

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13



Services Tomorrow

The elders have decided the the church will be meeting in homes tomorrow, with each family conducting their own service of worship in keeping with the scriptures. For the offering, we ask you to set aside the amount you have determined to give and, unless notified otherwise, we will gather the funds when we are all able to meet again. If you have any questions, please contact the elders.

The Vermont Experience

Some of you will recognize the photo above; Jodi Bremer used it on the cover of her award-winning book, *A Town Called Redemption*. If you haven't read it, I recommend it; you can find it on Amazon. The photo was taken in Vermont some years ago. The state of Vermont is one of the most beautiful states in America. The photo realistically depicts what you will see in Vermont if you visit sometime in late September to late October.

Notice the iconic white church building with the tall steeple rising up from the fall foliage. That, too, is typical in Vermont. But the large majority of those church buildings are not functioning as gathering places for believers. Most of them have been converted to meeting places for clubs like the Kiwanis or Lion's Club. There are some that house Unitarian Universalist groups; on one of those buildings, a sign advertised their meeting times as “every third Thursday at 7 PM.” In 2016, Vermont took the title as “the least religious state” in the U.S. You might think the state would encourage the tearing down of these buildings yet, there they stand, as a witness to the past.

Is there anything to learn? A plethora of church buildings does not necessarily prove anything. We know this is true in Europe, as well. In Germany, just about every city has a huge cathedral, yet relatively few actually use it for religious services. But they won't tear those buildings down, either. There's something to be said about being thought to be godly, even if you're not. Though I certainly wouldn't put everyone who doesn't attend a church in this category, the prevalence of these building designed for worship reminds me of what Jesus said in Matthew 23:27-28 about “whitewashed tombs” that “appear” righteous. That iconic, white building looks good on the outside; but there is nothing going on in the inside that honors God. That's sad.

In the News

- Nothing new on the Covid-19 front, except that the number of cases spiked the last few days, primarily because here was a large number of test results that were processed. Keep washing and observing the guidelines and we can beat this thing.

Bible Facts

The Bible was written...

- ...over a 1500 year span (from c. 1400 bc to c. ad 100)
- ...covering over 40 generations
- ...written by about 40 authors, from many walks of life (e.g., kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars)
- ...in different places (e.g., wilderness, dungeon, palaces)
- ...at different times (e.g., war, peace)
- ...in different moods (e.g., heights of joy, depths of despair)
- ...on three continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe)
- ...in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek)

Chapters and Verses

- The Bible was divided into chapters by Stephen Langton in 1228. The Old Testament was divided into verses by R. Nathan in 1488 and the New Testament by Robert Stephanus in 1551.
- The Bible contains 1189 chapters.
- The Old Testament has 929 chapters and the New Testament has 260 chapters.
- The longest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 119, and the shortest is Psalm 117.
- The longest verse is Esther 8:9, and the shortest is John 11:35 (actually, 1 Thessalonians 5:16 is shorter in the Greek)

Little Known Bible Facts

The oldest surviving manuscript of any part of the New Testament is a papyrus fragment containing verses from John 18; scholars estimate it was written about 125 AD. 📖

The Gutenberg Bible was the first complete book extant in the West and the earliest printed from movable type, so called after its printer, Johannes Gutenberg, who completed it about 1455 working at Mainz, Germany.

Many early Christians, to discover the answer to a problem, would randomly open the Bible, read the first line their eye fell upon, and consider it a divine message for them. So popular was this practice, it had to be repeatedly condemned by church leaders.

The word Bible comes from the Greek word for “papyrus plant” (*biblos*), since the leaves of that plant were used for paper.

In the ancient and medieval worlds, some Christians memorized large portions of Scripture. Eusebius of Caesarea said he once met a blind Egyptian who “possessed whole books of the Holy Scriptures... in his heart.”

The cost of a Bible in the 1300s might easily amount to a priest’s yearly income.

The medieval church did not object to Bible translations; by the early 1500s, there were Bibles in most European languages. But the Catholic church opposed the work of Wycliffe and Tyndale because these translators held “radical” views.

When English Bibles were first published, people were fascinated with them. One Essex man recalled that “poor men bought the New Testament of Jesus Christ and on Sundays did sit reading in the lower end of the church, and many would flock about them to hear their reading.”

Martin Luther translated the New Testament into German in a blitz of only 11 weeks.

Tyndale's translation introduced many new words into the English language, such as long suffering, peace-maker, scapegoat, filthy lucre, and even the word beautiful.

William Tyndale's first English New Testament, finished in 1525, had to be printed outside of England and then smuggled back inside barrels of flour and bolts of cloth. Catholic bishop Tunstall of London bought up most of Tyndale's first edition in order to stamp out Tyndale's “heresy” — but the proceeds financed new editions!

When the King James Version was published in 1611, the Geneva Bible was by far the most popular English Bible. It was the Geneva translation, not the King James, that was used by William Shakespeare and the early American Puritans.

