

SKYWRITER



From the Pastor's Desk

by Rev. John Freeland

Sanctification is the process of God working gradually in us to bring about change. Our problem is that we want to "schedule" sanctification. We pick a particular sin or area of our life that we are *willing* for God to work on at that particular time, while God chooses another. We hold back areas or sins for whatever reason. Maybe we like that particular sin or don't even consider it sin. The problem with our scheduling of sanctification is that it most often is contrary to God's schedule. Thus, we become frustrated with the process and blame God. All the while, God is working on our behalf.

The garden doesn't easily give up it's rocks and weeds. The Gardner must dig to completely rid the garden of it's rocks. So, the King of the Universe must dig into our habits, or sins, our very souls to rid us of every unwanted root and every rocky hindrance. It may be painful at times, but it is necessary. And, we must not only let Him, we must encourage Him. Not because He needs our encouragement, but because we must be willing, yes, even eager.

God works gradually and carefully. He understands that the "tiller" approach to "spiritual gardening" uproots the fruitful plants as well as the weeds. To dig deep enough to get all the weed but not damage the true plant nearby, the Gardner must take time and care. So it is with sanctification. Carefully and precisely, God targets each weed and removes them from the ground around the true plant. God protects the true plant and gives it space to grow. Without the overcrowding of the weeds, the true plant now receives all the nourishment it needs to grow as it should.

Our tendency is to want all, or none, immediately. "God fix me NOW!" But no gardner works this way, so why would we expect The Gardner to? At the risk of mixing metaphors, we would like to wave a magic wand over our garage, basement, or junk room and instantly, "Poof!" all the junk is gone and everything of value is in it's proper place. Doesn't work that way does it?

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**ARTICLES FOR
MARCH SKYWRITER
DUE FEBRUARY 13**

Worship in the freedom and joy of the Holy Spirit! Come experience God at our next Friday Night Fire service on February 4 at 7:00pm in the sanctuary. A free dinner will be served at 6:15pm in the dining area.



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How do we foster a spirit that is eager for sanctification? First, realize the value of sanctification. Sanctification brings holiness and holy is what we are called to be. "You are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine" (Leviticus 20:26). Sanctification is the process God uses to work perfection in us. It is a good thing. Embrace it!

Second, recognize that there remains in you something of the evil one. Ouch! That stings a bit don't you think? In the last five years both of my parents have gone on to Glory. I've thought about them a lot recently and have discovered that there is something of each of them in me. I am who I am in part because of who they were. They influenced me. You know who else has

influenced me? As much as it pains me to admit it, Satan. Recognizing this, my goal is to remove every character flaw, every proclivity to sin, and every evil desire from my spirit. I want nothing to do with him and nothing to do with the things he has worked so hard to instill into my being. I'd rather have sanctification working in me than retain any resemblance to Satan whatsoever.

Third, apply sanctification to daily living. It is easy to go about our day doing what we always do, but that insinuates that we live habitually rather than purposefully. Set about each day with holiness as your purpose. Ask yourself simple questions like, "Is this action holy?" or "Is this desire holy?" or "Is this something a holy man would do?" The danger here is legalism. It would be

easy for Satan to turn this pursuit of holiness to his advantage. So, to guard against legalism you should ask "What spirit is prompting me? Is it the Holy Spirit, my own spirit, or an evil spirit?" If it is the Holy Spirit or an evil spirit, then the appropriate response should be obvious. If it is your own spirit that is doing the prompting, then you must ask if it pleases God.

Sanctification is a process that is sometimes painful but always beneficial. Viewing sanctification as a blessing empowers us for transformation. So, the question is, "Are you willing?" If so, invite the Holy Spirit to work in you with His Sanctifying Grace.

Your servant,



Good Samaritan Fund

Our Good Samaritan Fund which we use to help others in need, is running on empty. Due to the current economic environment, our friends and neighbors have more needs than ever. Please consider making a donation to this much needed Fund. Make all checks payable to Skyland UMC and designate it "*Good Samaritan Fund*". Thank you for your support.

ESL Needs

The ESL Class is in need of the following items: a current globe, magazines (especially news, sports, nature and current events), and school/office supplies (such as binders, notebooks, and dry erase markers). If you have any of these items to donate or wish to make a designated gift for their purchase, please contact Sheila de la Cruz at (404) 354-4299.

SUPER BOWL PARTY

The Young Adults are having a combined youth and young adult party hosted by the Flanagans on February 6th from 6-9pm. **Young Adults only:** please bring an appetizer or a dessert and a 2 liter drink (soda, punch or tea) to share. The address is 4450 Fallowfield Lane, Lilburn, GA. If you have any questions, please call Kristen at (404) 323-7221.

Weekly Attendance

Date	Small Groups	10:00 Service	11:00 Service
12/26	-	-	-
1/2	66	42	67
1/9	67	38	80
1/16	60	39	71

Offerings

Date	Mile of Pennies	General Funds	Designated Funds
12/26	-	4,504.37	4,065.45
1/2	27.85	6,739.00	112.00
1/9	5.00	4,157.35	87.00
1/16	5.00	3,531.47	7,010.00

Designated Funds

Good Samaritan	60.00
Mission Post Office	63.75
Property Maintenance	3.70
Staff Gifts	30.00
Quentin Pirkle Memorial	300.00
Ken Freeman Memorial	600.00
Sky Camp	3,490.00
Gift for Rick Bonfim	100.00
Flowers	50.00
Mission House (in honor of Joann Meaders)	25.00
Stage Renovation	42.00
Choir	5.00
Postage	5.00
Youth	1,300.00
Spanish Translator	5,200.00



Trinity UMC will host the North GA Conference UMW Social Action Event on March 5th. Topics of discussion will include Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence and Immigration Rights. Registration begins with Breakfast (refreshments) at 8:00am. Program is at 9:00am and closing is at 12:00pm. Lunch is on your own. Registration fee is \$10 prior to deadline February 14; add \$2 late fee for all registrations after deadline. If you are interested, please see Mary Foster for registration form.

Children's & Youth News

- ◆ King's Kids is going to the Yellow River Game Ranch on **Friday, February 18**. Please meet at the church at 9:15am. We will return to the church by 1:00pm.
- ◆ The Youth will be selling Valentine's Day carnations before and after church and on Wednesday nights. All orders will be delivered at church on Feb 13th.



The Skyland UMW visited the Murphy Harpst Children's Center in Cedartown, GA to deliver gifts donated to the children by the Walter Murphy Class. They enjoyed a tour of the facility and lunch afterwards.



We will be hosting a Wedding Shower for Melissa Freeman on **Sunday, February 27 at 3:00pm** in the Fellowship Hall.

Skyland United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 191427
Atlanta, GA 31119-1427

Address Service Requested

**Making Disciples
of All Nations**

CHURCH STAFF

John Freeland, Pastor

Andy Hammer, Director of Children & Youth

Janet Walsh, Minister of Music

Jose Garcia, Pianist

Kimberly Thomas, Church Secretary

Eleanor Flanagan, Comptroller

Ini Emmah, Fellowship Dinner Chef

Melissa Freeman, Nursery Attendant



**BIRTHDAYS
THIS MONTH**

2/3 Mary Foster

2/8 Bill Wages

2/14 Adam Kincaid

2/15 Victoria Castillo

2/17 Tom Baker

Connie Tucker

2/18 Kristen Wages

2/19 Geraldine Freeman

Bill Ruppert

2/25 Linda Freeland

Karlee Baumann

2/28 George Bennett

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS: Martyne Gilleland, Carolyn Mull, Helen Buffington, Dave & Evelyn Smith, Margaret Barnwell, Velma Jackson, Rhoda Hall, Pam Johnston, Jinnifer Hoyla, Shirley Bryant, Jan Boehn, Jeenece O'Donald, John & Mary Turner, Edna Williams, Jack Cooke, Maude O'Donald, Diane Smith, Doris Hester, Joan Iddins, Steve Bryson, Porter Dobbins, Barbara Snipes, Harold Burrell, Wanda Miller, Kay Hastings

Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to Esther Stroud and family due to the death of her husband, John on January 27