

THE MESSENGER

Franklin United Brethren Church

7171 Central College Road

New Albany, OH 43054

WWW.FRANKLINUB.ORG

Sunday Service 10:15 AM

AUGUST 2024

“WIN – TRAIN – SEND”

SOMETIMES, I DON'T UNDERSTAND GOD

Once again, I find myself reading *The Purpose Driven Life* book. I have lost count of how many times I've read it, but for a decade or so, I have read it at least once a year. It's NOT the Bible, personally, it's not in my top five all-time favorite books, but I find it to be so practical and helpful. No wonder it has sold 50 million copies, translated into 137 languages, and is one of the best-selling nonfiction books in history. This morning, I ran across a verse I do not remember reading before, “He (King Hezekiah) succeeded in everything he undertook. But when envoys were sent by the rulers of Babylon to ask him about the miraculous signs that had occurred in the land, God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart,” – II Chronicles 32:30-31. The connection to *The Purpose Driven Life* is this: In days 5 and 6, Rick Warren says, “Life is a test, a trust, and a temporary assignment.” I agree, but that doesn't mean I completely understand.

Why would God leave Hezekiah to test him? There are other places in the Bible where it says God “left people” but in every case it was because of their disobedience. Hezekiah was one of the top three “good kings” of Judah. I don't understand why God left Hezekiah, but I also sometimes think, “Did God really have to allow one of his followers to be tested to the extent they were?” Abraham and Isaac, Daniel and the lion's den, Job and his losses, even Jesus and the torture he endured before the cross. Let me add two more: David running for his life from Saul and Moses pleading for a new job, more than once. In the grand scheme of things, all of them chose the path of obedience and trust and we remember them as giants of the faith. I truly wonder how my faith would stand up under half of their pressure.

Though I can't say I line up completely in his perspective, I understand Russian Christian philosopher Fyodor Dostoevsky, “It is not as a child that I believe and confess Christ. My hosanna is born of a furnace of doubt.” The fact is that Christians live in poverty, get sick, lose their hair and teeth, wear eyeglasses, experience tragedies, and die at exactly the same rate as everyone else: 100%. A few months ago, my son-in-law, Matt, was driving at 55 mph on I-270 around Worthington. My granddaughter was in the back seat in her car seat. Suddenly, a pickup truck completely stopped in front of him, no apparent reason. Matt slammed on the brakes but got to the right-side berm. The lady behind Matt slammed into the pickup truck. There were injuries, but Matt's SUV was not touched. I am thankful to God for his providence, but what about those injured?

We cannot answer all the “why” questions. If Abraham couldn't and Job couldn't, certainly, I can't. But I still trust in God. Those who hold no faith in God may say we're crazy or simple-minded fools, but I would rather trust in a God whom I know is “there” than believe life is all just a random chance and then you die and go in the ground. I have friends who see a demon behind every bush and an angel behind every vacant parking space. While I am skeptical about that kind of belief, I sometimes marvel at what their simple faith accomplishes. Sometimes I don't understand God; I just have to live with the why and ultimately, eventually, I'm OK with that!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Mike

SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Philippians 4:8

PRAYER NEEDS

Steve Derwent Jr., Carolyn Warren, Gabe Smith, Pastor Michael Muwonge, Pastor Al Carter, Faye Cooper (shut-in)

Missionary of the Month – Mike and Heather Slagle – Campus Crusades (Cru): Mike and Heather are the longest continually connected missionaries with Franklin Church. Though we are not financially supporting them now, they still need our prayer support. They have four school age children and are based in Marysville, OH. Their ministry is twofold. First, they teach new Cru staff members how to raise financial support. Second, Mike and Heather share Christ with students at several universities across Ohio. Pray for the Slagles with the start of the school year in August.

Shut-Ins: Helen Smith, Barb Pittenger, Trish Dolejs, Faye Cooper, Betty McCombs, Clarabell Harlan, and Bonnie Boone

Shut-in of the Month – Faye Cooper: Faye attended Franklin Church for four years before she needed to move into assisted living. Faye grew up in Portsmouth, OH, along with her two sisters, Fran and Fern. She met her husband, Harold, in nearby New Boston, OH, and they were married nearly 50 years before Harold passed away. Faye “grew up” in the church but did not become a Christian until her early 70s. Once she accepted the Lord, she wanted to know what book she should start reading in the Bible and rarely missed a Sunday at Franklin Church, until she moved into assisted living. Harold and Faye have two sons, Kevin and Keith, who both graduated from New Albany High School.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In a way, July was a Month of Miracles: A couple weeks we had the typical “summer slump” in attendance but God is good, and we had a couple significant offerings! Some miraculous events were:

- We set a love-offering goal of \$500 for Pastor Michael Muwonge and family – we raised \$1,050.
- The Building Fund was getting low, and we had three weeks to collect over \$2,300 – we did it in one Sunday.
- Eagle Scouts Candidate, Patrick Stucky, organized Project Shelter House Renovation. He raised money and in-kind gifts of \$15,000, and for the first time in its 35+ year history, the shelter house got a complete makeover: ground to roof. Around 35 people pulled together for this project.

Management Team Meeting: Tuesday, August 13th at 7:00PM

Woman's Ministry: Thursday, August 15th at 6:00PM – Join us for food, fun, and fellowship!

Men's Breakfast: August 23rd at 6:45AM at Tim Horton's on Fodor Road. First-time visitor – your breakfast is free!

New Outreach Team Formed: Rob and Cindy Jones, Ruth Salyers, Pam Hartman, and Pastor Mike. The mission of the team is to create opportunities to connect with our friends and neighbors and to show and share the love of Jesus. The outreach team generates ideas, but it takes a full church effort to be effective.

Happy 100th Birthday to Clarabell Harlan: August 18th – Call and wish her a happy birthday 614-245-4424.