

MOVING SPIRIT

an occasional, devotional newsletter from

Village Community Church

Pastor's Parcel

While staying safe during this long lock-down, many complain of decreased activity, loneliness and boredom. But we can still exercise, still phone our family and friends, and still enjoy what this pictured youngster is doing: *creating*.

We are creators, made in the image of the ultimate Creator. God rested after creating the universe but never stopped creatively serving creation as Provider and Preserver. Creativity is in His nature and ours, although in us it often lies hidden and needs to be uncovered.

Kids rarely get *bored* making crafts. If they do, a nap reactivates them. They love drawing, painting, molding clay. When older and starting to write, they're oblivious to rigid rules for expressing themselves. *We need to learn from them.*

I rediscovered my childhood love for art-making at a Christian camp where one of the prayer activities was called *Creatives*. We'd ask God to speak to us as we drew with pastels or charcoal, painted with watercolors, shaped clay, or wrote our thoughts in poetry or prose. It

was a spiritual highlight of the day at camp and finally led to my unsatiable study of art from age 56 until now.

I knew a resident in her mid-90s who



learned a new craft or art-form every year. She's probably still expanding her creativity in Heaven. When church starts up again, I'd love to hear stories of some getting so involved in creative activities that they've discovered new hobbies! When we're creative, boredom is driven off, and I believe that makes both us and God smile. — *Pastor David Hatton*

Parish Proclamations

Susie Veon on the VCC Team

Just before the lock-down's closing of VCC's church services, the board at Faith Legacy Church authorized Susie Veon to be on VCC's pastoral team. For those who've already heard her speak, you know how her ministry background with college youth brings a fresh new dimension to the VCC pulpit. Until she retires, her West Coast leadership with InterVarsity will be her priority, but we will enjoy her pulpit ministry frequently when church services begin again.

unidentified sources included here are either *anonymous* or *author unknown*

Pithy Pieces

The Christian is one who can remain right-side-up in an upside-down world.

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Words

A careless word may kindle strife;
A cruel word may wreck a life;
A bitter word may hate instill;
A brutal word may smite and kill;
A gracious word may smooth the way;
A joyous word may light the way;
A timely word may lessen stress;
A loving word may heal and bless.

Give Me the Roses While I Live

(James Rowe's song lyrics, 1925)

Wonderful things of folks are said
When they have passed away.
Roses adorn the narrow bed
Over the sleeping clay.

chorus:

*Give me the roses while I live
Trying to cheer me on
Useless the flowers that we give
After the soul is gone*

Praises are heard not by the dead;
Roses they can not see.
Let us not wait til souls have fled
Generous friends to be.

(chorus)

Faults are forgiven when they lie
Cold in their narrow bed.
Let us forgive them before they die.
Now should the words be said.

(chorus)

* * * * *

There's a heap o' joy in living.
When we're living as we should;
And the greatest joy is giving.
Where it does the greatest good;
And we come to this conclusion.
As the more of life we see.
It is merely an illusion,
When we live it selfishly!

Pertinent Parables

To Be Prepared

Some years ago a tourist was visiting Castle Villa Asconati along the shores of Lake Como in northern Italy. A friendly gardener opened the gate and showed him the grounds, which the old man kept in perfect order. The tourist asked when the owner had last been there.

“Twelve years ago.”

“Does he ever write to you?”

“No.”

“Who gives you your instructions?”

“His agent in Milan.”

“Does the agent come?”

“Never.”

“But this garden is kept in such fine condition, just as though you expected your master to come tomorrow.”

The old gardener promptly replied, “Today, sir, today!”

(“So also be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” — Matthew 24:44)

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His Father’s Safe Counsel

A small boy was on the witness stand in an important lawsuit. The prosecuting attorney cross-examined him, then delivered, he thought, a crushing blow to the testimony. “Your father has been telling you how to testify, hasn’t he?”

“Yes,” the lad replied and did not hesitate with the answer.

“Now!” triumphed the lawyer. “Tell us how your father told you to testify.”

“Well,” the boy said modestly, “Father told me the lawyers would try to tangle me in my testimony, but if I would just be careful to tell the truth, I could repeat the same thing every time.”

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Praise’s Portion

Silent Worship

by Lois Anne Williams

I sat and gazed in silence
at the azure sky overhead.
In the glory of that moment,
a simple prayer was said.
I thanked God for all the grandeur,
for His beauty everywhere,
I praised the Great Creator
as I sat in silent prayer.
I found an inspiration
and a peace within my soul,
I took the time to worship
and I felt myself made whole.

* * * * *

Yesterday God helped me.
Today He did the same.
How long will this continue?
Forever! Praise His Name!

Window

by M. Marler

Look from your window and behold
The grandest sight e'er seen,
Gold, yellow, red, tan, and brown,
Yes, and some spots of green.
Then say a little prayer of thanks,
As Autumn does its duty,
For only God can make a tree
And dress it in such beauty.

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Prayer's Priority

The prayers lived on our feet are just as
important as those prayed on our knees.

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Prayer is a golden river
by whose brink
some die of thirst,
while others kneel and drink.

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Dear Lord,

Let me remember, when I was young,
The games I played and songs I sung,
The joys I savored, the hurts I hid,
The foolish things I said and did.
I've lived so long in this Grown-Up Land
That a child is hard to understand.
Lord, let me go back, and in fancy see
The heart of the child I used to be,
So *my* child's heart will be clear to me!

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Why not change the pattern of your
prayers now and then? Wake up some
morning and ask, "Dear Lord, is there
anything I can do for You today?"

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Prayer is called a virtue, but in reality it
is the mother of the virtues: for it gives
birth to them through union with Christ.

— *St. Mark the Ascetic (5th Century)*

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Perpetual Precepts

All creation is an outstretched finger
pointing to God.

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Happy moments, praise God.
Difficult moments, seek God.
Quiet moments, worship God.
Painful moments, trust God.
Every moment, thank God.

* * * * *

Held in His Care

by Rev. Ron Rowe

Today I saw a spider climbing in
mid-air. It looked as though he had no
support at all. I could not see the one
line of web but it was there and it was all
that spider needed. Many times in life
we feel as though there's nothing to hold
on to and our fears and our tragedies and
our hurts leave us hanging in "mid-air."
The truth expressed to us from God
Himself is that those who trust Him will

be eternally held in His care.

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Just Use me

I'm the Bible, God's wonderful library.
I make known Him Who is the Truth.
To weary pilgrims, I'm a strong staff.
To one lost in gloom, I'm glorious light.
To those with burdens, I'm sweet rest.
To those who are lost, I'm a safe guide.
To those hurt by sin, I'm healing balm.
To the discouraged, I whisper hope.
To those distressed by the storms of life,
I'm an anchor, sure and steadfast.
To the lonely, suffering in solitude, I'm
a cool, soft hand on the fevered brow.
To defend me best, friend, just use me.

* * * * *

Poetry's Place

God's Extras

by Margaret K. Fraser

God could have made the sun to rise
Without such splendor in the skies;
He could have made the sun to set
Without a glory greater yet.

He could have made the corn to grow
Without the sunny, golden glow;
The fruits without those colors bright,
So pleasant to the taste and sight.

And caused the apple trees to bloom
Without the scent that doth perfume

Those dainty blossoms, pink and white.
That fill our hearts with sheer delight.

He could have made the ocean roll
Without such music for the soul—
The mighty anthem, loud and strong—
And birds without their clear, sweet song.

The charm of kittens' dainty grace,
The dimples in a baby's face—
All these are 'extras' from His hand,
Whose love we cannot understand.

The God who fashioned flow'rs and trees,
Delights to give us things that please,
And all his handiwork so fair
His glory and His love declare.

Yes, He Who made the earth and skies
Gave "extras" for our ears and eyes,
And while my heart with rapture sings,
I thank Him for the "extra things."

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Pearls of Prudence

Some Reflections on HOPE

(passed along by Gae Ruddell)

Hope is seeing light in spite of being
surrounded by darkness.

— — —

When the world says, "Give up,"
Hope whispers, "Try one more time."

— — —

H.O.P.E. = Hold On Pain Ends

— — —

Once you choose hope,
everything is possible.

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Wisdom from Famous People

Keep you face always toward the
sunshine, and shadows will fall
behind you. — *Walt Whitman*

— — —

Don't judge each day by the harvests
you reap but by the seeds that you
plant. — *Robert Louis Stevenson*

— — —

The best way to find out if you can
trust somebody is to trust them.

— *Ernest Hemmingway*

— — —

Great minds discuss ideas; average
minds discuss events; small minds
discuss people. — *Eleanor Roosevelt*

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Playful Pleasantries

Dear Minister: I didn't put anything in
the offering plate. My dad won't raise
my allowance. Please, preach a sermon
on raising allowances, and the church
will get more money. — *left unsigned*

Grandma's Prayer

I pray that, risen from the dead,
I may in glory stand —

A crown, perhaps, upon my head,
But a needle in my hand.

I've never learned to sing or play
So let no harp be mine;

From birth unto my dying day,
Plain sewing's been my line.

Therefore, accustomed to the end
To plying useful stitches

I'll be content if asked to mend
The little angel's breeches.

* * * * *

If you're sore at God
for His system of communication
let this be your balm:

Just simmer down a little,
and get real quiet . . .

you'll hear Him on His innercalm.

* * * * *

Proverb Prescriptions

He who waits for someone to ask for his
help has lost his opportunity to offer it.

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People may doubt what you say, but they
will always believe what you do.

* * * * *

Be too busy to worry in the daytime, and
you'll be too tired to worry at night.

* * * * *

Practical Perceptions

One step won't take you very far.
You've got to keep on walking.

One word won't tell folks who you are,
You've got to keep on talking.
One inch won't make you very tall.
You've got to keep on growing.
One little deed won't do it all.
You've got to keep on going.

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Courage is what it takes to stand up and
speak. Courage is also what it takes to
sit down and listen.

* * * * *

It takes courage to stand up for what is
right and be counted, but it takes even
more courage to keep standing after the
counting is over.

* * * * *

Priceless Prose

*(from Anna Loomis, Corning, N.Y. in
Sophy Burnham's Angel Letters, 1991)*

Once in my bedroom I looked up,
thinking I heard my husband's step, and
saw an angel. He was very, very tall, and
his head was going through the ceiling,
which wasn't there anymore. The
incredible thing was I knew him and he
knew me. He held out his hand.

"Come," he said. "I want to show you
something."

I took his hand, unafraid, and then we
were moving upward very fast.

He said, "Look." I looked and saw
our earth spinning around itself while it

was orbiting another path. It was so
beautiful.

He said, "Look better," and I seemed
to adjust my focus, like a camera, and
saw a woman on the earth coming out of
a grocery store, carrying a bag. I could
even see freckles on her nose. It was
glorious, and I was feeling so *good!*

He said, "Look even better," and then
I saw that everything had sound and that
all created things had a voice, little rocks
had little voices, big rocks and
mountains had big voices. They were all
singing and praising; little stones in
driveways were singing, and furniture
and grass. The sea and the waves were
all bringing their joy to the shores. I
could hear them rushing to the beaches
saying, "Hallelu-iaaahhhhhh."

These sounds were so perfect and
clean, it made me cry. My whole being
wanted to cry. The trees and bushes
didn't have leaves but little hands and
they were clapping in abandon.

I said to the angel, "Oh, I'll never
forget this."

He said, "See that you don't. All
these things were created to praise and
show God's glory, that is all they do.
But man is created with a will, and he
can't praise God unless he submits his
will out of love for God. When he does

this, God commands them to be silent because His child is praising Him.”

He said, “When we don’t praise God the very rocks cry out.” And then I was back in my bedroom, reading the book

of Isaiah, but I knew that what we see every day is not really what is there; instead all of it is held together by little singing, praising molecules of joy.



Village Community Church

From Jan. 1996 until the Covid-19 crisis in March, VCC met at Eskaton each Sunday for an interdenominational time of Christian worship. We hope to continue worship services as soon as pandemic restrictions are lifted.

For now, Pastor David Hatton, the minister leading the VCC ministry team, has tried to stay in touch by phone, mail or email with those attending before the lockdown. We have also started a weekly ZOOM meeting for “sharing and prayer” that begins at 10 AM. If you’d like to

join us for this time of online fellowship, send Pastor David an email requesting the link (pastordavidrn@gmail.com).

The VCC Team, sponsored by Faith Legacy Church in Sacramento includes Pastor Dawn Valerio, InterVarsity leader Susie Veon, and Rosemary Hatton (on a pianist sabbatical at present). For more information, questions or pastoral needs, here are **our contact numbers:**

Pastor David (cel): **605-9615**

Pastor Dawn (cel): **764-2328**

Susie Veo (cel): **(510) 542-7929**

Rosemary & David’s home: **550-8200**

Faith Legacy Church office, **487-5123**

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(sponsored by Faith Legacy Church, 3532 Whitney Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95821)

FALL - 2020