



# Reflections

## *“The Greatest Blessing?”*

*By Stefano Mugnaini*

What is the greatest blessing promised us by God? Is it peace or comfort or joy, as is commonly sung in Christmas songs? Is it wealth and financial security, health and miraculous freedom from pain as promoted by greedy, televangelist racketeers in exchange for “love offerings?” Or do his promises transcend the temporal and material?

In the Old Testament, God’s works were clearly pointed out by the Prophets, and they were often done to further God’s ultimate plan to bring the Son into the world. In the New Testament, Christ and His apostles were busy healing and performing great, clear signs in confirmation of the message. But then something changed. I be-

lieve the change is related to two statements Jesus made. In John 18:36, He said, “My kingdom is not of this world; if it were, my servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews.” The second, uttered before He died on the cross, was “it is finished.”

Jesus, in fulfilling his mission, offering Himself for sin, and establishing his kingdom, fundamentally changed the relationship between God and man. He inaugurated a new and holy way through the veil—he prepared for us a path to reconciliation. Moreover, He changed the fundamental focus of the religion of God. It was no longer about land, prosperity, earthly happiness, of comfort. It was about coming

home.

God still answers prayer, still heals the sick, strengthens the weary, and gives us the peace to pillow our heads at night; but these are not the greatest of his promises. These relate to Earth, to our temporal existence, to the flesh. Our God exists beyond the flesh, beyond time, beyond space, and his promises relate to eternity. Jesus said, in John 14:2: “...for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, you may be also.” It is a promise of reunion. Reunion with God, our Father, with Jesus, our Savior. It is a reunion with family and friends that have gone on before, with those heroes of the Bible

Church Office : 843-556-1792

Church Fax: 843-556-6085

Email: church@essexvillage.org

Website: www.essexvillage.org

### Schedule of Services

Sunday

Class: 9:00 am

Worship: 10:00 am

Worship: 6:00 pm

Wednesday

7:00 pm



**For the Record  
Week of 12-23-07**

**Communion &  
Baptismal Garments**

**Program of  
Worship**

- Ava Bullard*
- Helen Embry*
- Mark Embry*
- Scotty Hall*
- Mildred Inabinett*
- Leonard McNeill*
- Lois Ott*

Bible Classes:  
AM Worship:  
PM Worship:  
Wednesday Evening: 46  
Contribution: \$2,302.00

**Prepare Communion:**  
Christine Herman  
January: Doris Akers  
**Baptismal Garments:**  
Faye Spence  
January: Kim Koontz  
**Elder of the Month:**  
Howard Streets 766-7727

**Announcements:**  
Howard Streets  
**Song Service:**  
Roddy Akers  
**Opening Prayer:**  
Larry Casbeer  
**Communion:**  
Jim Lamm  
**Sermon:**  
Stefano Mugnaini  
**Closing Prayer:**  
Ethan Dee



**We Are Praying For...**

**Military**

- Robert Bagley*
- Kristopher Black*
- Adam Bowles*
- Chris Branham*
- Adam Carlucci*
- Russell Coble*
- Barry Collins*
- James Dalton*
- Mark Fiorey*
- Ellis Flenoid*
- Steven Hilton*
- Michael Hilton*
- Matthew Lemieux*
- Katie McCaskill*
- Kevin Mitchell*

**Nikolas** is in remission but will undergo chemo for two years and has a long road ahead. Nik is the nephew of Angela Noyes.

**Dixie Akers**, Royce's sister-in-law, is now at home on medication to dissolve the 4 blood clots she has from her last surgery. Please send cards to 204 Edney Ridge Road, Greensboro, NC 27408.

**Mike Allen**, preacher for Chesapeake Church of Christ, has bone cancer. Gary Moody has requested prayers for him.

**Durwood Collins, Sr.**, Durwood's father, is at home recuperating.

**Maxine Doll** had a pacemaker put in and has other health problems. Maxine is Pam Ragland's mother.

**John Donan**, Norma's cousin, has terminal bladder cancer.

**Dennis Flatley**, a friend of Jim Lamm, is currently undergoing chemo to treat his cancer.

**Duke Gregory**, Doris & Janie's brother, is being transferred to an assisted living rehab hospital. Please send cards to G. Duke Gregory Moses Care Hospital, McMinnville, TN.

**Wesley Hahn** is in need of prayers for his health and employment. His mother is a close friend of Faye Spence.

**Clara Haselden** is in Roper Hospital recuperating from surgery. She was diagnosed with cancer and will undergo chemo treatments.

**Debra Langford**, sister-in-law of Carl Bowles, had a stroke. Debra lives in Georgetown.

**Nell McIntire** has cancer and is the sister of Lois Ott.

**Margaret Mills**, a member of Cairo Church of Christ, had a heart attack.

**Melissa Murray** is being treated for cancer, please keep Melissa and her family in your prayers.

**Lauren Parker**, a friend of Gin-

nie Streets, has cancer and is not doing well.

**John Price**, friend of Faye Spence, has cancer and is in stage 4. Faye has requested prayers for him and his wife, Pat.

**Candice Spence**, needs our prayers for health problems and is the granddaughter of Chuck & Faye.

**Marcia Steckel** is undergoing chemo for breast cancer. Marcia is a friend of Sharon Rush.

**John Torres**, Johnny Murray's brother-in-law, has cancer and is not doing well.

**Verdie Whitson** has been released from the hospital and is in Trinity Rehab Center.



**Thanks for  
praying!**

## Here's What is Happening...

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### Nursery

We have an attended nursery for anyone that has a need for one. If you would like to help with the nursery, please see Louise Rogers.

### Bible Bowl

Bible bowl teams have formed, but there's still room for you. We will begin our group studies on the first Sunday in January from 1-5. Come check us out. We eat

supper together at 5. If you'd like to provide a meal and/or eat with us, see Sandra Dee.

### Food Pantry

Due to the holidays, the food pantry is low. If you would like to contribute to the pantry we could use the following items: peanut butter, jelly, canned meats and vegetables. Thanks to everyone for making this work possible.



### *Happy Anniversary!*

12/31

Ron & Christine

Herman



Please remember in your prayers those traveling during the Christmas holiday.

## Condolences

We would like to express our condolences to Mac & Agnes McLawhorn. Agnes' sister, Beulah Faye Romans, and her brother-in-law, James D. Romans, both passed away on Friday, December 21st within 1 hour of each other.

## "The Greatest Blessing?"

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whose faith inspires us. And it is reunion is a place where "...God himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain..."

When we suffer illness, sadness, and loss, let us never forget that God's greatest blessing, the ulti-

mate answer to all our prayers, and the hope for which we live was purchased with the death of our glorious Lord. It is not peace and prosperity, but going home to be with God. How blessed it is to live with such a hope!



### *Happy Birthday!*

12/29

Eric Zinc

01/03

Tina Cooper

## **Bulletin Board**

### **Youth Rally**

When: January 26, 2008

Theme: One Goal No Limits

Speaker: Craig Shackelford of Middleton, Tennessee

Where: St. Andrews Road Church of Christ in Columbia, SC

### **Revival/ Gospel Meeting**

When: January 6th - 9th

Theme: God's Plan Is Great for 2008

Speaker: Michael Griggs of the Azalea Drive Church of Christ

Where: Church of Christ in St. Stephen, SC

### **Ladies Retreat**

When: Saturday, January 26, 2008

Theme: "Women of Power Running For Jesus"

Speaker: Sister Olivia Guest White

Where: Church of Christ at Johns Island

### **ELDERS**

Larry Casbeer	795-0429
Howard Streets	766-7727
David Wakeland	766-3601

### **MINISTER**

Stefano Mugnaini	329-3704
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### **DEACONS**

Rick Porter	556-2679
Activities	
Jim Lamm	556-6756
Benevolence	
Lloyd McLawhorn	556-6709
Worship	
Roddy Akers	559-3565
Song Service	
Larry Polutta	795-5266
World Bible School	
Bill Ragland	556-6711
Building Maintenance	
Hilton Googe	766-4670
Lynn Smallwood	766-8579
Grounds	
Eddie Haselden	767-5511
Financial	
Durwood Collins	869-4199
Youth Activities	

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**Essex Village Church of Christ**  
**736 Savage Road**  
**Charleston, SC 29414**