



# Share n Care

*There is no one holy like the LORD;  
There is no one besides you;  
There is no Rock like our God. —1 Samuel 2:2*

Volume XLV, Issue 2

February 2019

## Suffering

As a pastor, I've walked alongside of so many people who are suffering. A common thread in life is that we all go through periods of suffering. Health and sickness, relationships, and death to name a few. I'm sure that if I gave the congregation an opportunity to share the kinds of suffering they have been through – we would be amazed by the kinds and by how many of us go through it.

If this article is painful, I apologize in advance. We are told in Romans 8:28-39 that all things work to the good of those who love God; and a little further in – that nothing shall separate us from the love of God. In the list – it's all suffering. There's something about suffering that will either push us into God or push us away. Which is it for you? Please remember that the bible doesn't promise us prosperity, good health and comfort. We are promised what Jesus was promised – to suffer as our savior did.

One passage that points to this is John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." We are told there will be trouble, or

suffering; but also that we will not be left alone. How awesome is that for a promise?

God doesn't send or permit suffering because he's sadistic or the like; he isn't ignoring us, nor has he left us or is angry. God allows or ordains suffering as hard and difficult as that is to hear. Too many will tell you that God is all about your comfort, health and wealth and even warm fuzzies. If that were true, Christ would never have died on the cross to redeem us from sin. In Psalm 34:18 we read that God is close to the brokenhearted. When we suffer the agony of this life in our body; in our relationships or for our faith; we do not suffer alone.

The suffering of Christ served a greater purpose than just satisfying God's justice. His suffering serves to set us free from sin; it redeems creation, it redeems relationships, it sets lives on the path that God desires – it takes the broken and makes it beautiful.

I firmly believe that, as Christians, our suffering serves a greater purpose. Can we say along with Job "...Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

(Job 2:10) We need this perspective in our lives, difficult as it may be for us.

Instead of asking God: Why me? What did I do to deserve this? Ask God this instead; what am I to learn from this suffering? Press into it. Pressing into suffering is actually one of the last things we do. I am not negating that it can be extremely painful and counter-intuitive. It's not wrong to pray for comfort, relief or healing. Jesus himself said to his father; if it be YOUR WILL, take this cup from me; as he was about to be arrested, beaten, sentenced and crucified.

Can we embrace suffering for the sake of Christ? Can we embrace it for the glory of our Father in heaven? We are not alone; God is at work in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Embrace God and trust that he is working out your salvation, and maybe those around you, to the glory of His name.

Peace and Grace  
Pastor Jeff

## Birthdays

### February

- 14 Nathan Ryder
- 16 Barry Lefever  
Donna Mulder  
Corey Pavelko
- 18 Deb Kleinhuizen
- 19 Wes Wieberdink
- 20 Maria Iedema
- 21 Danielle Mellema  
Tyler Wieberdink
- 28 Pauline Sankey  
Herm Van Niejenhuis

### March:

- 1 Carol Tensen  
Gloria Epema  
Travis Berry
- 5 Mindy Green  
Mary Gratz
- 7 Terry Reimer
- 9 Kevin Roelofs
- 11 Sylvia Pulscher
- 12 Charles Miller
- 13 Judy Vanden Einde  
Deanna Jacobson
- 17 Diane Plowman  
Alan Marcus  
Ron Zondervan



## Anniversaries

### February

- 19 Alan and Anna Marcus

### March

- 14 Dale and Mary Gratz
- 19 Adam and Heather Ruplinger



## 2nd Sunday Offering

### February 11

- CCS
- Youth Unlimited
- Great Commission Utah
- Hope Haven

### March 10

- CMCS
- Cadets National
- Hope Pregnancy Center
- Food Shelf

## Worship Schedule

### February 17

- Annual Safe Church Policy meeting following the service
- Fresh Encounters Prayer Service-4:30 pm

### March 4

- Communion Sunday and Potluck Lunch
- Lenten Sermon Series-Covenant



## Game Night Recap

Wonderful food and fierce competition on New Years Eve. 23 people gathered to play games and indulge in great food. Only 5 made it to midnight.



## Sunday School Update



The 1st and 2nd grade class activities:

We have marveled at God's mercy by looking at Jesus's parables. Now we are looking at the work of the Holy Spirit and how we get nudged to answer his leading.



## Prayer Corner



“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:103, NRSV).

Recently I was confronted with this question: If you fed yourself with food the way you feed yourself with God’s Word, would you still be alive? It gave me pause.

Do I eat *enough* spiritually? – feast regularly enough on Scripture to keep up my energy and the health of my soul? Do I eat *nutritiously*? – take in a balanced meal of law and gospel, comfort and commandments, prophecy and promise? Do I pass up spiritual *junk food*? – set aside empty calories that lead to disease, in order to hunger for what truly gives life? Do I drink enough *Living Water* to avoid faith dehydration? And once in a while, do I *splurge on dessert*? – savor the sweetness and joy of belonging at God’s table? What abundance God sets before us. May we never skip a “meal”!



–Heidi Mann

### "Teach us to love"

O God, perfect us in love,  
That we may conquer all selfishness and hatred of others;  
Fill our hearts with thy joy,  
And shed abroad in them thy peace which passeth understanding;  
That so those murmurings and disputings  
To which we are too prone may be overcome.  
Make us long-suffering and gentle,  
And thus subdue our hastiness and angry tempers,  
And grant that we may bring forth the blessed fruits of the Spirit,  
To thy praise and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen. —Rev. Henry Alford (1810-

### "There’s an App for that”

These days, there’s a smartphone app for just about everything. But what about spiritual concerns? Where can you turn?

- Depressed? Try the joy app. Read Isaiah 51:11.
- Tired? Try the renewal app. Read Isaiah 40:30-31.
- Unsettled? Try the peace app. Read Philippians 4:7.
- Unloved? Try the love app. Read Romans 8:38-39.
- Worried? Try the refuge app. Read Psalm 46:1.
- Fearful? Try the power app. Read 2 Timothy 1:7.
- Guilty? Try the forgiveness app. Read Colossians 1:13-14.
- Praying? Try the prayer app. Read 1 John 5:14-15.

The Scriptures are God’s storehouse of meaningful applications for what we face every day. Think of the Bible as the iTunes Store of spiritual apps. Best of all, everything’s free! —Timothy Merrill

#### Remember in Prayer:

##### Those who are in Care Facilities

Gerri Hillenbrand  
Shirley Jensen  
Martha Kiel  
Viv Marcus  
Margaret Negen  
Vern Kleinhuizen  
Hilda Nieuwbeerta  
Jean Rolighed  
Gary and Marlys Ruis  
Mae Ryks  
Doward and Sylvia Visser

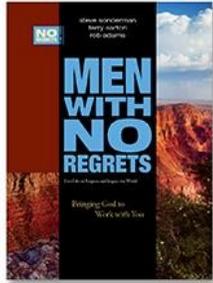
##### Our Serviceman

Jacob Lefever  
Joe Pavelko

##### Our College Students

Ethan Bos-Ridgewater  
Makenna Brouwer  
Christine Hoekstra-Dordt  
Hannah Vanderhooft-Dordt

## Men's Bible Study



All men are invited to an 8 week No Regrets Bible Study. Depending upon the interest, we will be meeting on Wednesday, February 27 at 6:00 am at Perkins, and/or on Saturday mornings starting on March 2 at 7:00 am at church. The topic will be **Becoming a Man of Influence**. In this study you will learn to identify your spiritual gifts and create change as a servant leader

- LESSON ONE - Looking for Power? Love Like Jesus
- LESSON TWO - Want to Be Remembered? Start By Serving
- LESSON THREE - Need More Strength? God's Given You Gifts
- LESSON FOUR - Just A Spectator? Stand Up and Act
- LESSON FIVE - Evangelism? It's Not a 4-Letter Word
- LESSON SIX - Feeling Ineffective? Leave Your Comfort Zone
- LESSON SEVEN - Got a Story? Make A Connection
- LESSON EIGHT - Ready To Influence? Tell God's Story

Even if you did not attend the No Regrets Conference, please join us!

## Thank You

—One of the men who attended the Conference, who is not from our church called, just to thank our church for putting on the No Regrets Men's Event. He indicated that the speakers were excellent and the food was great. He really appreciated and felt blessed by the effort we go to for this event!!

—It was wonderful to be with you this past summer. We always enjoy your fellowship. We pray for you and your pastor and family. May God Bless you as you minister in Willmar and beyond. We are so grateful for you and you are an encouragement to us—Chris VanZanen

—Dear friends of Rock of Life, We are between semesters, which creates an opportunity to catch up on overdue tasks like saying thanks. We are grateful for your support which enables us to serve here at Lithuania Christian College. This semester one of our dearest students was baptized. Another student, nominally Muslim embraced Jesus as Savior. It doesn't get any better than that! The former Muslim is full of joy despite strong pushback from family. (See story below) Please pray for these new Christians—Steve VanZanen

—Rock of Life, Thank you so much for your ongoing support of our work. We are extremely encouraged by seeing God's hand at work in our community. I will be going through language training to help accelerate my Somali language learning. Thank you so much for your prayers and support—Nathan S

## Ministry Update-Lithuania Christian College



"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

1 Peter 3:15

A growing number of LCC students come from Central Asia, where centuries of Islam were followed by generations of communism. Some of those students are at least nominally Muslim. One of them has been showing great interest in the Gospel message. He has connected with several faculty and staff who have been helping him with English, his adjustment to being far from home, and his spiritual questions. E. has also had repeated dreams in which Jesus comes to him. On December 9 one of those staff members sensed that it was time to ask the question, "Are you ready?" E. understood the implication. "Are you ready to accept Christ as your Savior and Lord?" He said, "Yes." E. is very excited and eager to find out all that it means to belong to Jesus and His people. Pray for his growth in faith and discipleship and also his studies. He will need to work hard to succeed here academically.

## The Window

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation.

And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band - he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words.

Days and weeks passed. One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it for himself. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall.

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Epilogue. . . There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all of the things you have that money can't buy. "Today is a gift, that's why it is called the PRESENT". Author Unknown

## Why Lincoln Was Called "Honest Abe"

*Noah Brooks, Abraham Lincoln*

In managing the country store, as in everything that he undertook for others, Lincoln did his very best. He was honest, civil, ready to do anything that should encourage customers to come to the place, full of pleasantries, patient, and alert.

On one occasion, finding late at night, when he counted over his cash, that he had taken a few cents from a customer more than was due, he closed the store, and walked a long distance to make good the deficiency.

At another time, discovering on the scales in the morning a weight with which he had weighed out a package of tea for a woman the night before, he saw that he had given her too little for her money. He weighed out what was due, and carried it to her, much to the surprise of the woman, who had not known that she was short in the amount of her purchase.

Innumerable incidents of this sort are related of Lincoln, and we should not have space to tell of the alertness with which he sprang to protect defenseless women from insult, or feeble children from tyranny - for in the rude community in which he lived, the rights of the defenseless were not always respected as they should have been.

## Musings

### Pure love for Jesus



Jesus has always many who love his heavenly kingdom, but few who bear his cross. He has many who desire consolation, but few who care for trial. He finds many to share his table, but few to take part in his fasting. All desire to be happy with him; few wish to suffer anything for him. Many

follow him to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the chalice of his passion. Many revere his miracles; few approach the shame of the cross. Many love him as long as they encounter no hardship; many praise and bless him as long as they receive some comfort from him. ...

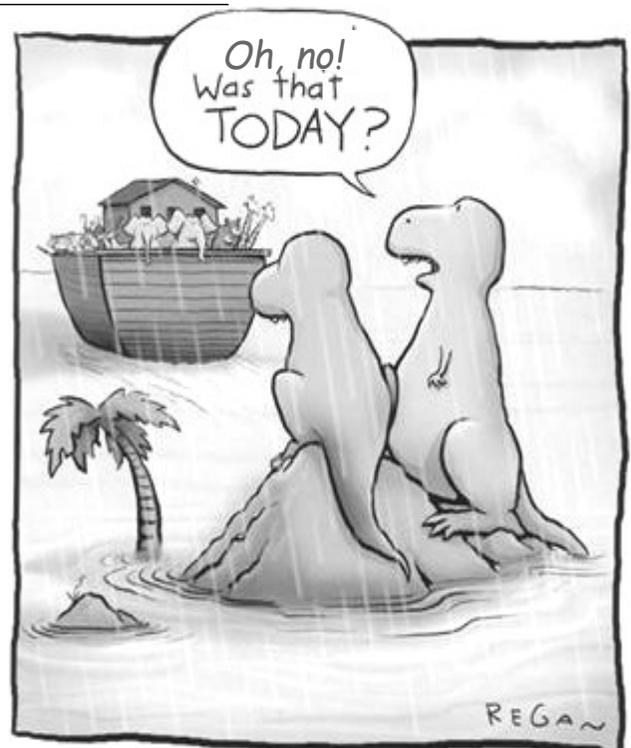
Those, on the contrary, who love Jesus for his own sake and not for any comfort of their own, bless him in all trial and anguish of heart as well as in the bliss of consolation. ... What power there is in pure love for Jesus — love that is free from all self-interest and self-love! —Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*

### Quotes

- “A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person.” – Mignon McLaughlin, Journalist
- “Love doesn’t make the world go round. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile.” – Franklin P. Jones, Engineer
- “Grow old with me! The best is yet to be.” – Robert Browning, Poet
- “The Eskimos had fifty-two names for snow because it was important to them: there ought to be as many for love.” – Margaret Atwood, Author
- “It is astonishing how little one feels alone when one loves.” – John Bulwer, Physician
- “Love is the greatest refreshment in life.” – Pablo Picasso, Artist
- “Where there is love, there is life.” – Mahatma Ghandi, Civil Rights Leader
- “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.” – Helen Keller, Author
- “There are never enough I Love You’s.” – Lenny Bruce, Comedian

### What we’d like to hear in church... but never do

- Hey, it’s my turn to sit in the front pew!
- I was so enthralled, I never noticed your sermon ran longer than usual.
- I’ll volunteer to be the permanent junior high Sunday school teacher.
- I love it when we sing hymns I’ve never heard before.
- Because we’re all here, let’s start the worship service early.
- Pastor, we’d like to send you to this Bible seminar in the Bahamas. (See if Pastor Jeff notices this one)
- Nothing inspires me and strengthens my commitment like our annual stewardship campaign.



Why Dinosaurs are extinct....



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**Willmar CRC Statements**

Purpose Statement

**Worship**

God in obedience to His Word

**Equip**

God's people to do His work

**Proclaim**

God's love and grace to His World

II Timothy 3:16&17

Values Statement

**Loving**

God above all, and our neighbors as ourselves

**Praying**

in all circumstances because God controls our ministry

**Preaching**

and teaching from God's Word, the Holy Bible

**Giving**

of our time, gifts and money which are blessings from God

**Seeking**

the Lord's will and direction in everything we do

**Helping**

others to find and follow Jesus.

Ephesians 4:1b-2

Vision Statement

**Reaching Up**

to God as we listen for His voice in our prayers of thanks, confession and praise.

**Reaching In**

becoming more Christlike, clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness

**Reaching Out**

Boldly through the power of the Holy Spirit, with words and deed, in our Community and worldwide.

Colossians 3:12-14

**All to the Glory of God**

**Kid's Corner**

**Puzzle!**

Love is a fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Identify another fruit that can make Valentine's Day — and every day — special. First, write a word that fits each clue below. Then unscramble the letters from the bold, vertical column to find another fruit of the Spirit. Write it on the blanks below.

LEAVE	_____
CHAPEAU	_____
TRANQUILITY	_____
BECOME MATURE	_____
RESPOND	_____
SPHERE	_____
OLD TESTAMENT QUEEN	_____
DISCOVER	_____
CONFIDENCE	_____
ALWAYS	_____

Answer: depart, hat, peace, grow, answer, ball, Esther, find, trust, ever, gentleness

**Bible Quiz**

At a time of deep struggle in Elijah's life, God made his presence known to him. How?

- A. In a strong and destructive wind
- B. In an earthquake
- C. Through fire
- D. Through silence

In Luke's account of Jesus calling the first disciples from their work as fishermen to follow him and "fish for people" (NIV), which disciple is not named?

- A. James
- B. John
- C. Simon
- D. Andrew

Answer: D (See Luke 5:1-11.) (NRSV.)

Answer: D (See 1 Kings 19:9-12,