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## *From the Pastor's Keyboard*



What is God calling us here at St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ of Dallastown, Pennsylvania, uniquely, to be and to do? What is our God-given niche in our community? What is it that only we can do (and no one else can do) for God's glory and purposes?

In the biblical book of Esther, Queen Esther (which some of you saw the production by that name at Sight and Sound) was told by her Uncle Mordecai that she was placed in her situation to make requests to King Xerxes on behalf of the Jewish people "for such a time as this."

Can it be said that we here today have been placed at St. John's Blymire's UCC "for such a time as this"? Our Profile Committee is asking exactly that question as we start filling out our church profile, which is the preliminary step to obtaining a new settled pastor or new pastoral opportunity.

It does us no good to yearn for the "good old past" of filled churches and many children. The past is exactly that – past – gone. It does no good to compare ourselves with other churches and think that if they can do things a certain way and appear to be successful, then we should act exactly that way, too. No; God has a unique mission for each church. We are not meant to be clones of each other. And it does no good complaining about what people do or don't do nowadays regarding the church. There have been so many cultural shifts in our country over the last few years that we are left only to say, "It is what it is." If we follow the example of Jesus (which I think is always a good way to go), we imitate Him who went out to people (many of whom were looked down upon by the respectable people of that day) and met them where they were at. He met their needs with His offer of salvation, freedom from all that was keeping them from God, healing, and eternal hope.

Where are people at today? Many are just keeping afloat amidst the stresses of jobs, careers, activities, and family life. Many are desperately searching for spiritual meaning and purpose, but are not finding it in organized religion. They often find such meaning and purpose in affinity groups or leisure activities and thus have become agnostic or atheist.

How are we to meet those people where they are at today? One way is to "think outside the box" and outside our four walls to "rub elbows" and to let people see our faith in action with such activities as our FUN events, our chicken barbecues, our outdoor concerts, our Messy Church, and our participation in local carnivals and parades (Can we revive that kind of involvement?). Yes, we need to look inward at times and to support and encourage each other with our own worship services, Bible study, prayers for each other, Circle of Grace,

and men's group – so that we remain strong in our walk with Jesus. But we do those things in order to reach out to meet people's needs – to meet them where they are at today – in Jesus' name and with His grace and love and welcome.

Our Bible Study group has been going through the Book of Matthew the last few months. Among other things, Matthew was addressing people who were new in their Christian walk. They didn't know exactly who should be included in their group, how they should structure themselves, and what it meant to be people of "The Way." But Matthew was totally convinced that the Body of Christ, the church, is absolutely essential for our full expression of our Christian faith. Later, Luke, gospel writer and author of the book of Acts, and the Apostle Paul, confirm the absolute necessity for the Body of Christ, the church, so we can nurture our own faith, support and encourage each other in our lives of faith, share what we have with other believers, and disciple others (help them to see how they can activate God's touch on their lives). For what can be more important – for now and eternity – than nurturing our own, and helping others nurture, a close relationship with Jesus Christ?

Please offer any input you can to our Profile Committee (Cindy Axe, Ed Bishop, Peggie Free, and Marti Leader) as we all continue to ask: Who are we as a church now? What is God calling us to be in the next 5 years? Our calling will be different than it was 20 or 30 years ago. It's tempting to want to go back to the way things were that we are comfortable with. But we don't have that luxury. And besides, isn't it exciting to follow where the Holy Spirit is leading us today in new ways – as the Holy Spirit has always led God's people through the centuries?

I believe that God has placed us exactly here "for such a time as this"!

See you around this summer. God bless, Pastor Rick

## 30 Bible book names in one paragraph



There are 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them?

This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new record. The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight." Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus. There really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found. God Bless.

*(If you give up and can't find them all, there are sheets with the answer key on the Welcome Table in the Gathering Room.)*

## **MONTH OF SUNDAYS WORSHIP SERVICES-JULY/AUGUST 2023**

### **JULY 2, 2023 – FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST– CELEBRATING FOURTH OF JULY**

Scripture: Genesis 22:1-14

Message: “How Much Does Commitment Cost?”

Theme: Abraham tested, what we need to truly commit to, a boy’s version of God

Special music: Mandy Streavig

### **JULY 9, 2023 – SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

Scripture: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Message: “What Do You Do When You’re Weary?”

Theme: Jesus said take His yoke upon us; He will give us rest; we need that today

Special music: Kenny Runkle and Hillbilly Heaven

### **JULY 16, 2023 – SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23, Genesis 25:19-34

Message: Rev. Nora Foust, guest preacher

Special music: Sunnyside Gang

### **JULY 23, 2023 – EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

Scripture: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Message: “Is Heaven Really Easy to Understand?”

Theme: Jesus gives us vision and a promise that Heaven is like a mustard seed, leaven in a batch of dough, hidden treasure, expensive pearl, net bulging with fish

Special music: Tom Ensminger

Fire drill toward the end of our worship service

### **JULY 30, 2023 – NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

Scripture: 1 Kings 3:5-15

Message: “Would You Be Afraid at the “Thank God Ledge?”

Theme: When we pray for a listening heart, God will add awesome power to our average abilities and accomplish much through us for God’s glory.

Special music: Mandy Streavig

### **AUGUST 6, 2023 – TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

Scripture: Matthew 14:13-21, Genesis 32:22-31

Message: Spring Davidson, guest preacher

Special music: Deb Counts

### **AUGUST 13, 2023 – ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST-SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION (SUMMER COMMUNION)**

Scripture: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

Message: “What Do We Do When Everything That Matters Has Been Torn Away?”

Theme: The one thing bigger than our fears is our faith. Even in our worst circumstances, God uses our faithfulness to change our future and influence the lives of others.

Special music: New Life for Girls

## **MONTH OF SUNDAYS WORSHIP SERVICES-JULY/AUGUST 2023**

### **AUGUST 20, 2023 – TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

Scripture: Genesis 45:1-28

Message: “Who Do You Trust When You’ve Been Hurt?”

Themes: Jesus showed us how to love difficult people. “God moments” are when God works to redeem our toughest struggles by God’s power and love. The Tale of Two Wolves.

Special music: Dennis Kohler

### **AUGUST 27, 2023 – THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST-**

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20

Message: “What Is the Truth About Jesus?”

Theme: To phrase it in Jesus’ words: “But what about you? Who do you say I am with your words and your actions?”

Special music: Rita Persing

## **REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS and those in need of PRAYER**

**Peggy Luckenbaugh**

Room 704B

Colonial Manor Nursing Home

970 Colonial Avenue

York, PA 17403



Keeping in our prayers

**Dolores Barley**

**Jeanette Black**

**Cindie McKinsey**

**Friends battling cancer**

**Covid 19 patients**

**Linda Trone**

Room 604

Colonial Manor Nursing Home

970 Colonial Avenue

York, PA 17403

**Carolyn Innerst**

Room 123

Senior Commons@Powder

Mill

1775 Powder Mill Road

York, PA 17403

\*\*\*\*\*



**Remember**  
and pray for  
**Our Members**  
in the  
**Military**

**A1C Ness, Brandon**

6907 S. Camino de la Humanidad

Tucson, AZ 85756

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## What Is the Essential Work of Congregations? By Rev. Cameron Trimble

Our friend Cameron Trimble, convenor of Convergence, recently wrote about insights that she received from her grandfather, Rev. Dr. James McCormick, a retired minister in the United Methodist Church:

Over time I realized that while he had many wise observations to offer, two came up over and over again. In teaching me to see and sense that “still small voice,” he would say, *“If it looks, acts, talks, and walks like Jesus, then it’s of God.”* For him, Jesus was the clearest example we have of God-incarnate. That said, he didn’t mean this in an exclusive way. He would also say that throughout history, we have seen people who so beautifully embody the spirit of Love that we sense in our own selves the presence of God within them. Being in their presence inspires us to embody those same qualities – loving kindness, deep compassion, and true empathy.

The second lesson that my grandfather would repeat was this: *“The quality of your life depends upon the quality of your relationships.”* When we fill our lives with kind, generous, loving people, then we develop kindness, generosity, and love within ourselves. If we surround ourselves with angry, manipulative, untrustworthy people, then we also risk taking on those characteristics.

I think about his wisdom often when I consult with churches. Properly understood, congregations at their best are places where we can be with others who make us more compassionate, generous, peace-filled, and kind. They are also places where we practice fairness, justice, and being beloved community. Over time, if we are deepening in Spirit, we begin to look, act, walk, and talk more like Jesus. By this, I mean we are coming to understand essential perennial wisdom rooted in a sense of Oneness with all that exists.

What if we have made all of this congregational business too complicated? In congregations where I have served as pastor, we create a discernment compass that helped us make decisions that balanced our being with our doing.

We ask a certain level of discernment questions. These are designed to remind us that how we spend our days is how we spend our lives. Christian tradition teaches that balanced days include time for meditation, study, rest, work, and community/play. Each opportunity we said “yes” to had to nurture at least three of these practices. In that spirit, we would ask:

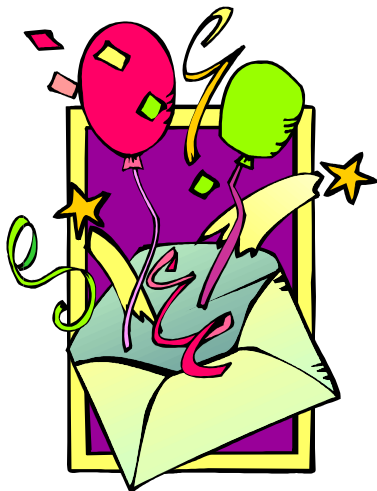
1. Does this opportunity strengthen our sense of community and connection?
2. Does this opportunity invite us into a space of prayer and meditation?
3. Does this opportunity deepen our study and learning?
4. Does this opportunity allow for rest and rejuvenation at needed intervals?
5. Does this opportunity further the work of justice and compassion in our community?

Then, we would move to the following discernment questions. Recognizing that everything we do should be in service to our spiritual maturation, we asked:

1. Will this experience make us more loving?
2. Will this experience gift us with new ways of knowing and understanding God and ourselves?
3. Will this experience develop within us a greater sense of peace?
4. Will this experience grant us wisdom for the benefit of the world?
5. Will this experience deepen our sense of gratitude for God, Creation and one another?
6. Will this experience strengthen our resilience for the life of faith and the work of justice?
7. Will this experience fill us with a sense of joy and aliveness?

I leave this now to your discernment if this helps you make decisions about how you invest your time together. In the end, our only “yes” should be in service to love for God, your neighbors, and yourself.

## **JULY BIRTHDAYS**



- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Erin Ness         | 26. Sarah Leader   |
| 3. Derek Troop, Jr.  | DeLaney Woerner    |
| 4. Billy Roelke      | Sequoia Innerst    |
| 8. Betty Hyser       | 28. Sandra Koicuba |
| 9. Christine Pope    | 30. LeAnn Eberly   |
| 11. Toni Flinchbaugh | 31. Jim McDowell   |
| Christina Lutz       |                    |
| 13. Carrie Rutledge  |                    |
| Heather Barley       |                    |
| 14. Trent Brown      |                    |
| 16. Randi John       |                    |
| 18. Wanda Strickler  |                    |
| 19. Trudy Wise       |                    |
| Dennis Ness          |                    |
| Curt Weber           |                    |
| Travis Rost          |                    |
| 20. Scott Smith      |                    |
| 22. Maranda Morton   |                    |
| 24. Alys Leader      |                    |

***May God  
Bless You On  
Your  
Birthday!***

## **CELEBRATING JULY ANNIVERSARIES**

July 3 - Jeffrey & Joan Mickey - 48 years  
July 8 - Greg and Sonja Ness - 56 years  
July 19 - Kevin and Renne Myers - 26 years  
July 25 - W. Edwin and Judy Bishop - 38 years



**AUGUST**  
**BIRTHDAYS**



***May God  
Bless You On  
Your  
Birthday!***

- |     |                   |     |                   |
|-----|-------------------|-----|-------------------|
| 2.  | Sterling Boyd     | 25. | Oliver Holtzapple |
|     | Dave Miller       | 27. | Lakota Innerst    |
|     | Ariel Contino     | 29. | Heather Matthews  |
| 3.  | Terri Diehl       |     | Nancy Rutledge    |
| 4.  | Janet Williamson  | 30. | Ryan Woerner      |
|     | David McDowell    |     |                   |
| 9.  | Terry Doll        |     |                   |
| 10. | Sue Myers         |     |                   |
| 11. | Madelynn Barley   |     |                   |
| 12. | Peggy Luckenbaugh |     |                   |
|     | Amelia Ness       |     |                   |
|     | Samuel Ness       |     |                   |
| 13. | Elizabeth Giese   |     |                   |
| 17. | Lucas Smith       |     |                   |
|     | Bonnie Sipe       |     |                   |
| 19. | Greg Ness         |     |                   |
|     | Joan Schell       |     |                   |
| 22. | Christina Barley  |     |                   |
| 24. | Barb Marshall     |     |                   |

**CELEBRATING AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES**

- Aug. 1 - Lonnie and Carol Barnhart - 59 years  
Aug. 4 - Matthew and Jill Boyd - 22 years  
Aug. 10 - Ed and Barb Adams - 49 years  
Aug. 16 - David and Brenda Miller - 59 years  
Aug. 18 - Charles and Janet Williamson - 45 years  
Aug. 19 - Ryan and Jenna Woerner - 18 years

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Undesignated General Fund

## Red Brick Chapel

## Cemetery

Month-2023	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Income	Expense
January	\$10,823.00	\$9,149.59	\$0.30	\$612.18	\$738.24	\$200.00
February	\$7,242.25	\$9,309.43	\$0.22	\$338.98	\$0.12	\$375.34
March	\$8,179.00	\$13,350.64	\$0.29	\$702.79	\$900.10	\$328.10
April	\$9,009.22	\$7,960.45	\$625.31	\$351.05	\$101.05	\$1,293.75
May	\$10,849.03	\$9,661.89	\$0.34	\$199.00	\$1,501.74	\$2,848.62
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						
<b>Total</b>	\$46,102.50	\$49,432.00	\$626.46	\$2,204.00	\$3,241.25	\$5,045.81

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ June 1, 2023

\$11,631.51

Balance of Red Brick Chapel Fund @ June 1, 2023  
(Includes \$58,096.91 Endowment)

\$59,985.19

Balance of Cemetery Fund @ June 1, 2023  
(Includes \$822,721.20 CD's, Trusts, UCC Foundation)

\$831,948.46

## Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2023

	#	Total	Monthly	Available
	Families	\$\$\$	Donations	Balance
Beginning				\$ 806.82
January	3	\$576.00	\$ 151.00	\$ 381.82
February	1	\$150.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 311.82
March	1	\$25.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 316.82
April	2	\$50.00	\$ 28.00	\$ 294.82
May	3	\$100.00	\$ 27.25	\$ 222.07
June				
July				
August				
September				
October				
November				
December				
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$901.00</b>	<b>\$ 316.25</b>	





Our next chicken BBQ of the season will be held on Saturday, July 8, from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM. You will get a 1/2 chicken, baked potato, applesauce, roll and butter all for \$10.00. To place an order, please call the church office 244-0655. We sold out early nearly every month, so to be guaranteed a dinner, it is best to pre-order. Other BBQ's will be held on the 2nd Saturday of each month thru October.

We are also planning to set up a bake sale table and would welcome donations of homemade cookies, rice krispie treats, cupcakes, candy, etc. Please put individual portions in baggies or plastic wrap. They may be dropped off at the church the day before or the morning of the BBQ. Thank you.



On Sunday, July 9, from 6:00-8:00 PM, you are invited to an "Old Fashioned" Hymn Sing at our church. Nelson Leader will lead the singing, accompanied by Brenda Kerchner on the organ.

Following the Hymn Sing in the Sanctuary, you are invited to join us in our Fellowship Hall for an ice cream social.

This is open to the public at no charge.



We would like to organize a group of people who would be willing to call church members in order to keep us all in touch every few months and to remind them of events that are happening at the church and to call them on a Sunday morning if services need to be cancelled for any reason. The list of members to be called will be divided up among the callers, so the more volunteers we get, the fewer people each one will need to call.

We are also currently going through our church membership list to determine who still wants to be an active member or an affiliated member and who would like to be taken off our membership roll. Help is needed to get letters ready to be mailed out for this purpose.

If you would like to help with one or both of the above, please let Pastor Rick know.



The public is invited to join us in the pavilion behind our church for an outdoor concert series featuring a variety of different types of music. The concerts will be held on Sunday afternoons from 2:00-4:00 PM. In case of inclement weather, they will be moved indoors to the church.

There is no admission charge, but a free will offering will be taken. Snacks will be available for purchase. Bring your own lawn chairs or blankets or sit at one of our picnic tables. Below is a list of our upcoming concerts;

JULY 23 - TIMELESS  
(50's and 60's rock and roll)

AUGUST 6 - RED LION FELTON BAND  
(Traditional band music)

SEPTEMBER 3- FIRST CAPITAL BRASS  
(Brass ensemble)



If you haven't been in the Book Room lately, check it out. New titles are coming in on a regular basis and you never know what interesting things you may find. In addition to hundreds of books, there are also DVD's, magazines, games, and puzzles. The Book Room will be open to the public during the concerts listed above.

### **CARD and GAME CLUB**

We have started a group to play card and board games here at the church. Everyone is welcome, and if you don't know how to play certain games, there will be someone who can teach you. You can bring lunch or order in.

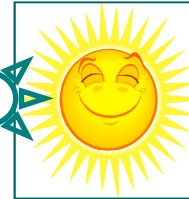
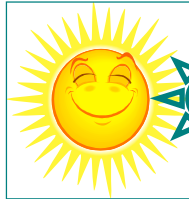
We will meet the second Wednesday of each month starting at 11:00 AM and playing until people are ready to stop. Our next meeting will be July 12.



The Fun Team is creating a new church cookbook and needs your help. We are asking you to gather your favorite recipes and give them to Sandy Innerst or Cindy Innerst-Axe. Thank you

Best rule for a simple life...  
Care with no reason,  
Love with no expectation.  
**Rity Ghatourey**

Talking about our problems  
is our greatest addiction.  
  
Break the habit.  
Talk about your joys.  
**Poets Cafe**



**JULY-AUGUST 2023**

### **GOD IS "THE GOD OF THE SUMMER."**

Summer is a time of open road - a time for exploration - for winding down some small road you've never visited before. You want to go there just because you're curious and it seems to call. God is down the road. God is to be found in exploration. God is met by the curious. "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God." - St. Augustine.

**PRAISE GOD FOR SUMMER ROADS WHICH PEAK OUR CURIOSITY. PRAISE GOD FOR OPEN SPACES.**

Summer is a time of stories. A time to read stories, to discover new stories. Loren Eiseley, the biologist, tells the summer story of the star thrower. The star thrower is a man who walks the beach and carefully throws any starfish he sees washed up on the shore back into the ocean. Asked one day, "why does he do that? There are so many beaches and so many starfish washed up on the shores of the world! What difference does it make that you threw that starfish back into the water?" The star thrower replies, "It makes all the difference in the world to that star fish!"

**ALL PRAISE TO THE GOD OF SUMMER.**

Summer is a time for the God of work. In the summer the farmer must toil long, long hours. The farmer perhaps more than the rest of us knows the God of the Summer. He knows how dependent he is for the mixture of sun and rain. He is aware of the rhythms of life, of how the seasons come and go. How the God of the summer is bringing forth his fruits in due season. Here in the summer we all experience from the farmer's labor some of God's most gracious gifts. Tomatoes and Carolina peaches were in the farmer's market yesterday. And that greatest of all gifts of grace from the God of the Summer ... **FRESH PICKED CORN!**

With all the delights of gourmet eating, there is absolutely nothing better than fresh picked corn.

**GOD IS GREAT  
GOD IS GOOD  
AND I THANK HIM ...  
FOR SUMMER'S FRESH CORN!**

**ALL PRAISE TO THE GOD OF SUMMER!**

I hope that these ideas may open for you an awareness of the beauty and grace of God this summer.  
I hope that this summer time, however you experience its rhythms, will be a **SPECIAL GODLY TIME!**

**ALL PRAISE TO THE GOD OF THE SUMMER!**

**Source Unknown**

Sometimes life becomes so complicated we feel as if we've gone as far as we can down this stressful highway. We imagine ourselves smashed up against a brick wall, unable to answer one more call, hear one more complaint, and take one more breath. When that's the image that fills your mind, change the brick wall to God. Imagine yourself pressed tightly against his heart, wrapped in his everlasting arms, soothed by his life-giving breath. Picture yourself encircled in God's love, soaked in his strength.  
**Barbara Johnson**

Rainbows and butterflies, cattails and dandelions, waterfalls and rainforests, puppy dogs and dragonflies, sea foam and orcas, sunshine and comets, snowflakes and icicles, wildflowers and **you....**  
Did God think of everything or what!!!!

**Source Unknown**

## EVERYONE NEEDS A CHEERLEADER

Every person needs to hear a “wonderful.” Here’s why: companies spend billions of dollars to convince us that we are chubby, smelly, ugly, and out-of-date.

Inadequacy indwells a billion hearts. Would you distribute encouragement? Will you make some happiness happen? Will you remind humanity that we are made in God’s image? That we are chosen and destined and loved?

Start by listening intently. Ask someone to tell you his or her story. Give the rarest of gifts: your full attention. Praise abundantly. Biblical encouragement is no casual kind word, but rather a premeditated resolve to lift the spirit of another person. Everyone needs a cheerleader. Give the gift that God loves to give: the gift of encouragement. This is how happiness happens.

Max Lucado

You are holding a cup of coffee when someone comes along and bumps into you, making you spill your coffee everywhere. Why did you spill the coffee? You spilled the coffee because there was coffee in your cup. Had there been tea in the cup, you would have spilled tea. The point is, whatever is inside the cup is what will spill out.

Therefore, when life comes along and shakes you (which WILL happen), whatever is inside you will come out. It’s easy to fake it until you get rattled.

So we have to ask ourselves... “what’s in my cup?”

When life gets tough, what spills over? Joy, gratefulness, peace and humility? Or does anger, bitterness, harsh words and reactions come out? Life provides the cup, YOU choose how to fill it. Today let’s work towards filling our cups with gratitude, forgiveness, joy, words of affirmation, kindness, gentleness and love for others.



You are stuck with your debt if . . . You can't budge it.  
If you've seen 1 shopping center . . You've seen a mall.



Acupuncture: . . . A jab well done.

A boiled egg is . . . Hard to beat.

A bicycle can't stand alone; . . . It is too tired.

A will is a . . . dead giveaway.



## THE WAGGLE DANCE

My honeybees work at a frantic pace in warmer months, packing away provisions for winter. The bees store far more honey than they need, and I have come to take some for myself.

The meadow where I keep my hives is a shimmering sea of goldenrod, with islands of asters. Bull thistle thrusts itself up here and there, their huge flowers like purple cupcakes, I give the first hive a few puffs of smoke from the smoker and pry open the aluminum lid. The top compartment is full of amber honey, forty pounds by the heft of it.

A honeybee’s wings stroke approximately 11,000 time per minute (180 strokes per second) to create that distinctive, gentle onomatopoeic buzz. When bees get alarmed and angry, their wings beat faster and the buzz gets louder, sharper, But today the buzz is soft and light. I work carefully, slowly and the bees continue to go about their business, while I go about mine.

When I inspect the second hive, something catches my eye, and I watch spellbound. One bee, her body dusted with orange pollen, is doing a little dance. Her abdomen vibrating, she wiggles and shimmies and walks this way and that. Apiarists call it the Waggle Dance, and I’ve seen it just twice in forty years of keeping bees. The dance is a kind of code. The bee is telling the rest where a rich food source is located. Her instructions communicate the distance to the food source and its location in reference to the hive and the sun. Amazing!

It is 88 degrees outside today, 103 inside my canvas suit and I am dripping with sweat. But the work is worth it. I’ve seen something remarkable and tomorrow morning my English muffin will be drenched in fresh, golden honey.  
Life is good!

*Thank you Lord for this sweet life. Give me eyes to see the sheer beauty, the magnificence, of creation. Give me a heart of gratitude so filled with thanksgiving that complaint and concern will have no room to dwell. Amen.*

Louis Lotz

“If you want to feel rich,  
just count the things  
you have that money  
can’t buy.”

Proverb





## Revelations for July and August from “Bly Mire” Mouse

To our dear church family:

Yes! You guys have slowed down a bit during June. The yoga class took a short vacation, the balance class has ended, Bible study and Sunday School and choir and bells rehearsals are taking a summer break. So we have fewer crumbs to pick up from you!

But your Sunday mornings are still hopping with your worship and informal fellowship times after worship – and with the Pentecost play, Music Sunday, and now the special musical groups during the summer. And your card and game club and regular meetings are still going on. Not to mention that we hear that you are finally starting to livestream your worship services. That’s great! So, although fewer, we still have a few crumbs still to scoop up from the floor!

We love to overhear events that are going on out in the parking lot and pavilion, too, such as the chicken barbecues and outdoor concerts. Wait, did we say that things are slowing down during the summer? Well, maybe not!

One thing we want to share with you this month is something we overheard two or three of you talking about the other week. You started by quoting the Bible verse: “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field.” —Matthew 13:44 (NIV).

Then you started talking about a television show that you watch faithfully each week, *The Curse of Oak Island*. It’s about finding buried treasure. Two brothers have literally invested millions of dollars and several years searching for buried treasure, all based on a legend. They have no map to point the way. They are driven by the unshakable belief it must be there. It seems each episode they find some small encouragement that keeps them going.

Honestly, we mice would have given up a long time ago, but not these two men! They are certain there is a huge treasure worth millions buried on this island. Despite the years and personal toll on their lives, they seem convinced they will find it.

We overheard one of you say, being cynical, you roll your eyes at the music and the drama when they find something as small as an iron button. But you have to admit, we’re all looking for hidden treasure, aren’t we? We’re seeking that perfect life; you know, the one where our children make us proud and give you bragging rights (yes, even us mice!).

And don’t you all seek success in your careers. Money. Appreciation. Acknowledgment. Those are treasures worth digging for . . . but do they really bring satisfaction? Paul David Tripp says, “The search for treasure is really a search for a Savior.”

That being the case, we have a map, our Bible, and we have a Savior, don’t we? He is our greatest treasure, and with Him we have love, acceptance, acknowledgment, and all that satisfies. Now that’s a treasure worth digging for!

One more thing: Don’t forget to celebrate our country’s freedom on the 4th of July. But please don’t have your fireworks and firecrackers too loud; they upset our mice little ones.

We look forward to seeing you around (and gobbling up your crumbs) during the summer months of July and August!

Love, Bly and Mire and our precious little ones.

(some of the above came from Debbie Macomber from *Walking in Grace*, 2023)



### July August Humor:

An Easterner was riding with a rancher over a blistering and almost barren stretch of West Texas, when a strange bird scurried in front of them. Asked by the Easterner what the bird was, the rancher replied, “That’s a bird of paradise.”

The stranger from the East rode on in silence for a moment, then said, “Long way from home, isn’t it?”

From: Phillips, Bob, *The Best of the Good Clean Jokes*, Harvest House Publishers, 1989.

A young minister, in the first days of his first parish, was obliged to call upon the widow of an eccentric man who had just died. Standing before the open casket and consoling the widow, he said, “I know this must be a very hard blow, Mrs. Vernon. But we must remember that what we see here is the husk only, the shell; the nut has gone to heaven.

From: Phillips, Bob, *The Best of the Good Clean Jokes*, Harvest House Publishers, 1982.



# Sprinkle and split

A sprinkle of pepper and a dab of soap illustrate a big concept from God's Word.



## What you need:

- Shallow dish
- Water
- Black ground pepper
- Toothpick
- Dish soap
- Bible

## What you do:

1. With the dish on a table, fill it halfway with water. Don't jiggle the dish.
2. Sprinkle pepper on the water.
3. Dab the toothpick into a drop of soap. Then touch its tip to the center of the water and observe.
4. Read Psalm 103:8-12.  
How does this experiment illustrate God's forgiveness?
5. Explain the science behind this experiment: The soap disturbs the water's surface tension. The soap molecules don't want to interact with the water. This repels the water molecules from the soap, causing the floating pepper to also move to the sides.



# SEPARATION FROM SIN

David praises God for his love and compassion.  
What does God do for people who fear him?

*Directions: Using each grid pattern marked below, find the word that appears in all three of those squares. Write the words in the spaces below to complete Psalm 103:12, NIV.*

FROM as is can	NORTH from far	at the EAST from
in South AS	do far EAST	the and up AS
WEST not is East	far and WEST	THE be AS West



... so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

PSALM 103:12, NIV

Answer: As far as the east is from the west