

August 11, 2017

Greetings friends,

Earlier this summer I picked up an electronic piano that can do all sorts of tricks. I found it on the Roland-Story Swap site for \$20 and thought it would be fun for Cora and my great-nieces and nephews to play with when they visit. Cora loves it and it's turned out to be a pretty nice machine. I decided to get a few piano books so I could *play* a few of the songs that I'm always singing for the kids. 45+ years ago, I took piano lessons for two years and I've been reading music ever since, so I didn't think it would be a big deal. Still, I found EASY level books of popular tunes and some Christmas music. My ego isn't so big that I thought I could handle any higher level.

That assessment has turned out to be distressingly accurate. In fact, after one session, I feel like I may have overestimated my level of piano-playing prowess. Good heavens! I can play the right hand just fine. I'm okay with the left hand, too. It's when I tried to do *both together* that I realized a whole new level of humility. Muscle-memory, it turns out, only lasts for so long and can only take you so far.

I should have realized this would be the case after the fiasco of trying to shoot a couple of rounds of H-O-R-S-E with Max when he was 10. That was a bit of a shocker, too. Even though I'd shot hoops regularly as a youth and played a ton of competitive basketball for 6 years as a teen-ager. It turns out 20 years of *not playing at all* trumped any of my former physical competency. My mind may have remembered how, but my body clearly didn't have a clue anymore. *sigh*

When I was a very little girl, my Grandma Wanda would play *Jacob's Ladder* for me on her piano. I don't recall if she ever played anything else, I don't even remember if she used both hands. This tells me I could probably get by with my current skill level and the kids would be just fine. But for myself, I want more. I wonder how many days/weeks/months of half hour daily practices it will take me to coordinate my right and left hands to play music well enough that the tune can be recognized. As with developing/practicing any skill, time and focused work will tell.

In the meantime, this piano playing revelation has caused me to ponder what other areas of my life could use some "shoring up". What other former skills have I neglected into no discernable level of competency? What new skills would I like to learn?

While shooting hoops may not be something I want or need to pick up again, there are plenty of other (perhaps more age-appropriate hobbies) to explore. I do think life is more interesting if we *grow through it*. I believe it is this philosophy that has prompted folks to build "bucket lists" of exotic places to visit or scary things to experience or physical fitness challenges to strive for. My own informal list of "things to experience before I die" has lots of simpler, more modest desires. After I am able to play a few simple piano songs, I want to learn to play my recently acquired ukulele. Gloria has been teaching me to knit prayer shawls this summer and I want to get involved in a Bible study again. I have a huge stack of interesting recipes I want to try and I have some major purging of possessions I want to get to, and Mark and I have a couple of longer road trips we'd like to take and, and, and...

Doesn't God move in wonderfully mysterious ways? All of these ponderings surfaced because I bought a used piano for \$20 off the Internet.

This week at Grace – Pastor Fred's message this week is inspired by Matthew 14:22-33. We're looking forward to hearing from Tanner Blue and his special music. Cheryl Semler will serve as liturgist with Cindy Spurlock greeting and the Brett Tesdall family and Beckey & Jori Witthuhn will serve as ushers. As always, worship begins at 9:15. We invite you to join us!

You are invited to a Community Prayer Night on Wednesday, August 16th from 7 to 8:30 P.M. to pray for the school year, the staff, parents, and the students. We will be meeting at the Middle School parking lot in Roland at 7:00 P.M. and plan to spend 15-20 minutes praying in small groups. We will travel to Story City to do the same at the Elementary School, and finally at the High School.

We're getting creative in staffing our Sunday school teaching needs. We have primary teachers for each level (Early childhood-1st grade, 2nd-4th grade, 5th-7th) in place. Safe church policy requires we must have 2 adults in each classroom of children and youth. **Here is where the “thinking outside the box” comes in.** YOU are invited to sign up to help with one month of Sundays for the level of your choosing. We need help on all 3 levels in September after that, we only have 9 slots to fill for the three levels combined. Please go to this link to sign up to lend your helping hands: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e45a9a72eabf85-parent>

Remember, Chancel Choir and the Bell Choir begin rehearsing on Wednesday, Aug. 23rd at 7:00 and 8:00 respectively.

As you pray this week, please remember these friends and hold each up in special prayer: Claudia Pauk; Denny Michel; Marjorie Gookin; Pam Hillis; Julie Jacobson; Leota Berg; Vivian Whitmore; Jeanne Hohneke; Ray Hults; George Sellers; Lois Johnson; Al Rau; Jordan Gertsen; Cooper Leeman

News You Can Use

Sunday, August 13

8:00 AM Trustees
9:15 AM Worship

Monday, August 14

5:30 PM SPRC
7:00 PM Worship

Sunday, August 20

9:15 AM Worship

Monday, August 21

6:30 PM Communications
6:30 PM Leadership Development

Faithfully,
Cathy

