

Main Idea: According to Ephesians 6:14-17, we have two responsibilities with regards to our armor.

- I. We need to know what we have.
 - A. God's armor involves a person (10).
 - B. God's armor involves a purpose (11-13).
 - C. God's armor involves parts (14-17).
 - D. God's armor involves prayer and perseverance (18).
- II. We need to use what we have.
 - A. We must wear the belt of truth (14a).
 - B. We must wear the breastplate of righteousness (14b).
 - C. We must wear the gospel of peace boots (15).
 - D. We must raise the faith shield (16).
 1. The Christian life begins by faith.
 2. The Christian life must be lived by faith day by day.
 - E. We must take the helmet of salvation (17a).
 1. A Christian is someone who has been saved.
 2. A strong Christian is someone who thinks like a saved person.
 - F. We must take the sword of the Spirit (17b).
 1. The sword is our only offensive weapon.
 2. The sword is God's Word.
 3. The sword is effective only if we use it.

The Bottom Line: We have armor because we have a mission.

I'm holding something in my hand right now that I value greatly. It's a sermon outline written by my grandfather back in the 1920s. He was an itinerant preacher in West Virginia. He later told me as an 80 year old man, “God called me to preach when I was a young man. I regret I eventually ran from his calling, like Jonah, and stopped preaching. Don't you ever do that.”

He entitled this particular sermon, “The Armour of God.” Here's what he wrote.

-Text: Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Ephesians 6:11.

-Scripture: 6:1-14. Ephesians.

None here but what loves peace.

None among us but what knows something of the horrors of war. We none want war.

No nation would go to war, lest first they

Count the cost

Prepare navy

Recruit and train army

Arm them with the best guns, swords, gas masks and all equipment known to man to overcome enemy and protect men.

Have you accepted God as your Savior? If you have you have enlisted for greatest war every fought. If you have enlisted you must prepare:

A) Put on the whole armour of God

B) You can't be a good soldier unless prepared to meet the enemy

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

² For an earlier development of this text, see the series on “Living with a Warfare Mentality” at WBC in 2003.

C) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Eph 6:12

You can't battle against these things with: Guns, swords, gases, aeroplanes, battleships or any material of modern warfare.

Christians the world is waiting: one hand to the ear, the other to the eyes.

Brothers and sisters, many things have changed since the 1920s. The list of the weapons of modern warfare sound quite different. But this hasn't changed. You can't battle our spiritual enemy with guns, swords, gases, and aeroplanes, nor with fighter jets or nuclear bombs, for that matter. You must use the *armor of God*.

This is part three in our series in Ephesians 6 called "The Armor of God." This morning, we're going to see that we have two responsibilities with regards to our armor, according to Ephesians 6:14-17.

I. We need to know what we have.

When it comes to armor, we have what we need, and we need what we have. God has not left us deficient. In a moment we'll be looking at the various pieces of armor, but to appreciate our spiritual protection we keep in mind the big picture. There are four things we need to know about God's armor, as spelled out in Ephesians 6.

A. God's armor involves a person (10). Notice verse 10, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." Our strength is found where? In the *Lord*. The armor is Christ. The armor is complete.

Twice in this section Paul exhorts us to, "Put on the full armor of God." This is not some mechanical exercise, nor should it be reduced to some mystical chant. It's highly personal for it involves a person, namely Jesus Christ. To put on the armor is to put on Christ. To put on the armor is to choose to depend on Christ for the battle.

B. God's armor involves a purpose (11-13). "Put on the full armor of God **so that** [here's the purpose] you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." We need God's armor so we can stand against a powerful enemy.

What makes standing so difficult? It's the character and capacity of our opponent. Verses 12-13, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, **so that** when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

There's the purpose again. We need the armor so we can *stand*.³

C. God's armor involves parts (14-17). What are they? Paul mentions six pieces of armor in verses 14-17: a belt, a breastplate, some boots, a shield, a helmet, and a sword. The armor is a unit, but it involves variety. Specific pieces of armor protect specific parts of the soldier's body.

D. God's armor involves prayer and perseverance (18). We see the need for prayer at the beginning of verse 18 and the need for perseverance at the end, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

³ Paul elaborates in 2 Corinthians 10:4, "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds."

So to put it simply, when it comes to spiritual armor, we have all we need. We can't overemphasize this. We won't stand in the battle until we grasp the truth that we have what we need, not in ourselves, but in Christ.

Furthermore, we need what we have. That means we must appropriate all the armor. More specifically, we must appropriate all the armor *all the time*.

We can't be flippant and passive if we're going to stand in this spiritual battle.

Lanny Bassham, Olympic gold-medallist in small-bore rifle competition, tells what concentration does for his marksmanship: "Our sport is controlled non-movement. We are shooting from 50 meters--over half a football field--at a bull's eye three-quarters the size of a dime. If the angle of error at the point of the barrel is more than .005 of a millimeter (that is five one-thousandths), you drop into the next circle and lose a point. So we have to learn how to make everything stop. I stop my breathing. I stop my digestion by not eating for 12 hours before the competition. I train by running to keep my pulse around 60, so I have a full second between beats--I have gotten it lower, but found that the stroke-volume increased so much that each beat really jolted me. You do all of this and you have the technical control. But you have to have some years of experience in reading conditions: the wind, the mirage. Then you have the other 80% of the problems--the mind.⁴

Know this, Christian soldier. We have what we need, and we need what we have. Spiritual survival starts right here. We need to know something about our spiritual armor. Next...

II. We need to use what we have.

Let's quickly review what we need to do with the first four pieces, as we saw last time, and then we'll examine the rest.

A. We must wear the belt of truth (14a). "Stand firm then with the belt of truth buckled around your waist."⁵

What is our belt as Christians? Our belt is truth. The Christian life begins when we admit that Jesus is the truth, as He claimed, but putting on the belt of truth goes a step further. To put on truth is to allow the life of Christ to be seen through us. It involves a resolve to walk in integrity, as Jesus did. Truth must characterize our daily living. Every day I must affirm that I will practice the truth.

B. We must wear the breastplate of righteousness (14b). The Roman soldier's breastplate was a molded metal chest plate that covered the entire torso, from the neck to the top of the thighs, on both his front and back.

What is our breastplate? Paul says it is "righteousness." What is righteousness? Actually, it's not *what*, but *who*. Christ is our righteousness (1 Cor 1:30). To put on the breastplate of righteousness is to put on Christ. It's to acknowledge that our right standing before God is based on what Christ did at the cross, not on what we do. To put on the breastplate of righteousness is to trust in Christ and let Him live His righteous life through you. It's to live the exchanged life.

C. We must wear the gospel of peace boots (15).⁶ What do our feet do for us? They take us places. What are we as Christians to take with us wherever we go? The

⁴ *Sports Illustrated*, August 2, 1976, pp. 31-35, quoted in *How to Profit from Bible Reading*, I. L. Jensen, Moody Press, p. 80.

⁵ The soldier put on his belt first. Actually it was an undergarment, and not a piece of armor. Yet it was essential. He wrapped the belt around his waist in order to draw up his tunic and keep it from dangling down to his feet. He couldn't go to battle if his garment was loose fitting.

gospel, the good news that produces peace between men and God. We need the gospel, yes, *Christians* need it. We need to put it on daily by reviewing the amazing story of what Christ did for us. It will protect us. It will also prepare us for our mission of reaching lost people who need peace with God.

In verse 16 Paul states that “in addition to all this,” that is, in addition to putting on the first three pieces of armor, we need to do the following.

D. We must raise the faith shield (16). The soldier's shield was large, usually about 4' by 2'. It was a big, thick plank of wood. It was covered on the outside with metal and even leather at times. The metal would deflect arrows, while the leather would extinguish the fiery pitch on the arrows.

What is our shield? God's Word says it's “faith.” How does a person become a Christian? By living a good life? No. By being baptized or going through confirmation classes? No.

1. *The Christian life begins by faith.* “For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, so no one can boast (Eph 2:8-9).” But once saved, faith doesn't leave.

2. *The Christian life must be lived by faith day by day.* Paul's not talking about saving faith in verse 16, but living faith.⁷

It's worth noting that the edges of first century Roman shields were made to interlock. So an entire line of soldiers would hook their shields together and march into the enemy like a solid wall. And so, Christian soldiers, we're not to fight this battle alone. We need our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Now why specifically do we need this shield of faith? Verse 16 says we need it to “extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” The KJV refers to them as “fiery darts,” a term that can speak of an arrow, a bolt, even a missile.

He calls them “fiery” arrows. In the battles of Roman times, archers would put a cotton material on the tip of their arrows and soak it in pitch, which would burn slowly but was very hot. Before they shot the arrow, they would light it. When the arrow hit its target, the pitch would splatter and start little fires on the clothing of the soldier. That's why a shield was so vital.

Where do these fiery arrows originate? Verse 16 says they come from the “evil one.” [KJV “the wicked,” that is, The Wicked One. Satan].

So here's the picture. The devil is like an archer on a wall shooting down at us. We musn't be surprised when he attacks. It will happen. Just make sure your shield is in place. Then you'll be okay.

What are Satan's darts? Notice the word “all,” as in “*all* the flaming arrows of the evil one.” That indicates Satan has a variety of missiles in his arsenal: seduction, selfishness, fear, disappointment, lust, greed, vanity, covetousness, doubts, hateful thoughts.

Several years ago I was in my study one wintery morning when I took a break and looked out the window. It was snowing. The ground was bare, but millions of individual snowflakes were falling out of the sky. One at a time they hit the ground. And one at a time they disappeared. It didn't seem like those little flakes were having an impact on anything. They were so small, so seemingly insignificant. But over the course of time,

⁶ The Roman soldier wore a battle boot, a leather sandal with hob nails on the bottom, tied up with leather straps around the ankles and shins.

⁷ John talked about this living faith in 1 John 5:4-5, “For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”

something happens. Before long you don't see the individual flakes anymore. What do you see? A blanket of snow.

That's the way Satan's fiery darts work. Sin starts out seeming so small, so insignificant. Then it escalates, it builds, and without the shield of faith, it can eventually blanket our lives.

The Bible has much to say about Satan. His name appears 49 times in the Bible (not counting the appearances of his other titles).

⇒1 Chronicles 21:1 says Satan duped David into sinning.

⇒ Job 1:6-7 says Satan inflicted Job.

⇒ Luke 22:31 indicates that Satan wanted to destroy Peter, but thankfully, Jesus said in verse 32, "But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not."

⇒ Satan manipulated the believers Ananias and Saphira, according to Acts 5:3.

⇒ 1 Thessalonians 2:18 indicates that Satan tries to hinder ministers of the gospel.

So there's no question about it. Satan is powerful and his attack is vicious. But we can stand. How? By raising the faith shield.

Brothers and sisters, Christ conquered our enemy when He went to the cross. He defeated this enemy for us when He shed His blood and died as our substitute and rose from the grave. And when He returns to the earth, He will once and for all cast Satan and his wicked hosts into the lake of fire.

John said in 1 John 5:4, "This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." Have you been living by faith or by sight? Faith is being confident of what you cannot see, according to Hebrews 11:1. When we have the shield of faith in place we will live with a different perspective.

Joe Stowell offers this insight in *Through the Fire*: "I think of David Livingstone, the pioneer missionary to Africa, who walked over 29,000 miles. His wife died early in their ministry and he faced stiff opposition from his Scottish brethren. He ministered half blind. His kind of perseverance spurs me on. As I run, I remember the words in his diary: 'Send me anywhere, only go with me. Lay any burden on me, only sustain me. Sever me from any tie but the tie that binds me to Your service and to Your heart.'"⁸

There's a man who had the shield of faith in place. David Livingstone also said, "People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply acknowledging a great debt we owe to our God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny? It is emphatically no sacrifice. Rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, danger, foregoing the common conveniences of this life--these may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing compared with the glory which shall later be revealed in and through us. I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk, when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself for us."

How could David Livingstone do such great things for God? Did he have access to resources that we don't. No. We have the same armor he did. But he used his. Are we?

The Bible exhorts us to *put on the full armor of God*. Put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace boots, and the faith shield. Are we ready for battle yet? Not quite.

⁸ Joseph Stowell, [Through The Fire](#), Victor Books, 1988, p. 150.

E. We must take the helmet of salvation (17a). The word "take" is in the imperative, and the verb form indicates we are to take this piece of armor, put it on, and leave it on.

Put on your helmet, Paul says. The Roman soldier's helmet was made of a tough metal-like bronze or iron. It was obviously heavy. The inside was lined with sponge or felt to make it bearable to wear. Nothing short of a blow from an axe or hammer could penetrate the helmet.

Why does a soldier need a helmet? Obviously, to protect his *head*. Why do you need a helmet? For the same reason.

Friends, your most vulnerable target as a Christian is your mind, and Satan knows that, which is why he attacks your mind with all the ammunition he can muster.

So how can we protect our minds? Paul says we must put on the helmet of salvation.⁹ In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 he puts it this way, "Let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."

What exactly does Paul mean when he says to "put on the helmet of salvation?" Is he telling us to "get saved"? No. He's talking to Christians. The first readers of this letter are people who were already in God's army.

The Bible is very clear about this, and so must we be.

1. *A Christian is someone who has been saved.* A saved person is one who has admitted he was lost as a sinner and condemned to suffer God's wrath. A saved person is one who accepted the teaching of the Bible that Jesus Christ lived and died in our place, taking God's wrath for us. A saved person is one who has placed his full confidence and trust in Jesus Christ. That's a saved person.

What then does it mean to put on the helmet of salvation? Simply this. A saved person needs to learn to think like a saved person! In fact...

2. *A strong Christian is someone who thinks like a saved person.* Don't miss this. Christians are supposed to think differently than non-Christians, and Christians who are successful in overcoming the evil one do think differently. They think differently about their goals in life, about money, and about entertainment. Their desires are different. Their ambitions are different.¹⁰

So when you put on the helmet of salvation, what you're doing is this. You are making a decision that you are going to think differently than you used to, by God's help. You're choosing to think like a saved person.

We are living in a pagan world. We are being bombarded continually with vile, godless thoughts. So every day we need to put on the helmet of salvation and choose to think like a saved person.

Take entertainment, for example. Just because the world says a movie is entertaining is no reason for us to watch it. Dads and moms, when you see an unwholesome movie coming on the television, do you talk with your kids about it? Do you tell them, "We are Christians. The Bible says we think differently. Jesus expects us to be pure."

The same goes for the music we listen to, or the video games we play. A helmet is designed to keep deadly things out. Young people, please be careful about what you take into your mind.

⁹ We see this image elsewhere in Isaiah 59:17, "He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak."

¹⁰ Paul put it this way in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—*think about such things.*"

Resolve to think like a saved person? If Jesus saved us from something, then we need to give it no place in our minds. Put on the helmet of salvation.

One final piece of armor...

F. We must take the sword of the Spirit (17b). “Take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Let’s make three observations regarding our sword.

1. *The sword is our only offensive weapon.* A Roman soldier had two swords. One was the large broad-sword which was more than 3' long. It was double-edged and heavy, and took both hands to use. That's not the word Paul uses in verse 17. The one he references here is the short-sword (6 to 18 inches). It was like a dagger. The soldier carried it in his sheath. He used it for hand to hand combat. Peter used this kind of sword to cut off the soldier's ear (Matt 26:51).

What is the Christian's sword? Paul says clearly, “which is the Word of God.”

2. *The sword is God’s Word.* Hebrews 4:12 tells us, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

As we preach the Word, we are invading enemy territory. Right now, the sword of the Spirit is at work, releasing Satan’s victims from the clutches of his wicked grasp.

God's Word is our sword. But its value is not just for preaching. It’s sufficient, authoritative, and powerful for living. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be *thoroughly equipped for every good work.*”

It’s the Word that God uses to deliver us from personal sin according to Psalm 119:133, “Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.” It’s also the key to standing when persecution hits according to Revelation 12:11, “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”

So the Word of God is the Spirit's Sword. It's what God uses to defend us, defeat the attacking enemy, and deliver others who need help. But know this...

3. *The sword is effective only if we use it.* Which raises a problem. Most of us aren’t using the Word as we ought.

It’s sort of like the story that Leroy Eims, from the Navigators, told, “One spring our family was driving from Fort Lauderdale to Tampa, Florida. As far as the eye could see, orange trees were loaded with fruit. When we stopped for breakfast, I ordered orange juice with my eggs. "I'm sorry," the waitress said. "I can't bring you orange juice. Our machine is broken." At first I was dumbfounded. We were surrounded by millions of oranges, and I knew they had oranges in the kitchen--orange slices garnished our plates. What was the problem? No juice? Hardly. We were surrounded by thousands of gallons of juice. The problem was they had become dependent on a machine to get it. Christians are sometimes like that. They may be surrounded by Bibles in their homes, but if something should happen to the Sunday morning preaching service, they would have no nourishment for their souls. The problem is not a lack of spiritual food--but that many Christians haven't grown enough to know how to get it for themselves.”¹¹

Do you know how to use your sword, and are you using it?

A few years ago, Walter Martin, a cult researcher, made the tragic observation that, in his opinion, a 90-day-wonder from the Jehovah's Witnesses can take apart the typical Christian in 30 minutes. Why? Because most Christians don't know the Word like they

¹¹ [Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making.*](#)

should. They hear it every week. They see it on their coffee tables every day. But they're not really using it, not personally.

Do you know where to turn in God's Word to deal with discouragement, or to fight off lustful thoughts, or to overcome sinful anger? We have what we need, but we need to use what we have.

I'm very concerned about the person who comes to church but then does not make the Word his daily food.

Perhaps you're searching. That's why you've been coming to church on Sunday mornings. You probably feel good when you hear God's Word, and you leave pumped up, filled with hope. But then your Bible stays on the shelf and you don't receive any spiritual nourishment for the next six days, only Satan's darts. You don't use the shield of faith that could protect your soul and the helmet of salvation to guard your mind. And so by Thursday you are overwhelmed with feelings of doubt and discouragement, and you begin thinking, "Where are you God? What's wrong? Why doesn't Christianity work for me?"

It's not complicated. The problem is not with Christianity. The problem is thinking that *admiring* the sword is the same as *using* it.

We need to know what we have. We need to use what we have.

But why? Why has God given us armor? "So we can stand," you say. Yes, but why?

The Bottom Line: We have armor because we have a mission.

Our calling as a church is to know Christ and to make Christ known through the teaching of His Word, locally and worldwide.

Last week I shared my observation that when it comes to fulfilling our calling, by God's grace WBC is seeing wonderful fruit in the areas of teaching/equipping and missions. But a key growth area for us pertains to local, corporate ministries as a church.

The question our leadership team has been pondering is, "Does our community think of WBC as *a church that cares*?" Granted, we have Scioto Hills Camp and CRADLE pregnancy care center and the WBC Biblical Counseling & Counseling Training ministries and our Youth and Kids Bible Club ministries, and we receive feedback as to how these communicate our love for our community. But there's so much more that could be done to show we care, with a view towards the ultimate expression of care, the sharing of the good news of Jesus and His atoning work.

And so a week ago I presented a significant proposal to you which comes as a unanimous recommendation from the combined board of this church. This proposal is available in written form on the table foyer, and on our website, and we will be voting on it in two weeks, on Sunday morning, August 25.

We believe the Lord has put several things together that present us with the opportunity to show our community that we care about it deeply. We're still passionate about training the saints through the teaching of the Word, and about world missions. But now it's time to develop a strategic, local ministries oriented Community Center.

The proposal involves three primary components.

One, we recommend purchasing the Porter township senior and civic center across the street, and then using it, not primarily for our own interests (although that could happen; meeting space for SS classes, etc), but as a *Community Center*. We are presently developing a strategic set of objectives designed to show this community that we care in tangible ways, all with a view towards communicating the gospel. More specifics about that in a moment.

The Porter Township trustees desire to sell this facility since they have purchased a larger building on Green Street. They are asking \$120,000 for the current facility, which includes the kitchen appliances and half of the tables and chairs. There are two large meeting rooms in the building (which seat 50 and 75 people) with a kitchen and rest rooms in the middle.

Two, we don't believe it's wise to go into debt for this venture. But thankfully, neither is it necessary, for the following three reasons.

A) The board has contacted the donor of the Education Fund, and the donor, who is excited about the Community Center proposal, recommends that we close that endowment and use those \$48,000 towards the purchase of the Community Center. We are still in communication with the donor's attorney regarding the logistics of this transfer, so it's not final yet, but likely.

B) The board recommends that we sell the parsonage to its pastor and use the income towards the purchase of the township building. The congregation will be discussing the specifics of this next Sunday morning, while Pastor and Sherry are on vacation. At this evening's business meeting, the church will be considering a motion to obtain an appraisal of that property. As I shared last week, Sherry and I have prayed about this, and believe it's wise and good for us, as well, to have our own home, with equity, and particularly, a place for Sherry to live should something happen to me.

As a benefit to the church, selling the parsonage would also free up the following General Fund moneys (yearly figures), which could then be transferred to the Community Center costs: \$3,900 for utilities, \$1,000 for maintenance, approximately \$1,000 for property taxes and insurance.

C) We will be inviting others to give specific love gifts, which may include this year's Harvest Offering, towards other costs involved in setting up the Center.

Three, we also recommend that we move Pastor Matt's status from one-third time to one-half time, so that Matt can devote the time that will be needed to identifying specific ministries to serve our community, recruiting and resourcing leaders for these ministries, and helping with the ongoing needs to provide the volunteer base that will be needed. Since the general fund giving through the first six months of the year was \$300 *over* budget, we believe this increase is manageable.

Although the final form of the Community Center will include your continued input as a congregation, here's the mission statement, motivation, and general framework for the programs (with a few specific suggestions).

The Potential of a WBC Community Center

Our Mission

The WBC Community Center is a facility/ministry that exists to show in tangible ways that we care about our community, with a view towards communicating the gospel.

Our Motivation

Jesus Christ's work on the cross powerfully shows the love of God, and because of that great love, we seek to love God and love others by being a blessing to the community.

Our Programs

We see four primarily programs, although others will certainly be considered. The specifics listed below under the four headings are merely examples of what another church is doing with its community center (Faith Church in Lafayette, IN).

1. *Community Assistance*

Some examples:

- Food Pantry
- Clothing Closet
- Car Works
- Blood Drives
- Election Voting Center
- Red Cross Disaster Shelter
- Team SCCReM (construction ministry)
- Christmas for Everyone
- Community Thanksgiving dinner

2. *Community Partners*

Some examples:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Scioto County
- Court Appointed Special Advocates
- Parent Mentor Program
- Community Foster Care
- Habitat for Humanity
- Lifecare Services
- Mental Health Shelter Ministry
- PETE's PALs (for kids with disabilities)

3. *Ministry to Seniors*

- Monthly Program for those above 55
- Providing services for seniors

4. *Ministry to Young Adults*

- Cup O'Faith Café – an attractive meeting space for relationship building

Keep in mind. These are just suggested possibilities. For this venture to work, the ideas and efforts of the whole congregation will be vital.

Are there challenges to this proposal? Yes. Perhaps the greatest, and yet one you may not think of first, is the potential drift to the social gospel. Our ultimate purpose as a church is to make the gospel known to lost sinners, not just simply show them we care, and we must guard against shortchanging meeting eternal needs for temporal ones. On the other hand, Jesus' answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?," reminds us that showing this community we care about their temporal needs can open up wonderful opportunities to address their ultimate need of a Savior.

Other challenges will include: the ongoing need for volunteers to do the ministries, should there be higher than expected utility and maintenance costs for the Community Center, the potential stretch on the general fund by increasing Pastor Matt's position should giving not stay at present levels. This venture calls for an investment by the congregation, in terms of time, in terms of regular giving, in terms of special gifts to develop special ministries. But we believe the Lord is sufficient for these challenges.

I'd like to lead us in prayer, and then open the floor for another "church family" discussion. We'll address some questions we've received, as well as others you may

want to submit. And if you'd rather talk one on one, please feel free to contact your deacon, or me. It would be our joy to hear your thoughts.

Questions submitted by the congregation (since last week):

- Are there some unresolved maintenance issues in the ladies' restroom?
- What are the insurance and liability factors of having a community center?
- Have we talked with the person who presently schedules events in the building?
- What about the siren?
- Are the small appliances included (coffee pots, sound system, etc)?
- What is the assessor's appraisal of the building across the road from the church?
- What is the assessor's appraisal of the parsonage?
- What were the selling prices of the buildings that General Dollar purchased?
- What is Matt's plan for the future at this time? Does he have a full time job now plus work at the church? If so will that change? When will he be finished with his masters? What is his master in? What are his thoughts about finishing the biblical studies with the Titus School now that he has put that on hold?
- What are the real Dollar figures we are talking about increasing our budget?
- Who will be voting on this proposal? As our by-laws state, in matters to pertaining to property and/or calling a pastor, it takes a quorum of one-half of our active members age 18 and older.
- Will there be an absentee ballot? Yes.