



March 22, 2018

Greetings friends,

Do you ever take a moment to look back on a series of events in your life and see a pattern that went un-noticed in the living of those events? Ever since my mom passed away (5 years next month) I've been on a quest to lessen the stress in my life. I can't say it was a conscious decision; I just quietly began choosing not to participate in previously beloved, but high-anxiety producing activities. When I withdrew, people were up in arms. What is wrong? Were you offended? Are you sick? Why? Why? Why? The curious thing was that I had no definitive reason that I could clearly articulate. I just felt I needed to be done.

In the first couple of years, I could be persuaded to "help around the edges" of some activities. But my heart was never in it, and after a few times, I was able to just say "no". I haven't regretted my decisions, I have

no desire to rejoin or re-engage with those abandoned pastimes. I don't have bad feelings about any of them, I have wonderful memories of my participation, I just lost my passion for them. At the height of my participation, these activities were all-consuming and I believed I could do them for the rest of my life. Because I still can't really put my finger on my motivation, I will occasionally posit possible reasons for my utter withdrawal. But, the lack of interest/desire was so unusual and complete, none of my excuses ever really felt right. Now, after five years, I've come to believe it is most likely a God-thing.

I've retained the skill set that allowed me to be successful in my earlier pursuits, and I have found other, less stressful ways to employ those gifts. My obligations are far fewer which has made it possible to be available to different members of my family and friends whenever, wherever a need has presented itself. With my previous schedule, it would have been nearly impossible to have that flexibility. This is why I "blame" God. I didn't have any conscious foresight in down-sizing my public hobbies and activities, I just followed my heart and it has turned out to be a wonderful blessing.

Do you ever take a moment to look back on a series of events in your life and see a pattern that went un-noticed in the living of those events? Maybe in review, you'll see how events are tied together in a way that seemed unrelated previously. Perhaps you'll come to believe, as I do, that sometimes God just takes the wheel and delivers us where we need to go. I've identified several times in my life where I believe this has happened. It is a humbling realization.

My heart is full of praise and thanksgiving for all the wonderful blessings that God showers upon each of us...whether we immediately recognize them or not.

This Week at Grace – It's Palm Sunday! Pastor Fred's message, *Let This Mind Be in You* is inspired by Philippians 2:1-11. A Children's Quartet will sing, *Children of the Heavenly Father*. For your information, these 4 middle school kids (Jori Witthuhn, Isabel Hoskins, Luccas Hart and Riley Larson) were each recently selected to participate in an area honor choir. Greeters this week are Cindy Spurlock and Amber & Jenna Hoskins. Those serving as ushers include Jim & Shelley Hassebrock and Doug Doolittle. Cheryl Semler will serve as liturgist. Worship begins at 9:15 with Coffee Fellowship following at 10:15. Sunday school meets at 10:30. Please join us!

With all of our work to retire apportionment debt last year, we have just under \$11,000 remaining due from 2014. Our Finance Committee has completed the paperwork to have that debt forgiven by the Conference. In order to expedite the process, a Charge Conference must be called to get

congregational approval to submit the request. **On Monday, April 2nd, you are invited to a simple casserole buffet supper at 6:00 p.m. and a special Charge Conference at 6:30 p.m.** to vote on our application for apportionment debt forgiveness.

Look for the shopping cart in the narthex. It has been placed there to collect food, paper and personal hygiene items you might like to donate to the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry this year. A list of items that are always in shorter supply is posted on the cart. Thank you for your generosity to our local food pantry.

On Palm Sunday, March 25, 2018 from 10 AM until 2 PM, Bethany Life will be holding their annual Palm Sunday Brunch and Bake Sale/Craft Sale, in support of their Chaplaincy program. Chef Chris Hansen will be making omelets and serving streusel coffee cake. Enjoy a great meal for a free will donation. Bethany Volunteers will be selling baked goods. Please plan to bring the entire family, your neighbors and friends to the **Story City Senior Center at 503 Elm Ave.** for the Bethany Life Palm Sunday Brunch. See you there!

The UMW is heading up a sewing party Wednesday, March 28 beginning at 9:30. All church members welcome to join. We are sewing school bags for in gathering. Plenty of jobs for non-sewers. Bring your pins and threads and join us.

As you pray this week, please remember these friends and hold each up in special prayer:
Caleb Michel; Vena Mae Larson; Jackie Royer (Sharla's friend); George Mackey; Tim (Becky Barclay's brother); Denny Michel; Julie Jacobson; Sara Dappen; Norman Patti; Pam Hillis; Lois Johnson; Cooper Leeman, Taylors in Africa

News You Can Use

Sunday, March 25 – PALM SUNDAY

- 9:15 AM Worship – children's quartet
- 10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship
- 10:30 AM Sunday school and Confirmation class
- Noon – Family Gathering in Fellowship Hall
- 12:30 PM Venture Scouts in Youth Room

Monday, March 26

- 5:30 PM Finance
- 6:30 PM Council

Wednesday, March 28

- 7:00 PM Choir
- 8:00 PM Bells

Thursday, March 29

- 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday service with Communion

Sunday, April 1 EASTER SUNDAY

- 9:15 AM Worship – choir
- 10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship
- 10:30 AM NO Sunday school

Lily form on next page.

**Faithfully,
Cathy**

Lilies for Remembrance



Let's fill our sanctuary with beautiful Easter Lilies for Easter Sunday. You are invited to bring in a lily plant during Holy Week or on Easter morning. You may bring a lily of your own. If you want to pay tribute to loved ones either as a memorial for those who have passed or in honor for those who are still with us, simply fill out this form and drop it in the offering plate by **Palm Sunday (March 25)**.

My name _____

of plants _____

In honor/memory of
