

Growing in Hard Places

By Janet Berrill



I recently got back from an extended trip out west to visit some of the national parks. What an amazing trip! The national parks contain magnificent wonders in God's creation. Towering canyon walls, roaring waterfalls, giant saguaro cacti, amazing rock formations, gushing geysers and hot springs, otherworldly cave formations – these are just a few of the marvels I saw in the parks I visited.

It was easy to marvel at the big awe-inspiring sights like the towering canyon walls; they were right there in front of me and impossible to miss. But there were also small wonders that could easily be overlooked. Sights like flowers growing in the desert, tracks left by animals that came out at night, and the sound of the wind as it blew through the pine trees.

I think the "small" wonder that amazed me the most was when I saw a plant growing out of a rock. On several occasions, I saw a tree, a cactus, or some other type of plant growing in a place that looked totally inhospitable. Yet, the plant was able to grow. These plants weren't small and scrawny, but full and healthy; some trees were taller than I am. Obviously,

plants need water, so for them to be able to survive, they must have found a crack in the rock in which to grow roots that not only supplied it with the water it needs, but also anchored it to the ground. These plants weren't just surviving, they were thriving.

In this life, we will all have trouble; no one is immune to hard times. But how a person views the hard times and chooses how to navigate through them varies from person to person. As Christians, we have the assurance that God is always with us (Hebrews 13:5-6), even in the hard times. Not only is He with us, but he says He will bring good out of whatever situation we are going through (Romans 8:28).

People often describe being in a difficult situation with no clear way out as being between a rock and a hard place. Rather than crushing us, if we have our root firmly planted in Jesus, we can get from Him all the strength and wisdom we need to not only survive the hard time, but to also grow spiritually.

In my life, I want to grow in my relationship with God. I don't want to just know more *about Him*, I want to *know Him* more. I don't want to just learn more facts about God's character, I want to experience Him. In order for me to gain experiential knowledge of God, I have to go through situations with Him. How will I ever know God as my supplier if I am never in need? How will I know God as a healer if I am never sick? How will I know God as a miracle worker if I am never in an impossible situation?

The plants I saw in the rocks were growing and thriving in a place that defied expectation. What looked like an environment that would not support growth did. Just like the plants, when I am in a hard place, it can be an opportunity for me to grow and thrive spiritually. Not only do I gain experiential knowledge of God which benefits me, but it can be a great encouragement to other people as they face hard times.

Fellowship Picnic Lunch

Join us after the service on July 14 for a picnic lunch. Sandwiches and beverages will be provided. Please bring a side dish and/or dessert and enjoy some summer fellowship!

When it comes to life the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.

Gilbert K. Chesterton



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.

Angelo Cleffie	July 9
Graeme Cull	July 10
Janet Berrill	July 15
Lise Hill	July 16
Don Ober	July 16
Stephen Berrill	July 19

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: Janet Berrill



The Kids' 5-Day Club for children ages 5 – 12 is almost here! This action-packed week of fun will start at Windsor Chapel on Monday, July 15, and continue through Friday, July 19. The hours will be from 7:00 – 8:30 pm. The children will learn timeless truths of the Bible through exciting and engaging ways, and enjoy lively songs, games, inspiring Bible and missionary stories, snacks, outdoor play and more!

Parents may register their children on our website at www.windsorchapel.org. Please share this exciting news with your family, friends and neighbors, too! All children are welcome!

There are many enjoyable and easy ways to partner in this important outreach, including helping to register children, warmly greeting the parents as they arrive, and decorating our chapel in preparation for this fun event. Help is especially needed in providing snacks for the children. You may volunteer to provide the snacks for just one night or for several nights if you wish. Youth ages 12 and over are also encouraged to get involved. Since many parents stay at the church during the event, the 5-Day Club presents a perfect opportunity to welcome new people to Windsor Chapel.

Please pray that the 5-Day Club will be life-changing for each child who attends and their families and will bless and encourage every teen and adult who helps. To volunteer or learn more, please contact Ed MacQueen by email at e.macqueen1@comcast.net or by phone at 609-751-6584.

Financial Update

(Through May 31, 2024)

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

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$53,075	\$74,167
Expense	\$60,177	\$74,167

Elders' Corner

By Ken Bills

As most of you know, we spent most of our service at Windsor Chapel on Sunday, June 16, participating in an all-church meeting. During that time, Tom Taylor provided a brief update from the elders, and we spent time in small group discussion. I thought it might be helpful to summarize the meeting for any who were not able to attend.

First, the elders have decided not to pursue an interim pastor at this time. While Windsor Chapel has been blessed by interim pastors in the past, our current financial situation makes conserving our resources to support a permanent pastor the wisest course for now. We praise God that He has blessed us with gifted preachers who have been willing to give their time to share God's Word with us each Sunday, and we currently have speakers scheduled through mid-September. Anyone who needs pastoral ministry should feel free to reach out to any of the elders, who will be happy to come alongside. By God's grace, we will seek to see that needs for pastoral care continue to be met.

Second, the elders have formed a pastoral search team. At this time, the team consists of Larry Berrill, Helen Cull, Cindy Bills, and Tom Taylor. Thank you to each of the members for your willingness to invest your time and effort to serve in this process! Finding the new pastor who God has for us would be a challenging process under the best of circumstances, and Windsor Chapel's current size and budget present obvious complications. The committee will be starting its work in the near future and will welcome your support and input as they move forward. Please pray for the committee as a whole and for each of its members, that the Lord would guide the process and lead us to the new pastor He would have for us.

Finally, we also divided into small groups to share our thoughts about 3 questions:

- **What are two or three of the greatest gifts God has given to Windsor Chapel?**
- **What do you believe are two or three of the greatest opportunities God may be presenting to Windsor Chapel at this time?**
- **What is your God-given dream for Windsor Chapel?**

Many, many thanks to all who participated in the discussions and who submitted written responses to the questions! The groups provided an opportunity to speak and be heard, and the discussions were enthusiastic and illuminating. In the coming weeks, we will be using the responses received and notes from our discussions to create a synthesis of the responses. Our desire is that the result will provide a "snapshot" that reflects who we are as a church that can provide insight to the elders, the pastoral search team, and pastoral candidates.

In the meantime, as we wait to see what God will do, we could do worse than to give heed to a famous story about the Apostle John. It is said that when John was old and frail, unable to walk, his disciples would carry him into the gathering of believers each Lord's Day. And each week, his words to the congregation were "Little children, love one another." This continued week after week, and no doubt there would have been some frustration at the simple repeated message. After all, John had spent three years as Jesus' disciple – the stories he could tell, the wisdom he could share! Eventually, John's followers asked John, "Master, why do you always say this?" "Because," John replied, "it is the Lord's command, and if only this is done, it is enough."

Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

Celebrating Freedom

July.... Independence Day! Fellowship, fun, and fireworks....

On July 4, 1776, the leaders of our nation-to-be took a major step not simply toward independence of the thirteen British colonies in North America, but more importantly, toward a government that would view all human beings as having value. The Revolutionary War made the Declaration of Independence a reality, and the thirteen colonies became free. And so freedom has become synonymous with independence in American culture. It is interesting that independence and freedom are not synonymous in Scripture.

The celebration of Independence Day carries a potent reminder to believers that our lives of faith are not all about—or even mostly about— independence. In fact, the Bible reminds us that an independent attitude can have disastrous results. The archangel Lucifer was not content to remain dependent upon the LORD but rather decided to strive with God, to become like Him. After Lucifer was expelled from heaven, he came as a serpent to tempt Eve, offering her the fruit that would make her wise *like God*. If she were wise like God, she could be independent! The American dream is older than America....And so Eve, and then Adam, took the fruit and ate. Their choosing a way independent from the LORD immediately led to fear and shame. And like Lucifer was expelled from heaven, Adam and Eve were evicted from the Garden of Eden. All of heaven wept, and all of God's glorious creation has suffered ever since.

The "self-made man" that we often admire looks great through the lens of independence, but does not fare so well through the lens of Biblical truth. The Bible is clear that it is God who has made us and not we ourselves (as proclaimed in the Book of Common Prayer). He gives us every breath we take, and He is the genuine source of provision and protection. We are called to trust in the LORD with all of our heart and lean not on our own

understanding and to depend upon the Father for our daily bread. We are called to glorify our Maker and by faith welcome the indwelling Holy Spirit who will enable us to be conformed to the character of Christ and transform us as He allows us to behold His glory.

The spirit of independence—which chants such mantras as "when you want something done right, do it yourself"—can wreak havoc in our relationships as well. The Apostle Paul teaches us that as believers, we become members of one body—the body of Christ. We cannot be independent any more than the parts of our physical bodies can be independent from one another.

Freedom, on the other hand, is a more Biblical concept, though again it differs significantly from the world's concept of freedom. The Good News of the Gospel proclaims freedom from slavery to our sin nature and from the penalty and power of sin as set forth in God's Law as recorded by Moses in the Old Testament. We need no longer to be bound by sin and the fear and shame that follows. But here is the irony about the freedom that the Bible proclaims: We can experience the freedom offered by God only if and as we relinquish our sin nature-driven desire to live independently from Him. It is only as we become bond-servants of Christ, abiding in Him as the vine, that we can experience genuine freedom as well as peace and joy as we bear fruit for His glory. And all of this is possible only as we recognize our need for the indwelling Holy Spirit and depend upon Him to complete the work He has begun in us.

And so while our celebration of Independence as a nation is quite appropriate, our July 4th activities also invite us to consider that as bond-servants of Christ, we choose—moment by moment--dependence upon Him rather than independence from Him. And from that solid and safe foundation, we can rejoice in the eternal freedoms our Lord and Savior has won for us: His atonement for our sins on the cross has freed us from slavery to sin, and from the power and penalty of sin. We walk free from the opinions and expectations of others, even (and sometimes especially) ourselves. Praise God, indeed!

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