

# **2022 Lenten Daily Devotional**

**40th Edition**

**March 2, 2022 - April 17, 2022**



## **The Presbyterian Church of Johnstown**

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## Dedication

To those who left us in the year gone by, we dedicate this 40th Edition of our Lenten Devotional in thanks for and remembrance of their talents, their deeds, their gifts, and their faithful service.



**March 2, 2022**

*"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written:  
'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.'" – Galatians 3:13 (NIV)*

### **Cursed**

As you all know I have been a Cleveland Browns fan for as long as I can remember. And as a fan, I have never experienced the joy of even going to a Super Bowl let alone winning one. But, like so many Browns fans, I try to be ever hopeful. And my hope at the beginning of this past season was particularly high. On paper, the Browns had everything they needed to be contenders. Experts were predicting they would finish at the top in their division and would be a force to be reckoned with. But clearly that is not how the season progressed. And eventually it became clear that we would settle right into the last position in our division. And at one point, I was talking to a friend and we were discussing the upcoming draft and where the Browns really needed to focus. I casually (and jokingly) mentioned that instead of drafting any new players that perhaps what the Browns needed to do was draft a priest, because they seem cursed and perhaps a priest could exercise whatever evil has settled into the organization.

Now, when it comes to the Lenten season, we begin that time with Ash Wednesday, which is a time to focus specifically on sin and what it has done to our world and to our lives. We are reminded of the curse that was placed upon Adam and Eve when original sin entered the picture. God told Adam and Eve that, "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:19, NIV). In these words, we see how God responds to sin and disobedience in a very decisive way, and the very dust that Adam was created from will now be all of our destinations as death enters into the story.

It is easy during Lent to want to focus on the resurrection and on our redemption through Christ. But we should not be too quick to overlook the sin in our lives. The curse that comes from sin is death and every type of suffering we could ever experience. But as awful and dark as that is, the worst of the curse will not fall on us. It fell on Christ. As we're told in the Galatians passage above, Christ became the sacrifice for us and took that curse entirely upon himself when he was crucified on the cross.

Certainly we should look forward to celebrating the resurrection, but on this Ash Wednesday, we should also be mindful of what put Christ in the grave to begin with.

### **Pastor Kevin**

*Prayer: Lord God, we know that you can't just overlook the sin in our lives, because you are holy and just. But we are thankful to you Lord for the mercy and grace found in your plan for redemption that allows the curse that should have fallen on us to be placed upon Your Son. We are thankful and humbled by the love you have for us. It is in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.*

**March 3, 2022**

*"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." – Isaiah 41:10*

### **I Feel Guilty**

I feel guilty. The predominant theme over the past 12 months or so has been, "These Are Really Bad Times". I know I don't need to give you the list of negative things going on. I'm sure you all know that list all too well.

Now I'm not beating my chest and saying "Look at me," not by a long shot. But for me, it's been a good 12 months. We had a beautiful summer. I was able to kayak four or five times a week. I was able to visit my daughter in Houston twice. My health is good. I was able to paint again. I was elected an Elder in the church that I love, and I even got most of my to-do list accomplished. It was a good year, not a perfect year, but a good one. Yes, I have been truly blessed.

Perhaps it's the glass half empty/half full thing. Perhaps bumps in the road are just that. But one thing I do know for sure, the Lord has blessed me in so many ways. I thank God every day for these blessings and when things go wrong (and they do), I pray for His guidance and try to act according to His Son's teachings.

So if you are wondering how I can be so upbeat in times like these, the answer is really quite simple; I worship a God who loves me and cares for me. And when I stray, he gives me His grace. A God who watches over me day and night. Now, how can I not be upbeat?

But I still feel guilty.

**Randy Hilderman**

*Prayer: Blessed Father, I come to you with thanksgiving and praise. I thank you for the many blessings you give me every day. I am here because of your Grace and Love. Help me to make my life worthy of that Love. Help me to look for your guidance and direction when I fail and give me the strength to share your love with others. I ask these things in Christ's name. Amen.*



**March 4, 2022**

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” – Proverbs 3:5-6*

### **The Light in the Darkness**

May 19, 2021, will be a day that I personally will never forget. My varsity softball team had just won our first district championship since 2016. On our long ride home, amidst the celebrating, the bus abruptly came to a halt. I looked ahead to see a horrific car accident had just taken place. One of the families involved was one of my player's family members. Nothing can prepare you for something like that. I protected my player by not allowing her to go to the scene of the accident. This meant that I went to the scene and saw things that I will never forget. The grandmother ended up passing away, along with the other driver. The mom ended up with life-threatening injuries. The dad, as the driver, is dealing with serious emotional scars, and the player's boyfriend had serious injuries as well. Thankfully, other than the emotional scars, by the Grace of God, they have made a full recovery physically.

I have been told that I was put at that accident for a reason. I have been told that I was meant to be there. I did not see it that way at the time. I was very angry. I could not understand how God could let something like that happen. One minute we were celebrating, and ten minutes later lives were forever changed.

Charles Stanley once said, “Every test, every trial, every heartache that's been significant, I can turn it over and see how God has turned it into good no matter what.” This quote sums up what happened next.

After the accident, we went on to win the regional semifinal with that player who had been in a major hitting slump. Up 4-2, our #7 (her family was in the accident) hit a bases clearing double that blew the game wide open. I knew then that God had his hand in it.

The next game, we were up against the number one team in the state. They were 28-0 going into our game. We were facing the number one pitcher in the state. (She was a national pitcher of the year candidate.) In the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning, we were tied 1-1. #7 came to the plate and got a hit. She ended up scoring the winning run that sent us to the state final four. I cannot describe to you this emotional rollercoaster, but I can tell you that God had his hands in all of it. As a matter of fact, I made the comment that God and Grandma were sitting up in Heaven together, with their popcorn, saying “Watch this”.

As I am coming up on a year since the accident, I look back to see how much good has come from it. Not only did the emotion aid us in our run to the final four, but the family and I have become extremely close friends. More importantly, I have witnessed how this brought that family much closer to The Lord.

**Andrea Beverly**

*Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for all you do for us, in the good and in the bad. Thank you for always being the light in the darkness. Amen.*



**March 5, 2022**

*"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away;  
behold, new things have come." - 2 Corinthians 5:17*

### **Easter Reflections**

With OUR EYES we see  
The beauty of Easter  
as the earth awakens once more...

With OUR EARS we hear  
The birds sing sweetly  
to tell us Spring again is here...

With OUR HANDS we pick  
the golden daffodils  
and the fragrant hyacinths...

But only with OUR HEARTS  
can we feel the MIRACLE of GOD'S LOVE  
which redeems all men...

And only with OUR SOUL  
can we make our 'pilgrimage to God'  
and inherit His Easter Gift of ETERNAL LIFE.

Helen Steiner Rice

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for the beauty of Easter and for the gift of eternal life. I am  
forever grateful for your love. Amen.*

**March 6, 2022**

*"You who are young, be happy while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment." – Ecclesiastes 11:9*

### **It's About the Fun**

Our granddaughter, Emily, went one step further in her own personal tribute to her Papa Scott Lockwood. She recalled an incident where she was certain our big family trip should be on a Disney Cruise ship to Alaska. Her momma, being very thoughtful, thought that Emily should call her grandparents and plead her case. Upon my statement to Emily that the Disney Cruise line was very expensive, she recalls her Papa's reply to me, which appears below in the beautiful and colorful Aurora Borealis tattoo she now bears on her upper bicep.



She says, "The quote I always want to remember Papa by is in his handwriting underneath the northern lights. Now I'll always be reminded that it's about the fun."

Papa certainly earned points that day and a lasting reminder to the family.

**Linda Lockwood**

*Thought: Always remember the fun and let your heart bring you joy!*



**March 7, 2022**

### **Thoughts from the Future of the World**

- Alexis - *Luke 6:27-28* - Reminds us to love one another.  
*Galatians 6:9* - We are strong and should never give up.
- Peyton - *Colossians 3:23* - Helps her wake up to realize she needs to do better and work harder.
- Mia - *Deuteronomy 31:6* - Reminds us to be strong and courageous even if someone is trying to scare you.
- Cassidy - *Deuteronomy 6:5-9* - You should always believe in the Lord, all the time with both your thoughts and actions.
- Marilyn - *Exodus 34:6* - God allows us to go through a lot but is always with us.
- Jack - *John 1:1-9* - This one always stuck with me because John the Baptist was so important yet very modest.
- Julie- *Matthew 6:34* - I have turned to this verse to remind me not to worry, that all things will be provided by God.

### **Middle School and High School Classes**



**March 8, 2022**

*"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace." – Ecclesiastes 3:1-2*

### **A Time for Everything Under Heaven**

As Christie, Craig and I sat in vigil at St. Ann's Hospital the day of January 8, 2022, during Scott's emergency, and as the gravity and as the enormity of the decision we were to make was setting in, I couldn't help but note the newborn babies coming off the elevators.

The parents, along with their tiny babies, would parade past us in the main sitting area right there in the lobby. As my beloved Scott's life was coming to an end, happy, elated and joyful people were replacing Scott's life with new hope and new life.

There is just no greater love to be given to God's people than the gift of new life and the gift of love. For the young person, it's the joyous expectation of raising a baby and providing for their family.

At the other end of the spectrum is the bittersweet, most painful moment of saying goodbye to your most loved, or for a son or daughter to say goodbye to their beloved parent. Saying goodbye is the hardest thing I have done.

Christ promises us New Life in Him for those who believe in Him. Scott knew that and believed it. He was called home early to be with the Lord in paradise...making a place also for me at some unknown time and choosing of the Lord. Until we meet again, Scott. I love you.

**Linda Lockwood**

*Prayer: Holy Lord, Most Holy Lord, You alone are worthy of our love. I thank you Lord for New Life...both here on earth and in heaven. Amen.*

**March 9, 2022**



How do you show love to others? How do you prefer love be communicated toward you? Has your preference changed over time? The following are five ways to give and receive love:

1. words of affirmation
2. acts of service
3. receiving gifts
4. quality time
5. physical touch

How do the people around you want you to show love to them? Do you honor their (most likely unspoken) wishes?

**Marianne Derenberger**

*Prayer: Dear Jesus, Thank you for our community. Thank you for the time we are given to cultivate the relationships within our community. Please help me show multiple acts of love daily. Let You be shown through me. Thank you for loving us unconditionally and making the ultimate sacrifice for us. It's in Your name I pray, Amen.*

Let all that  
you do  
be done in  
love

1 COR. 16:18

**March 10, 2022**

*“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” – Romans 8:28*

### **Scott Lockwood**

Diane and I have known Scott and Linda and their children for about 40 years. In that time, we have spent numerous hours together, sharing meals, traveling, and attending church activities.

We have cruised and done road trips many times, including trips to the American West, Caribbean, Europe, and through the Panama Canal. It was often our job to hold down the benches in front of the junk/souvenir shops while the women shopped. We shared many great hours together.

Scott dearly loved his wife, Linda, his children, and his grandchildren. He loved the Lord and his church where he devoted many hours of service. He was an Elder, Church Treasurer, member of committees, and “Sound Man.”

Scott was also a member of the choir and we enjoyed our time together. Scott attended Men’s Coffee on Thursday mornings. It seems strange to pull into the Hot Spot and not see Scott’s car there. He was almost always the first to arrive.

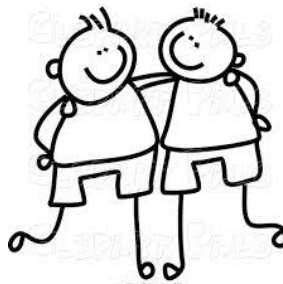
Scott had health problems that kept him in pain. For all the procedures he went through, he didn’t complain. He was a trooper.

The best thing I can say about Scott is that I was blessed to have him as a friend whom I valued greatly. I will miss him very much. I will especially miss his kind, gentle spirit and sense of humor.

God called Scott to a life of servanthood and has now called him home.

### **Jim Frazier**

*Prayer: Lord, we thank you for the life and example of Scott and are thankful that he rests in your loving arms. Amen.*



**March 11, 2022**

*"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him,  
the son of man that you care for him?" – Psalm 8:3-4*

### **Our God is Faithful**

Why does God love us? I wonder about that sometimes. When I read the Old Testament, I see that, time after time, the Israelites turned from God to wooden idols or a golden calf. Yet, He had mercy on them and led them through the wilderness to the promised land. That was long ago. Today, do we still forget to turn to God when we face trials and tribulation? Just like the Israelites, do we try to handle the situation ourselves or turn to modern day idols for consolation? Still, He forgives us when we turn to Him and repent, because He is our Father and we are His children.

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song." – Psalm 28:7

**Diane Frazier**

*Prayer: Father: We praise you and thank you for your blessings. You're our God who stands with wide open arms waiting to welcome us home. Amen.*

*Faith*

**March 12, 2022**

*"My child, if your heart is wise, my own heart will rejoice! Everything in me will celebrate when you speak what is right." – Proverbs 23:15-16*

### **The Importance of Family**

I always enjoy viewing Facebook pictures of families and their growth and adventures. I was an only child, but when we gathered with my father's family at Christmas there were lots of aunts, uncles, and cousins. Now that I have reached "old" age only 2 cousins remain. This makes me sad, but I do have wonderful memories of those times together.

We have only one grandchild, Benjamin, who was born in 2004. Now he is getting ready to graduate from high school and go off to college. His parents were transferred to Columbus in 2007, and that was all the impetus I needed to persuade Dick to move back from Colorado. I knew this would be our only grandchild and I wanted to be part of his life. It has been a wonderful adventure, and we are so proud of his accomplishments in school and scouting. Dick has always loved traveling to our National Parks, and he introduced Ben to their beauty and importance on many trips together. In March, they will travel together to Big Bend National Park in Texas over spring break for probably their last trip together.

You cannot underestimate the importance of family. Watching the Olympics, many athletes thank their families for their love and support through years of hard training. And even though families could not personally travel to China this year, it is a joy to see so many gathered together to cheer and support their loved ones.

The most important family I belong to is the family of God. It doesn't matter how few of my family are left. I know that friends and church members are there to love and support me because of their love for our Savior, Jesus Christ. The old hymn says, "We are joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod, for I'm part of the family, The Family of God".

**Ann Moseley**

*Prayer: Thank you Father for your guidance and the family you have provided to love and support me.*

**March 13, 2022**

*"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever." -*

*1 Corinthians 9:24-25 - NIV*

### **Scott Lockwood**

I know I'm in good company when I say that I will very deeply miss Scott Lockwood. I will miss him personally, and I will miss his influence and service to our church.

Scott's love for life and adventure took him and Linda on many fantastic trips in different areas of the world. I'm grateful that my parents had several opportunities over the years to travel with Scott and Linda for many of those adventures.

Scott's care for our church led him to be part of the choir, handle much of the technology needs during the Sunday services and throughout the week, support all aspects of the children's music programs and VBS, and spend many, many years serving through the financial committees of our church.

I appreciated his kind heart, his sense of humor, his heart for God, his humble nature, his quiet way, his example of perseverance, his love for his family, and the prayers I know he lifted for my family over the years.

Scott now wears the crown that will last forever. His race has been run, and he ran it with an incredible amount of grace. I'm so grateful for having had his influence in my life for around 38 years. He will not be forgotten.

### **Katie Miller**

*Prayer: Lord, we thank you for Scott and for his service to you. We thank you for his friendship and care. We thank you for his example in life and ask for your support for Linda, his family, and all who cared for him. Amen.*



**March 14, 2022**

*"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?" – Matthew 7:9*

### **Forgiveness**

I'm a sinner. And I'm hard on myself about that. How could God forgive me for the things I've done? The things I still do? I beg Him for His forgiveness and trust in the gift, but I still find myself struggling with why he would forgive me.

I'm a parent, and (shocker!) my children don't always do what I tell them to. Sometimes they are willfully disobedient, sometimes persistently disobedient, and sometimes, just disobedient. And I love them. And I forgive them for their disobedience, even though it doesn't make me happy.

What then? Do I believe I am more forgiving than God? That I love my children more? That I am able to see beyond their failings but He is not? May it never be! No, but by questioning even for a moment that He could forgive me, when I am capable of forgiving my own children, I would be setting myself as somehow more capable of grace than God Himself.

I sin. And I want to do better for Him. And he forgives me. And I just have to accept that.

READING: Romans 7:21-25

**Bob Pardee**

*Prayer: God, help us to accept Your love and forgiveness and to respond in gratitude to all You have done for us. Amen.*





**March 15, 2022**

*"Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is." – Ephesians 5:15-17 (NIV)*

### **Never Take Life for Granted**

Most of you don't know, but I recently started working for a nursing home/rehab center. I have seen a lot of patients in this past year get Covid with little to no symptoms, to some ending up in the hospital. I have also seen patients who have been in a coma for many months before God has called them home. I have seen and talked to patients who have overdosed on heroin and other drugs only to have God say, "Sorry, today is not your day to come home to me".

Working at the nursing/rehab center has made me realize just how precious life is and that we should never take life for granted. We need to have understanding, care, patience, hope, and love for our family and our friends. Life is too short not to sit back and enjoy every moment that we have on this earth.

**Patty Eichensehr**

*Prayer: May God bless you and keep you safe during these stressful and sometimes tiring times. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

grateful  
AND blessed

**March 16, 2022**

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." – 2 Timothy 4:7*

February 2022

*My dearest Barbara,*

*You are now where pain and suffering don't exist, ensconced in the gentle and loving hands of Jesus. For that we are all so very grateful. However, the cavernous void that you left us with is immeasurable and everlasting.*

*It was indeed an honor and privilege to be brought into the fold of your family as one of your daughters. Even in all the excitement of our wedding day, you found a private moment to tell me, "You are my daughter, and I will never abandon you." And twenty-four years later here you remained.*

*In those early years, you guided my navigation of becoming a wife and raising small children on an island that wasn't home to me, yet. You understood that I didn't always understand island ways, and you were patient and graceful as I endeavored to be the best for my family and also honoring your family. You were a matriarch in every moment; wise, patient, loving, and generous-all while holding us accountable to the family and to one another.*

*I remember calling you during my first hurricane on Andros when Max was out repairing electricity lines. The wind was howling; the house was in complete darkness; I was home with three young children and doing my best to be brave. You reassured me that all would be fine, and you prayed that my anxiousness would leave. After my seventh hurricane, many years later, I understood your confidence and peace. For you had placed your life and the lives of your family in the trusting hands of Jesus.*

*You continued to hold me in one of the darkest moments of my life. You listened, listened, and listened some more. (If you know me, it's easy to remember that I'm a talker.) Your love helped to heal all my broken, sad pieces. Your love gave me courage when I didn't want to try, and your love gave me just enough sass to keep going.*

*Fast forward to our life in Ohio. I was always so excited when your arrival was imminent. We enjoyed our own special traditions and so many adventures: having your favorite coffee on hand, new pajamas and flowers on the bedside table in your room, going to church at JPC, never missing a One-Day Sale at Macy's, attending Women of Faith conferences, road trips near and far, cheering in the audience of the kids' sports and music performances, graduations, shopping for your garden, playing cards, and sitting at the kitchen table laughing while solving the world's problems.*

*You set an example as a mother and friend which I aspire to emulate. Our family continues to grow and bring new hearts into the fold. Your regal legacy will guide all that we are and who we will become.*

*One of my dear friends responded to the news of your passing with the following:  
“Andros lost an empress, the world lost a peace-seeking believer, and heaven gained an angel.”*

*Until we are all together again, I will feel you in moments of sunshine, remember you in times of struggle, and celebrate you always-especially on our shared birthday. Barbara-you will be missed every day of my life.*

*All my love,  
Jenny*

*Prayer: Dear Lord, as our family continues to mourn the passing of our mother and friend, help us never forget the love and unshakeable faith that guided her words and steps. May we continue to walk in steps that glorify You and reflect her faithful legacy. -Amen.*



**March 17, 2022**

*"God says that where two or more are gathered God is there." – Matthew 18:20*

### **Blessings**

I am blessed to have family, friends, and this church home. While talking with Marie one day, she shared that she has never seen a church family like ours, where all you have to do is ask for anything and within an hour all needs are met by those anxious to volunteer or help.

My church family and my God is like a wonderful insurance policy. I know who I can always depend on, and I know where I am going!!! God has prepared a place for me.

My "gift" is to have the friends here at JPC with whom I share my faith and sorrows and celebrate my joys.

In this world of angst, how Great to have this port in the storm and a God who loves us. We are never alone!!!

**Barbara Derenburger**

*Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for my church home and for your presence in my life. Amen.*

**COUNT YOUR  
BLESSINGS.  
NAME THEM ONE BY ONE.  
COUNT YOUR  
MANY BLESSINGS  
SEE WHAT GOD HAS DONE.**

**March 18, 2022**

*"Be Still and Know that I am God..." Psalm 46:10a (ESV)*

Have you ever been asked to share a truth God has given you or seen God work specifically in your life? You get excited and can't wait to share the Scripture and the "Wow moment" only to not recall what the wow moment was? You look through all your prayer journals, even call specific people that you know have heard this amazing truth God gave you and get no answer. You exhaust the lists of where to find this nugget of truth that will bless someone to hear it. You pray and plead that God will reveal it, and then you feel guilty that you can't recall what the Lord clearly wanted you to hold dear to share at any given moment.

Well, it happens to me... a lot! It happened just today, when asked to share a devotional for the church. Why can't I recall it? Where did I put it? Surely, if I was asked; that is the one thing God wants me to share. Then after hours of racking my brain, God gently and in His loving kindness revealed to me the Scripture He has given me for the year. Be Still..... Really, Lord, Be Still and know that You are God?! But, Lord, what about that Scripture I shared a while back and the example of it that you gave me? "Yes, sometimes those are just for a particular moment, audience, and/or season. But take comfort in knowing I have more for you, my daughter." God clearly is showing me that He is the comfort, He is the Messiah, He is the Redeemer. He can change lives. When those anxious thoughts come flooding in or someone is looking for an answer and/or direction from you and nothing flows out.... BE still. Trust the Creator, the Savior, and Know He is God. HE will be exalted among the nations and on Earth.

**Debra Minkos**

*Prayer: Father God, thank you for your truth. Thank you for your comfort in knowing you have a plan, you are sovereign, you provide. Lord, when we become anxious, still our hearts to draw from your truth. Holy Spirit, guide our words, actions, and thoughts to bring Glory to God and to fill us with your peace and hope as we wait on you. It is in the precious name of Jesus we pray, Amen and Amen.*

**March 19, 2022**

*“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.” – Revelation 21:1*



### **How will it be in Heaven?**

Have you ever thought about what it will be like in heaven? A small group of us are studying the book, “Heaven”, by Randy Alcorn. Of course, no one knows for sure, but Randy has some interesting thoughts based on Scripture. He starts out stating how some personalities can’t imagine being happy just singing praises to God for eternity. Will that be all there is to heaven?

Randy claims that the heaven that exists now is not the heaven that will exist after the second coming of Christ. He states that God will create a new heaven here on earth, and the heaven above will be merged with the “new” earth. God will sit with us here on heaven and earth in his temple and the doors to the temple will always be open. We start to imagine the earth much like it is today except without war, or suffering, or anger, or disease, or any of the sins that we deal with today. We start to imagine the whole earth as the Garden of Eden before the serpent. We imagine people doing things much like they do today. Everyone will have a job – just not a job where we are struggling to live. Maybe a job that will be for the betterment of His Kingdom.

These thoughts start the imagination running wild. Will we have pets in heaven? Will we have the same bodies? Will we know our ancestors? Will we rejoin our partners in life? Will we have children – without the pain of childbirth? What about natural resources like coal, oil, gas? Will those be restored or will we even need them? Will we see friends who did not know Christ suffering in the fires of hell? How will that make us feel? What about the balance of nature? The questions go on and on.

I wonder if we are making a mistake trying to equate a heaven to the earth we know today. I wonder if our mindset will be so totally different that spending eternity singing praises to God will

not be viewed as boring, but as a joy that fills our soul. Maybe the new earth is much more than this physical planet. Maybe it stretches across all the galaxies in the universe.

Whatever it will be. Whatever the answers are to these questions. Whatever I can imagine is inconsequential. I must trust in God that heaven will be much greater than I can envision, and I trust I will be happier than I have ever been. God is far greater than I can possibly conceive. He loves us and He has His plan for us. Therefore, it is not necessary for us to worry.

**Scott Lockwood**  
**(Lenten Devotional 2017)**

*Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your love for us. Forgive us in trying to worry about heaven. Help us to know in our hearts that heaven will be much greater than anything we can imagine. Amen.*



**March 20, 2022**

*“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” – Colossians 3:1-4*

## **Change**

Change impacts people every day, and throughout my years I have learned to become somewhat resilient to change. However, the changes that are happening in our own town have been heavy on my heart lately. Ty and I are ready to plant our roots and have always thought Johnstown would be that place we would call home forever. With Intel being built less than a mile from our home, it has brought uneasiness to what our future holds and where home will look like. Ty and I, for the most part, have grown up in small towns. As we both grow older, we truly learn to appreciate every aspect of the “small town feel”. We absolutely love Johnstown and all of the people in it, but fear in five or ten years that it will no longer feel or look how we know it to be. During this season of uncertainty, I have been listening to a Christian-based podcast on my ride to and from work. This podcast interviews influential Christians, such as Bob Goff, and they are asked to share the best advice that they have ever been given. When listening to this podcast, there are two pieces of advice I have held close to my heart and almost felt as though God led me to hear these things.

One piece of advice is always having the attitude of: you know what, if I go to bed tonight and wake up tomorrow morning and have lost absolutely everything but I still have my family, friends, and my faith, then everything will be okay. This is such a simple concept, but it brought me an enormous amount of peace. It really highlights that the loved ones surrounding you and your faith are really the only things that matter in life. If you have loved ones supporting you and faith guiding you, then the possibilities are endless.

Another piece of advice is: always remember where your home is. A young woman said that she had received this advice from her dad. Her dad passed away when she was a teenager, and on one of his last days on earth he wrote her a letter that had this advice in it. At first she was mystified because a huge portion of what she considered “home” had just left this earth. However, throughout the years a deeper meaning revealed light to her. We can be stripped of anything within our lives, but if we remember where our true home exists, this will always offer us peace, hope, and stability for the future. In reality, our home is not fully found on this earth and this is not our forever dwelling place. When the world tells you to find comfort or stability in earthly things or places, always remember where your true home resides because those earthly things or places will not fully satisfy you.

**Katie Choate**



*Prayer: Dear God, thank you for earthly places and people that you have placed in our lives. Let us be grateful for the experiences we have had and for the new ones to come. Help guide us to live our lives with your purpose in mind. Please always remind us that our earthly life is only temporary, and that you have a special plan for each and every one of us during our time on earth. In Jesus name, Amen.*



**March 21, 2022**

*"And do not forget to do good and to share with others for with such sacrifices God is pleased." - Hebrews 13:16*

### **Christmas Eve Blessings**

Christmas hasn't been "normal" for a while now. (I'm not sure what "normal" is, but that is a topic for another day.) I don't think I've ever not attended our Christmas Eve service at church in my entire life. I struggled with no live Christmas Eve Service in 2020 but resigned myself to watch our church service with my family on TV and carry on with the traditions our family has. But, that day, beautiful snow began to fall. By late Christmas Eve, 2020, the snowfall was stunning. It was soft and beautiful! That night, Grant and I took a long walk here in town. Everything was crisp, pure white, and serene. We walked past the town square, our village Christmas tree standing proud and tall, the Santa house, and on to our church and the snow-covered nativity. We stood there quite a while in the beautiful peace and quiet of the night that blessed night. I have thought several times since then that had we had church that night, I wouldn't have had that opportunity to make those memories of a beautiful Christmas Eve with my oldest grandson.

Fast forward to December 24, 2021. We were going to have our traditional two Christmas Eve services in our church! Everyone was excited. Normalcy! And then I received a call from our church. Our Pastor's wife, Julie, had tested positive for Covid! She was not feeling badly, but obviously she would not be attending church...and oh wait, Pastor Kevin would not be able to carry on with his normal responsibilities of the evening. Would I be willing to read The Christmas Story for the evening service? Sure.

But this story isn't about who would read; it's a glimpse into what everyone did that day to make our service meaningful. Everyone pitched in! Kevin is a meticulous planner and of course everything was planned; my assignment was easy. But the "glue" of the evening wasn't going to be in his usual role. The first person I spoke with when I arrived at church (quite a little bit early) was Scott Lockwood who was busy at the sound system. He smiled in his calm and friendly way and had my mic ready. He and Pastor Kevin had spent the afternoon getting Kevin connected from his office to the large projector in our sanctuary so Kevin could interact from his office with both services. I know there were MANY others who worked quietly behind the scenes that day preparing for both Christmas Eve Services, but you get the picture.

Isn't that what we should be doing every day? Working together for the good of the Lord? Pitching in when there is a need, seeing what needs to be done and doing it? And doing it joyfully? I know I could do a better job of that and thank you to those who already do!

**Alice Main**

*Prayer: Dear Lord, as we prepare for the death and resurrection of Jesus, help us to do a better job working together to do your will every day, not just on Sunday or holidays, but every day. In thy name we pray, Amen.*

**March 22, 2022**

*"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you." Psalm 32:8*

Life is full of dreams, these fleeting moments in our memory come and go, but sometimes a dream grabs hold. I once heard that if you do not chase your dream it will not chase you. Life provides dreams, God provides opportunities, and if you trust in the Lord, you will discover that opportunities and dreams collide creating a path created by the Lord.

In 2009, we took a family vacation to the mountains of western North Carolina. It was then that we felt called to this area. At that time the conversation began, we knew we wanted to be in that region of the United States, but we did not know why. We knew we were being called. We still do not know why we are being pulled to that region, but we are trusting the Lord.

This past summer we followed the Lord and listened to his counsel. We solidified our plans by choosing to relocate to Sharps Chapel, Tennessee. We know this is the way we should go, though we still do not know why. The Lord has a plan, and it will be revealed. It is refreshing to wake up each morning and fall asleep every night knowing that God is in charge, and he will show us the way.

**Chris Blair**

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, you are our Redeemer and Savior. You provide guidance every second of every day. Thank you for placing your hand on our shoulder and guiding us through your amazing journey. Amen*



**March 23, 2022**

*"For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father."* – *Philippians 2:9-11*

When I first read this poem as a pre-teen, it deeply moved me. I would read it often as a teen, young adult, and adult. To me the words are beautiful and meaningful. I hope your reading of this poem touches your heart as it did mine!

### **One Solitary Life**

He was born in an obscure village  
The child of a peasant woman  
He grew up in another obscure village  
Where he worked in a carpenter shop  
Until he was thirty

He never wrote a book  
He never held an office  
He never went to college  
He never visited a big city  
He never traveled more than two hundred miles  
From the place where he was born  
He did none of the things  
Usually associated with greatness  
He had no credentials but himself  
He was only thirty-three

His friends ran away  
One of them denied him  
He was turned over to his enemies  
And went through the mockery of a trial  
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves  
While dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing  
The only property he had on earth

When he was dead  
He was laid in a borrowed grave  
Through the pity of a friend

Nineteen centuries have come and gone  
And today Jesus is the central figure of the human race

And the leader of mankind's progress  
All the armies that have ever marched  
All the navies that have ever sailed  
All the parliaments that have ever sat  
All the kings that ever reigned put together  
Have not affected the life of mankind on earth  
As powerfully as that one solitary life

Dr James Allan © 1926

**Kathy Trimble**

*Prayer: God, help us to remember the power of the gift of your Holy Son. Help us not to lose the awe of the power of Jesus Christ. Help us to continually contemplate and recognize the reason for Christ's life on earth and ultimate sacrifice. A sacrifice made so that we may one day have eternal life with God. Jesus' name above all names. Amen.*



**March 24, 2022**

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven" Matthew 5:16. "Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." Romans 15:2-3*

### **In the Present**

Why is it that we are constantly rushing through life, always looking ahead to what is next to come? This starts very early in life; as young children we can't wait to grow-up so we can participate in sports, school activities, drive, go to prom, and ultimately graduate. As parents of young children, we are constantly rushing through the days, looking ahead to the next activity and many times just looking forward to the end of a long day or week for a moment of quiet and relaxation. As our children grow and leave home, we remember fondly the time when they were young and wish we could reverse time and go back to those days. This is also when we begin to look forward to a time when we can retire, relax, travel, and spend more time with family and friends.

This constant focus on what lies ahead can rob us of the opportunity to enjoy each moment and make the most of each day. Every day is a precious gift, filled with opportunities to make a positive impact on others. These can be simple yet intentional acts, such as offering a compliment or word of kindness, helping someone in their personal or professional growth journey, taking the time to listen, or offering a helping hand to someone in need. We should take time each day to really make meaningful connections with others. I find inspiration in the Max Lucado quote: "The sweetest satisfaction lies, not in climbing your own Everest, but in helping other climbers."

**Carrie Almendinger**

*Prayer: Dear Lord, I pray that you will lead me in all that I do today. Please help me to focus on the present and see the beauty within the moments of each day. Lord, help me be a blessing today, to speak life into those around me, to show compassion and be a source of encouragement. Lead me to love without conditions, believe the best in others, and shine your light to everyone I meet. I pray others will see Jesus in me today. Amen.*



**March 24, 2022 cont.**

*"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." - Deuteronomy 31:6*

*"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." - Ephesians 5:8*

*"The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken." - Psalm 34:19-20*

### **Signs**

From May 2021 until December 2021, my wife and I have gone through some challenging times. In May 2021 we found out we were pregnant! In the beginning of June we returned from a family vacation to Las Vegas and were informed that I had no job to come home to; they were going out of business due to financial reasons. Shortly after, we received the news that we had lost our baby. Being out of a job and losing the baby that I never got a chance to meet, but loved so much, devastated me. It devastated Madison too and was very trying with the new nanny position she had taken. It had to be hard taking care of a young infant when we had just lost ours. But through faith and persistence, I finally landed a job in August after doing odd end jobs to get by.

Then comes October when I find myself in the hospital. While in the hospital, Madison was worried and trying to keep everything together. Soon after being discharged (three days to be exact) we found out we were pregnant again. Such good news! November brought another hospital stay. This time finding out I had pulmonary embolisms in my lungs. At one point I offered God that if He had to take me so that Madison and my child could live, I was okay with this because parents are all we'd wanted to become.

Thankfully, He did not see fit to have to do that. In all we went through there were signs of God being with us everywhere! The guys I had previously worked with worked to open their own shop and hired me back doing something I love doing. Our baby, who is a boy, is very healthy and happy, just like his mother. God shined through everyone we knew—our parents helped us immensely, others brought us groceries, our neighbors and friends started a donation campaign, many prayed for us, sent well wishes, and sent cards. We were so blessed to have such great people in our lives. It was God! God worked through the people in our lives to pull us back to His light.

### **Zane Maize**

*Father, thank you for all the guidance you give us, you know our plans before we do. We may not always agree with the path you have planned for us, but please help us to hold fast to your love and our faith in you. Let us all be a light of hope for others who struggle! In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.*

**March 25, 2022**

*"Shout to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, we are His; we are His people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations." Psalm 100:1-5*

### **Thanksgiving Journal**

Several years ago, I started writing down things I am thankful for daily during my devotional time. This practice turned into writing a daily journal of "Thanksgiving"; thus, I call it my "Thanksgiving Journal." Every sentence starts with the words "thank you" and expresses a sentiment to the Lord in which some form of praise, thanksgiving, gratitude, and/or gratefulness is given to Him. Many times during our prayer/devotional time, we spend it asking for things and often forget to say "thank you" for the daily blessings we receive and often take for granted. During this Lenten Season, let us turn from our wants and desires; let us spend time thanking the Lord for all He provides and promises daily - from the very least to the greatest. For God is Great and greatly to be praised!

**Valerie Whalen**

*Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for covering this day with Your Presence, Power, Protection, Provision and Peace. Thank you for Your Almighty Hand that covers us and Your hedge of protection that surrounds us keeping the evil one and all who do his will from us. Thank you for the Power of Your Healing Hand that touches us from the top of our heads through the soles of our feet, cleansing and healing all our afflictions, sickness, illness and disease - physically, mentally, and spiritually. Thank you for Your love, joy, mercy and grace. Thank you for forgiving our sins and filling our hearts full of Your joy, peace, praise, thanksgiving, gratefulness, and gratitude for being The One True God of all creation. You are Great and greatly to be praised!*





**March 26, 2022**

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." - Psalm 23:1-3*

As I think about writing a devotional, I give Thanks. Thanks for this time with my sweet and caring mate while some of my friends are alone. We have a beautiful and comfortable home to enjoy. Our children and grandchildren can be here in a moment's notice, love us and cater to our every need. My church family is praying for all of us, and I value their friendships as well as friends made in our walk in life. We are Blessed. While I give thanks daily, I wonder how I could be a blessing to someone.

As most of you know, I love to send cards and give away devotional books to shut-ins. But that does not feel like much of a payback for all Jesus has done for us. The reality of what Jesus has done for us has touched my heart in a real way. He does not require paybacks, but only loving and serving him. What a magnificent promise.

We do not know what is around the corner for us, but we do know Christ will be with us. He was with us in the death of two children and you, our church family, were with us too. I will never forget how our church family all held hands and lined the street during the funeral procession for our little Mary K Elizabeth as we left the church. You were giving us your love and support.

Our Bibles are full of wonderful promises. I recall so many verses and words from hymns that I learned as a child, and I thank God for that. He sends them back to my forgetful brain just as I need them. I wonder where He is when I listen to the news, but then I recall, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

**Hazel Almendinger**

*Prayer: Dear Lord, please lead us in love for one another. Help us to be examples of your love to others. Amen.*

*Love • ONE • Another*

**March 27, 2022**

*“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” - Isaiah 41:10*

*“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” - Philippians 4:13*

*“For the LORD your God is he that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.” - Deuteronomy 20:4*

### **Strength**

For me, physical strength is easy. If you want to have a stronger body, you go to the gym and hire a coach to put you on a fitness regimen. Combine that with eating well and you get strong. Easy, simple, and step wise. Emotional strength is tough. It's not something that we can physically see or measure. Throughout our lifetime we will inevitably go through struggle. We cannot escape it. But what within our soul gives us the literal strength to get out of bed when we feel like we can't tackle the day? What makes us keep moving forward in our darkest times? It's a force or an energy that we can feel pulling us along, even when we don't want to. I truly believe that force is God. If we call to him and ally Him, He takes the weight of our worries, fears, sadness, and burdens and gives us the strength to get up after being knocked down. If we give the weight to Him, we will then be strong enough to move forward.

### **Courtney Strout**

*Dear Jesus, please help us all learn and continue to look to You for our strength. Let us find strength in You and ask You for strength regularly. It's in Your name we pray, Amen.*

**March 28, 2022**

*"In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!" Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them." - Acts 9:36-39*

### **Tabitha Circle**

Tabitha was a beloved disciple who was always helping the poor. She also made robes and other clothing during her lifetime. She died, and because her friends were so distraught, Peter prayed that she would be spared. The miracle caused many to believe in the Lord. She was a mere servant deserving of the Lord's blessings.

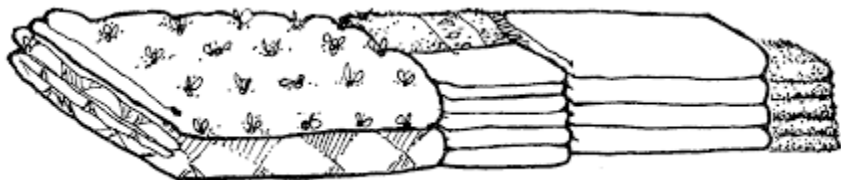
Our church has a circle named for her. The circle is composed of several women who make toddler blankets. The goal is to give about 50 per year to the organization named Newborns in Need of Greater Newark, Ohio Chapter, which donates them to various hospitals, Leads, The Center for Safety and Healing, and other service agencies.

The Tabitha Circle has been a function of the church for at least 40 years. I believe that it was started by Betty Carlisle. The original members have either died or moved away. A few of the earlier members were Alice Neibarger, Julie Hott, Marie Brown, Betty Ford, and Hope Rife. The group also serves as fellowship for its members.

We thoroughly enjoy completing the blankets. However, we have limited space and have to resort to "homework." We are grateful for the financial assistance the church has given us. This is a two-way ministry: gifts for the needy and fellowship for its members.

### **Carolyn Friedberg**

*Prayer: Dear Lord, we thank you for the ability to create and give these blankets with love. We pray that our labor is received in your name. Amen.*



**March 29, 2022**

*"Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God. - Ruth 1:16*

### **Loyalty and Love**

The old testament book of Ruth is a compact love story. The entire account is given only 85 verses. Ruth's life was the true perfect experience in one genuine woman. The name alone means "friendship". She was very supportive and physically strong.

She would not compromise her virtues. When a severe famine spread throughout Israel, she, her Mother-in-law, and sister-in-law were reduced to complete poverty. She spent hours laboring in the fields. Yet, she saw the hand of God in her suffering.

Fast forward more than two thousand years. I knew another Ruth. Her life started with a loving family but very little income. She married at age 16 to a loving man who provided her with an easier way of life. Although she missed her loving large family, she made the best of her life helping others. She took her sister's young son and nursed him through two years of polio. Several years later, she and her husband had three daughters. She was such an attentive wife and mother. Her house was always spotless and filled with food. She shared many meals with those in need and ill. Snacks were always waiting and available for her girls and their friends and neighbors after school. She never failed to visit each daughter's classroom and know their teachers each school year.

Oh! Did I forget to say that this wonderful woman was my Mother.

**Ramona Hilderman**

*Prayer: Dear God in Heaven, may the world be filled with Ruths. Strong wives and mothers and neighbors all over this universe.....Amen.*



**March 30, 2022**

*"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline." - 2 Timothy 1:7*

### **Trying Something New**

As a parent you want to give your children every opportunity you can to try new things and have a spirit of adventure. Trying new activities can often be a source of fear and stress. Both of my girls tried new activities this past year, and we are proud of their efforts! None of these changes to their schedules or the activities themselves came easily, nor did they come without the fear of the unknown.

Megan took a big chance last year by playing on the club lacrosse team at the high school. Since it's not currently a varsity sport, the club team is for both girls and boys. She was the only girl to play on the team last year, and it was her first time ever trying the sport of lacrosse. She was beaten and bruised on several occasions, but her loyalty to the program, and the will to continue to get better has never wavered. Megan met and overcame many challenges, and we are extremely proud of her. She even earned her varsity letter! Conditioning and voluntary practices have started for this spring's season, and we look forward to the challenges and successes that will ensue.

Peyton was a dedicated Irish Dancer for four years. Three of those years were spent in competition. In every competition, she placed in the top half of the group, and the majority of those were top three performances. It was a joy to watch her compete and be part of a wonderful dance family. However, this last fall came, and the desire to continue in dancing was starting to wane. The opportunity presented itself to try Cross Country for the Jr. High. She was the only 7th grade competitor for the Jr. High last year. There were only three total Cross Country runners for the Jr. High. They practiced with the high school team. Peyton was able to compete in only two races last year due to knee injuries, but she went to every practice and supported her teammates at each contest. We are incredibly proud of her desire to try something new and the support she gave her teammates.

I think sometimes it might be easier to try new things when we are younger. I know as I've gotten older that the familiar has become very comfortable and I'm not always willing to step outside my comfort zone or circle. I need to be better at remembering that God did not give us a spirit of timidity. He gave us His spirit so we could try new things, become uncomfortable, and stretch our wings. May we use that spirit to reflect His love to others in service to Him.

**Katie Miller**

*Prayer: Dear Lord, may we be open to trying new things and open to your call in our lives. Amen.*

**March 31, 2022**

*"They send forth their children as a flock; their little ones dance about." - Job 21:11*

### **Sunday School Has Returned!!**

Our Sunday School class is 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders. They are a delightful and lively group. I asked them the question, "What does kindness mean to you?"

Annabelle Parpart – Friends.

Claire Rucker – Treating others the way you want to be treated.

Piper Schirtzinger – Playing a board game with your brother or sister.

Gabe Wittmer – Donating to people who do not have much.

Lincoln Derenberger Helping other people and being kind to others.

Dalton Greenwald – Family.

Wyatt Schirtzinger – Someone who gives you a whole bag of Reese Cups.

### **Rhonda Piper**

*Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, our little ones are such a delight. I pray for peace and laughter to fill their days. Give them courage to face any challenge that comes before them.*



**April 1, 2022**

*"I know your works, and your labor, and your patience, and how you cannot bear them which are evil: and you have tested them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars. And have persevered, and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake, and have not become weary. - Revelation 2:2-3*

### **Are You Ready?**

This year, my company offered a voluntary severance package to reduce its workforce. This package would allow me to retire! I had been looking forward to retirement, but I thought I had at least a couple more years before I could do it. Suddenly and without warning, the opportunity was here. But I had only two weeks to decide. In the end, I decided to take the opportunity.

But I had a problem. Experts state that you need to be able to financially support yourself plus you need to have a plan for what you are going to do in retirement. How right they are. I thought I was ready, but I wasn't. The financial part was fine, but I really didn't have a plan for what I was going to do. I had some thoughts, but they were not really any part of an actual plan. I thought I could formulate the plan as I go. That worked fine for about three months, but then I really missed the contact with people and the challenges of the job. I found a part-time position where I could work from home and still have the challenges. The contact with people part still needs work, but things are turning out fine now.

So, am I ready to meet my God? That opportunity could occur even more quickly than the retirement opportunity. I think I am ready, but these recent events make me wonder. Are my financial affairs in order so my family can continue without me? Do the people I love know how much I love them? Have I repaired any wrongs that I made? Have I made someone's life better? Have I done what God has wanted me to do? Does Jesus know how much I believe in Him?

How about you? Are you ready?

**Scott Lockwood**  
**(Lenten Devotional 2011)**

*Prayer: Dear Precious Jesus, help me be ready for the day when I am called to Heaven. Help me find the strength and will to do your work for you until then. In your name I pray. Amen.*

**April 2, 2022**

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:  
The old has gone, the new is here!" - 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Does your conversation with God ever start with "Oh Lord, I am trying to understand. God, I am trying really hard"? This prayer or conversation usually occurs when things are changing around me and I want to know why, and I want to know why right now. It is hard to be patient and understand God's plan and path he is leading me down.

I am an advocate of change. When your socks develop holes, you buy new (well, I hope you do). When your vehicle starts to cost more than it's worth, you purchase a new one. When your home gets too small due to the addition of children, you purchase a new one. All of these changes provide us with memories even though the initial items are gone. Any change can be hard. The unknown answers can be fearful. Are you ready to make a change but not sure where to begin? It all begins with prayer. The Lord empowers us to change by his unending grace and love.

Our family is soon going to experience several changes that are both exciting and, frankly, a little scary due to the unknowns. I know that these changes will leave us with many years of great memories made and memories of things yet to be. It is difficult to leave behind material items; however, the memories speak volume and bring so much joy and love.

If you struggle with change, don't focus on yourself and what the future may bring, but rather strive to renew your mind to who you are in Christ - a new creation. For our own Heavenly Father gave His only son so that we would be changed from our sinful nature and renew His glory, His righteousness.

**Karen Blair**

*Prayer: Dear Lord, as we continue down our life path and journey, help us to embrace change. Allow us to hold on to the memories and open our minds to the new yet to be. Amen.*



**April 3, 2022**

*"And the King will answer them, 'I assure you: Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.' " - Matthew 25:40*

### **Sewing Circle**

Early last Spring I was invited to be a member of the Tabitha Circle. It is a group of ladies, Mona Hilderman, Ann Mosely, Carolyn Friedberg and the late Marie Brown who make quilts for a group called "Newborns in Need". I said that I could do many things but sewing wasn't one of them. Carolyn said, "If you can tie a knot, then you can participate". So I began attending the regular Tuesday Tabitha Circle. I learned their process of making the "tops" and then pinning those to the batting and the backing. And then I got to tie those knots! I enjoyed working together with these ladies and hearing tales about "the place in Newark" where they take the completed quilts. I looked forward to the day we were delivering the first batch of 21 we had completed. We walked into this door of a former music store, and I was led towards the back where I could see a soft glow breaking through the doorway. I have described this as walking into a "Crafters Heaven" as my eyes scanned the rooms. In the middle was a large table surrounded by women knitting and crocheting booties, hats, and sweaters. The walls in this room were lined with sewing machines and a few ironing boards. One woman was making infant toys using soft fleece materials. Another was also using the fleece to make nursing pads for breastfeeding mothers. Another woman was using donated wedding gowns to make "Keepsake gowns and pouches" for babies who do not make it home or are stillborn. And still others were assembling their contributions to these kits. As we walked in and I looked around the room, the word Harmony came to mind. We all were there working for the same purpose; we all had a common goal to share God's love with "the least of these". Newborns in Need put together packages of these items, bibs, burp cloths, blankets, sweaters, hats, a toy, nursing pads, and much more. Each baby born in Licking County is a recipient. It was a good feeling to see these other ladies from all over the county caring for "the least of these".

A few ladies stopped what they were doing and took our donations out of the bags we transported them in, opening them up to show the handiwork and then pinned their tags on them and added to their inventory. Once done, they went back to their sewing or knitting. I looked around at the various projects while Carolyn and Mona chatted with the organizer. I was in awe at the serenity on all of the faces. We all were blessed doing God's work.

In total, our little group completed 54 quilts in 2021. We haven't set a goal yet for 2022 but it will be fun working together. We have another new member, Patty Eichensehr, who has much more sewing ability than I do. I'm sure we will contribute plenty.

**Sharon Overmier**

*Prayer: Dear God, thank you for the opportunity to put our talents, no matter how big or small, to use for Your Kingdom. Thank You for these talents You have bestowed on us. Thank you for the opportunity to be Your hands and feet to these little ones and new mothers. May Your blessing go to them as they receive these items and remember the love of God when they are put to use. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*



**April 4, 2022**

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God." - Ephesians 2:8*

It was an early April afternoon. We had all just got in the car after church and headed home. The brightly shining sun made it quite warm in the car with our winter coats on. We were all quietly looking out the windows when my little sister loudly said, "Dad, when we get home will you get the sleds down?" My Dad paused a moment, looking at her in the rearview mirror and said, "Why do you want them down?"

Excitedly she said, "I'm going sledding!" Quickly he responded, "But there's no snow." Still with joy she replied, "I prayed to God to let it snow so I could go sledding." With a soothing voice my Dad explained, "We don't always get what we want when we pray. It is spring and I have put the sleds away until next winter." She sat quietly looking out the window the rest of the short distance home.

We pulled into the garage and everyone hurried into the house to change our clothes, like most Sundays. While scattered out in our rooms, we heard my little sister yell, "Look, it's snowing!" We all ran to a window to look and, sure enough, it was snowing. There was so much snow and huge flakes, you could hardly see. Unfortunately, it didn't snow long and melted as soon as it landed. The sun never stopped shining. My Dad was speechless. (I think he knew God was reminding him to have the same faith he was teaching us to have.)

My Dad was the rock in our Christian upbringing. He saw that we attended church regularly and took part in the church. He taught us we needed to have faith and pray to God. I thank my Dad still for teaching us to let God be in control through our faith in Him.

**Tami Ashbrook**

*Prayer: Dear God, thank you for always being there to hear my prayers, no matter how big or small. I know with my faith, your will be done. Amen.*



**April 5, 2022**

*"Be joyful in hope, patient in tribulation, faithful in prayer." Romans 12:12*

### **Relearning to Walk by Faith**

This verse truly defines much of our 2021 year.

On Saturday, April 10, 2021, my brother, David, suffered a massive stroke. He was walking back into his house from being outside and did not make it. The effects of the stroke happened quickly and he fell just outside his back door, unable to move. He lived alone and his phone was out of reach. Sadly, he spent the night outside in the rain and cold, sleeping on and off and hoping for someone to find him. The next day and night was spent in the same manner as the one before, hoping, waiting and praying...no one came.

By the second morning, his hope was fleeting but God was there. On this morning, he should have been at work. It was unusual for him to miss, so a co-worker came to check on him when he didn't answer his phone. When he found him, he thought it was too late but then David regained consciousness long enough to share scattered details of the events leading to his current state. Upon arrival at the hospital, it was determined that a portion of his brain was badly damaged and the swelling was so severe that a section of his skull would need to be removed to relieve pressure and save his life.

This is when the family was made aware of David's situation. Our parents were in Florida so they quickly departed and began the long and difficult drive home. They spent their time crying, praying, and trying to educate themselves on strokes. Unfortunately, time was not on our side. Life and death decisions needed to be made right away. Trusting that David was in God's hands and praying that the surgeon was competent in removing this piece of his skull, they consented to move forward with the procedure. It sounded like something from a sci-fi movie, but it worked! He made it through surgery and was able to recognize our dad when he woke up.

The progress has been slow but it is still happening. He has come much further than doctors ever imagined. After months of moving from various rehabilitation centers and nursing homes, he was finally able to go home in August on his birthday. Although he has paralysis on one side of his body, he is relearning to walk and function. He still needs care but is beginning to do more on his own thanks to the commitment and tireless efforts of our parents. We know that God is using this situation to restore relationships, to teach patience during tribulation, and to acknowledge that God hears our prayers.

As we face situations that are difficult and hard to understand, we are seeing that this is when God is pulling us nearer and wanting us to trust Him more.

**Laurie Clark**

*Prayer: Father, thank you for showing us the good in every situation. Amen.*

**April 6, 2022**

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God." - John 1:1*

### **A Treasure Map**

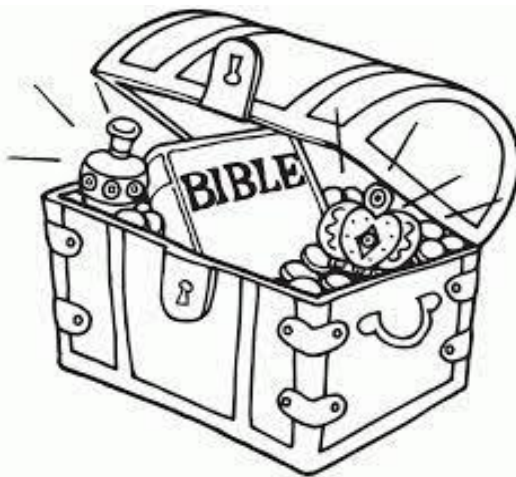
The Bible has been banned, burned, scoffed, and ridiculed. Scholars have mugged it as foolish. Kings have branded it illegal. A thousand times over it the grave has been dug and the dirge has begun, and somehow the Bible never stays in the grave. Not only has it survived, it has thrived. It is the single most popular book in all of history. It has been the bestselling book in the world for years!

There is no way on Earth to explain it. Which perhaps is the only explanation? The answer? The Bible's durability is not found on Earth; it is found in Heaven. For the millions who have tested its claims and claimed its promises, there is but one answer - the Bible is God's book - God's voice.

The purpose of the Bible is to proclaim God's plan and passion to save his children. That is the reason this book has endured through the centuries. It is the treasure map that leads us to God's highest treasure - eternal life.

*Prayer: Thank you, God, for your treasure map, the Bible. Thank you, God, for these recordings that help us learn of your great love. May we share your love with others. Amen.*

**Norma Johnson**  
**(Lenten Devotional 2013)**



**April 7, 2022**

*"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God." - Romans 5:8*

### **One Woman's Faith Story**

Today our friend Miriam would have turned 18. Every year on her birthday, I honor her memory by sharing Jesus with you because that is the hope she had this side of Heaven. Romans 5:8 was her favorite verse. This year I've decided to tell my own story of faith. Long post alert! I hope it is an encouragement to you:

I grew up in a Christian home. Both of my parents came to know Christ while they were in college, and they modeled the love of Christ to me throughout my childhood. We attended a United Methodist church when I was young, and I started hearing about the good news of Jesus early in my life. I was told that Jesus wanted to be my friend and he was knocking on my heart to come in. When I was five years old, I remember praying to ask Jesus into my heart on the way home from a children's ministry event. My parents had me speak with our minister shortly after that. I went into his office and I can recall his gentle voice as he spoke with me about my decision to follow Christ. Soon after that he baptized me by sprinkling some water on my head to tell the church that I was now a Christian.

Years passed, and I grew up going to VBS, helping my mom in the children's ministry, and learning Bible verses in Sunday School. When I was in the fifth grade, our family made the decision to move to another church. This was a very awkward time in my life to be starting over with a new group of friends, but I made the best of it. We decided to join a Southern Baptist church because my parents were longing for a church that preached the Bible. This church emphasized the salvation message and had an altar call every week. At the end of every service, I did a kind of gut-check and reaffirmed that, yes, I really did accept Jesus into my life all those years ago.

I went to Sunday School, attended all the crazy youth events, sang in the choir, and participated in our youth group musicals. I knew that I was a Christian, but I often felt like I was just going through the motions because, frankly, living the Christian life is all I really knew. I was very private about my faith and some, including my parents, would say I was even kind of prickly and did not want to talk about my beliefs. I did not like to pray or read my Bible. I can remember a few times telling myself that one day I would commit to really doing this whole Christian thing. Someday I would read my Bible and speak out about my faith, but not yet. I lived a very moral life throughout those years and made a mark for myself as a goody two-shoes. Hard to believe, I know.

I headed off to college and knew that my faith was still an important part of who I was. I sought out Christian campus organizations and continued to live my very straight-laced, don't-you-dare-

take-me-to-a-party-where-they-are-drinking, kind of life. I knew that I was a sinner and Jesus died to take away my sins, but I was more focused on my outward behavior and making sure everyone else saw that I was different from them. I wanted them to see Jesus in me, but I had a very strange, pharisaical way of showing it. At some point, I started doubting that any of what I had learned as a child was even true. I had many personal and raw prayers during those years as I sought out who Jesus was and what I really believed. As college progressed, I slowly began to claim the Christian faith as my own. I did start to read my Bible more and became more open about what I believed to others around me, but I still didn't fully get it.

Fast forward a few years. I was married in 1998 to a man who loved God and he and I continued to grow in our faith as a newly married couple. We prioritized going to church, serving, and growing in our faith. Again, I knew that I was a Christian. I knew that I was "saved" and would someday go to Heaven, but it wasn't until we started attending a new church in Massachusetts five years into our marriage, that I finally understood the gospel.

Now I'm sure that I had heard the gospel like this before. I mean, how could I not have heard it? But for the first time my ears were open and ready to listen to what God had to say. This may have been because we had just moved many miles from home while I was very pregnant with my first child and all my comfort zones were leveled to the ground. Whatever it was, God finally got through to me. This is what I finally understood: He loved me so much that, even while I was still a sinner, He sent His son Jesus to die on a cross for my sin. The rest of my life is meant to be lived in response to this love NOT in order to earn it or prove anything to anyone. He showed me mercy by not giving me what I truly deserve and grace by giving me more than I deserve. He now sees me as if I had never sinned or will ever sin again. Wow.

What drives me now is knowing just how much God loves me. He let His son die for me even though I didn't deserve any of it. My life is now focused on living in response to this gift that he gave me. Any good that I do is because He loves me not so that He will love me. Do you see the difference? I no longer feel like I am just going through the motions and living the life of a goody two-shoes. I want to read the Bible. I want to pray. I want to love and help others. I want others to know Jesus. My faith is real, and my hope is real.

Written by Janelle Jones Pickens and shared with her permission to Alice Main. Janelle is a classmate and close friend of our daughter, Melanie.



**April 8, 2022**

*When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!" -  
Matthew 27:54*

### **The Soldier's Crime**

*Nailed to the crossbar, couldn't move, now let's see Him try to prove,  
All the things He claimed to be - Son of God and majesty.  
But now He's under our control, He's stuck upon a wooden pole.  
The claims He made were sure great schemes; fantastic thoughts and crazy dreams.*

*Now look what happened to His plan - He's nothing more than one dead man!  
Such foolish things that guys will do, I guess He's just one messed up Jew.  
My goodness! It's so dark out now but it is only noon!  
What's happening? What's this all about, why is it dark so soon?*

*You don't suppose that Jew was right, and what He said was true?  
If he was right, God help our souls! Oh God! What can we do?  
We can't undo this horrible crime, we didn't see the light;  
It took this frightening, midday black to know we lost the fight.*

*God! We are doomed by lack of faith, we've hung your only Son,  
He, most innocent of all; we each, a guilty one!  
But God replies, "Hope is not lost, your trust can set you free.  
Just do what Jesus told you to: 'Come, believe in me.'"*

*The soldiers bent their grieving heads and sought for their release,  
Then Jesus gladly took them in and gave eternal peace.*

Greta Zwaan, © 2019

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, in the midst of performing our jobs, let us be affected by your presence. When you get involved with our lives, we are forced to make the decision, "What will we do with Jesus?" Help us, Lord, to make the right decision. Amen.*



**April 9, 2022**

*"I call on you my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me  
and hear my prayer." - Psalm 17:6*

### **Focused on Prayer**

Several years ago, a good friend lost her mother. Her father had passed away several years before that. She was very distraught over her mom and felt like her heart was breaking. I sat down and got a card for her and wrote this poem:

I cannot say, and I will not say that she is dead;  
she's just away.  
She went on to an unknown land  
where angels sing with an angelic band.  
I know you'll cry,  
I know you must!  
Just remember - in God to trust.

She called me when she got my card and said how much it meant to her. We will all face this, or we already have. Every night when I say my prayers, I always start with, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep; If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take". My mom taught this to me when I was very little. It makes me focus on my prayers. Once I do this, I'm focused on what I'm doing.

### **Penny Replogle**

*Prayer: Dear God, thank you for always listening to our prayers and for giving us love and peace.*



**April 10, 2022**

*“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised. In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.” - Job 1:21-22*

### **In His Time**

As I begin this, know it will get a little mushy and somewhat of an appreciation dedication to my now-husband, Zane. Zane and I met in the summer of 2013. We dated for two years, were engaged in September of 2015, and then finally married in the fall of 2018. Yes, we had an unusually long engagement, but it worked for us and our long distance relationship held to the test until we were financially and physically ready to make the forever commitment.

On our first date I asked Zane if he planned for children in his future. If the answer was no, then it was a deal breaker for me. It was one of the few times I did not beat around the bush. (I can be windy at times.) My love for children has never waived and that bore my one true dream of one day being a mother, however that came about—biological or adopting children. Thankfully and gratefully, as I held my breath, I heard him respond, “Yes.”

As our relationship grew stronger and we were more serious, I felt I needed to share with Zane there was a possibility of my body not being able to provide biological children in our future. This possibility could be pinned up to my medical history—Type 1 Diabetes, Graves’ Disease, hypothyroidism, and anemia. I wanted him to be aware of this possibility and the challenges we could potentially face in the future. With no hesitation or doubts he responded that he was committed and in for the long haul. With tears of relief, I knew this was not only true love but the future father of my children, however they may come to us.

Over time we discussed the possibility of the necessity for adoption if my body was not able to carry biological children. We were open with family and friends that there could be options of medical intervention for pregnancy. As time progressed, names were agreed upon and our future babies were dreamt about. We always imagined our children and the family we would one day create when God saw fit and how He found appropriate.

Though we lost our first pregnancy, and it was devastating, we learned it was not in God’s time. I am as grateful for our heavenly child that taught us I was able to get pregnant and carry as I am for the current bundle of joy I’m carrying, which doctors have confirmed healthy and progressing as should be. God is good!

### **Madison Maize**

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank you for the opportunities and challenges in our daily living. You know the desires of our hearts but have our lives planned and provided so that we may learn from these opportunities and challenges. May these challenges grow and strengthen our relationships with you. In closing, may we continue to walk in the Spirit. Amen.*

**April 11, 2022**

The Top Bible Verse for 2021 was:

*Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*

The past few years have been filled full of joys, heartbreaks, victories, breakdowns, breakthroughs, and so much more. Working in healthcare since the beginning of 2020 has caused me to dig deep and trust that God has a plan for the world we live in. There are times when I get caught up in the negatives of it all but remember to seek God in the darkest moments.

**Madison Blair**

As we continue to navigate 2022 remember this: *"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* - Isaiah 41:10



**April 12, 2022**

*"The garden is a place to meet with friends." - John 18:1-2*

### **Reflections From the Garden**

I used to view gardening as a daunting task that involved sweating in the heat to pull overgrown, prickly weeds, and digging up large plants that required power tools to split. Who in their right mind would want to spend their free time doing this?! Over the past 10 years I have become eager to get into my gardens. The excitement begins early each year with planning starting in October/November for the spring ahead.

Why the gradual change? I began to use my garden as a time for mindfulness and solitude with the Lord. Rather than seeing my work as another task, I began to explore the beauty of the plants and take in the details of nature; studying the way each plant grows, the color of every petal, the texture of each plant, and the smells of the garden. With the passing of each season brings new anticipation for what God will bring to my gardens. The blooming of each plant is God's artwork for me to share and others to enjoy.

Gardens in the Bible were places of beauty, shelter, and sustenance. A garden can symbolize what God offers to human beings, the quiet care that can produce fruitfulness in our lives and in the world around us, and the hope that what is buried in death can produce great beauty.

We work in our gardens and enjoy them. We can reflect on the gardens of the Bible and what took place then. Then our gardens too can be a place to fellowship with our Lord God, the Master Gardener.

**Sabrina Schirtzinger**

*Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for the artwork and beauty of each plant.*

**April 13, 2022**

*"So now faith, hope and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is LOVE." -  
1 Corinthians 13:13*

### **Shoes Left Unfilled**

The following is an adaptation from the children's message I delivered on Sunday, February 6, 2022.

Good morning. I have some things to talk with you about today. Today is the first Sunday in February and February is often called the month of love. 1 Corinthians 13:13 says, *"So now faith, hope and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is LOVE."*

I have a big red package with a white bow. Do you wonder what's in it? It's a gift. We all have special gifts. Some of your special gifts might be being good at sports, math, reading, listening, technology, running, talking, thinking, music, helping others, working hard, and many more. You all have special gifts, even if you don't know yet what they are!

I opened my "gift" with two pairs of old shoes in it... white baby shoes and my Dad's old work shoes. You have different "gifts" even when you were the age to wear these baby shoes, like maybe just making people smile or wondering what you will be when you grow up? But as you get older, your "gifts" will change. We have lots of people in our church who have many gifts that they use to glorify God.

Pastor Kevin's job is right here at our church, but he shows his many gifts outside our church too. Our church has many people who use their gifts of music, running the sound system, teaching Sunday School, paying our bills, planning our budget for the year, and many more. There are so many in our church who are here today and many others who have already passed away that have made a difference in our church by the way they used their gifts.

I want to tell you about someone who had lots of gifts and that you may recognize from our church. (I had a picture of Scott.) His name was Scott Lockwood. He was retired, so he had time to do things he hadn't been able to do when he was working as an electrical engineer. He and his wife loved to travel and they did a lot of it! But he had lots of other gifts too. He was very good with technology! He ran the sound system and managed to get all our announcements and hymns and prayers and Pastor Kevin's movie clips all to work just fine! I think that would be really hard to do all that but he did. He was really good with numbers and budgets and paying bills. He sang in the choir and we had lots of fun together.

Scott loved children and was never too busy to help anyone. He was patient, kind, and fun to be around. Scott loved our church family.

About a month ago, Jesus called Scott to be with Him in heaven, and that was a really big shock to his wife, Linda, their whole family, and to our church. His shoes are not filled, and we miss him so much, but we know he is with Jesus and we will be too when our time comes.

What I want to challenge you today is to be the best gift to others you can. Be the very best version of you. Find ways to help others and use your gifts to glorify God.

Remember in this new month of February which is known as the month of love what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 13:13: "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love".

### **Alice Main**

*Pray: Dear Jesus, we know that every person with us here today has lost someone close to them. The empty shoes they leave behind are never filled completely. We will always miss them. We miss Scott but thank you for his life and all he did to glorify you. Help us to follow that same example that you showed us through Scott, to recognize our gifts and use them to glorify you. In thy name we pray, Amen.*



**April 14, 2022**

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” - Romans 8:38-39*

### **Christ's Obituary**

Beware if my obituary is stating I am dead;  
I bear the scars of suffering, the thorns upon my head;  
The marks where nails were driven, the lashes on my back;  
The deep humiliation, the angry mob's attack.

The torment of deep hatred, the mistrust and the guile;  
The words that bite like adders, such cruel words defile.  
It did not thwart my purpose, it did not change my plan,  
The need seemed only greater, the sinfulness of man.

Before my journey started, my mission was to save,  
Before my earthly entrance, man had become sin's slave.  
I knew the pain I'd suffer, the burden that I'd bear,  
The price that sin demanded had to be carried there.

The cross could never hold Me, my Father set me free;  
I live! I walk in glory! No grave had claims on me.  
And through my death I conquered the perils all men face,  
Sin is no more a victor, it's been replaced by grace.

Salvation's door is opened, the key is to believe,  
For mercy is extended the moment you receive,  
The gift of God's forgiveness, you're not a slave to sin,  
You are a new creation when Jesus enters in.

Greta Zwaan, © 2013

*Prayer: Lord, Jesus, your sacrifice is my salvation. Remind me of your gift. Reassure me of your forgiveness. Renew me with your love. In Your Holy Name, Amen.*

**April 15, 2022**

*"Let Your Light Shine" – Matthew 5:16*

### **Fine**

My daughter and I always laugh when we use the word, "Fine".

How many times do we all have so many things going on in our lives that we are overwhelmed, depressed, angry, discouraged, or just plain tired? But let someone ask, "How are you doing?" and we immediately respond with a smile and say, "Fine!"

Well, we all know that is not always true, but it is not easy to admit because of pride or privacy. It may not be the reality of our current situation or day.

Today and every day we are indeed "Fine". God is with us always. He is carrying us in His loving arms, and tomorrow will come and be a better day. He helps us be a "Light".

**Barbara Derenburger**

*Prayer: Dear God, please help us to remember in the not so "Fine" days to count our blessings and not our woes. Amen*

*His love  
never fails*



**April 16, 2022**

Dear Friends, in the text of Psalm 16, we find the line, *"Lord, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing"* - Psalm 16:5. The entire psalm is an assurance of God's presence with us.

As we move toward the celebration of Easter with its faith giving report of the resurrection of Jesus, we can find joy that the idea of resurrection is taking root in many ways and places in our modern society. It is the Gospel giving meaning to daily life and taking a real place in the lives of people everywhere.

Listen to this! The mayor of Oklahoma City was given the report that his city was among the top ten cities in America when it came to number of obese people. He declared that the people of Oklahoma City should lose one billion pounds in 2008 in order to restore health back to the city. "I challenge you" he said, "to participate in doing that for our city".

At first, churches and schools and colleges responded and started programs with groups with one purpose, to lose weight. Soon, the whole city was buzzing with excitement over taking one billion pounds off the lives and the bodies of the citizens of Oklahoma City.

When we come together to restore and fulfill, what we achieve becomes special and fills us with joy. Listen to the words from Psalm 16 as the author affirms that idea and tells of his faith in what the Lord will do for us and with us.

*"No wonder my heart is filled with joy, and my mouth shouts his praises! My body rests in safety. For you will not leave my soul...you will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever."* - Psalm 16:9-11

**God bless you, Oluf  
(Lenten Devotional 2013)**



**April 17, 2022**

*"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." – 1 John 4:10 (NIV)*

### **This Is Love**

When I read this verse from 1 John 4:10 that describes what love is and how it originates with God and to what lengths God would go to show his love for us, it is pretty sobering.

Probably the greatest gift I ever received from anyone in my life, outside of what God has given in Christ, came from my wife. One year for my birthday she surprised me with a fly fishing trip to Michigan. And as much as I love to fly fish, this was not the greatest part of the gift. The greatest part of the gift was that she was coming with me and had arranged for where we would be staying and had done her research to discover the areas where the fishing would be productive. When I received that gift I knew that my wife truly loved me, because she does not share my passion for fly fishing. She does not understand the joy I find in doing it for as many hours as I do on any given day that I'm able to get out on a river. So I knew that the gift was pure and selfless and reflected her understanding of me and her willingness to be sacrificial of her own time and interests.

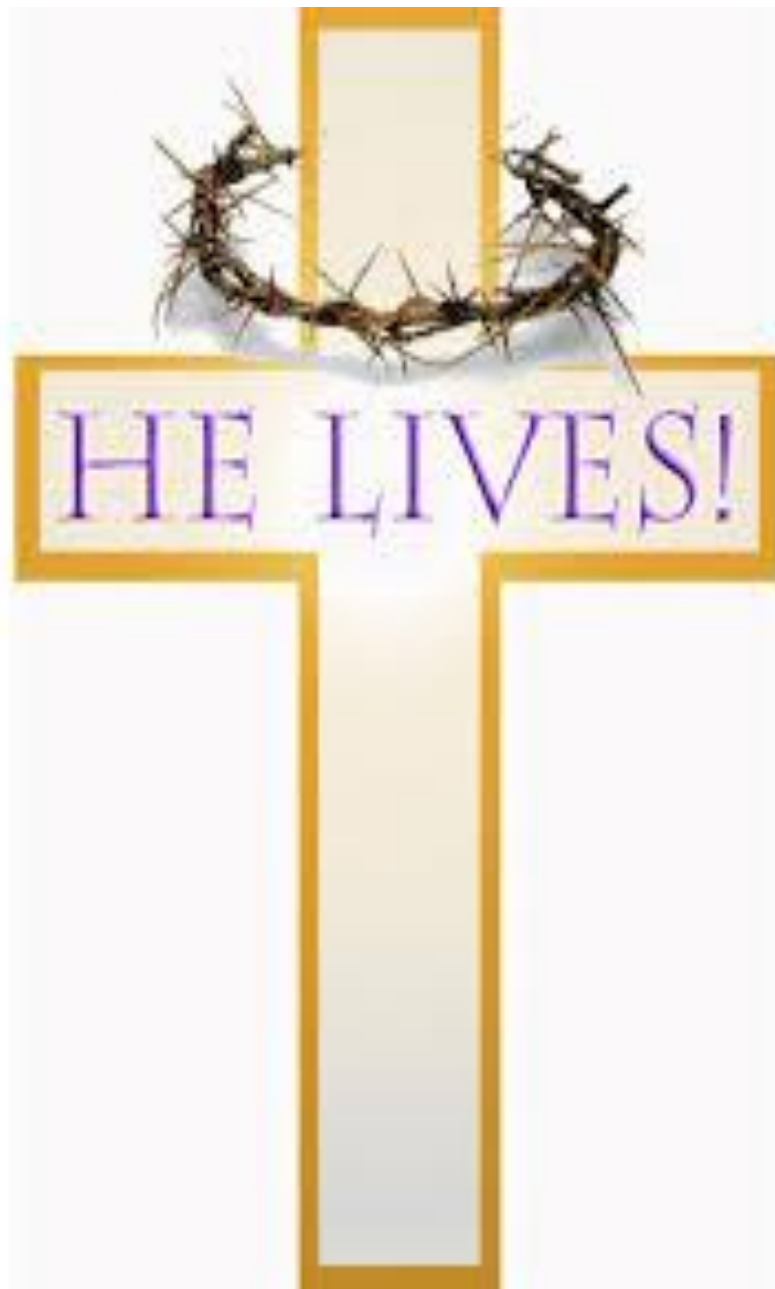
God sending his Son to die "as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" is the ultimate act of love. Jesus was not sent to us because we loved God well enough to have earned it, he was sent because God loves us... pure and simple. And he was willing to make this sacrifice because of that love.

Easter Sunday is here and with it we are able to now see the full extent of God's love for us as we celebrate how Christ conquered death on our behalf, so that we can experience life to the fullest for all eternity. I really love the way Peter expresses this to some followers of Christ in his first epistle when he says, *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade."* – 1 Peter 1:3-4 (NIV)

We have received a gift in Christ that truly does give us a living hope and an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This is love... God's love!

### **Pastor Kevin**

*Prayer: Lord God, we give thanks to you for your love and for the gift you have given us in Jesus Christ. We thank you for the hope we have, and we look forward to that day when we get to experience the fullness of the inheritance you have given through Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.*



**Happy Easter to our JPC Family!**