

# SKYWRITER

February  
2012

## From the Pastor's Desk

by Rev. John Freeland

Skyland Church leadership has been peering into the future for the last few months seeking the direction God has for us. But, we must also consider things that kill a move of God in the church and ultimately kill the church itself. These are called Church Killers. I can't address them all in this article, but I hope you will follow along as I post others on my blog. Here are a few Church Killers:

**Gossip:** Gossip can be defined as carrying a concern to anyone other than a person who can help solve the problem. Gossip spreads strife and discontent. If at the start gossip isn't false, it will become so when details are distorted and embellishments are added as it travels down the grape vine. It spreads a negative attitude, facilitates a spirit of offence and a spirit of defense, and creates division and cliques within the church. On a more personal level it proves that the gossiper cannot be trusted. If a gossiper will gossip about someone else, they will gossip about you too. The axe of gossip has felled many ministries and churches. What is the solution for gossip in the Church? If you hear gossip being spread, call it what it is and walk away. If you have an axe to grind, take it to the source and not the grape vine. "Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies." (Psalms 34:13)

**Cliques:** Cliques are unofficial small groups that are elitist and unwelcoming to newcomers. Cliques usually number less than ten and are closed to new members. Occasionally a new member is accepted into an existing clique but only when introduced by a longstanding and respected member of that clique. They have undefined and unspoken goals and expectations of its members and may evict a member if that member strays from the clique's ideals. Cliques bring a spirit of high school into the church. (Now, I don't know if there really is a spirit of high school, but it makes my point.) The small group aspect is not the problem, elitism is. A clique naturally thinks that everyone and every group should agree with them. Cliques foster gossip and give birth selfish ambition. What is the solution to cliques in the church? Refuse to participate. If you are in a clique, step out of it. Rotate your seating at fellowship events so that you do not sit with the same group each time. Spread yourself around and don't allow yourself to be pigeonholed into one group of people. Don't limit yourself. Be ready with something to share with different people of different age groups and cultural backgrounds.

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Please submit your  
information for the  
March Skywriter  
by February 15, 2012



Everyone is invited to come  
worship in the freedom and  
joy of the Holy Spirit at our  
next Friday Night Fire  
service on February 3 at  
7:00pm in the sanctuary.

**Selfish Ambition:** Selfish ambition promotes a personality, not a purpose. It is the need to create a legacy. Selfish ambition seeks bragging rights, “Look at how good we are.” It is not just pride but working and angling to accomplish something of which to be proud. Selfish ambition promotes self, personality, and power. Leaders who seek to own position and power rather than seek God are guilty of selfish ambition. The church governed by selfish ambition invites a spirit of control into its ranks. This spirit of control spreads and creates radical rulers, cliques, and divisions. Those operating with selfish ambition frequently resent the leaders God established and attempt to run over them. Selfish ambition, and its spirit of control, may be exercised through an officially organized position, class, or group. Sunday School classes and choirs are likely targets. “The elders who direct the affairs of the church *well* are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.” (1 Timothy 5:17) *Well* is the key word. Selfish ambition removes *well* and demands the double honor anyway. How do you combat selfish ambition? Seek the Lord and not the honor. Recognize selfish ambition for what it is and walk in humility. Don’t let the devil suck you in to seeking your own reward. Seek God’s kingdom first and His righteousness.

**Vain Conceit:** Vain Conceit is thinking of oneself more highly than one ought (Romans 12:3). Being remade in the image of Christ, the Christian is called to humility; to become nothing as Christ became nothing; to love your neighbor as yourself.

Vain conceit looks at accomplishments, measures success, and counts money, people, and even souls. God determines success not man. In the Kingdom of God, faith is success, and the greatest failure can be used for the glory of God. Whether man calls the outcome of that faith a success or a failure doesn’t matter. Vain conceit causes you to miss this fact. Vain conceit grieves over the failures of self and envy the success of others thereby promoting jealousy in the church. Vain conceit asks, “What have I accomplished today?” Humility asks, “Do I look more like Jesus today than I did yesterday?” Vain conceit causes you to strive for success and jostle for position rather than seek a righteous relationship with God. Vain conceit runs counter to Matthew 6:33 “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” What do we do about vain conceit? Understand that success is determined by God and not man. Failing is not the problem. An unwillingness to let God use your failure is the problem. Allow God to help you mature spiritually through every situation and circumstance no matter how it turned out.

**Luciferic Spirit:** A Luciferic spirit attempts to build a following behind the back of the existing leadership. This is what Lucifer did in heaven when he attempted to steal the worship that was due only to God. We see a Luciferic spirit in the church when someone gathers his/her own fan club with the intent of undermining the leadership. A tug-a-war ensues. Leaders are pitted against one another, the peace of the Body is disrupted,

and a split occurs. In essence a Luciferic spirit stages a mutiny. Often the Luciferic spirit works through ministry staff like an associate pastor, youth director, or choir director. A Luciferic spirit wants power and glory, so he usurps the power and position of the pastor. If he cannot have the whole church, he will settle for splitting the church and taking his half with him when he leaves. In Acts 20:17-38, Paul calls these types of men wolves. The future for the person with a Luciferic spirit is as grim as Satan’s future. (Isaiah 14:12-15). How do you kill a Luciferic spirit? God solved the problem by throwing Satan out the window. If you discover that a Luciferic spirit is rising up within you, humble yourself and deny it access to your thoughts. Refuse to think of yourself more highly than you ought. Recognize that God has you right where He wants you, and if He wants you somewhere else He can move you there. Consider David who, knowing he was already anointed to be king, did not kill Saul when he had the chance because he understood that you don’t lift your hand against the Lord’s anointed (1 Samuel 24:1-7). For those guilty of any one of these Church Killers, repentance is the answer.

Coming up in my blog at <http://skylandumc.org/media/#blog>, more Church Killers will be exposed for what they really are, like: Jezebel Spirit, Back-biting, Sin, False Doctrine, Tradition vs. Truth, Grounds vs Glory, Programs vs Prayer and Preaching, Musicians (Satan’s favorite targets), Conflict within the Leadership, Decapitation, and more...

Your Servant,



### Weekly Attendance

Date	Small Groups	10:00 Service	11:00 Service
12/25	-	-	48
1/1	49	41	71
1/8	67	42	76
1/15	61	45	74

### Offerings

Date	Mile of Pennies	General Funds	Designated Funds
12/25	-	7,740.96	246.26
12/30	-	250.00	200.00
12/31	-	-	1,500.00
1/1	5.00	6,104.65	343.66
1/8	6.00	5,362.25	334.30
1/15	7.00	3,988.23	275.00

### Designated Funds

Mission Post Office	22.00
Flowers	125.00
Good Samaritan	243.00
Property Maintenance	8.76
Youth	50.00
Postage	6.00
Global Missions	18.80
Joyce Baker Memorial	200.00
Pastor's Expenses	1,500.00
Emma Tingley Memorial	175.00
Office Supplies	150.66
Jim Miller Memorial	25.00
Library (Emma Tingley)	25.00
Youth Winter Camp	100.00
Technology Fund (translator)	250.00



Make someone's day and celebrate Valentine's Day this year with carnations! The Skyland Youth will be taking orders for carnations on Wednesdays during dinner and before & after each worship service on Sunday mornings until February 8.

**Cost: \$5/arrangement of 3**

You may pick up your orders on Sunday, February 12.

Sorry, no deliveries this year.



The Youth will host a Super Bowl party on **Sunday, February 5, from 6:00pm - 8:30pm** at the church in the youth room. Snacks will be provided. Youth will go home at half-time. The Young Adults will also host a Super Bowl party at Chris Morgan's home at 6:00pm, 1479 Ashford Place, Atlanta, GA. Please bring snacks to share. If you have any questions, please contact Beth Howd at [bethpirkle@yahoo.com](mailto:bethpirkle@yahoo.com)



Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season. It is a season of penance and reflection which prepares us for Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday, through which we attain redemption. We will observe the beginning of Lent with a traditional Ash Wednesday service in the sanctuary on **Wednesday, February 22 at 6:45pm**. Come join us for a time of personal prayer and reflection on the Lenten season and the imposition of ashes.

Ladies, mark your calendars now for the North GA Conference UMW 20-30-40 Event - "*U*" Turn to God" on **Saturday, March 10, 8:30am - 1:30pm** at Korean Church of Atlanta. Cost: \$10 (includes lunch). If you are interested in attending, please call Mary Foster at (770) 621-9459 for registration information by February 26. The deadline to register is February 29 (no refunds). Free childcare is available!

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, Children & Youth Director*

*John Burke, Choir Director*

*Kristen Wages, Worship Band Director*

*Jose Garcia, Pianist*

*Kimberly Thomas, Church Secretary*

*Eleanor Flanagan, Comptroller*

*Ini Emmah, Fellowship Dinner Chef*

*Melissa Wise, Nursery Attendant*

*Alex Thompson, Pastoral Intern*

*Clair Carter, Intern with Middle-Schoolers*

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

2/2	Monty & Florence Montgomery	2/19	Geraldine Freeman
2/3	Mary Foster	2/24	Bill Ruppert
2/8	Bill Wages	2/25	Karlee Baumann Linda Freeland
2/15	Victoria Castillo	2/28	George Bennett
2/17	Tom Baker Connie Tucker		
2/18	Ottley Clark Matt Hurd Kristen Wages		



Carolyn Mull, Dave & Evelyn Smith, Margaret Barnwell, Velma Jackson, Pam Johnston, Jennifer Hoyla, Shirley Bryant, Jeenece O'Donald, Maude O'Donald, Doris Hester, Steve Bryson, Jimmy Johnson, Kay Hastings, Geraldine Freeman, Sarah Bryson, J.C. & Nella Jones, Harold Burrell, Edna Williams, Rhoda Hall, George Bennett, Florence Montgomery