

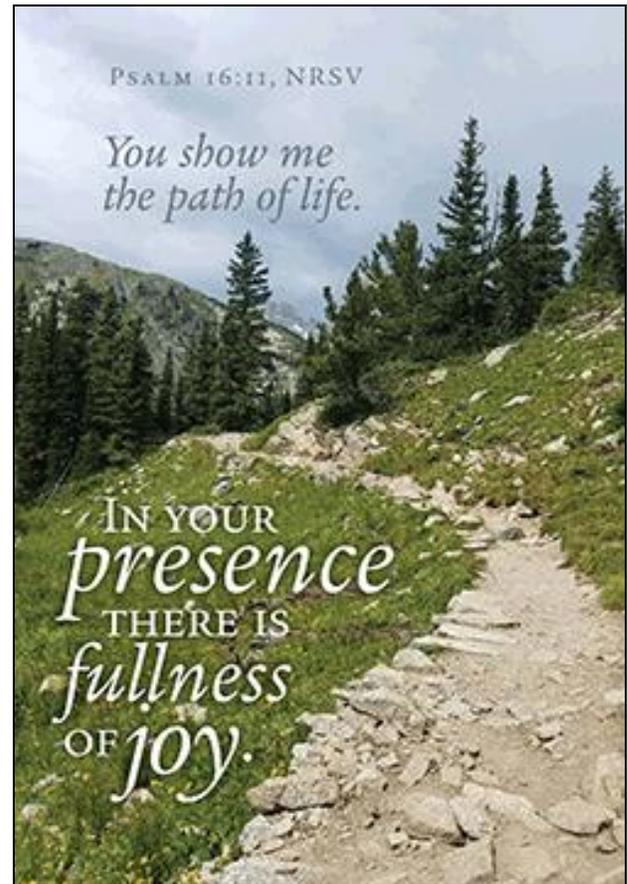
## The Year of Yes!

By Pastor Andy Straubel

Netflix has become a favorite Friday night pastime during the pandemic. Recently, while flipping through the offerings, I noticed an unusual title, "The Yes Day." It featured Jennifer Garner as a mother who found herself always saying, "No!" to her children's requests to do things. It is somewhat ironic, since her character was an adventure hound before having children. So, a family conference was called to discuss the problem. The proposed solution was to declare a "Yes Day," that is, a day when the parents had to say "Yes" for an entire day of fun-filled family activities that the children got to choose. The movie was rather silly, but it had a good message. It reminded me of our study in Ephesians 5, verse 16, *"Make the most of every opportunity because the days are evil."*

Given the last year and three months, I thought I would declare a "Yes Year." That's right, a Yes Year! We have been locked down, shut up, sequestered, banished, exiled, and nearly driven crazy far too long. We need a "Yes Year!" So, from March 1, 2021- March 1, 2022 we need to say, "Yes": yes to visit friends, go out to eat, reconnect with family, chisel away at your bucket list (sorry for another movie analogy), etc. Having said that, I thought I would share just a few of my unexpected happenings when I began to say "yes!" These are in no distinct order, just the ones I recall at the moment. (I am getting older and have a hard time with chronology.)

Some time ago I said yes to Don when a friend of his offered to take me up in a WWII Bi-Plane, specifically an open cockpit Boeing Model 75 Stearman Trainer. It has controls in both the front and back seat. My father was in aviation his entire life and often talked about his first time up. Words cannot describe the emotions I had going up for the first time. It



was a breath-taking experience I will never forget.

I said yes to an old college roommate. Tim and I went to college and seminary together, but we went in separate directions after graduation. For thirty-five years, he has planted and pastored a church near Philipsburg, New Jersey. I had only seen him once or twice since then, usually at a pastor's conference or funeral. He called me in March because he had taken up fly fishing. He asked to get together, and I said, YES! He arranged it all. It was an epic afternoon of laughing and reminiscing. I hadn't laughed that hard in years.

I said yes to a few one hour get-a-ways with Scott, Darrell and sometimes Tim and Titus to go fishing. We met after work at a small pond behind an industrial park in Lawrenceville. We

**Continued on page 2...**

## “The Year of Yes!” ... continued

were socially distant but able to talk and get caught up. It was just fun.

I said yes to a neighbor who invited me to Island Beach State Park. I met him while walking my dog. He was loading up his truck to go surf fishing and we got to talking. He asked me if I wanted to go sometime. Of course, I said, “Yeah!” We had a wonderful time. I heard countless stories of his forty plus years of law enforcement.

And I was able to see someone else say yes. Joe and Randy have a neighbor Dave who lives around the corner. Joe saw him coming out of his garage and invited him to join us for a ride to get lunch. As we talked, it became obvious that God had intended it to be much more than a ride. Dave had cancer and had just learned that his cancer had come back and spread to his lungs. Our hearts broke for him as he spoke. We planted a few seeds and plan to follow up.

Perhaps you have been saying “No!” We are told to, “Make the most of every opportunity.” Maybe it is time to start your “Yes Year”!

P.S. For the record I am fully vaccinated and still take the necessary precautions when visiting with others.



Blessings to all who celebrate a birthday this month. May you feel the love, joy and presence of the Lord as we all celebrate your special day with prayers and warmest wishes.

Luke Yamamoto	May 9
Allison Warner	May 10
Jonathan Ventura	May 11
William MacQueen	May 12
Jean LaRosa	May 29

## Elders' Corner

By Ken Bills

These are challenging times, and Windsor Chapel, like other churches, has had to wrestle with numerous questions. How can we function as the body of Christ and have fellowship with one another when not meeting together? Can we maintain unity as a body when we have different perspectives on political and pandemic-related issues? What is the proper response of the church to government regulations? What does love require with regard to masks, social distancing, vaccines, ...?

I thought it might be worthwhile to put all of that aside for a bit and step back to consider more generally who we are as believers. The New Testament is overflowing with verses that tell us who we are as believers – the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27); a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's possession (1 Peter 2:9); children of Abraham (Galatians 3:6); a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17); bond-servants of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1); adopted as God's children, fellow heirs with Christ (Romans 8:15-17). We would do well to meditate on each of those. But the verse I want to focus on here is Galatians 2:20:

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Galatians 2:20 is part of a longer discussion by Paul regarding the relationship between believers and the Old Testament law. While we are not going to focus on that issue in particular, Galatians 2:20 has a lot to say about who we are in Christ.

**We are loved.** Jesus loved us before we did anything to deserve it. Whatever your circumstances, wherever you are, no matter your health, whether rich or poor, old or young, male or female, whatever your emotions are telling you, Jesus loves you deeply. “Love moved first” says the song by Casting Crowns:

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## “Elders’ Corner,” continued...

*What kind of grace, relentless grace  
Would chase this rebel down  
Crawl into this prisoner’s cage  
Take my hand and pull me out*

**We are redeemed.** Jesus’ love for us wasn’t just talk or only a warm feeling. Out of love He “gave himself” for us. “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) We have each been “bought with a price.” (1 Corinthians 6:20)

**We were crucified with Christ.** No doubt there is mystery here. Through faith in Christ, we participate in His death. Only Jesus’ death would do, since without Jesus, our situation would be dire. We thought we were free, but we were slaves to sin. (Romans 6:10, 16). Sin is a progressive condition and if we live in it, sin makes us increasingly less free, less able to even tell right from wrong, and less able to want to do what is right. And as violators of God’s good law, we had earned a sentence of death. But since we died with Christ, we are free both from slavery to sin and from the law’s just condemnation. Nothing less drastic than Christ’s death, and our dying with Him through faith, would have been enough to deal with the problem.

**We still live in the flesh.** Of course, we still live in a physical body, and we don’t yet experience freedom from sin. We are no longer slaves to sin, but as any of us who desire to follow Jesus in all things can attest, we still fall short. Paul in Romans 7 expresses the frustration we all feel at times: “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate... Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:15, 24).

**Christ lives in us.** “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me,” says Paul. We have another mystery here, and one worth pondering. Not only did we die with Christ, but Jesus now lives in us. “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” Paul asks in 1 Corinthians 3:16. Our lives are not our own, but this is good news! Jesus has not left us alone; we now can love with some measure of Jesus’ love by His power working in us. Jesus said, “Abide in me and I

in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches.” I can only pray that my life will more and more reflect the life of Christ in me.

**We live by faith.** This new life we live is a life of faith from first to last. Our death with Christ is a gift of grace received by faith. But faith in Christ is not just a one-time event. Jesus dwells in our hearts by God’s grace received through faith. Every day, every hour, every moment, we come to God with the empty hands of faith, and it is only by His grace that we can follow Him and love as He calls us to love.

So that’s who we are: loved, redeemed, crucified with Christ, still in the flesh, but now with Christ living in us as we live by faith in Him. May God’s grace help us so to live for His glory!

## Save the Date



Windsor Chapel will offer a free in-person 5-Day Club for all children ages 5 – 12, from 7:00–8:30 pm, on July 19 – 23. The children will enjoy music, games, Bible stories, outdoor

play and more! Please spread the word. All are welcome!



On Sunday, May 9, we will celebrate Mother’s Day. It is an opportunity to honor, love and cherish the special women who have given us life or have cared for us as their own. These unselfish women have nurtured us, taught us and prayed for our well-being. Our hearts are overflowing with gratitude to all mothers whose love is wondrous evidence of God’s tender guiding hand.

## Worship Team News

By Don Ober



This month the worship team would like to share with you our violinist's motivations and the reason why the music ministry means so much to her. Kristin is not only a wonderful violinist, she is also a very caring person committed to the music ministry. She has played for the team for quite some time, at least as long as I have played here. She has an impeccable ear and is much more talented than she would ever give herself credit for. I can say that; I work with her! Anyway, this is Kristin's article this month from the praise team to you. Enjoy!

### God Working in and through Us

By Kristin Westbrook

*God has gone up with a shout,  
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.  
Sing praises to God, sing praises!  
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!  
For God is the King of all the earth;  
Sing praises with a Psalm!  
Psalm 47:5-7*

What it means to me to be a part of the Windsor Chapel Worship team: Well, for one, it is truly cool to see how God works in us and through us as a group of musicians gathering to praise His glorious name. We do not have a whole lot of time to rehearse together, so a lot of it relies on our individual practicing at home. Another component is being able to listen well to one another when we do finally get to practice: not only listening to what is being said or asked of us for a particular song, but also musically inclining our ears to the many different components. We are all human with our own interpretations, ideas, and abilities, so we can sometimes get lost in our own compositions and lose sight of what is going on around us. On the other hand, "getting lost" in the worship is where I want to be. And it happens more often than not. Of

course, I am aware of the rest of the band and the congregation singing along with us, but there is something special about being in the moment with our One True God and praising Him deep in our hearts with one another.

Another part I appreciate about being on the team is planning worship sets. Picking out songs and placing them together in a way that flows and creates a theme brings me joy. It typically begins when the Lord puts a particular song or scripture on my heart. That creates a theme on which to base the rest of the songs. I especially enjoy it when I get to collaborate with another team member. A few weeks ago, we celebrated Easter and I had the opportunity to build a worship set with Jess, one of our lead singers. It is cool and refreshing to have another friend's perspective, insight, and ideas added to the mix!

One more component of what it means to be a part of the worship team is our comradery in our love for the Lord as well as our love for worship music. Every Sunday morning, we gather in prayer asking for help from the Lord with our practice, for wisdom and guidance as our pastor shares the message with the church, and for any individual prayer requests from our team. We then begin working through the songs planned for that morning. Some practices go smoother than others, but one thing stands true – no matter how well or how not so well our rehearsal goes, God shows up and always finds a way to help us. And I don't know about you, but I love how God shows off His power especially in the moments when I seem to forget who I am there for anyway! It's not about our abilities, in fact, it is way beyond our abilities, because it is completely about HIM, and I thank God for that!

*"Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me." Psalms 54:4*

*"My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. Selah." Psalms 62:7-8*

*"Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?" Exodus 15:11*

## Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in  
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

### Reasons, Excuses, Explanations, and Change

Three Christians walk into a Bible study.... The teacher is beginning a lesson on Galatians 5:19-24, the fruits of the flesh versus the fruit of the Spirit.

***Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.***

The first Christian listens for a moment and says to his companions as he walks out the door: "This isn't for me. I don't need to change; God has already forgiven me. I am going to live by faith in His grace."

The second Christian listens to the teacher a little longer. "I know that I need to control my temper," he says to the friend next to him. "But that is the way my father always dealt with frustration. I am just like him." He, too, walks out the door.

The third Christian becomes increasingly uncomfortable as he continues to listen in a corner of the room. He runs through his personal and family history in his head, a history marked by broken relationships, infidelity, addiction, and secrets. But as he turns his attention back to the teacher, he is struck by the foundation of hope in Paul's message: godly behavior is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's work within him. It

is not—and cannot be—the result of independent human effort.

Christian number three starts to listen more carefully. "It is absolutely essential to take Paul's words seriously, to relinquish our dependence on the deeds of the flesh to feel good and to cope with a troubling and difficult world," the teacher states. "But it is equally essential to work with the Holy Spirit as we seek to become free from family patterns and personal sin patterns and to become like Christ and manifest the fruits of a Spirit-filled and Spirit-directed life. We cannot change ourselves; when we try, we give up, or make excuses. It is only when we allow the Holy Spirit to expose our sins and hurts and allow Him to touch us and heal us can we begin to turn from the lure of fleshly desires and pursue God's best for us."

The third Christian stays to the end of the study and waits for a chance to talk with the teacher. They talk for a long while and agree to continue their conversation over the next several weeks. He leaves a changed man, no longer feeling destined to repeat the sins of his fathers and prepared to allow the Holy Spirit to redeem his family history as He works in the deepest parts of his heart and soul.

When we are confronted with the personal and uncomfortable truths of Scripture, we have the same choices as our three fictional Christians. We can refuse to deal with the truth and abuse the Lord's grace. We can look at the brokenness of our past and make excuses. Or, we can look at our past and see the roots of sin that need to be pulled in order for us to become more like the person who the Lord has created us to be, more faithful in following Him. Understanding the reasons for our sin is helpful and often necessary in the process of Christian growth. But it is crucial that we go beyond the "reason stage." Reasons are not excuses. They are explanations that can empower genuine repentance. But as we remember the words of the Apostle Paul, we must remember to invite the indwelling Holy Spirit to help us uncover the drivers of our sin and empower us to repent. May we choose to keep company with our third Christian and his Bible study teacher.

*Please feel free to contact Cindy (609-275-8557 or [cynthialbills@gmail.com](mailto:cynthialbills@gmail.com) to continue the dialogue...*

## No Pain No Gain

By Janet Berrill

Several months ago, I woke up with a bad pain in my left shoulder. I had obviously slept on it in an awkward position during the night. I found that moving my arm in certain positions, namely reaching behind me, was limited and very painful. I reasoned that if I was careful to avoid sleeping on my left side for the next several nights, it would get better on its own. Unfortunately, that is not what happened. Despite my efforts, my shoulder did not get any better. Finally, after many weeks, I got to the point where I decided to get some physical therapy.

My physical therapist, Troy, evaluated my shoulder and discovered that I have a large knot in my shoulder muscle that lies on top of the shoulder blade. Muscles knots are hard, sensitive areas of muscles that tighten and contract even when the muscle is at rest. To break up these tense muscle fibers Troy presses on them hard. Did you catch in my explanation of muscle knots that they are sensitive? I can attest to that for when Troy presses on the spot where the muscle knot is, it hurts! A lot! Despite my groans of pain, Troy does not ease up. When I said something to him about how much it hurts, he offered little sympathy and said that this is what he needs to do in order to break up the knot.

At home I am supposed to put a lacrosse ball between the wall and my shoulder and push back against the ball on the sore spot. This obviously hurts, but not as much as when Troy does it for I don't press as hard. I mentioned this to Troy at one of our sessions and commented that your body naturally tries to defend itself against pain, so it's difficult for me to push hard against the ball when it hurts. Troy said, "Unless you can convince your body that what you are doing that is causing the pain is beneficial."

As adults, we are a product of a lifetime of experiences. Some of those experiences were good, some were bad. Some of the bad ones were so bad that we try to forget them. But they still have an effect on us. If a bad experience from a long time ago is having a negative effect on us

today, God may decide to deal with it. And that can be very painful. We don't want to relive the traumatic experience, but in order for God to heal us we may need to face it.

Psalm 107:19-20 says, *"Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them."* John 8:31-32 says, *"Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" From these two verses we learn that God heals us by His word and sets us free by the truth. His word and the truth; both of these are names of Jesus (John 1:1,14; 14:6). It is natural for us to avoid the pain of our past. But in order for us to be set free from its negative effects, we might have to revisit that past so that God can speak His word and the truth which will bring healing and set us free.*

What Troy does is very painful, but it does feel better when he is done. He assures me that eventually the muscle fibers will relax and there will be no more pain. So I keep going back and subjecting myself to this painful procedure believing that it will ultimately heal me so that in the future I will pain free. The Holy Spirit, our Counselor (John 14:26) desires the same thing for us, that is to be healed. It may be painful, but if we allow the Holy Spirit to do His work and deal with our past, we too can experience healing in the future.

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### Financial Update

(through March 31, 2021)

*"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want..."*

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$63,049	\$54,999
Expense	\$59,714	\$55,004

Windsor Chapel has sent \$8,474 to our missionary partners this year. That is 13% of your giving!

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**If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please e-mail:**

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