copenhaver | Julie Cornell



## Missionary Spotlight John McCall in Taiwan

John travels throughout Taiwan teaching courses on ministry and spiritual formation to leaders of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. He facilitates mentoring relationships between older and younger pastors, as well as churches seeking to serve the growing population of urban areas. He also teaches courses at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Taipei. -Kent and Dianna Koebke, International Missionaries Co-Chairs



**On November 29th, the students of SHPC joined six other Presbyterian churches and helped bring light into the Lonsdale community.** If you search “Light up Lonsdale,” you can find the students of Sequoyah featured on the local NBC channel and also in the Knoxville newspaper.



**On Wednesday, Dec 6, we had an awesome evening of fellowship. We decorated 82 cookies and sprinkled a lot of joy into each other’s lives.**



**On Sunday, Dec. 10, we had our end-of-year Christmas Party.** We had 27 students show up for a delicious meal, a gift exchange, and some crazy games. It was a great way to wrap up SNF for the year. We are looking forward to a great next semester. Put Sunday, February 4, on your calendar, it’s Youth Sunday!

**Thank you** to everyone who has said hello to me and made my family feel at home. Robyn and I feel blessed to call Sequoyah home. Be on the lookout for a possible hire of a new full-time assistant. I also hope that we can get our students more engaged in serving our church and alongside church members. Praise God for the confirmation class. Keep all 17 students and their sponsors in your prayers. We look forward to growing closer to our church family in the new year. If we haven’t connected, please feel free to say hello! We wish you and your family a healthy and happy new year. -Brandon Bajema | Youth Director



# SEQUOYAH HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3700 Keowee Avenue | Knoxville, Tennessee 37919  
865.522.9804. | sequoyahchurch.org

## 01.24

**Our Meal Ministry** | SHPC has some great cooks, and our Meal Team is ready to help any member of our congregation at a time of need, such as illness, recovery, loss, or welcoming a new baby into your home. If this ministry could help you or someone you know, please text or email Helen Bruner at (865) 368-4107, <mailto:helen.bruner44@gmail.com>, or Jennifer White at (865) 363-9684, <mailto:jennifer6178@hotmail.com>. If you would like to participate in this ministry and furnish a meal to someone in need, please let us know!

## CHURCH RECORDS

### DEATHS

Margaret Rodgers  
Saturday, December 23

Retta Ellis  
Thursday, December 21

Ashley Stamper  
Friday, December 8

Dale Dyslin  
Monday, December 4



### SHPC Annual Meeting on

**Sunday, January 21 | 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary**

Business includes presenting the 2024 budget; electing officers; and pastors' terms of call.