

MOVING SPIRIT

devotional newsletter of

Village Community Church

Pastor's Parcel

It was inevitable. Grandparents and parents both warned us, but we couldn't believe it. *How could living in the prime of life ever come to an end?* Yet it did.

This realization came long ago to most Eskaton residents. My recent bout with cancer initiated me, too. As a pastor of seniors, I always tried putting myself into my congregation's shoes. Physical changes and losses in body function from cancer treatments slipped them on me with no effort at all.

Aging and chronic disease affect more than our bodies. Loss of mobility curtails other freedoms and enjoyments. Loss of health limits independence. Lost income tightens an already tight budget. A *critical mass* of such losses can cause us to lose the precious attitudes depicted in the cartoon—terrible losses indeed!

Jesus said He came "*to seek and save that which was lost.*" Did He mean just *lost souls*? I think He meant *everything lost*. Ultimately we'll find that fulfilled in Heaven. But what about here on earth? Can't God redeem our losses



now, so that His "*will be done on earth as it is in heaven*"? I think He does, by helping us exchange our activities:

When weary feet can walk no more,
God has work for your hands in store.
If hands grow weak and eyes grow dim,
Prayer's the work you can do for Him.
Then, when service on earth is through,
You've got jobs in Heaven to do!

Humans were created for action. When one ability is lost, God enables another, until it's time to go—and even then, we will never be done. — *Pastor David*

Parish Proclamations

Village Community Church exists not just to provide a church service each week for Eskaton residents, but also for pastoral care. David, Terry and Dawn are all bivocational ministers, still doing secular jobs while serving at VCC. We are each available to schedule a pastoral visit for anyone who has spiritual needs or questions of faith, whether they've visited the church or not. (Our contact information is on the back of each Sunday's worship folder and on the last page of this newsletter.)

If you're ill or have been hospitalized for some reason, let us know or have someone contact us. We will try to arrange a home or hospital visit, as soon as possible. But for the needs of those not attending VCC, please, ask them personally if they want a pastoral visit before you contact us. Thanks.

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Personal Pulpit

Some thoughts on Micah 6:8 (NIV)

"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

"Act justly." Or, in other words, act

with fairness, honesty, and integrity. Micah had a special concern for justice, primarily because he saw so little of it. And over the years you may have seen very little too. What God requires of us is that we do what is right and fair in our relationships with other people. Justice involves sensing a standard of equality among people. It's as simple as being honest in even the smallest business transaction or personal interactions; especially in the routines of life.

The second thing God requires of us is that we *"love mercy."* We are to fill our hearts with compassion and kindness toward one another. The word "mercy" here is to be understood in a covenant sense, involving the attitude of two parties in a vow of relationship with one another. In relation to God's mercy, it is used most often of His grace, or of unexpected kindness. This is what God did for us through Jesus Christ. We experience this when we allow Jesus to reside in our hearts and abide with Him.

And finally, *Walk humbly with your God.*" First ask yourself, who is my God? Did you make one up? Is it you? If so, you're held to a weak standard. You can change the rules as you please. Your own idea of justice or mercy can easily become unjust and unmerciful.

Notice how the first two things God expects has nothing to do with God. They're about how we behave toward people. God expects His children to love and get along with one another; to do "*what is good.*" He expects His children to treat each other justly and fairly.

But the third expectation is that we have a right relationship with God Himself. A right relationship with Him always begins with humility, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." —Psalms 51:17 (NIV)

Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us, "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

God humbly serves all His creation, especially us, made in His image. As grateful recipients of His care, we should walk humbly with Him, following His example of service. This means doing what's right and showing mercy. Then, everything else in life will fall into place. – Pastor Terry A. Brown

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**“The Christian Way at Work Today”
by E. Stanley Jones**

The unseen crosses that press in upon the spirit are often more poignant than

those that cut into the flesh. Of all those who suffer in silence the most silent must be those who go through life without finding a mate. The human spirit is made for companionship and feels lost and unhappy until it finds its counterpart. But what of those who never find?

I remember one such who seemed to be the very epitome of gracious womanhood. She had every instinct for motherhood—and what a mother she would have been! But she who would have made such a wonderful mate was denied a mate, and she who would have been a model mother was denied motherhood....

She bore this unseen cross in silence during the lonely years. One day, as she listened to an address describing the birth of a human spirit from darkness and shadows to new light and life, she saw a vision and heard a call. She would give herself to bringing forth spiritual children, nursing them into character and fruitfulness. She who was denied motherhood on one plane gave herself to motherhood on another.

No pain and travail was too terrible to bring forth these spiritual children into the world. The gnawing, regretful pain left and a creative pain, a pain that

is really joy set to a higher key, took its place. Regret turned to re-creation. She is now a happy mother, mothering the souls of the lowly and finding a mate in human need, married to misery, yet blissfully happy. She is using her denials and turning them into doors. (adapted from *Christ and Human Suffering*)

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Pithy Pieces

Ten Commandments

for a Long and Peaceful Life

1. Thou shalt not worry, for it's a most unproductive human activity.
2. Thou shalt not be fearful, for most of the things we fear never come to pass.
3. Thou shalt face each problem as it comes, handling only one at a time.
4. Thou shalt not cross bridges before you get there, for you won't succeed.
5. Thou shalt not take problems to bed with you, for they're poor bedfellows.
6. Thou shalt not borrow the problems of others. They can handle them much better than you can.
7. Thou shalt listen to ideas different from your own. (It's very hard to learn something new when you're talking.)
8. Thou shalt not try to relive yesterday for good or ill—it's gone. Concentrate on what's happening in your life today.

9. Thou shalt not let frustration bog you down, for most of it is self-pity and only interferes with positive actions.

10. Thou shalt count thy blessings and never overlook the small ones, for lots of small blessings add up to a big one.

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Praise's Portion

Thank You, God

by Nina Stiles

Life can hold such lovely things!
Apple blossom-scented springs;
Purple mist of haze and heather;
Books to read in stormy weather.
Common as a cookie jar,
Things I hold the dearest are:
A small white house, a small brown dog;
Sunlight breaking through the fog;
And as sweet as summer rain,
Understanding after pain.
Life holds all these lovely things.
Thank you, God, for all it brings.

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Prayer's Priority

Prayer by St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument
of Thy Peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born
to Eternal Life.

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Perpetual Precepts

Four Things

by Henry Van Dyke

Four things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true:
To think without confusion clearly;
To love his fellow-men sincerely;
To act from honest motives purely;
To trust in God and heaven securely.

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(a comment on the poem above)

Other things besides these four that a man must learn are how to make a living, to perform his duties well, to control his tongue, to mind his own business, to govern his passions, to keep his head level, to take care of his health,

to fix up his accounts, to know the time of day, to economize, to steer clear of mischief, to be mannerly, to pick up knowledge, to keep wide awake, to know a good thing when he sees it, and to avoid all evil, *if he would make his record true.* — A. L. Alexander

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Poetry's Place

Courage, Courage, Courage

by Edgar A. Guest

When the burden grows heavy,
and rough is the way,
When you falter and slip,
and it isn't your day,
And your best doesn't measure
to what is required,
When you know in your heart
that you're fast growing tired,
With the odds all against you,
there's one thing to do:
That is, call on your courage
and see the thing through.

Who battles for victory
ventures defeat.
Misfortune is something
we all have to meet;
Take the loss with the grace
you would take in the gain.

When things go against you,
don't whine or complain;
Just call on your courage
and grin if you can.
Though you fail to succeed,
do not fail as a man.

There are dark days and stormy,
which come to us all,
When about us in ruin
our hopes seem to fall.
But stand to whatever
you happen to meet—
We must all drink the bitter
as well as the sweet.
And the test of your courage
is: What do you do
In the hour when reverses
are coming to you.

Never changed is the battle
by curse or regret,
Though you whimper and whine,
still the end must be met
And who fights a good fight,
though he struggle in vain,
Shall have many a vict'ry
to pay for his pain.
So take your reverses
as part of the plan
Which God has devised
for creating a man.

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Pearls of Prudence

(From 90-year old Regina Brett's column
in *The Plain Dealer*, Cleveland: "To
celebrate growing older, I once wrote the
45 lessons life taught me. It is the most
requested column I've ever written...")

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and parents will. Stay in touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It's OK if your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.

14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry; God never blinks.
16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
19. It's never too late to have a happy childhood. But the second one is up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
21. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
22. Over prepare, then go with the flow.
23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
24. The most important sex organ is the brain.
25. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
26. Frame every so-called disaster with these words "In five years, will this matter?"
27. Always choose life.
28. Forgive everyone everything.
29. What other people think of you is none of your business.
30. Time heals almost everything. Give

time time.

31. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
32. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
33. Believe in miracles.
34. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
35. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
36. Growing old beats the alternative – dying young.
37. Your children get only one childhood.
38. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
39. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
40. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.
41. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
42. The best is yet to come...
43. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
44. Yield.
45. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift."

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Serving Residents at Eskaton

Village Community Church offers an opportunity for interdenominational Christian worship under the sponsorship of Faith Legacy Church. Honoring tradition, we maintain an evangelical spirit focused on the Bible as the Word of God. Congregational unity is expressed by our confession of the ancient Apostle's or Nicene Creed at our monthly Holy Communion. We hope residents without a church home, or who find travel to their own churches too difficult, will visit our fellowship.

Rev. David Hatton is an RN who leads VCC, assisted by Rev. Terry A.

Brown and Pastor Dawn Valerio, both also bivocational ministers. All three are available for pastoral visits and spiritual counsel by request:

Pastor David's cell phone: 605-9615
(His & Rosemary's home: 920-5854)

Pastor Terry's cell phone: 425-4731

Pastor Dawn's cell phone: 764-2328
Or leave a message at Faith Legacy's office, 487-5123. (Our assistant Terry Evensizer's number is: 847-0986)

Regular Meetings:

Worship (Music Room) . 10:00 a.m.

Worship (Assisted Living) 11:15 a.m.

Communion . 1st Sunday each month

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Fall – 2014