

JULY



The Mountain Top Messenger

JULY 2023

ZION LUTHERAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH, LCMS ASHLAND, WI

| SUN | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT |
|---|-----------|---|-----------------------------|--|-----------|-----------|
| July 2 John S. July 5 Andy July 9 Randy July 12 Doug July 6 Scott July 19 John P. July 23 Randy July 26 Andy July 30 John S Aug. 2 Scott Aug. 6 Doug | | | | | | 1 |
| <h1>2023</h1> | | | | | | |
| 2 9:00am Service 10:15am Bible Study 2:00pm LGP | 3 | 4 4th of July Offices | 5 6:30pm Service | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 9:00am Service 10:15am Bible Study | 10 | 11 | 12 6:30pm Service | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 9:00am Service 10:15am Bible Study 2:00pm Mellen | 17 | 18 | 19 6:30pm Service | 20 Winkel 9:00am St. Paul's | 21 | 22 |
| 23 9:00am Service 10:15am Bible Study | 24 | 25 | 26 6:30pm Service | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 9:00am Service 10:15am Bible Study | 31 | VBS August 7th - 11th 9:00am - 3:00pm Register by July 26th Call or email the office | | | | |

Hello all! It is definitely a mixed emotion's day. By the calendar it is the first day of summer, the longest day of the year. Exciting! On the flip side tomorrow marks the beginning of the days becoming shorter and the long arduous slide toward the shortest day of the year, that first day of winter. (boo hiss) Anyway another month has flown by, and I am again challenged to find something to write about and hopefully inspire you with some scriptural incite.

We just finished on our series on the Seven Churches of Revelation. I thought it went well and I personally found myself digging deeper into scripture than I had in a while. That, and working on the ongoing Revelation Bible study has helped me to be incredibly involved in study. Now I know that it is going to probably take most of the summer to finish the Revelation Bible Study, I am already looking forward to what our next study might be. As I ponder that thought, I have a few ideas.

First, I have always had a desire to do a rather in-depth Bible study on the Gospel of John. I have always felt that John is one of the most important books of the New Testament, if not the whole Bible, and it is the one I always recommend to people when they say to me "I have never read the Bible, where should I start?". The answer to that question is never Genesis.

One of my other Ideas, I believe I broached before, is to have you, the folks that read this, give me some written ideas of what you would like to see for a Bible study. I know I have asked this before, and I know I have received some ideas from you before, however, I cannot seem to find any information that I collected. So, if at first you don't succeed, try, try, again. So please send me your ideas. I may even do them in some of the extra Sundays we might have once we finish Revelation and before the fall church and Bible Study season starts. And that idea of sending me ideas for Bible studies

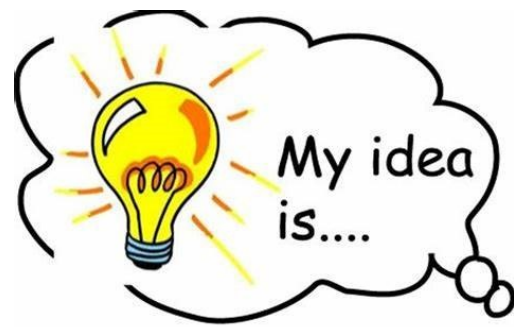
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July Altar Guild



Lisa Warren
 715-209-8547
 Michelle Vyskocil
 715-682-2498



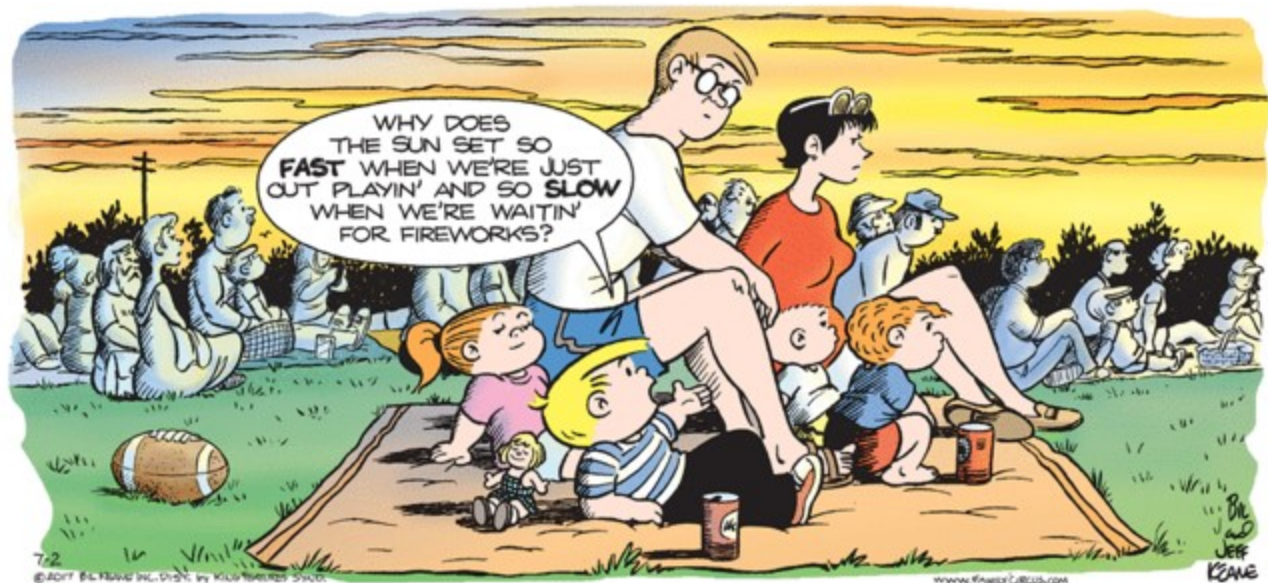
would also be helpful if you would like to send me ideas for short topics that I might be able address in my monthly newsletter covers. There are a lot of questions out there I would guess. What are you curious about? What do you encounter in your daily lives that may cause you to ask, what does the Bible say about that? I would love to be able to help you answer those ques-

tions and I can assure you, if it is question in your mind, others have the same question as well. So please, for the sake of my lack of creativity, share some ideas with me. I will keep your ideas anonymous, so you need not worry about any embarrassment.

The only other thing that I do wish to address today is a quick update on the new church directory. I have been asked by many, "Where is it?." Well, I am just finishing the layout, it will be going to the printers before the end of the month and if memory serves me correctly, I believe they said 6 – 8 weeks following submission. I am sorry again for the delay and hopefully the finished product will be something that you will all enjoy.

Now, I am going to keep it short and go enjoy a little warm weather before church tonight. Please enjoy your summer, enjoy those long sunny evenings, and watch out for the mosquitoes.

The Lord Bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord look upon you with favor and give you Peace.
Pastor Rick



The Benefits of Suffering

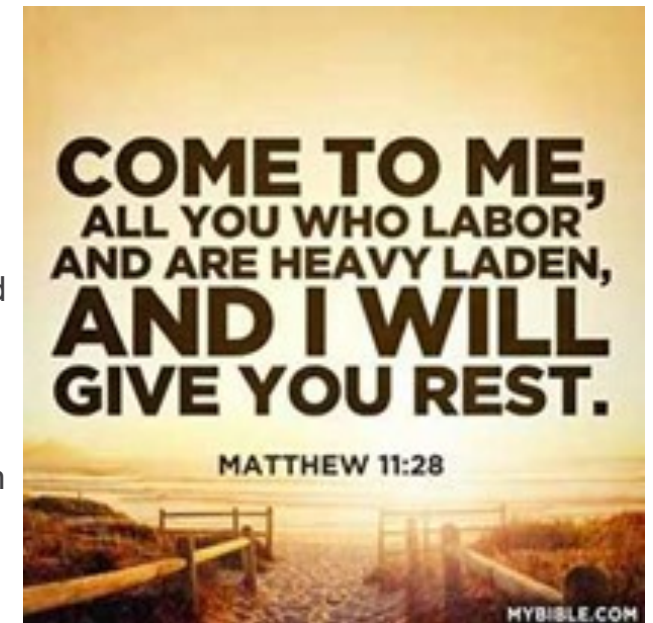
By Martin Luther
(Faith Alone - 365 Devotional Readings)

Joseph prepared his chariot and went to meet his father Israel. As soon as he saw his father, he threw his arms around him and cried on his shoulder a long time.
Genesis 46:29

Israel, or Jacob, didn't despair even though he faced many troubles. He appeared to be rejected, but God didn't abandon him. He remained God's child, but God didn't abandon him. He remained God's child, and God remained in him in a hidden and wonderful way. Much later, when the events played themselves out, Jacob saw his son Joseph was still alive and become an important leader in Egypt. Then Jacob was happy to have gone through so much suffering. He thought, "I wouldn't have experienced this much happiness if my family had been taken care of the way I had planned. Joseph would've been just a shepherd like the rest of my sons. But now he has been elevated to a position of royalty, and he will save many people."

So, when we are being disciplined and feel sad, we shouldn't fight against our troubles, but rather remind ourselves, "I will not die, but I will live" (Psalm 118:17). Even when the opposite seems to be true, we should say, "Whenever I feel helpless, I can put my trust in God, who is able to make everything out of nothing. When I am totally devastated, no one can lift me up again the way He can."

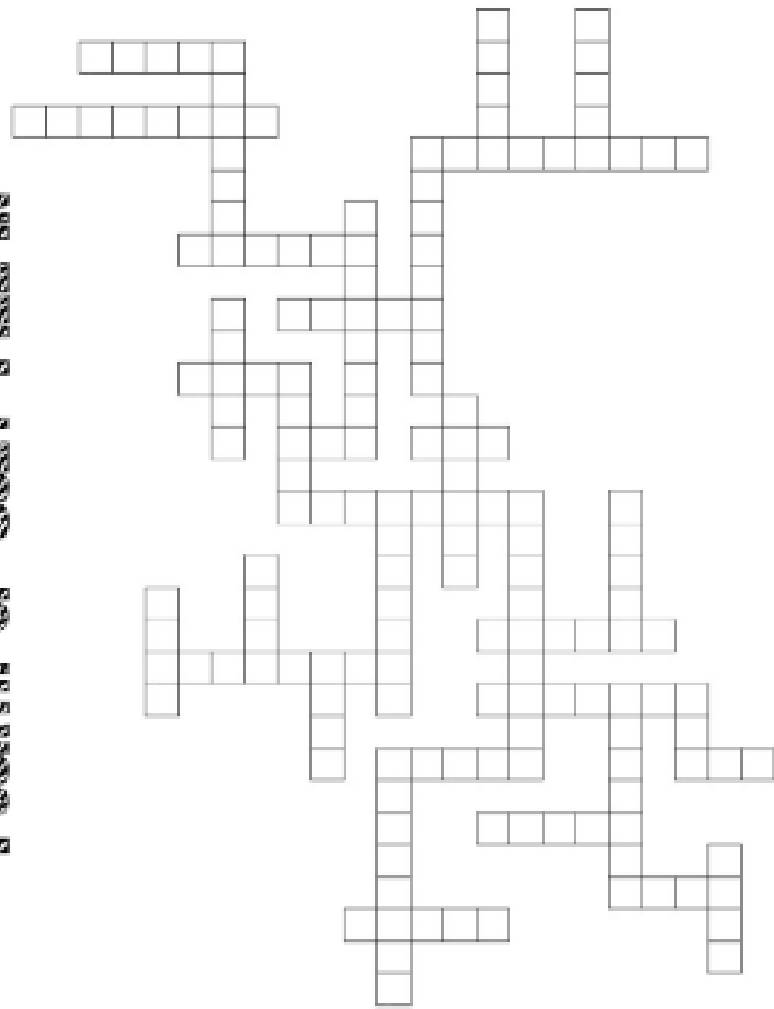
The more severe the suffering, the greater the wonderful benefits to God's holy people. Being tested through suffering is a sure sign of God's kindness and mercy to His faithful people. When they faithfully cling to God's promises, unbelievable blessings result. James says, "Blessed are those who endure when they are tested. When they pass the test, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12).



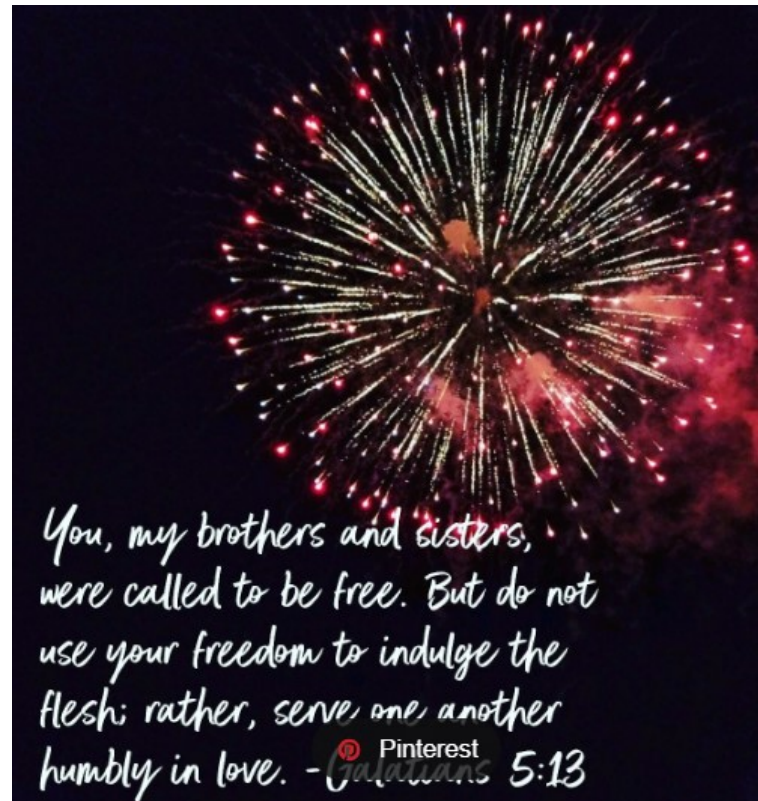
When Isaiah saw the Lord God seated on His throne in Chapter six, he was overcome with joy. Oh, what an infinite majesty was God's majesty. Oh, what a glory. Oh, what a throne. Oh, what a sight! Soon you will see what Isaiah saw.

I thoroughly enjoy working on the monthly newsletter. It does take a good amount of time to look for new stories, activity sheets, poems, prayers etc. That's part of the fun. What I need from you, readers, is to tell me what you like to see in the newsletter each month. If no one likes a particular theme, then I won't include that anymore. Or, is there something you would like to be included, such as recipes, let me know. I have included recipes a few times but not lately. Just list the things you would like to continue or an added new request and I'll see what I can do. And don't forget about the kids' likes. You can email me your choices. Thank you, Lynn

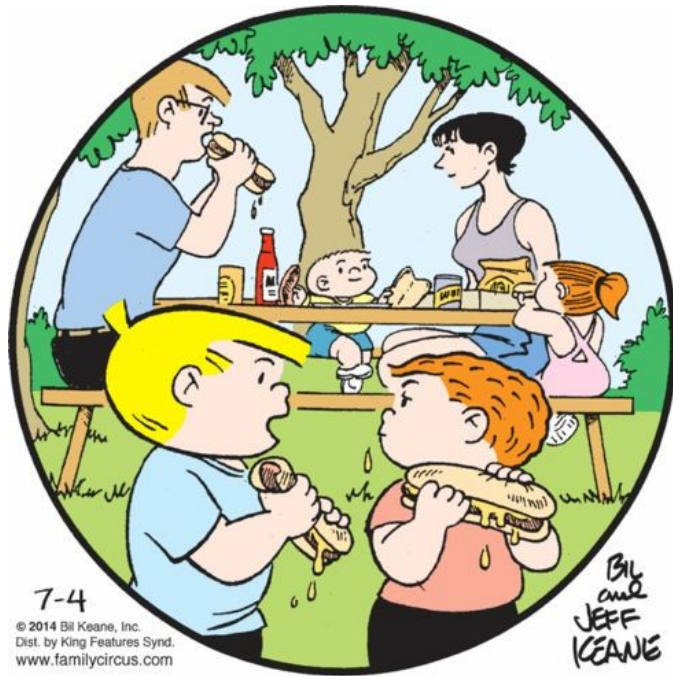
FOURTH OF JULY FALL-OUT



- 3 letter words: air, red, say, see
- 4 letter words: flag, free, home, land, star, wave
- 5 letter words: bombs, brave, broad, early, fight, glare, light, night, proof, stars
- 6 letter words: banner, bright, hailed
- 7 letter words: proudly, rockets
- 8 letter words: bursting, gleaming, perilous, ramparts, spangled, twilight
- 9 letter words: gallantly, streaming



You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. - Galatians 5:13



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 "Today's a good day to eat hot dogs, 'cause that's what our fourth fathers always ate."
 Bill and JEFF KEANE

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSOURI SYNOD

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
 1111-11TH AVE WEST
 ASHLAND, WI 54806

Sunday Worship Service 9:00am live streamed
Wednesday Evening Service 6:30pm
Sunday School Starting in September
Bible Study Sunday 10:15am and others starting in September

Pastor Rick Williams -
 715-209-0479

Office Hours:
 M/Th 9:00am-5:00pm T off
 W 12-8:00pm F 9-2
 Please call ahead if you need to speak with Pastor Williams as he may be visiting shut-in's, at a conference, etc.

Office Secretary
 Lynn Ladd 715-682-6075
 Office Hours M-W 8-2
 Days and times may change.

Church President:
 John Pruss 715-292-4825

Lord, thank you that our comfort abounds through Christ. Nothing in the world can bring us the comfort and peace that you alone can offer. Thank you that you understand our trials, and you care. Through our own struggle and pain, help us to be your vessels to offer comfort and strength to others who are hurting. Thank you Lord that through every weakness and hard place, your strength is displayed in our lives. We can't do it on our own. But you can, through us. Your power is Mighty within us, you are our Helper and our Strength. All things are possible through you. Amen.

Head Elder:
 Darryl Warren 715-492-0488

Website
 www.zionashland.org

E-mail
 secretary@zionlutheranashland.com

Little Friends of Jesus Child Care Center: 715-682-5185

LFOJ Administrator:
 JoAnn Martikonis
 715-682-6075

PRAYERS FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

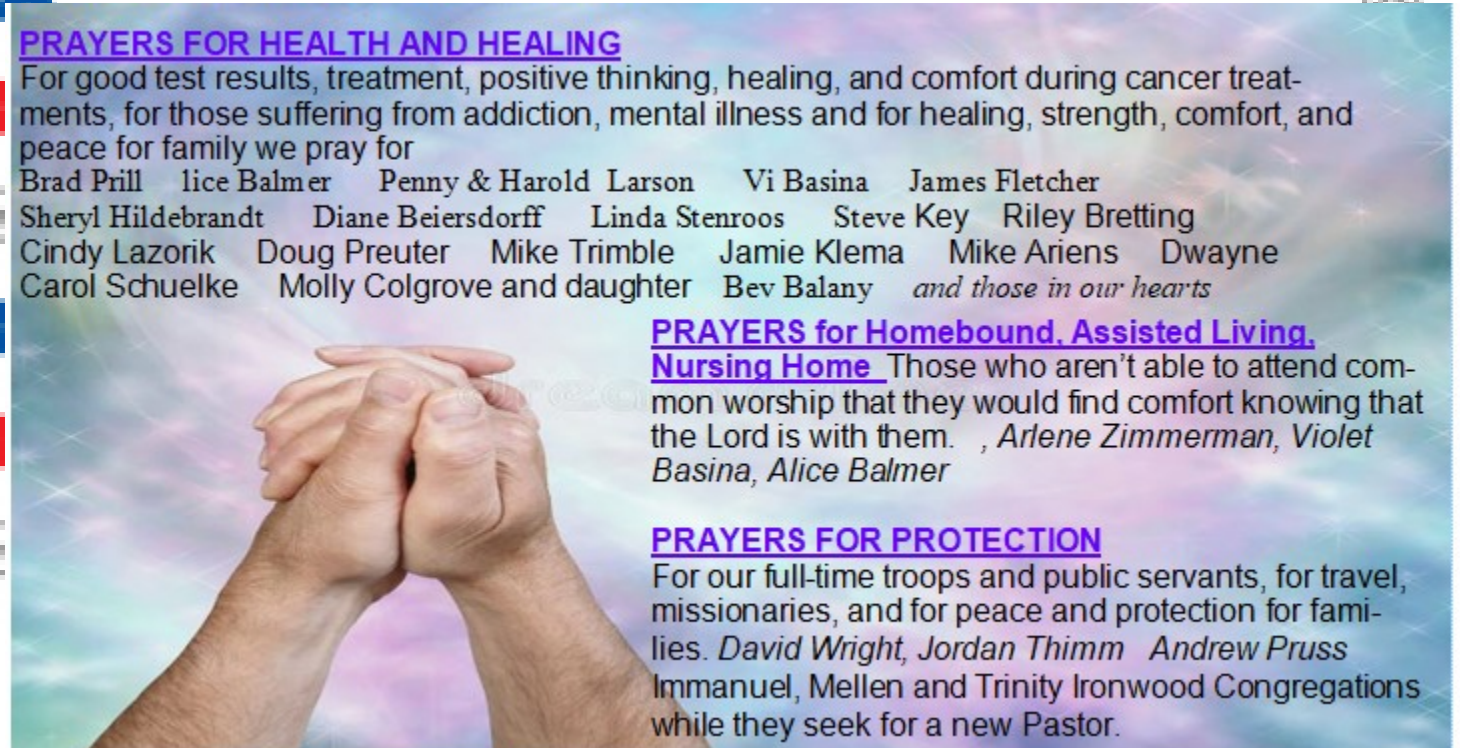
For good test results, treatment, positive thinking, healing, and comfort during cancer treatments, for those suffering from addiction, mental illness and for healing, strength, comfort, and peace for family we pray for

- Brad Prill lice Balmer Penny & Harold Larson Vi Basina James Fletcher
 Sheryl Hildebrandt Diane Beiersdorff Linda Stenroos Steve Key Riley Bretting
 Cindy Lazork Doug Preuter Mike Trimble Jamie Klema Mike Ariens Dwayne
 Carol Schuelke Molly Colgrove and daughter Bev Balany and those in our hearts

PRAYERS for Homebound, Assisted Living, Nursing Home Those who aren't able to attend common worship that they would find comfort knowing that the Lord is with them. , Arlene Zimmerman, Violet Basina, Alice Balmer

PRAYERS FOR PROTECTION

For our full-time troops and public servants, for travel, missionaries, and for peace and protection for families. David Wright, Jordan Thimm Andrew Pruss Immanuel, Mellen and Trinity Ironwood Congregations while they seek for a new Pastor.



Why serving in the church is so important

Amanda Thompson

I had a failed career as a tap dancer.

My dreams of tapping my way into musical theater ended at age seven with my lack of coordination and disdain for Lycra. But until my feet wouldn't move like the rest of the kids in the class, how would I have known I wasn't destined for the remake of Singing In the Rain? How would I know it wasn't what I was gifted to do unless I tried the shuffle-ball-step?

This pattern has been repeated in all of my life. Music lessons, after-school clubs, changed majors, even favorite school subjects — all peeled back layers of who I was and who I wasn't. My math SAT scores, for example, speak volumes as to why I will never be an accountant. Instead, my love for the stories of history and English were clues pointing to a larger life picture.

Scripture tells us when we meet Jesus, we are all given at least one spiritual gift

1 Corinthians 12:7. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

Spiritual gifts are specific ways the work of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our lives. These gifts — on top of our interests, abilities, hobbies, likes, and dislikes — join together to form who we are and how we participate in the work God is doing all around us.

These are not only for us. We are not made to be who we are to serve just ourselves

1 Peter 4:10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

I will never serve the world around me with my tap dancing or math skills. But I do love to tell stories. I do love dinner parties and kids. God takes who He has made me to be and matches it with the needs of others.

So what does it look like to really serve other people with our gifts?

What is Serving — Really?

I need a thousand things every day. I have big needs and small needs. Everyone around me does too. Sometimes the people around me see my needs before I do. The real treasure is when we act on what we see. When we shoot the text to the co-worker who had a tough day or move the elderly neighbor's trash can to the curb.

A good measure of our spiritual health is our depth of concern for other people.

As we allow the Gospel to change our hearts, we will develop a deep care for other people. Our attention will begin to turn away from ourselves and to the needs of others

Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.

A good measure of our spiritual health is our depth of concern for other people. Eventually, our hearts are so in tune with what Jesus is doing around us, He begins to use us to meet the needs of others.

It is lacing up our tap shoes and seeing what God can do.

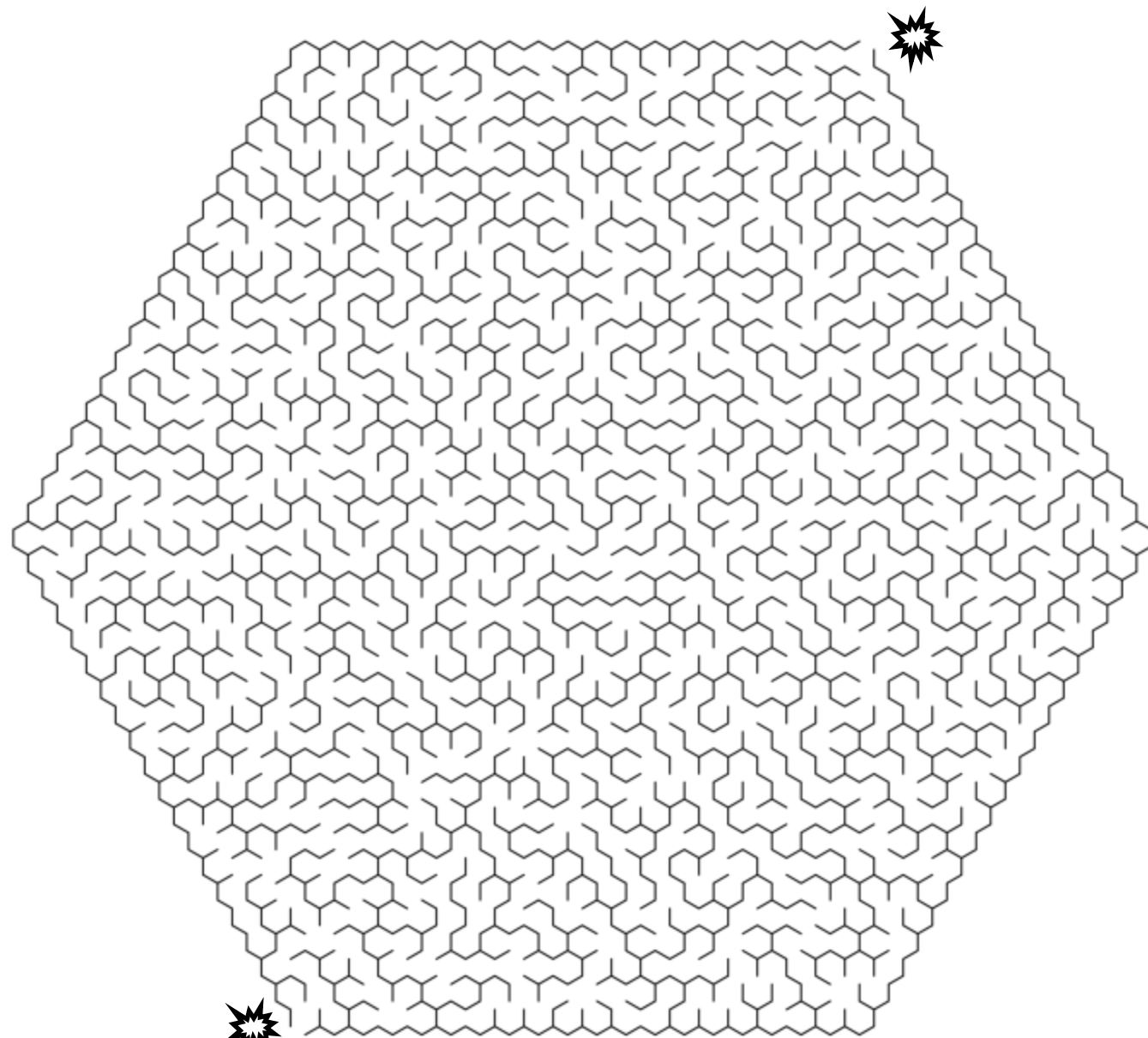
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Gardening

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid.
The remaining 27 letters spell a Lady Bird Johnson quote.

F S W H E E L B A R R O W W H G E G R
 U P E G S P E T U N I A S S N F N R T
 C A G O R T L S O I L O C I N O W A U
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| ANNUALS | GARDEN | ORGANIC | SEEDS |
| BEANS | GERANIUMS | PEAS | SHOVEL |
| BEETS | GLOVES | PERENNIAL | SOIL |
| BIENNIAL | GNOME | PETUNIAS | SPADE |
| BROCCOLI | GREENHOUSE | PINWHEEL | SUNSHINE |
| CARROTS | GROW | PITCH FORK | TOMATOES |
| COMPOST | HOES | PLANTING | TROWEL |
| CULTIVATE | HORTICULTURE | RAIN | TULIPS |
| DAISIES | HOSE | RAKE | VEGETABLES |
| DIGGING | HYDRANGEA | RELAXING | WATER |
| FERTILIZER | LILACS | ROSES | WEEDS |
| FLOWERS | LILIES | ROWS | WHEELBARROW |
| FUCHSIA | MARIGOLDS | | |



Only two cats

Uncle Bart was a city boy whose familiarity with wildlife began and ended with pigeons. One time he joined us at our cabin in the woods. In the evening, he opened the door to let our cats in. The first cat walked in; then the second. Bart stood there coaxing the third cat to come, which we found strange—we had only two cats. The third cat was a possum. —

Eyes on the road

Driving across California, we stopped at a red light in a beautiful old western town. As I admired the elegant storefronts and beautiful scenery, I didn't notice that the light had turned green and back to red again. It was then that a police officer tapped on my window and said, "That's all the colors we got here." — *Yefim Brodd, Tacoma, Washington*

Dances with bees

On a trip with my Florida-based church to support a Blackfeet Nation mission in Montana, I accidentally disturbed a hornets' nest. My zigging and zagging to evade the angry swarm prompted a nickname for me, Dances with Bees.

Cut to two years later, and I'm working on another project, this time alongside a missionary from Washington State. As I told the story, he suddenly stopped and said, "You're Dances with Bees! I heard about you on a fishing trip in Idaho!" — *Christopher Parmley, Murfreesboro, Tennessee*



(cont. from previous page)

Serving in the Church

The Gospel is enacted through the local church all across the world. The church is us: people who love Jesus serving others by parking cars, holding babies, to praying with others, pouring coffee, and opening their homes.

In this, God changes us. Serving in the local church is a vehicle to discover how we are made and how the Lord can use us. Serving provides us the opportunity to know more about how we are created: our likes and dislikes, what we can do well and what we cannot.

God fills in the picture for us. We discover more about ourselves and how He is growing us while He uses us to meet the needs of others. We learn best by doing.

A Beautiful Relationship

The discovery process of how God can take our unique selves and join with the work His doing will last our entire lives. As we grow, as stages of life change, as we meet new people and participate in new activities, new ways to serve others will become clear to us. Our heart posture must always be the same: what can I do to serve other people?

Our opportunities at Zion are greatly needed, we are given the opportunity to practice putting our attention less on ourselves and more on others. We will not be perfect. We may find ourselves serving in an area that doesn't match our gifting and need to adjust. We may also find we love a group of people or an area of ministry more than we thought we could. Either way, we jump in and start.

In this, God weaves a beautiful relationship between both working in us and through us.

A Devotion for July 4th CAROL KNAPP

This classic *Daily Guideposts* devotion captures the true meaning of this beautiful, bountiful holiday. *Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you...—Romans 15:7 (RSV)*

It was a cloudy, quiet July Fourth for us, that year of 1988. My husband worked. There were no parades. We'd decided not to spend the extra money on fireworks. You can barely see them, anyway, in Alaska's summer twilight. We didn't even have a picnic. Yet it's the Fourth of July that I remember and treasure the most.

The two-story log home where we were living was not our own. We were house-sitting for the summer for our friends Lou and Elsa, who were visiting their native Czechoslovakia for the first time in twenty years. As a young married couple, they had fled the streets of Prague in terror when Soviet tanks swept through the city in 1968. For days before, Elsa had hidden beneath the bed in their cramped apartment with her two little girls. When they left, they could say good-bye to no one. They simply disappeared.

Lou and Elsa found a welcome in the United States, eventually making their way to Alaska. They learned English and worked hard. Lou, a master craftsman, fitted each log in their home with mortar and hope. Elsa tended a fruitful vegetable garden and produced wonderful aromas from kettles simmering in her tidy kitchen.

I was alone in Lou and Elsa's living room in the afternoon on that Fourth of July, when I suddenly burst into tears. *This is it*, I thought. *This is the real Fourth of July. They came to America to find "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," and here I am, standing in the middle of their dream.* I had a glimpse of how precious this beautiful, bountiful country of ours really is. And so I waved the only flag I had ... my tears, genuine and proud.

She's Yours, Lord, but You've allowed us to call her ours. Thank You from sea to shining sea.

7 Things to Not Say at a Funeral

By Aaron Earls

Some of the most difficult moments of our lives are after the death of a loved one. Some of the most awkward moments are when we go to comfort friends after the death of their loved one.



Though we all are confronted with death and must deal with personal loss, we never seem to know what to say to someone else going through grief.

Sometimes, even if we have the best intentions, we can say something that is emotionally hurtful or theologically off-base.

Here are seven things to avoid saying at a funeral or to someone grieving the loss of a loved one.

“They’re an angel now.”

No, they’re not. Nowhere in Scripture does it teach that deceased humans become angels.

Don’t let cartoons and pop culture ideas influence your understanding of death.

Not only is it wrong, it can be insensitive as well. Don’t try to diminish the grief of someone by spouting off trite (and inaccurate) sayings.

“I know how you feel.”

Yes, virtually all of us have suffered loss, but none of us has the exact same experience or feelings. This makes the conversation about you and not about the person who is suffering. If you have been through a similar tragedy—such as losing a spouse or child—tell the person that you’d be glad to talk when they feel up to it. Don’t push them, but follow up after a few weeks once things have settled down. Let them know you will be there for them.

“They look so good.”

One of the most awkward experiences is seeing the body of the person in the casket. The temptation can be to compliment the appearance of the body or note how it “looks just like them.” Don’t do this.

In reality, we all know the body doesn’t look good. It doesn’t look right because it’s not. After Adam and Eve fell, death became an unwelcome resident of God’s good creation. The dead body looks unnatural because it is, and no amount of soothing words can make that any less of a reality.

“Don’t cry” or “Go ahead and cry.”

Yes, everyone grieves, but everyone grieves differently. We should not attempt to impose our way of grieving on others.

Yes, Christians do not grieve as those who have no hope ([1 Thessalonians 4:13](#)), but we do grieve. For, some that means floods of tears. For others, that may mean silent reflection.

Work to bring comfort, not grief judging.

“At least it wasn’t worse.”

This should be obvious, but too often it’s not. Saying something like this will not make the person feel better or lessen their loss.

Don’t try to point how other people have had it worse or try to get the grieving person to “look at the bright side of things.” Allow them to grieve without feeling guilty for it.

(Continued on the next page.)

“God is sovereign.”

Yes, this is true. Yes, this is biblical. Yes, God has promised to work all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose ([Romans 8:28](#)). But no, you probably shouldn’t say it and nothing else to a person immediately after their loved one died.

We can rest in God’s sovereignty and trust in it, but still not want to hear a trite “everything happens for a reason” as we stifle waves of grief.

“Let me know if I can help.”

This may sound comforting, but in many ways you are placing the onus on the person trying to keep their head above water. Instead of asking them to tell you, look for ways you can meet a need without being asked.

They’re probably not going to call you to ask for something, but they may gladly receive a meal, some help with paperwork, or an offer to pick up kids from school or take them to soccer practice.

Be close enough that you can see the needs they have and meet them without making the grieving family contact you to ask for help.

What can you say instead?

In many ways, just saying, “I’m so sorry for your loss” can go a long way in communicating care and presence.

Maybe try sharing your favorite memory of their loved ones. For me, one of the unexpected comforts during the grieving process was gathering with family members and friends and reminiscing and telling stories.

If all that fails, just hug them or sit with them in silence. You can communicate a lot without saying a word. It’s better to say nothing than to say something that will do more harm than good.

Funny Pastoral Visit to the Nursing Home

Pastor Bob drives up to the Happy Rest Nursing home to visit Matilda, an elderly member of his church in the latter years of her life.

"Hi Matilda, good to see you, can I sit with you for awhile?"

As they begin chatting, the pastor notices a bowl full of peanuts on the nearby nightstand. As Matilda continues to share a story he’s already heard a few times before, he reaches for the bowl of peanuts and takes one.

As the conversation continues, he also continues to eat more and more peanuts. Near the end of their time together he realizes he has eaten every single peanut in the bowl.

"Matilda, I must apologize. It seems that I have eaten every one of your peanuts."

"Oh that's okay Pastor Bob."

"They would have just sat there anyway."

"Without my teeth anymore, all I can do is lick and suck the chocolate off of them and put the peanuts back in the bowl."



A teacher was giving a lesson on the Old Testament and asked one of her students, “Tommy, who knocked down the walls of Jericho?” Tommy answered, “Well, it wasn’t me.” Worried about this lack of Bible knowledge, the teacher called Tommy’s mother. His mother said, “Look, my son’s a good kid. If he says he didn’t knock the wall down, he didn’t knock the wall down.” More worried, the teacher called Tommy’s father. He listened to her story and said, “Well, look, I don’t want any trouble. Just tell me how much this wall costs, and I’ll take care of it.”