

## A Letter from Pastor Reeder

Dear Briarwood Family,

Grace and peace. I am sure that most of you have received the sad and horrific news concerning the depraved and evil shooting incident at Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee this past Monday. Covenant School is a ministry of Covenant Presbyterian Church, one of our sister churches in the PCA. Our relationship with Covenant is significantly personal. Over the years, because of job transfers, several Briarwood members have moved to Nashville and joined Covenant Presbyterian and likewise, a significant number of their members have moved to Birmingham and joined Briarwood. Even more so, the Sr. Associate Pastor at Covenant Presbyterian is Rev. Billy Barnes, a son of Briarwood. For those of you who don't know the connection -- Billy is the son-in-law of our founding Pastor, Dr. Frank Barker and his wife, Barbara. Billy married their daughter Anita whose vivacious and attractive life and ministry profoundly blessed many. This past year, Billy and Anita were here at Briarwood worshipping with us as the Lord called Frank and Barbara home to Glory and shortly afterward Anita. Billy and Anita's son Taylor is our Director of the International Students Ministry at Briarwood. At the beginning of the year, Billy returned to Covenant, so he is now in a significant position of pastoral ministry. In light of this incident as well as all that he has gone through these past several years it is certainly crucial that we engage in intercessory prayer for him.

Three students, all nine years of age, were fatally shot by the intruder. Let us call upon God's presence, power, and peace for their families. One of the children, Hallie Scruggs, was the daughter of the Sr. Pastor of Covenant, Rev. Chad Scruggs. Please lift them up as they not only work through their own grief as a family but also face the challenge of ministering to the Covenant Church and School community as well as the surrounding Nashville community. Also, please extend your prayers for the family and friends of the three adult casualties, *Mike Hill*, the School Maintenance Manager, *Cynthia Peak*, a substitute teacher, and *Dr. Katherine Koonce*, the Head of Covenant School. Finally, would you also please pray for the Elders and Deacons of Covenant Presbyterian Church as well as the rest of the Faculty, Administration, and student body at Covenant School. I know many of you are already engaged in praying and ministering to our brothers and sisters in Nashville. I am always amazed at our church family's ability to respond intentionally, personally, thoughtfully, and prayerfully at moments like this for which I praise the Lord.

**In light of this and knowing that many are traveling during this Spring Break week, the Briarwood Leadership Team would like to call everyone to a concert of prayer tomorrow night at 7:00 PM on behalf of Covenant Presbyterian church and school as well as the witness of Christ. Please join us at 7:00 PM no matter where you are but, for those who can come, we will assemble in the Chapel at the 7:00 PM hour for gathered, intercessory prayer.**

It is at such moments that I am also grateful for the leadership of Briarwood who several years ago thoughtfully secured our Safety and Security Director in anticipation of the increasing challenges for Christians, Churches, and Christian schools in this present age. So, while you pray for the leadership of Covenant Presbyterian Church and School, please pray for the leadership of Briarwood Church and School as well as other sister churches/schools. I have just finished recording a *Today In Perspective Podcast* to encourage ministry to our brothers and sisters in Nashville that will be aired Wednesday or Thursday.

I'll be returning from preaching at the Ligonier Conference, Pinelands Presbyterian, and the Coral Ridge Presbyterian conference at the end of this week. I look forward to worshipping together with you as we take advantage of the opportunities to reach out to our neighbors and bring them to hear the Gospel during our Holy Week Services.

With Confidence that *God's Grace is Greater Than our Sin*,

– Harry