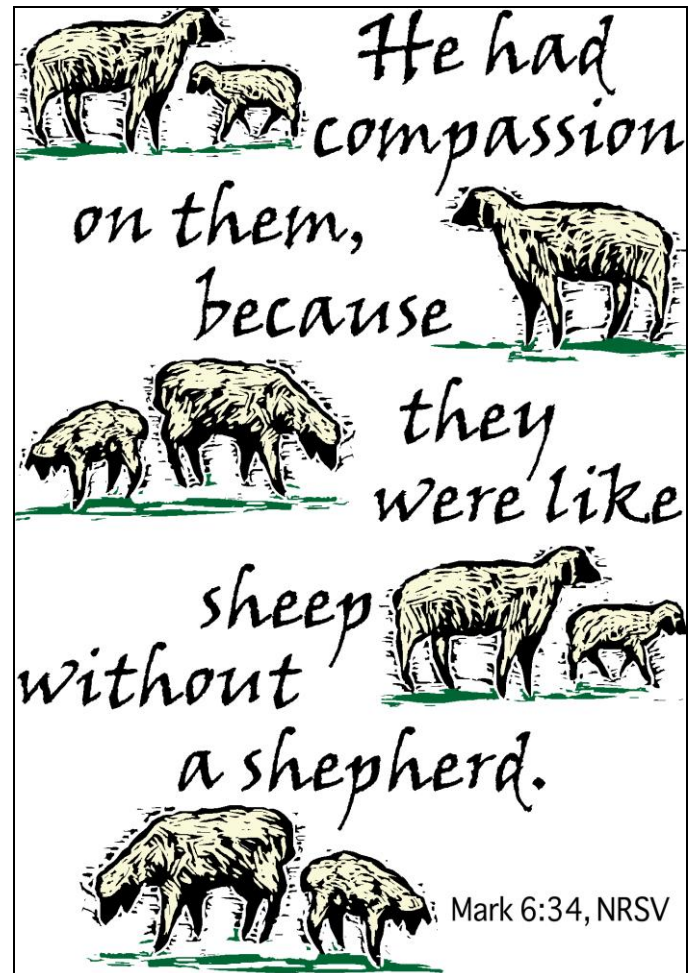


The Compassion of Jesus

By Jean LaRosa

I grew up near Buffalo, New York, so I always read with interest stories about the winter weather in Buffalo. They had two record setting blizzards in November and December of last year, with the second one even worse than the first. There were several stories about the December blizzard that described people helping one another—neighbors and even strangers. One of the featured stories told of the actions taken by a woman, Sha'Kyra Aughtry, who rescued a developmentally disabled man struggling in the cold and snow. Early in the morning of December 24, she heard him calling for help outside her home. She brought him into her house, made him warm and comfortable, and did what she could to care for his badly frostbitten hands. She washed and dried his clothes and fed him. He spent Christmas Eve and part of Christmas Day with her and her family while she tried to get medical help for him in the aftermath of the storm. Emergency services were overwhelmed and travel all but impossible, so she cared for him and made at least one hundred calls to 911 trying to get help for him. Finally, in desperation, she posted a plea for help on social media, and some neighbors volunteered to try to drive him to the hospital. She had compassion for this man.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines compassion as "sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it." Other references describe compassion as "an empathetic emotional response to another person's pain or suffering that moves people to act in a way that will either ease the person's condition or make it more bearable." Compassion goes beyond empathy in that it includes a desire to take action.



One of my favorite Bible teachers, Andy Stanley, often refers to himself and his congregation as "Jesus followers" as an alternative to using the label "Christian." It sometimes seems that the term "Christian" has acquired a lot of negative baggage, due to its association with a specific set of political beliefs and cultural opinions. I like the expression "Jesus follower" because it makes me think about what it really means to follow Jesus. I hope that Jesus would recognize me as someone who, however imperfectly, is trying to follow Him. I like to reflect on the glimpses the Bible gives us into His personality, the way He interacted with people, and the stories or parables that He chose to

Continued on page 2...

“The Compassion of Jesus,” continued...

share with His followers. And one of the attributes He modeled that I've been thinking about lately is compassion.

After He was told about the death of John the Baptist, Jesus wanted to spend some time by Himself. He probably wanted some privacy to grieve the loss of His close relative and co-laborer for the Kingdom of God. He probably wanted some time to pray. *“But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.”* (Matthew 14:13-14) Even though He had other plans, Jesus was willing to interrupt His plans to minister to the needy people in front of Him. And this was far from the only time Jesus put the needs of others ahead of His own.

And He instructed His followers to do the same, telling them, *“You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.”* (Luke 6:36) Even people who don't read the Bible are familiar with the parable of the Good Samaritan which appears just a little later in Luke's Gospel. (Luke 10:30-37) Jesus told this story in response to a question from an expert in the law, who asked Jesus to explain exactly who he should consider his neighbor. In the parable, a Jewish man was attacked by bandits while traveling. They beat him up and left him half dead beside the road. Two religious professionals, a priest and a Levite, saw him there and passed by without offering to help him. Then a Samaritan, a member of a despised group, came along and felt compassion for the man. He stopped to provide some immediate first aid and made provisions for the man to recover in an inn, at his expense. Jesus ended the discussion by asking the legal expert which of the three was a neighbor to the man attacked by bandits (obviously the Samaritan), and telling him, *“Now go and do the same.”* (Luke 10:37)

Imitating Jesus in this area is sometimes challenging. I usually feel like I already have too much to do and not enough time to do it. How willing would I be to serve others at the end of a busy day when I just want to have a little time for myself? Would I be willing to interrupt my plans to take care of someone I didn't even know? I'm not sure I know the answer to those questions in the abstract. Maybe the answer doesn't become apparent until there is someone with a need standing in front of you. I just know that Jesus is telling me, *“Now go and do the same.”*



Happy Birthday!

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.

Helen Cull	February 3
Xueliang Yang	February 6
Tom Taylor	February 16
Sandy Ober	February 17
Ella Bernheisel	February 21
George Hill	February 24

Financial Update

(Through December 31, 2022)

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...”

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$218,290	\$235,545
Expense	\$236,249	\$235,545

Windsor Chapel has sent \$28,865 to our missionary partners this year. That is 13% of your giving! Total giving in December was \$44,583, praise God!

Elders' Corner

By Pastor Andy Straubel

I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!

(Psalm 34:1-3)

Every year it seems to be a race from Thanksgiving to Christmas. This year was no exception. Special thanks to our worship team as Christmas and New Year fell on a Sunday. Thank you also to Ken and Cindy for a beautiful candlelight Christmas Eve service. It was good to see new faces and old friends as we entered the new year. I also want to thank Ken for his work with Helen on the 2023 budget. Ken will be stepping away as elder as the by-laws require. As always Dorothy put all the info together for the annual meeting. We couldn't have done it without you. Thank you!

As we get into the new year, I want to stress the word "together" in the verse above. I sense we have come through a great storm and have come out to survey the damage. One goal I have is to bless the Lord at all times, to make my boast in the LORD, to magnify the Lord and exalt His name together.

The old hymn "Count Your Blessings" comes to mind. Verses 1 and 4 are my favorite.

*When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

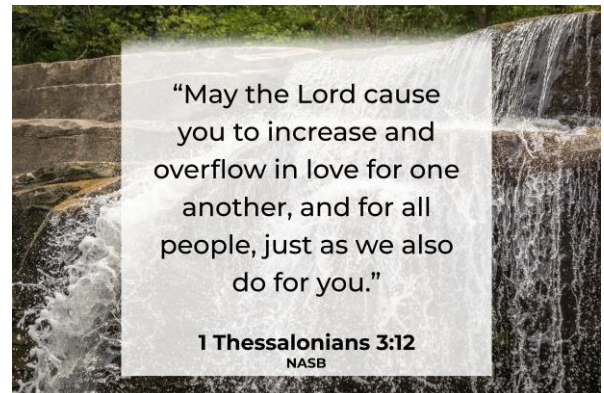
*So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,*

*Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.
[Refrain]*

As we get into February, make your plans for the 11th hour beginning February 26. Men will be learning a method of Bible Study called "Pathways." We will be in a study of Jonah. The Women will be back into their study of 1 Samuel.

*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!
Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!
(Psalm 34:8)*

Continue to pray for the Windsor Chapel family. Let us trust the Lord for a great year.



There was a special Sunday School class entitled, "The Decline of Religion" on January 22. It was taught by Don Ritchie. Don is a Religion and Culture Expert assigned to the Fort Dix Joint Army/Air Force Base. Soup and salad were provided, and it was a welcome time of fellowship and learning.



11th Hour Classes

A special one-day Sunday School class entitled *Strange New World* will be held February 19. It will include a review of the book with that title by Carl R. Trueman.

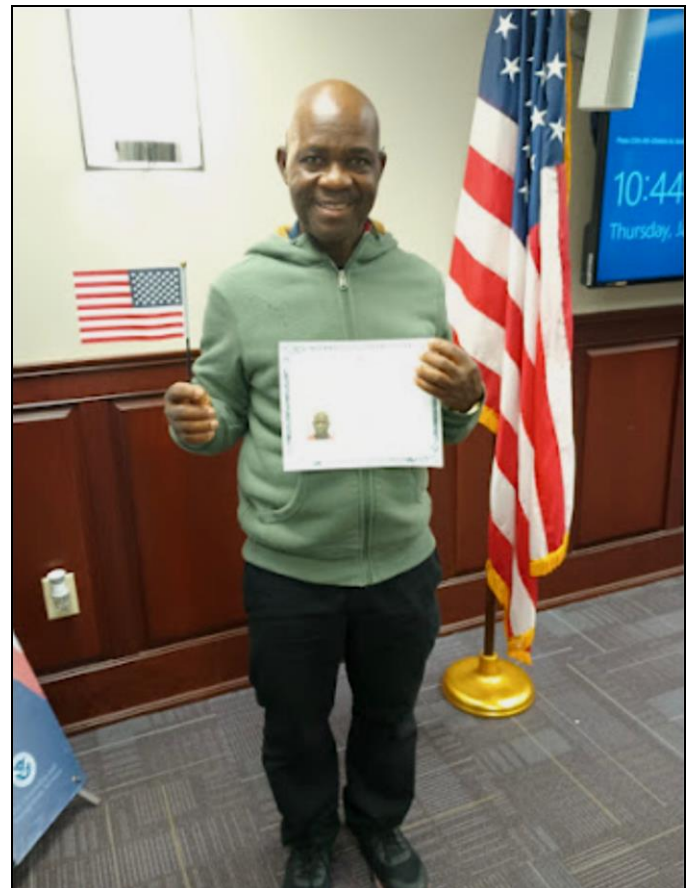
Our regular 11th Hour classes will be separate for the winter/spring term. The women will begin a ten-week, in-person series on February 26, and continue their study of 1 Samuel. They will meet downstairs. For more information, or any questions please contact Cindy Bills (cynthialbills@gmail.com; (609-275-8557)).

The Men's 11th Hour Sunday School class will also begin on February 26 and will be meeting downstairs. Pastor Andy will lead the study called "Pathways in Jonah." Pathways is an easy and natural way to do Bible Study. For more information, contact Pastor Andy.

My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations," says the Lord Almighty. Malachi 1:11

Perisseia

Our women's growth group has just begun an eight-week series on relationships among believers in the early church. It promises to be a fun, encouraging, and enlightening study. All women are welcome! We are meeting remotely via Zoom on Thursday evenings, 7:00-8:30. No preparation or commitment is required. For more information or to be included on the Zoom link list, please contact Cindy Bills (cynthialbills@gmail.com; (609-275-8557)).



Daniel Mark has lived in the US for several decades. Early in the morning of January 19 he attended his citizenship ceremony in Mt. Laurel, and by late morning he was a new American! It was a long process, but Daniel gives all his praise to God: "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; And his greatness is unsearchable..." (Psalms 145:3)

Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

November in February

February brings Valentine's Day and thoughts of love and romance. Perhaps a candlelight dinner at a secluded table for two, soft music in the background, and a special meal of ... roast turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, and pumpkin pie?

Wrong holiday? Not necessarily! While the turkey, stuffing, mashed potato, and pumpkin pie menu takes us back to Thanksgiving, there is an important link between Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day. If we want to love well—romantically and otherwise—cultivating a grateful heart is essential.

At Thanksgiving, we are reminded to count our blessings and offer praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for His goodness and gracious provision. That is a very good thing, especially since giving thanks does not always come naturally to us. Giving thanks requires us to turn from our all too common and self-focused grumbling and look with eyes of faith toward the Lord and others. And this looking outward, beyond ourselves, enables and empowers us to love more genuinely and deeply.

This brings us back to Valentine's Day. While romantic dinners and kind gestures toward others can be appropriate expressions of love, I would like to suggest that applying the principles of thanksgiving to those we want to love can be more powerful and longer lasting. If we want to generate thankfulness in relationship, we need to look at others with that intent, to see beyond their annoying habits, idiosyncrasies, and faults to those qualities that remind us that they are image-bearers of their

Creator. And as we come to appreciate them, we can love them more fully.

The essence of thanksgiving is the giving of thanks. So as we become thankful for someone, it is essential that in addition to thanking God, we thank the person, express appreciation. The Apostle Paul models this as he addresses the believers in the church at Thessalonika:

We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.... You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, 6-7)

Paul shepherds the congregations under his supervision with care and attention. He knows them, and what they are doing. He thanks God for them and then takes the time to share his appreciation of them in detail. What an encouragement that must have been for this early church, new in the faith living in a pagan world, and facing the ongoing threat of persecution. And so it all comes together: Paul has committed his heart and mind toward cultivating gratitude. He expresses that in the continual giving of thanks, encouraging and blessing others in love. His encouragement of them reinforces his attitude of gratitude, generating continual encouragement. It is a theme that runs through his epistles.

As we seek to love others in this "love month," may we, like Paul, turn our hearts to the Lord in gratitude and thanksgiving so that we may love as He loves.

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

New Requires Change

By Janet Berrill

Many of you know that in July 2021 my son Stephen came to live with us along with his pregnant wife, Rikki, and his fourteen-month-old son, Luke. Rikki had recently been diagnosed with leukemia. Stephen had quit his job to help Rikki out at home and with no income, they could no longer afford to rent the house where they were living. At the time Rikki's parents were unable to house the young family so they came to live with us.

It has been a fast year and a half! Luke is now inching ever closer to turning three, and our granddaughter is now sixteen months old. I have really enjoyed having them here! It's great being a grandparent! You get to enjoy the children without having all the responsibilities of being a parent. Also during the time this young family has lived with us, I have gotten to better know Rikki and deepen my love for her.

But now things have changed. At the end of January, Stephen and his family moved to Ohio to live with Rikki's parents. Rikki's parent's house has a two-bedroom apartment in the basement with its own entrance, so Stephen and his family can finally have a space of their own. This is good for them, but it leaves an emptiness in my heart. I went from seeing my grandchildren every day to having them live 585 miles away.

I don't like change. I was used to having lots of people in the house, and now that is not the case. I get comfortable with routine and like things to stay the way they are. But that is not always good for me. If nothing changes, how will I learn anything new? Jesus said in

Matthew 9:17, "*Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.*" You can't put new wine into old wineskins for they are inflexible.

If I want to grow in my faith and experiential knowledge of God, I cannot be like an old wineskin, inflexible and resistant to change. God is always doing something new in my life. If I want to learn what He is trying to teach me, I need to have an open mind when I encounter things I have not seen or experienced before. My tendency is to hold on to what I know and keep things the same. New can be uncomfortable! But being uncomfortable doesn't mean it is bad.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.*" Stephen and his family lived with us for a season. That season has now ended, and it is time to move on. Right now, this change is uncomfortable, and I don't like it. I miss them. But I trust that God is doing something new, not only in their life, but in mine as well. I have a trip coming up in the spring which I have been slow to prepare for because of all the activity at my house. Now that it is quiet and relatively empty, I can focus more on the preparations that need to be made. God is good, and when He brings change, it is for our benefit. The transition may bring some difficulty with it, but the end result will always be worth it!

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

Susan Seiboth at

susan@quiltingsquare.com

Dorothy Soi at

dsoi@windsorchapel.org

Chapel Office (609) 799-2559

www.windsorchapel.org

Contributing photographer:

Pastor Andrew Straubel