

Joy IN THE JOURNEY

Activities & Service Opportunities of Mayfair Church of Christ

Bienvenidos (Welcome), Alfonso and Itzy Sanchez

By Denton Kimbrough

In 2023, Diego Nava, from the Westlawn Church of Christ, approached the elders with a request for us to consider hiring a full-time minister for Westlawn (preferably a married couple so that they could minister to families and individuals). We prayerfully considered that request and soon Diego and the elders began that search. God answered our prayers and led us to Alfonso Sanchez and his wife, Itzy. Alfonso was no stranger to us as he graduated from our Baja Bible Institute. After Diego met with Alfonso, he highly recommended him for consideration and the elders agreed that he was the man for the job and that Itzy would be a valuable asset.



Itzy and Alfonso Sanchez

Our greatest challenge was that neither Alfonso nor Itzy had a visa that would permit them to come to the U.S. God led us to an immigration attorney who helped guide us through the slow, arduous process of securing proper visas. Her recommendation was for them to secure a religious visa. Prayers were lifted up to the Father from Alfonso and Itzy in Baja and us as we laboriously filed the proper paperwork with Homeland Security. After working, waiting, and praying for about a year, their application for visa status was finally approved. In the spring of this year, Alfonso and Itzy sold their possessions in Baja, made



their way across the border, and flew to Huntsville. The church greeted them with open arms.

From the moment they arrived, Alfonso and Itzy have been busy working, serving, and sharing Jesus both within the church and within our local Latino community. Numerous people have been baptized into Christ since they began their work. We thank God for bringing this sweet couple to Huntsville, and we know that God's hand has been and continues to be on them.

We are confident that God has great things in store for the Westlawn Church through the efforts of Alfonso and Itzy, as well as Urias Villanueva who also came to us from Baja. Alfonso and Urias make an awesome team as they help grow the Kingdom in this area.

So that you might know Alfonso and Itzy better, I asked them a few questions:

Tell us about growing up in Mexico. Where did you grow up? What was life like there? What about your families?

Alfonso: I was born in Monclova, a city in the state of Coahuila, a very hot and desert place. Monclova is a few hours from Eagle Pass, Texas. Most of my family still lives there. I am the third of four children. My mom was one of the first in our family to come to the Lord. She was one of my strongest influences for

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Christ. One of the oldest memories I have with her is a phrase she told me when I was a child, and I didn't fully understand the things of the church. She said, "The time will come when you love God more than me." At that time, it was impossible for me to think that I could love anyone more than my mother, but she was right. My father came to know Jesus when I was 18 years old. My father is a hardworking man and always asks good questions; he is a living testimony that Christ can change people.

Itzy: I was born and raised in Toluca, Mexico. It is a city in the center of Mexico, about 45 minutes from Mexico City. I like it there because it has cool weather and lots of rain during the year. My mother and father still live there. I am the oldest of three children. I have two brothers.

Share with us about the church where you grew up and how you came to know Jesus.

Alfonso: I attended the LaOccidental Church of Christ where most of my mother's family were church members - grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Since I was born, my mom took me to church. When I was 13 years old, the power of the gospel confronted me. I remembered we were singing "Redeemed, How I Love To Proclaim It." In my mind I was thinking that I need to go up front and be baptized, but I was motionless. I believe my grandfather, Hector, noticed that so he bumped his shoulder into mine and helped move my feet to respond and be baptized. Growing up in this church allowed me to have the opportunity to experience God from a very early age. Several of my uncles were elders, my grandfather was a deacon, and my uncle was a preacher.

Itzy: We came to the church when I was about 14-15 years old. My mom was the first one who came to Jesus, and she took me and my brothers every Sunday to church. I was baptized when I was 16 years old and was a part of the youth group. Toluca Church of Christ has about 150 members. When I was a teenager, it was a little difficult for me to get involved with the church, but when I was about 27, I decided to study at the Bible Institute in Toluca and get involved with the youth ministry, specifically with

the girls. It was an experience that I remember with great joy because it made me grow spiritually and strengthened my relationship with God and with the church.

Alfonso, tell us about your time at BBI and how it prepared you for ministry.

In my opinion, the Baja Bible Institute (BBI) is the most equipped Bible School in Mexico. It was a blessing for me to have the opportunity to be a student at this institute and to be mentored by the director, Liberato Ovalle. He is someone who has a great deal of experience in ministry. The Institute prepared me for ministry with a focus on serving others and helping others to be more like Christ.



Westlawn minister, Alfonso Sanchez assists a young lady in her baptism

The immigration process was laborious and slow. Tell us about your experience regarding this year of waiting. What did you learn?

When the process started, we prayed for God to show us His will. The attorney guided us very well through this difficult and time-consuming process. The first challenge we faced was obtaining all the documentation requested. There were documents that we had to wait almost three months to obtain. During all that time God confirmed to us that He continued to work on it. We learned at the end of our immigration process that God is in control, and we need to be totally dependent on Him. When we arrived at the visa authorization interview, we saw the hand of God taking control of the people who

(Continued from page 2)

attended and guided us because, thanks to Him, all the process went smoothly.

Share with us how you felt when the immigration status was approved, and you began the transition to move to Huntsville.

When the visas were approved, we felt happy and amazed. All the time we waited, now it was being finalized and the move and transition began. So, during the transition we had a combination of emotions, very happy for God's call to come to Huntsville and a feeling of sadness saying goodbye to the spiritual family that we left in Ensenada. All the brothers and sisters there encouraged us and supported us in the transition. When we arrived in Huntsville, we were greeted by a beautiful community of faith who supported us to settle in. The Mayfair and Westlawn churches know how to love, and we could feel that powerful love toward us as they received us and made us a part of their family.

How do you feel about living in Huntsville and being minister at Westlawn?

For us it is a privilege to be here and serve the Westlawn church and community. We are excited about God's plans for this church and for being a part of them. Being a minister at Westlawn is a beautiful responsibility, and I enjoy carrying it out with the help of fine brethren.

Now that you are here, what are your goals for the Westlawn church? What strengths have you found there that have encouraged you as you begin your ministry?

Our goals for Westlawn are to help each member to be more like Jesus. We will try to focus on every event, teaching opportunity, and activity toward the goal to be transformed into the image of Christ. Westlawn is a congregation that has a great spirit to work and learn new things and this encourages us as we feel supported by them to carry out God's work. Our vision for Westlawn is to grow in every way, train and develop leaders, and impact the Hispanic community with the powerful and loving gospel of Christ.

How can we help you? How can we pray for both of you and your ministry?

Always, keep us in your prayers, please. Ask God to bring us closer to the people who are seeking Him, for the leaders who are being trained, for our children who are being instructed. It would help us a lot if you could share with your Hispanic acquaintances about the work at Westlawn.

¹ As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. ... ⁵ May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance (2 Thessalonians 3:1, 5 NIV).



Westlawn Iglesia De Cristo

Treats For First Responders

By Keith Hodges, Senior Life Minister

Following the tragic murder of Huntsville police officer Garrett Crumby in March 2023, Mayfair Church of Christ made our facilities available for the visitation and funeral, as well as providing rooms for family, Huntsville Police Honor Guard, and dignitaries. Mayfair has done this before and continues to do it when the need is present. The “Funeral Ministry Team” and staff come together to provide the optimum service for all who come to our building during those difficult times.

Following Officer Crumby’s passing, the “Living Beyond” ministry in conjunction with the “Senior Life Ministry” began providing weekly snacks and treats for police officers and firefighters. These items are brought to the Classics classroom on Sundays, to the “JOY Class” on Wednesday afternoons, or to my office throughout the week.



Mayfair Senior Life Minister Keith Hodges delivers treats to first responders

Since its inception, several have delivered these treats to Huntsville’s three police stations, to the police station in Madison, and several of Huntsville’s fire stations. They are always received joyfully and appreciatively. With the cookies and other snacks, we also leave a nice greeting card prepared by our artistic administrative staff with a greeting from the Mayfair Church of Christ that says, “THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE. We are thankful for you and keep you in our prayers.”

Although spearheaded by two ministries composed of senior members, all are encouraged to participate in providing these gifts to our first responders. You may bring your treats at any time, but we have a suggested schedule based on the first letter of your last name (see below). This helps keep it organized and maintains monthly participation.

Schedule: 1st Week of the month (Last name begins with A - F); 2nd Week (G - L); 3rd Week (M - R), 4th Week (S - Z); 5th Week (Anyone unable to participate earlier that month).



“Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life” (Proverbs 16:31 ESV)

In this issue of JOY in the Journey, we continue our series on Mayfair’s Senior Members, who truly wear a “Crown of Glory.” This month, we learn more about Joyce Hall.

Joyce Hall

by Ryan Hall

Joyce Hall was born April 25, 1934, to John D. & Jewell “Granny Jewell” Adcox in Huntingdon, TN. While her childhood would not be characterized by material wealth, she was blessed beyond measure with a close, Godly family. Although the world was dealing with The Great Depression and World War II, her life was filled with love, peace, and simplicity. Memories of time spent with uncles, aunts, cousins, and friends on her grandfather’s farm fill conversations reminiscent of happy times.

Joyce was baptized at 11 during an old-fashioned tent meeting at Anark Church of Christ, located beside the family farm in west Tennessee. As was typical in those days, the baptistry was a small creek near the church.



Joyce Hall in her younger days



Joyce Hall with her three children: Lori Smith, Renee Copeland and Ryan Hall

After 7th grade, she moved to Nashville with her mother and younger sister, Darlene. She worked at various jobs, including Kuhn’s Five & Dime, Nashville Linen Service, and Southern Builders to help support her family while she attended Cohn High School. Hard work and helping others have always been a big part of her life. She graduated from Cohn High School and briefly attended Nashville Business College.

During that time, Granny Jewell worked at the Belle Meade Biscuit Company and those long hours in the kitchen certainly paid off. Family and many friends have enjoyed her biscuits and gravy throughout her years on earth. Granny Jewell lived with Joyce and her family from 1976 until she passed away in 1993. She could always be heard humming or singing an old Christian hymn, but usually singing the words of one song to the melody of another. It didn’t matter. Granny was a woman of love and faith in her Savior.

Joyce met Roy Hall in Nashville. Roy was a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne stationed at Fort Campbell, KY. He liked to say they met at a bar, but Joyce would disagree with that recollection. They had mutual friends and after a night of playing cards at a friend’s house, Roy called and asked Joyce if she

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

would like to go on a date, and the rest, as they say, is history. They were married on December 15, 1956, after a 'long' six-month courtship.

Roy had a bricklaying job arranged back in his hometown of Gary, Indiana after he left the service, but Joyce had other ideas. She reached out to men at their church and "Fessor" Boyce said he would be able to help get him enrolled at Lipscomb College. Within two and half years, Roy had earned his degree (as had Joyce since she did much of the work). He then enrolled in law school at Cumberland School of Law. The law school was sold to Howard College (current day Samford University) in Birmingham requiring them to move there for Roy to finish his final year. This was the first of several moves the young couple experienced.

Over the years Roy and Joyce have lived in Nashville, Lebanon (TN), Birmingham, Springfield (VA), and Taipei, Taiwan, but Huntsville has always been 'home' after landing here in 1966.

Joyce has always loved to travel. When Roy asked if she wanted to move to Taiwan for two years, she quickly replied, "Sure! Where is it?"

The number of places she has visited on trips with church friends and groups remains countless. Some of her most epic journeys have been with her friend of almost 60 years, Phyllis Ridley, as they traveled the country following the Alabama football



Roy and Joyce Hall

team. From the Rose Bowl to Miami and everywhere in between.

They once found themselves walking to the stadium at LSU, and as the crowd parted for them, they realized they were 'leading' the Tiger Walk as the LSU team made their way into the stadium...fully adorned in Crimson.

Joyce is the mother of 3 children: Renee Copeland (Mike), Lori Smith (John Paul), and Ryan (Lea Ann). Mike, Renee, John Paul, and Lori live in Huntsville while Ryan and Lea Ann live in Birmingham. Joyce has been blessed with eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren (with 3 more on the way).

Roy passed away in 1995 after a multi-year battle with cancer. After his initial diagnosis, as a true example of God's graciousness, he and Joyce were able to spend two years enjoying life together. Most importantly, and largely due to the unwavering example of his Christian wife, Roy returned to faith in Christ during that time.

Today, Joyce finds purpose using her talents in the World Bible School program at Mayfair. Last count, she's been a part of over 3,000 baptisms resulting from her and others' work in this service.



Joyce Hall and Phyllis Ridley cheer on Alabama

CORRECTION

The April 2024 issue included an article on Johnnie Swaim as part of our ongoing "Crown of Glory" series on our members over 90. We neglected to mention her oldest daughter, Jeri Kirkpatrick, and her husband Tim, who are former Mayfair members. We are happy to make that correction.

Give Me the Feet of a Deer

By Dick Savage

Several places in Scripture refer to God making our feet “like hinds’ feet” (Psalm 18:33; 2 Samuel 22:34; and Habakkuk 3:19). More modern translations speak of “the feet of a deer.” This metaphoric language describes the blessings that the presence of God brings to a situation. This expression describes the journey of a person learning to overcome fear and suffering like a deer leaping over obstacles.

The deer referenced here can be described as a graceful, swift, and sure-footed animal that can climb sheer rocky cliffs and never stumble or fall. In climbing, the deer can place her back feet exactly where her front feet are, thus needing only two sturdy foot-rests instead of four. She can scamper across what appears to be a vertical cliff, unafraid and undeterred by seemingly impassable terrain.

The deer at this altitude seems unimpressed with the view of God’s creation. It is because the feet of the deer are so adapted to climbing that they can reach these heights. Whether chasing other deer, evading danger, or simply running, their muscular hind legs propel them forward. The front legs act like pivot points to make sharp turns. But it is the hooves that make it all possible.

The prophet, Habakkuk, declares in chapter 3 verse 19, that the Sovereign Lord is his strength. He acknowledges by this statement that he has no strength of his own. And by calling the Lord, “Sovereign,” he recognizes that whatever his difficult circumstances may be, God is the One in control. Rather than focusing on his limitations, Habakkuk sees God leading him to the heights, enabling him to stand confident and sure-footed! Habakkuk is not living in his circumstances but above them!

Without God’s help and strength, I am unsure and wobbly. When the path is level, I can do well. The problem is that my life is seldom smooth. My path is strewn with pits and obstacles. My circumstances trip me up. Instead of relying on Him, I frequently try to maneuver on my own. In doing so, my head is down, and I miss the heights with their fantastic views. I need God’s help and strength every day. When He answers my cry, He enables me to stand on the heights and enjoy the view of His faithfulness!

That is the picture the inspired writers draw for us when they describe their sure-footed reliance on the Lord in times of crisis. Habakkuk had cried out to God about the sinful condition of his nation, and he had questions about the methods God used to correct the situation. But, like the psalmists, Habakkuk did not stop just by penning his frustration; he continued wrestling with his confusion until the Lord brought him to a place of resolution. Then he expresses his faith in the face of troubled times:

17 Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! ¹⁹ The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights (Habakkuk 3:17–19 NLT).



When we run with the “feet of the deer” in high places, we live above our circumstances. God gives us the grace, courage, and inner strength we need to press on to attain new heights and experience new vistas. With the swiftness of a deer, we can escape our enemies and gain freedom. All this is because “*the Sovereign LORD is my strength.*” Regardless of what others may do, we keep our eyes securely fastened on the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:2). We run with endurance the race set before us (Hebrews 12:1) and refuse to give up until God calls us home (Philippians 3:12–14). We watch with amazement as He accomplishes His work in and through us, and we give Him all the praise and glory (Romans 11:36; Philippians 4:20). We shake off the temptation to live for ourselves, and like a deer on a mountain slope,

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

we step boldly into whatever God has called us to do. During trying times, it is easy to become overwhelmed with discouragement. Habakkuk lived in trying times, but his solution was to redirect his attention to the Lord.

God is the Solid Rock that never fails (Psalm 144:1–2). With God’s promises as our strong foundation, we can walk in freedom and courage, as unafraid and undaunted as a deer leaping in high places.

Surely you have seen goats, sheep, or deer (or maybe pictures of them) walking on very treacherous mountain trails. I am amazed that they can travel there with such ease. No doubt David as a shepherd watched animals in Israel running down steep slopes in a way that we could never do. I believe this prompted David to write these words recorded in 2

Praise the Lord, who is my rock. He trains my hands for war and gives my fingers skill for battle. He is my loving ally and my fortress, my tower of safety, my rescuer. He is my shield, and I take refuge in him. He makes the nations submit to me (Psalm 144:1-2 NLT).

Samuel 22:34.

I am confident that Habakkuk was familiar with David’s writings when he wrote his words. I am afraid that my prayer has often been that God would make my way easy and that he would remove the struggles. I have been wrong. I now believe that a more appropriate prayer would be that God would make me surefooted and give me the right kind of feet I need to face the struggles that come. In struggles, we really get to know God and recognize our total dependence upon Him.

Getting to Know Your Elders

We continue our series on getting acquainted with our Mayfair elders by learning about Nobie Stone and his family, their history and how they came to be at Mayfair.

Nobie Stone

When I was growing up, my family attended the Methodist Church in Port St. Joe, Florida, where Dad was on the board of trustees. Christianity was a strongly held belief and way of life for my family. One weekend during the summer of 1949, I had finished first grade and school was out, so we went to the beach for a family excursion of a picnic, racing, and dune climbing. On Sunday after church, my dad left to drive to Tallahassee where he had been working during the summers on a PhD in history at Florida State University... I would never see him again.

On Tuesday we learned that Dad had become critically ill. We all prayed for God to spare his life, but a couple of days later my dad died. On the previous Saturday, Dad and I had raced on the beach and climbed the sand dunes. The very next Saturday we had his funeral and then we came home...Dad was gone! And in the deafening silence, even at seven, I had to ask, “Where is God?”

Mom was distraught. She pulled herself together and taught school that fall, but grief remained a struggle for her—as it did for me. Mom buried herself in school work and I spent a lot of time, when



Nobie and Margaret Stone

not in school, chasing fiddler crabs down at the bay with my friends. One does not think about the weightier issues of human mortality when chasing fiddler crabs!

People often blame God in such circumstances. I never did. My response was much worse. To become angry at something, you must believe it to exist. For me, however, prayer seemed hollow and ineffective—like a phone conversation with nobody on the other end of the line. I didn’t blame God because, over the years, I concluded that he simply didn’t exist.

Mom loved and respected God. She was a lady of great faith, but in her generation “irreverent” ques-

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

tions were not to be asked. I couldn't raise the question underlying my doubts: "How do we know that God really exists?" This question would go unanswered for another ten years, and it (or rather, the lack of an answer) formed the basis for my descent into agnosticism.

With money I was able to save, and a couple of scholarships, I entered the School of Engineering Science at Florida State University in the fall of 1960. Interestingly, it was not my studies in science that undermined what was left of my childhood faith—it was history. We studied the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures and their gods—and the Hebrew culture and their God...God singular! Everyone knows that the "gods" (plural) are a creation of the mind of man. I had to ask, "Why is the Hebrew God (singular) different?" Why should I believe in that God? I had no clue how to answer this question.

Between working and the cooperative student program with NASA, it took six years to complete my BS degree. By that time, I had become convinced that there were no answers to my questions concerning God and that, in all probability, he did not exist. I never claimed to be an atheist—I knew that no one could logically disprove God—but I graduated from college with serious doubts...

In my mid-twenties, I returned to school and earned a master's degree, was doing research for NASA, and published several peer-reviewed technical papers. Werner von Braun had personally come to my lab to sit down and discuss the possible effects of electrodynamic drag (an application of my research) on the Spacelab that would soon reenter the Earth's atmosphere. I should have been on top of the world! The point of all this is—I was not! I was still deeply troubled by the God question. I realized that without God—no matter what we accomplish; no matter how highly we are esteemed—life has no ultimate purpose or meaning. Without God, we are no different from the lower animals—simply existing to exist.

Of great importance to this point, when I returned to Huntsville after finishing my BS degree, I resumed dating a girl I had met a year earlier. This would be a critical part of my return to faith. This girl was different. After our first date, she had asked me to attend church with her. That first trip to Mayfair led to the

introduction of an important mentor into my life, Clyde Jones, an electrical engineer at NASA.

One night during the week following that first visit to church with Margaret, Clyde and a friend showed up at my apartment, said they were from Mayfair, and asked if I would like to study the Bible... Clyde and I studied the Bible and the basis for Christian faith off and on for the next six years. I would ask questions. Clyde would come back with answers, a book for me to read, or a reel-to-reel audio tape on the subject. The difference between my faith today and my childhood faith is a matter of study. By studying the Bible as I would one of my college subjects, I found that there are answers to my questions.

I have to view this episode as the answer to a prayer. Looking back—about a year before I met Margaret—one night before I fell asleep, I was staring at the ceiling contemplating what I should strive to accomplish in life. I thought: "Teaching is a rewarding profession! I will go back to school earn a PhD and teach young people at the university...so they can go home at night, stare at the ceiling, and wonder about the meaning of life!"... No, the answer is not in what one does. No matter how grandiose, all of the great achievements of man are temporal and soon pass—and I knew that it would ultimately be the same with the Apollo program. Solomon was right—without God, all of life is folly.

I came to firmly believe the God question to be the ultimate question of life—and that, if God exists, the decision to accept or reject God is the most important decision one can make. But to believe something that isn't true is an equal folly. So, I had awkwardly prayed, "God, if you exist, please let me know." In his own time, a year later, God answered my prayer. I met a girl who invited me to church—I believe that Margaret was God-sent! Clyde Jones, too—he showed up a few days later ready to deliver precisely what I had asked God to provide—evidence of His existence.

Two years after that first trip to Mayfair, Margaret and I married. Today, 57 years later, we have three children by birth, three by marriage, and six of the most beautiful and intelligent grandchildren alive—and we are thankful that all are Christians.

Condensed from the book, "Beyond the Tree—where is God?"



By Frank Houck

Living Beyond Ministry is a Christ-based Ministry led by Frank and Diane Houck. It works under the umbrella of the Senior Adult Ministry and receives guidance from the Mayfair Church of Christ eldership. Originally founded in 2002 as the Cancer Support Ministry, we recognized the need for some changes to better support the Body of Christ located in Huntsville, Alabama.

As a Christ-based ministry, Living Beyond tries to enhance the quality of life for families living with numerous health-related issues including cancer, strokes, and conditions associated with vital organs of the body. We also help those dealing with same-sex attraction, and nutrition problems. We encourage and support these families as they discover what lies ahead from others who have previously traveled this path.

As our Living Beyond Ministry grows it will provide a constantly expanding chorus of deeply personal and individual accounts about individual and family reactions to a diagnosis. We will suggest personal lifestyle adaptations that can be used while living with and beyond life-threatening conditions. We provide hope, thoughtful reflection, and the courage of a chorus of individual patients and survivors just like you. Rather than becoming just a dehumanized "patient", here you will find hope in unique voices, thoughtful reflection, and courage to permanently change the approach to ailments.

The shock associated with a diagnosis is bad enough but many times the friend you thought was

supportive through thick and thin turns out to be just a fair-weather friend. This causes another shock and a deep feeling of isolation and loneliness. When we hear of someone experiencing the trauma of a diagnosis, we approach them to reassure them that they are not alone and that we are here to listen and try to supply support, personally.

We sponsor a monthly Living Beyond meeting and potluck dinner normally on the first Monday night of each month to help you as you deal with doctor visits, expenses, unknowns, and the need to talk to someone. The dates of the meetings may vary based on holidays and meetings are well-attended and enjoyable. Everyone is invited to attend. You do not need to be suffering to belong to or attend Living Beyond. We need caring people wanting to help make a difference in the lives of others.

We provide professionals to speak on topics of interest at our meetings, or inspirational speakers who are fellow survivors or caregivers. Survivors and their families are more than willing to discuss with others how they coped and what to expect from treatment. At each meeting, we have a time of prayer for our sick and for their families and friends going through this with them or should be.

We understand that some people tend to be private and don't care to draw attention. Please know we care for you, and we want to make ourselves available to talk about our experiences and your walk with God at any time you feel is convenient.

If there is a need for meals to be provided, we have a group of individuals who will deliver one. At the time of delivery, the individual making the delivery is asked to spend no more than 15-20 minutes in conversation and prayer.

We are so grateful for the joy of the Lord. God's mercies are new every morning and His faithfulness is great. Satan, on the other hand, loves to discourage and oppose, but God knows our struggles and can provide the help and spiritual strength we need. He is strong when we are weak, wise when we are confused, loving when we are hurting, and true when we have been misled. We all need spiritual strength in our challenging times, and God will answer when we ask Him for strength. When we put our trust in the Lord and faithfully serve Him, He will act and keep His promises.

A Season of Transformation

by Darryl Wortman

While Alabama may be best known for its ever-green pines (the official state tree), we have a host of hardwoods that put on a spectacular show every autumn. Red maples, gold and amber cottonwoods, elms, blood-orange hornbeams, mustard-colored river birches, and many more come together to create a beautiful tapestry of color each fall.

I've always loved seeing the leaves change because it's a reminder of how beautiful change can be. It's not hard to see a connection between this natural transformation and the way our lives are transformed through faith—moving from who we once were to who we're becoming in Christ, from the temporary things to what's eternal.

The Splendor of Creation

The beauty of autumn reflects God's incredible creation. Scripture often points us to nature to remind us of God's majesty. Psalm 19:1 tells us, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands"* (NIV). Just like the colors of fall show God's design and creativity, the changes in our spiritual lives show His work in us too.

Each leaf is different, just like each of us in the Christian community is unique. We are told in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 how we all have different gifts from God, but together we make up the body of Christ. Romans 12:4-5 reminds us that even though we're different, we're all united in Christ. Together, we create something beautiful.

Letting Go of the Old Self

As the weather cools and the days grow shorter, trees start preparing for winter. The green chlorophyll in the leaves begins to break down, and the trees let go of their leaves to conserve energy and limit the damage that comes with freezing temperatures.

This reminds me of how, as Christians, we're called to let go of our old selves—our sinful nature—and embrace the new life Christ offers. Ephesians 4:22-24 puts it this way: *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self... to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true right-*

eousness and holiness" (NIV).

Letting go of our old ways isn't always easy. Just like the tree goes through its changes, we go through repentance and renewal. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, we are told, *"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"* (NIV) It's a process, but it's one that leads to something much better.

Finding Beauty in Surrender

Even though the leaves are falling and dying, there's beauty in that process. The vibrant colors we see in autumn are hidden underneath the green all year long. It's only when the tree starts letting go of its leaves that its colors are revealed.

That's a lot like our walk with God. When we surrender to Him—letting go of our own will and desires—our true beauty and potential in Christ are revealed. Jesus tells us in Luke 9:23, *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me"* (NIV). This isn't something we do just once—it's a daily choice to live for Him instead of ourselves.

It's not always easy, but when we do surrender, we experience real spiritual growth. Romans 12:1-2 encourages us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices and to let God transform us by renewing our minds.



The Need for Change

The changing leaves remind us that change is not just inevitable—it's necessary. Trees need to let go of their leaves to prepare for new growth in the spring. The same is true in our Christian lives. We're meant to keep growing, getting closer to God, and becoming

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

ing more like Christ as time goes on.

This process of change, or sanctification, is something we experience throughout our lives. Philippians 1:6 assures us that *"he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"* (NIV). God is faithful, and He continues to work in us, even when it's hard to see.

Just like the tree must shed its leaves, we must let go of the things that hold us back in our faith. Hebrews 12:1 reminds us to *"throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles"* (NIV). That way, God can continue to shape us into who we're meant to be.



The Hope of Renewal

While fall brings the cold months of winter, it also gives us the promise of spring. This cycle of death and rebirth is a picture of our hope as Christians. Even though we may face trials and difficult seasons, we can trust that God is always working to renew and restore us.

The Bible talks a lot about the hope we have in Christ. 1 Peter 1:3-4 tells us, *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the*

dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade" (NIV). Just like the tree will bloom again, we have the promise of new life in Christ—both now and in eternity.

Colossians 3:10 reminds us that we've *"put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator"* (NIV). This renewal is an ongoing process throughout our lives, and it culminates when we're finally united with Christ forever.

Reflecting God's Glory

At the end of the day, the beauty of the autumn leaves points to something bigger: our lives are meant to reflect the glory of God. Just as the vibrant colors of the leaves display the beauty of creation, our transformed lives should reflect the beauty of Christ to those around us. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, *"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven"* (NIV).

Our transformation isn't just for us; it's for God's glory. As we grow in Christ and let His Spirit change us, our lives become a testimony to His grace and power. In 2 Corinthians 3:18 we read, *"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit"* (NIV). Just like the autumn leaves reflect the beauty of their Creator; our lives should reflect the glory of Christ as we're transformed into His likeness.



On August 25, 2024, Mayfair celebrated its 75th anniversary. The congregation's first meeting occurred on November 20, 1949 when about 50 people met at a building on Bob Wallace Avenue. The Central Church of Christ in downtown Huntsville saw the need for a new congregation on the south end and thus Mayfair was born. God has blessed this congregation with tremendous growth over the past 75 years.

Mayfair Assistance Helpline

If you need help with home maintenance, automotive repairs, or transportation needs, please call the phone numbers below and leave a message:

256-881-4651 (during office hours)
256-704-3384 (nights & weekends)