

## The Lord Is Near

By Jean LaRosa

For several months I've been a volunteer working with cats at a local animal shelter. The shelter can be a stressful environment for the cats even though they are loved and well cared for. Some of the cats seem to crave human companionship and love to snuggle against you. Some will meow and meow until you pay attention to them. Others don't really want to be held or pet, but they still seem to take comfort in knowing that I am there with them, as they lean up against my leg or put their paw on my hand. One of the senior cats, a battle-scarred veteran of life on the street, liked to fall asleep with his head on my hand. He just wanted to know I was there. I want to tell them all, "You are loved. You are safe."

I am not so different. When life gets stressful, I want to know that God is near, that He hears me when I call to Him for help. There is a cemetery down the street from my house, and in the back of the cemetery, there's a park bench in a peaceful spot under a tree. That bench is a favorite spot for me to sit and pray and meditate on Scripture. I often visualize Jesus sitting there next to me on the bench, listening to my concerns. When I am struggling with anxious thoughts, I calm my mind by memorizing the verses in my scripture memory app. These verses remind me that God is near, that He will never leave me or forsake me.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul told them that they didn't need to be anxious about anything because God was near. I recently noticed the connection between the different parts of this passage:

*The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God,*



*which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:5b-7)*

I have a tendency to be anxious, especially about the future. When I read verses that tell me, "Don't be anxious," or "Don't be afraid," I sometimes think that's easier said than done! The future is uncertain, and there are a lot of bad things that could happen. But before Paul instructs this church not to be anxious about anything, he reminds them that the Lord is at hand. The Lord is near. He's right there. His presence is the reason we don't need to be anxious.

In his book "God Is Closer Than You Think," John Ortberg asserts that the most frequent promise in the Bible is "I will be with you." Even  
**Continued on page 2...**

## **"The Lord Is Near," continued...**

the name Immanuel (God with us) reminds us of this promise. Once you start looking for these promises in scripture you can find them everywhere—all through the Psalms, the writings of the prophets, the Gospels.

*"The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them."* (Psalm 145:18-19)

*"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* (Isaiah 41:10)

While I was doing my devotional reading this morning, I was struck in a new way by the words Jesus spoke in John 14:23: *"Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."* Wow. No wonder he was able to tell us a few verses later not to let our hearts be troubled and not to be afraid. We don't need to be afraid, because the Lord is near. He hears us when we call on Him. He cares about our concerns. He loves us. (Isaiah 41:10)



Our 11<sup>th</sup> Hour Adult Sunday School class begins Sunday, October 6, at 11:00 am, in the sanctuary basement. We will continue our study of Paul's epistle to the Romans. Please join us as we study, discuss, and apply God's Word. The teachers are Ken and Cindy Bills.

## **HARVEST** *Party*



**Saturday, October 26**

The leaves are turning vibrant colors, the days are gradually getting shorter, and there is a bit of a chill in the air. It's the perfect time for our annual Harvest Party, which will be held in the Windsor Chapel picnic grove on Saturday, October 26, from 7:00 – 8:30 pm. Please join us as we gather together around a crackling campfire on a cool, crisp fall evening. You may wish to bring a folding chair for extra comfort while listening to a suspenseful campfire story. Invite your family, friends and neighbors to share in the warm fellowship and enjoy this special evening. Everyone is welcome!

**Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.**

**Philippians 4:8**

## Elders' Corner

By Ed MacQueen

Greetings. God bless you for your faithfulness and steadfastness these past several months. It was great to spend time together at our summer picnics and get to know one another better. With fall picking back up I hope you'll take advantage of one of our small group meetings like Adult Sunday School, women's growth group, or Wednesday prayer.

I think we all know pastoral transitions are lengthy processes, but when you're in the middle of one it can feel *really* long. I suspect this will especially be the case at special times like holidays. But God is faithful, and I'm confident that the deliberate, thorough, prayerful approach which we're taking is His plan. Through it I trust that the pastor God has for us will be made known! That doesn't mean that we don't keep our eyes open for unexpected opportunities, because God can certainly answer prayers in unexpected ways. But it does mean that calling a pastor is a serious endeavor and our search team is taking every step to see that it's done right.

As we work through it, draw near to Him and to one another. His Word is life. As we were reminded by a guest preacher recently, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall. God will bring us into the next chapter of Godly life at Windsor Chapel, and I pray when He does He will find us having waited as children in patient trust. That said, you are always encouraged to raise questions or concerns with the elders or search team. We are here to serve you.

As fall gets underway, may you enjoy the cooler nights and crisp mornings. I hope to see you at the Harvest Party!



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.

Mark Warner	October 1
Marina Cull	October 3
Anshi Duggireddy	October 3
Nancy Muldrow	October 4
Robert MacQueen	October 12
Donald MacQueen	October 20
Andres Chiles	October 23

*Congratulations to  
Ken and Cindy Bills  
on the birth of  
their granddaughter  
Evangeline Marie Bills.*



*Evangeline was born on  
September 6, 2024.  
The Bills are  
grateful grandparents!*

## Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in  
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

### An October Holiday

October is the month when we celebrate Halloween—or not. When I was a young Christian wife and mother, our church culture discouraged involvement in Halloween because it was associated with evil. My wise and thoughtful husband took the position that our children would be different enough because of our family faith without withdrawing them from Halloween activities. And I was happy to have the opportunity to love our neighbors by engaging with their children. Our daughter still complains about our stuffing her pumpkin costume with newspaper to give her a pumpkin shape before going out for trick-or-treating.

While some historians posit that Halloween has secular/pagan roots, many scholars believe that the celebration of All Hallows' Day originates in Christianity and goes back in time to at least the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD. This is the time the church set aside to honor believers who had died. This is why the day is also known as All Saints' Day. And like other feast days, it was preceded by an evening vigil: All Hallows' Eve.

My intent in writing is not to make a particular argument about the pros or cons of Halloween. I would prefer to use the celebration of All Hallows' Day as a reminder that we would do well to remember the saints who have gone before us, and thank God for their example and legacy. Our spiritual ancestors—from the apostles to St. Augustine to Martin Luther to Mother Teresa—are now part of the cloud of witnesses spoken of by the author of Hebrews. And of course, the saints who have gone

before us include not only (or even primarily) believers who are well known in history but also the lesser known and unrecognized. Many of us have believers in our family lines that have contributed to our own faith. This is a time for gratitude.

All Hallows' Eve and All Hallows' Day also remind us that we are saints. As we live and walk in faith, we become the hands, feet, and voice of Christ, encouraging other believers and inviting nonbelievers to consider the Lord and Savior of the world. And then unless Christ returns first, we will die and become members of the cloud of witnesses celebrated on All Hallows' Day.

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



## Financial Update

(Through August 31, 2024)

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

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>Income</b>	\$82,964	\$118,667
<b>Expense</b>	\$91,469	\$118,667

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

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