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From the Pastor's Keyboard



Dear friends in this wonderful family of faith,

Summer has arrived! That is quite evident with the heat wave we're experiencing as I type this column.

Traditionally summer has been a time where regular school-year activities take a break or hiatus, such as our choir, bell ringers, Bible study, Messy Church, and Sunday School. But summer is also the time when we engage in other activities, such as our outdoor concerts, special music during worship, outdoor worship, chicken barbecues, continued hymn sings, FUN events, continued Emmanuel's Closet outreach, and gearing up for our regular fall activities and new endeavors such as partnering more with the Dallastown Area School District.

In the midst of our other summer activities such as beach-going, gardening, holiday family gatherings, fairs and festivals, picnics, and camping, summer can also be a wonderful opportunity for us to step back, take a deep breath, refresh ourselves spiritually, and renew our relationship with Jesus Christ. Let Cindy or I know if you would like to talk about that kind of renewal. We as a church family want to be there for each other on our spiritual journeys.

I have also found during the "extra breathing space of summer" to be a good time to reflect on where we are as a church (both our local church and the church worldwide) and where we want to be.

Rev. Kenneth L. Samuel, Pastor of Victory for the World UCC Church in Decatur, Georgia, has recently helped me do this. He starts out by citing 2 Corinthians 11:30: *If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.* - (NRSV)

Rev. Samuel reminded me that in the 2018 blockbuster movie, *Black Panther*, T'Challa returns to his native African home of Wakanda in order to replace his deceased father as king. But in order to defend and assume the leadership of his beloved Wakanda, T'Challa first must divest himself of his Black Panther superpowers and become as weak as any other human.

Only in becoming weak can the Black Panther reveal the strength of his character. Only in his weakness can his true courage be tested. Much more than his amazing abilities as a superhero, it is the power he reveals in his weakness that qualifies him to lead his people of Wakanda.

Like Rev. Samuel, for many years of my life, I thought that the portrayal of power meant the downplaying of weakness. I gravitated toward the macho-muscular depictions of Christianity that promulgated proclamations of spiritual invincibility. But like Rev. Samuel, I've learned that a spotlight on Victory without the corresponding reality of Vulnerability is not a true representation of my own experience. In fact, as I have shared in several messages to you folks recently, that is a major

reason why folks (young and old) have left the church (across the board) in droves the last 20 years. They hear us talk over and over again about the victory of the church and of the Christian faith without mentioning their vulnerability, and that just doesn't seem realistic. The truth is that I've never experienced strength without struggle. The glory of the Resurrection means nothing to me without the agony of the Crucifixion.

Perhaps you have found out, too, that it is precisely the acknowledgement of our own struggles and weaknesses that has given us the power to connect with the struggles and weaknesses of others and makes our faith more real, believable, and relatable. This does not mean that we "spill our guts" with anyone we meet. But it does mean that the shared compassion produced by shared suffering is precisely what fuels the empowerment of church community.

In fact, it is true that only bruised hands can bless. Only a broken heart can hear the hurts of others. Only a wounded healer can cure. This not an endorsement for self-flagellation. But rather, it's how we "get real" with each other and with those who may have been "turned off" by the church. And, as the Apostle Paul said, it's really something quite remarkable to boast about!

Popular hymn writer of the last century, Fanny Crosby, referred to this reality in her words, "In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever."

May we as a church continue to pray for, respect each other, encourage and support each other, challenge and comfort one another as needed, walk with each other on our Christian journeys, and reach out and welcome others into our fellowship as Jesus continues to invite all to become one with Him!

Once again, I as your interim pastor, and Cindy Innerst-Axe, as our Lay Minister, continue to be excited about serving you and partnering with you on our individual spiritual journeys and on our spiritual journey as a congregation. And once again, we ask that you continue to help us all discern the answer to the questions we have been looking at for the past year: **Who are we as St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ? Who are our neighbors? Who is God calling us to become as we journey into God's future? What is our unique niche here in Dallastown?**

See you around these months of July and August! God bless, Pastor Rick

Summer Holy humor:

"Did you hear Robinson snoring in church this morning? It was simply awful." "Yes, I did – he woke me up."

Question: Why is a pair of roller skates like the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden?

Answer: Both come before the fall.

The excerpts above were taken from The World's Greatest Collection of Heavenly Humor, compiled by Bob Phillips, Harvest House Publishers, 1982.



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 concerts for 2024

JULY 14 - COUNTRY CORE

(Country music)

AUGUST 4 - SPRING GARDEN BAND

(Traditional band music)

If you have any questions, please call the church office at (717) 244-0655.

We recently celebrated the newest federal holiday, Juneteenth. It is a holiday to commemorate the fact that it took 2 ½ years after the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1863 to reach the enslaved folks of Texas to be told by a general of the US Army that they were freed. The following is an inspiring UCC devotional about Ms. Opal Lee, the “Grandmother of Juneteenth” – Pastor Rick:

Fire in Their Bones June 19, 2024

By Talitha Arnold, Senior Minister of the United Church of Santa Fe (UCC), Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is the author of [*Mark Parts 1 and 2*](#) of the *Listen Up! Bible Study series* and *Worship for Vital Congregations*.

If I say, “*I will not mention the Lord or speak any more in God’s name,*” then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. - Jeremiah 20:9 (NRSV, adapted for inclusive language)

Like the prophet Jeremiah, Ms. Opal Lee, the “Grandmother of Juneteenth,” has had fire in her bones since she was young. Like Jeremiah who witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem, on June 19, 1939, the 12-year-old Ms. Lee watched a mob of 500 white rioters burn down her family’s home, because they’d moved into a predominately white neighborhood of Fort Worth, Texas.

And like Jeremiah, Ms. Lee couldn’t hold in the holy fire of God’s justice and peace. After retiring as an educator, she became an activist, organizing yearly bus tours for city leaders around Fort Worth’s poorest neighborhoods. And she started to walk—2.5 miles each year, all around the city, to bring attention to Juneteenth and the 2.5-year delay in implementing the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas.

Her first walk started at her church. Then in 2016, at age 89, she began a symbolic walk from Ft. Worth to Washington, D.C. “I was thinking that surely,” she said, “somebody would see a little old lady in tennis shoes trying to get to Congress and notice.”

People did notice. On June 17, 2021, President Biden signed the bill establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday. He then got down on one knee before Ms. Lee to present the pen and thank her. “God love you, Ms. Opal,” the President said. “You’re incredible.”

Amen to that truth.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for your prophets like Ms. Opal Lee and Jeremiah who can’t hold in your Holy Fire of justice and love. Amen.

Just a day later, the following uplifting UCC devotional appeared about how blessings and new understandings can come, even from a man who is beginning to have dementia – Pastor Rick:

Oh! June 20, 2024

By Mary Luti, a long time seminary educator and pastor, author of *Teresa of Avila’s Way* and numerous articles, and founding member of The Daughters of Abraham, a national network of interfaith women’s book groups.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; God’s mercies never come to an end: they are new every morning. - Lamentations 3:22–23 (NRSVUE, adapted for inclusive language)

Many years ago, when my friend and colleague, Martha Bays, first told her elderly father that she was going to seminary, his face lit up, and with a warm smile he exclaimed, “You’re in seminary? Oh! You’ll make a wonderful minister!”

Her father had dementia. He didn’t always track people or conversations. But that day he did. He knew her. And that she was in seminary. And that she would make a wonderful minister. And he told her so.

The next time she visited, she reminded him who she was and what she was doing. He immediately brightened. “You’re in seminary?” he exclaimed in original amazement. “Oh! You’ll make a wonderful minister!”

And so it went. Each time she saw him, he took in her news with fresh glee. Every time he blessed her with the same delighted “Oh!” And every time his spontaneous affirmation felt as new to her as it actually was to him.

It made her world. It still does, even now that he’s gone.

What would you give to have someone discover you afresh every day? To see you originally, time after time? To receive you like a revelation?

What would you give to behold a smile of vast affection spread across a beloved face, announcing every day, like breaking news, that you are wonderful? What would you give for a life so firmly grounded?

It would never get old, that “Oh!” It would make your day. It would make your heart.

Prayer: In your presence, Holy One, I am always new. Your new morning mercies re-create me. Every single time. Great is your faithfulness!

MONTH OF SUNDAYS WORSHIP SERVICES-JULY/AUGUST 2024

JULY 7, 2024 – SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Scripture: Mark 16:1-13, Ezekiel 2:1-5 Centering Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:9b-10

Message: “Starfish Jesus”

Theme: We have one Lord, the head of the church. And from this one head shine many rays, doing the work of Christ, acting as His body in the world, and remaining connected to Him.

Theme: Special music: Mandy Streavig & Brenda Knaper

JULY 14, 2024 – EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Message Scripture: Mark 6:14-29 Centering Scripture: Ephesians 1:13-14

Message: “The Golden Rule of Travel”

Theme: Jesus’ “Good Neighbor Policy” is to implement His teachings, repent (have a new travel plan for life’s journey, a new life). Jesus gives us some essential travel tips for life’s journey.

Special music: Rita Persing

JULY 21, 2024 – NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - FIRE DRILL

Message Scripture: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 Centering Scripture: Ephesians 2:13-14

Message: “Don’t Just Do Something, Stand There”

Theme: How do we tune out everyday stressors and tune into a Quiet Life? How do we let the Divine Presence permeate our all? God has sown for us the seed of love. To reap a harvest of love, we need to cultivate that seed.

Special music: Becky Wilcox

JULY 28, 2024 – TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SUMMER SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Message Scripture: John 6:1-21 Centering Scripture: Ephesians 3:18-19

Message: Andy Stump, guest preaching and sharing about ASAPH Ministries

Special music: Mandy Streavig

AUGUST 4, 2024 – ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Scripture: John 6:24-35

Message: “Food That Endures”

Special music: Ray Watkins

AUGUST 11, 2024 – TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Scripture: Ephesians 4:25-5:2

Message: “Strengthening Community”

Special music: Troy Winemiller

AUGUST 18, 2024 – THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST-

Scripture: Ephesians 5:15-20, John 6:51-58

Message: “In Search of Wisdom”

Special music: Dennis Kohler

AUGUST 25, 2024 – FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST-

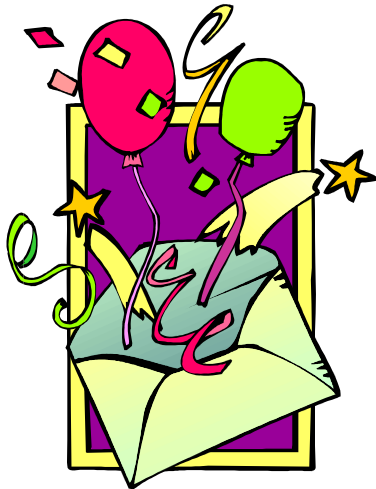
Message Scripture: John 6:56-69 Centering Scripture: Psalm 84:10-12

Message: “God’s Living Word – Just Read It!”

Theme: Are we looking for guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit through Scripture? We can skip the CliffsNotes and Wikipedia entries. And we don’t try waiting for the movie version. But there is one sure way to increase our Bible literacy with tips to jumpstart our reading and absorbing of the living word.

Special music: Kara LeCates

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 |
| 10. Sharon Stein | 31. Jim McDowell |
| 11. 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 - 49 years
July 8 - Greg and Sonja Ness - 57 years
July 19 - Kevin and Renne Myers - 27 years
July 25 - W. Edwin and Judy Bishop - 39 years

AUGUST
BIRTHDAYS



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

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------|
| 2. | Sterling Boyd | 27. | Lakota Innerst |
| | Dave Miller | 29. | Heather Matthews |
| | Ariel Contino | | Nancy Rutledge |
| 3. | Terri Diehl | 30. | Ryan Woerner |
| 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 - 60 years
Aug. 4 - Matthew and Jill Boyd - 23 years
Aug. 10 - Ed and Barb Adams - 50 years
Aug. 16 - David and Brenda Miller - 55 years
Aug. 17 - Richard & Jean Nelson - 61 years
Aug. 19 - Ryan and Jenna Woerner - 19 years

FINANCIAL REPORT

Undesignated General Fund

Red Brick Chapel

Cemetery

| Month-2024 | Income | Expense | Income | Expense | Income | Expense |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| January | \$10,102.00 | \$9,943.43 | \$600.89 | \$319.65 | \$784.93 | \$0.00 |
| February | \$7,747.00 | \$10,447.49 | \$1,200.83 | \$318.91 | \$1,652.89 | \$500.00 |
| March | \$8,402.00 | \$10,244.71 | \$0.91 | \$556.38 | \$26.59 | \$792.24 |
| April | \$13,187.00 | \$11,317.37 | \$0.81 | \$258.87 | \$2.74 | \$3,187.50 |
| May | \$9,242.00 | \$9,355.00 | \$0.71 | \$178.64 | \$438.87 | \$3,159.28 |
| June | | | | | | |
| July | | | | | | |
| August | | | | | | |
| September | | | | | | |
| October | | | | | | |
| November | | | | | | |
| December | | | | | | |
| Total | \$48,680.00 | \$51,308.00 | \$1,804.15 | \$1,632.45 | \$2,906.02 | \$7,639.02 |

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ June 1, 2024

\$4,689.57

Balance of Red Brick Chapel Fund @ June 1, 2024
(Includes \$60,949.81 Endowment)

\$65,995.28

Balance of Cemetery Fund @ June 1, 2024
(Includes \$894,537.17 CD's, Trusts, UCC Foundation)

\$898,039.47

Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2024

| | # | Total | Monthly | Available |
|--------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Families | \$\$\$ | Donations | Balance |
| Beginning | | | | \$ 956.17 |
| January | 1 | \$25.00 | \$ 48.00 | \$ 979.17 |
| February | 1 | \$50.00 | \$ 192.00 | \$ 1121.17 |
| March | | | \$ 93.00 | \$ 1214.17 |
| April | 3 | \$420.00 | \$ 404.00 | \$ 1198.17 |
| May | | | \$ 265.15 | \$ 1463.32 |
| June | | | | |
| July | | | | |
| August | | | | |
| September | | | | |
| October | | | | |
| November | | | | |
| December | | | | |
| Total | 5 | \$495.00 | \$ 1002.15 | |

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS and those in need of PRAYER

Terry & Fran Doll

Room 346

Residence @ Fitz Farm

2200 Springwood Rd.

York, PA 17403

Terry's cell (717) 968-2454

Fran's cell (717) 968-8754

Peggy Luckenbaugh

Room 710B

Colonial Manor Nursing Home

970 Colonial Avenue

York, PA 17403



Linda Trone

Room 604

Colonial Manor Nursing Home

970 Colonial Avenue

York, PA 17403

Keeping in our prayers

Cindie McKinsey

Friends battling cancer

Covid 19 patients



Remember
and pray for
Our Members
in the
Military

A1C Ness, Brandon

6907 S. Camino de la Humanidad

Tucson, AZ 85756

NEW PARTNERING WITH DALLASTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Following up on Dallastown Area School District Supervisor of Auxiliary Services Keith Dyke's message and informal sharings with us on June 23rd, we at Blymire's Church will partner more closely in two ways with DASD.

The DASD has a fund called the Caring and Sharing Fund which helps students and their families who have urgent needs for heat, food, clothing, housing (some students and their families are homeless or are living in crowded conditions with other families because of evictions), and other necessities which they are not able to obtain. We as a church will contribute to that fund. You may write out a check to the church and earmark it for DASD Caring and Sharing Fund. We will also have a special offering the first Sunday of each month for the DASD Caring and Sharing Fund with a plate on the table in the Gathering Place. When there is available money in our Hands of Hope Fund and it's needed, we will add money from our Hands of Hope Fund to supplement what we give to DASD for their Caring and Sharing Fund.

Secondly, you are encouraged to bring good used clothing to Community Aid, Queensgate Towne Center, 2001 Springwood Road, York. When you bring in clothing to Community Aid and mention the Dallastown Area School District, DASD receives a certain amount of money per pound of clothing. That money goes into the Caring and Sharing Fund. If you cannot bring used clothing into Community Aid, you may bring used clothing to church and put it in the bins in the Gathering Place. Periodically that clothing will be brought to Community Aid and DASD will get credit for it and receive some money to go toward the Caring and Sharing Fund.

Giving directly to the DASD Caring and Sharing Fund and giving used clothing to Community Aid (either directly or by bringing the clothing into church) are wonderful ways for us to help those in need who are literally in our back yard.



EMMANUEL'S CLOSET

We are now getting settled in our new home here at Blymire's Church. Past clients are coming back and we are registering some new ones. Due to space limitations we are no longer giving out clothing or household goods. If you would like to donate any non-perishable food, toiletries or cleaning products, please put them in the marked bins in the Gathering Room. Right now we are especially in need of **juice, cereal, tea, frosting (we have lots of cake mix) and toilet paper**. Thank you for supporting this ministry.



Our next chicken barbeques will be held on Saturday, July 13 and August 10, 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 at (717) 244-0655. We sold out early nearly every month last summer, 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 welcome donations of homemade goodies for our bake sale table. Please put individual portions in baggies or plastic wrap. Thank you.



W.O.W.(a discussion and support group for women) has begun meeting again at 11:00 AM in the Gathering Room on the 4th Saturday of each month. Our next meetings will be held on July 27 and August 24.

Our time together will include informal discussions of things we've read, heard about, or have questions about. We will also share joys and concerns. Lunch afterwards is optional. Everyone is welcome. Text or call Ginny (202) 549-4358 for more info.

You are invited to join us on Saturday, August 17, at 5:00 PM for a potluck dinner, followed by the movie "Jesus Revolution."



The film is based on the autobiographical book of the same name co-written by Greg Laurie. In the 1970s, Laurie and a sea of young people descend on sunny Southern California to redefine truth through all means of liberation. Inadvertently, Laurie (Joel Courtney) meets a charismatic street preacher and Christian hippie Lonnie Frisbee (Jonathan Roumie) and a pastor, Chuck Smith (Kelsey Grammer) who open the doors to a church to a stream of wandering youth. What unfolds is a counterculture movement that becomes the greatest spiritual awakening in American history.



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 meet the second Wednesday of each month starting at 11:00 AM and playing until people are ready to stop. Our next gatherings will be held on June 12.



GUIDED MEDITATION AND DRUM CIRCLE

Meditation and Music are very good ways to deepen your personal spiritual practice. Relax, let go of worldly thoughts, and sink into your soul. You are invited to join us Saturday mornings at 10:00AM, July 20 and August 17, for Guided Meditation, followed by Drum Circle, with a variety of instruments available. We have moved the meeting place from the church to the home of Cindy Innerst-Axe, 2285 Swamp Road, Dallastown. Questions, call Cindy (717) 855-6330.



On Sunday, August 11, from 6:00-8:00 PM, please join us for an old-fashioned Hymn Sing, followed by refreshments. The public is invited and there is no charge. We will also be holding another Hymn Sing on October 13, so mark your calendars.

The FUN Team is once again sponsoring a Silent Auction and is asking for donations of new or gently used items. They may be placed in the nursery any time from now until September 1. The auction will run from September 7 thru September 29. Thank you for your support.



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 games, DVD's, and puzzles.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! We are amazed and so thankful for the prayers, cards, flowers, phone calls and texts, and the list goes on- we are so grateful. God bless everyone! Love, Peace and Joy, Steph and Joel



"The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose, but mosquitoes come close."

Unknown

We can never untangle all the woes in other people's lives. We can't produce miracles overnight. But we can bring a cup of cool water to a thirsty soul, or a scoop of laughter to a lonely heart.

Barbara Johnson



July/August 2024

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
 ☆ 248 years ago...on July ☆
 ☆ 4th, 1776 this nation, ☆
 ☆ the United States of ☆
 ☆ America, in a struggle ☆
 ☆ for what was right and ☆
 ☆ free, was proudly born. ☆
 ☆ May we celebrate that ☆
 ☆ precious freedom for ☆
 ☆ which our forbears ☆
 ☆ fought so bravely... ☆
 ☆ the freedom that is ☆
 ☆ inherent in the Stars ☆
 ☆ and Stripes. Celebrate ☆
 ☆ freedom this July 4th! ☆
 ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

"We are surrounded by miracles every day. We see people looking for weeping statues. They miss the every morning miracles _ like sunrise and friendship."

Frankie Murray

A VACATION PRAYER

from "My Daily Orthodox Prayer Book"

Dear Lord,

How we've waited for this vacation, and now it's finally here. Thank You, Lord, for the opportunity to take a break from our daily routines and to replenish our minds, bodies and souls so they we may better serve You. Sometimes our expectations for vacations are unrealistic, and we find ourselves disappointed when things don't go our way. Help us not to worry about having the 'perfect' vacation but to relax and enjoy every moment, whatever it may bring. We are grateful for the joys that await us-whether they be the beauty of your creation, recreation with family or friends, or peace and solitude. Watch over us and protect us as we travel, and brings us safely home again-refreshed and renewed.

Amen



HAPPY 4TH
OF JULY

A BIT OF SUMMER HUMOR



What did the tree say when summer finally arrived?
What a re-leaf.

What kind of scientists avoid the sun? Paleontologists.

What do you call a fly without wings? A walk.

WORRIED ABOUT AGING?... CONSIDER THIS:

Your kids are becoming you but your grandchildren are perfect.

Going out is good Coming home is better!

You forget names But it's OK because some people forgot they even knew you!

You sleep better on a lounge chair with the TV blaring than in bed.

You miss the days when everything worked with just an "ON" and "OFF" switch.

You tend to use more 4 letter words . . . "what?" . . . "when?" . . . "???"

Now that you can afford expensive jewelry, it's not safe to wear it anywhere.

What used to be freckles are now liver spots.

Everybody whispers.

But Old is good in some things, Old Songs, Old Movies, and best of all, OLD FRIENDS.

CONNECTING THE DOTS! It's amazing how, with hindsight, we can see the threads of God's plan weaving together to bring us to where we are today. Let us not be discouraged when our prayers seem to go unanswered. Instead, let us trust that God is always working for our good, even when we don't see it. And let us look for the lessons and blessings that come from unexpected places, knowing that they are often the answers to our prayers.

..... Leslie Zamora

THE GRACE OF GOD

The grace of God means something like: Here is your life. You might never have been, but you are because the party wouldn't have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. Nothing can ever separate us. It's for you I created the universe. I love you. There's only one catch. Like any other gift, the gift of grace can be yours only if you'll reach out and take it. Maybe being able to reach out and take it is a gift too.

Frederick Buechner

"The party wouldn't have been complete without you." As we go through life and deal with our individual trials and tribulations and successes and happy moments, it's important to keep this in mind. We belong here, and we have the benefit of the unconditional love of God. The grace and love of God is there, unconditionally, but it's not shoved down our throats or injected into our veins. It's hanging right next to us like grapes on a vine, which are sweet and nutritious, but will help us only if we reach out and pluck one and eat it.

We are full of amazing potential if we work in conjunction with God, secure in the knowledge of the love that will support us through all of our trials. One person working alone can have great effect, but two working together can have even more than twice the effect--it's the law of synchronicity. Just imagine how effective we can be if we're working with God on our side, if we tap into the synchronicity that definitely is available to us--if we dare and care to reach out and accept the gift of grace.

If I call myself "unworthy" or if I get angry at myself for every little mistake that I make, I'm basically closing the door to love and forgiveness. As a being who is learning every day of my life, I'm bound to make mistakes. And the things that I hurt myself about today seem insignificant or even funny tomorrow. So why close the door to grace for simple mistakes? Accept and move on. And live life as we're meant to live our lives: as wonderful beings who are loved unconditionally and who have amazing potential. Let's reach out and accept the love so that we can strike out and fulfill our potential.

Tom Walsh



Talking about our problems is our greatest addiction. Break the habit. Talk about your joys!



Poets' Café

Just for today, I will sing...
Just for today, I will appreciate all
that I have...
Just for today, I will share my
smile...
Just for today, I will be me, and
only me...

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Thanks to Josiah Gilman

05-02-2007

LEPERS ... I HEAL LEPERS

PEACE

I can't make the world be peaceful. I can't stall tanks from roaring down roads. I can't prevent children from having to hide in bunkers. I can't convince the news to stop turning war into a video game. I can't silence the sound of bombs tearing neighborhoods apart. I can't turn a guided missile into a bouquet of flowers. I can't make a warmonger have an ounce of empathy. I can't convince diplomats to quit playing truth or dare. I can't deflect a sniper's bullet from turning a wife into a widow. I can't stave off a schoolyard being reduced to ash and rubble. I can't do any of that. The only thing I can do is love the next person I encounter without any conditions or strings, to love my neighbor so fearlessly that it starts a ripple that stretches from one horizon to the next. I can't force peace on the world But I can become a force of peace in the world, because sometimes all it takes is a single lit candle in the darkness to start a movement. Oh, Spirit, let me be a candle of comfort in this world.

Let me burn with peace

John Roedel

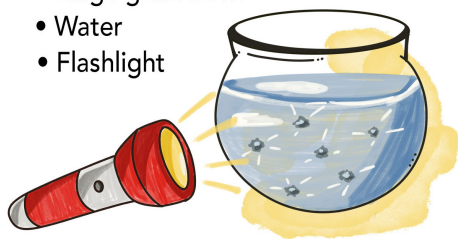


SHINE like stars

Why do stars appear to twinkle? Try this experiment to find out!

What you need:

- Aluminum foil
- Large glass bowl
- Water
- Flashlight



What you do:

1. Crumple the foil into a ball. Carefully unfold it and lay it flat on the ground.
2. Fill the bowl with water and place it on the foil.
3. Turn off the lights and make the room as dark as possible. Shine the flashlight about 1 foot from the water's undisturbed surface. Light will reflect onto the foil.
4. Then tap your finger on the water's surface. As the water moves, what happens to the light on the foil?
5. This flickering simulates scintillation, which happens when starlight enters Earth's atmosphere. As light passes through layers of gas and water, it refracts and appears to twinkle.

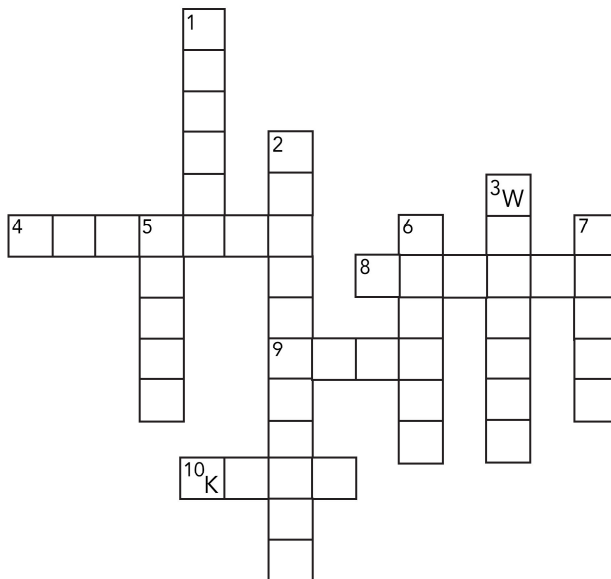
PUZZLE



THE WONDER OF STARS

The heavens display evidence of God's great power.
What else does the Bible say about the sky?

Directions: Use the clues and Bible references (all NIV) to complete the crossword.



DOWN

1. The sun, moon and stars do this to God. (Psalm 148:3)
2. God made these as numerous as the stars. (Genesis 26:4)
3. Don't do this to the stars and sky. (Deuteronomy 4:19)
4. What do the heavens declare? (Psalm 19:1)
5. The moon and the stars do this at night. (Psalm 136:9)
6. When we're pure, we do this like the stars. (Philippians 2:15)

ACROSS

4. The heavens are the work of these. (Psalm 8:3)
8. On what day did God create the stars? (Genesis 1:14-19)
9. God calls each star by this. (Isaiah 40:26)
10. A star announced the arrival of him. (Matthew 2:2)

Answers: DOWN: 1. praise, 2. descendants, 3. worship, 4. glory, 5. govern, 6. shine, 7. shine, 8. fingers, 9. fourth, 10. king