



Staying in Touch September 30

Looking Death in the Face

When we experience truly great things, we hate for them to end; movie, a sporting event, a vacation. But guess what? Research is revealing that we *need* for things to end. When faced with an ending, we become stronger, more focused, more productive and more positive.

According to *The Atlantic* magazine a study revealed that 23 percent of goals in soccer came in the final 15 minutes of the 90-minute match. The end of the game has a focusing effect, motivating players to summon their strength for a final push. In a similar manner, deadlines inspire deal-making. An analysis of bargaining experiences found that 41 percent of deals are struck in the final 30 seconds. And for a similar reason the last 10 minutes of a therapy session are more productive than the first 40 minutes of that \$200 50-minute hour.

Endings are important. And what about the end of life? Blog posts by terminally ill patients use language that is much more positive than the language used by people who are farther from death. The same is true for the last words of death-row inmates.

Another study looked at hospice workers and other end-of-life professionals. For these people, exposure to death causes them to “live in the present, cultivate a spiritual life and reflect deeply on the continuity of life.” In a similar manner, people who have near-death experiences report an increased sense of spiritual well-being.

So, how does this sound? As we come to the end of life, we might think that we will hate for it to end. But the reality is that we *need* for it to end.

In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul offers a surprising perspective on the end of his earthly life. “For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain” (1:21). He knows that his ongoing life on earth means “fruitful labor” for the Philippians and for him, but at the same time he admits that his “desire is to depart and be with Christ” (vv. 22-24). Paul is writing from prison in Rome awaiting trial for his missionary work. Paul is feeling that the end is near. Part of him wants his life on earth to end, so that he can be with Christ and share his resurrection life.

“Endings are important. And what about the end of life?”

Like a prisoner on death row, Paul uses remarkable language to describe his situation. “I want you to know, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ” (vv. 12-13). Because Paul is in prison, the good

...continued on page 2

We Love Our Community Garden!



Photo of our community garden in early summer

What is our Community Garden, you ask?

Community garden: exploring gardening, sharing produce, hard work and good neighborly behavior. A work in progress as one stage leads to another in a never ending circle of life and the work is never done or perfected.

Thank you to all our gardeners this year! A report coming soon about the harvest and the produce we were able to share.



Thank you to Rod & Becky Hagen, Tim Stanford, Marty Thorpe, Lee

Meier and Tom Berry for chopping down three dead trees and dead tree limbs on the SJL property!

news of Jesus spread throughout the Roman establishment. In addition, “most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear” (v. 14). Paul’s courage and confidence are inspiring others to speak with courage and confidence.

Paul’s afflictions are an opportunity not a detriment. As people gossip about Paul in the prison folks learn about the Christian faith. Faced with an ending, Paul becomes stronger, more focused, more productive and more positive. When Paul looks death in the face, he sees new life.

Paul wants us to live in a manner worthy of the gospel, always showing the grace and love of Jesus Christ. He wants us to become stronger and more focused, standing firm in one spirit and striving side by side with one mind. Such strength usually happens in difficult times.

Arlington Presbyterian Church, west of the Pentagon in Virginia, worshiped in a stone sanctuary for more than 80 years. The congregation had watched its numbers dwindle, and its building became a burden. Facing death what were they going to do?

Arlington Presbyterian joined forces with a nonprofit group that builds affordable housing. They sold their land to a nonprofit group, and then the group constructed a six-story building on the site of the church, with five floors of affordable housing above retail space on the first floor. On the first floor, the church now rents space for worship.

The transformation of Arlington Presbyterian was not an easy process, and there was struggle both inside and outside the church. The congregation “risked it all for the sake of their neighbors,” says Ashley Goff, who became the pastor of the church after the change had begun. “It’s almost like they became curious about death, the curiosity of how to die well.” The congregation has become stronger and more focused, standing firm in one spirit and striving side by side with one mind. They are experiencing new life after looking death in the face. And this, Paul would say, “is God’s doing” (v. 28).

Reimagining our ministry differently is as frightening as it is exhilarating. It seems like a death of a sort and always involves struggle and suffering. Paul also reminds the Philippians that God “has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well” (vv. 29-30). The

privilege of believing in Christ is easy to accept, and we are happy to receive his forgiveness and new life. But “suffering for him as well”? That’s a bit tougher to swallow. Paul tells the Roman Christians, “We suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified with him” (8:17). Once again, our Christian faith challenges us to look death in the face.

Throughout his life, Jesus was willing to suffer as he showed love and grace to the people around him. He held nothing back, but emptied himself completely. In the same way, we are challenged to give of ourselves to show the love of Jesus to others. Fortunately, such sacrificial service not only benefits our neighbors, as we feed the hungry, house the homeless, visit prisoners and welcome strangers. It also benefits us, as it brings us into the presence of the one who suffered and died for all.

Peace, Pastor Wes

SHARE THE JOY!



BINGO!

Fridays, 12 Noon - Starting Oct. 8

playing at

Bingo Oasis

10657 Melody Dr., Northglenn

St. John’s Council has decided to sponsor bingo sessions as a fundraising resource to help support the ministry of St. John’s. Additionally, we view bingo as an opportunity to “Share the Joy” (StJ—St. John’s) of Jesus with the people we meet as we express love and care with our lives. We already have a team of 9 people, but would love to have more volunteers so we can have substitutes for our team members as needed. For more information, contact Pastor Wes or Nina in the office.

Come Play or Volunteer!



October Birthdays

Happy Birthday to these St. John's Family Members!



- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Darcy Wendland | 18 Paula Wilkening |
| 6 Paul Olson | 19 Carl Bagwell |
| 6 Christine Schepker | 21 Nathan Blay |
| 7 Yvonne Bates | 21 Valoie Wallestad |
| 7 Monica Goad | 23 Jill Meier |
| 10 Tami Yott | 25 Sam Larson |
| 11 Brianna Kunz | 25 Dee Wilhelm |
| 12 Josh Werpy | 26 Lori Hoffman |
| 13 Valeta Bagwell | 27 Simon Stotz |
| 14 Rosemary Stover | 28 Teresa Hanson |

Parking Lot Entry Repaired!



WooHoo! Our large pothole in the entryway to our parking lot was fixed last Saturday! By Sunday, we were able to drive in and out of it comfortably!



October Anniversary

Happy Anniversary!

- 2 Brett & Julie Smith

Church Volunteers



Readers

- 3 D. Williams
10 L. Jones
17 C. Blanchard
24 R. Stover
31 R. Fair

Assistant Ministers

- 3 J. Dunbar
10 T. Stutesman
17 S. Ryan
24 J. Stallsworth
31 L. Meier

Altar Guild

- 3 Darcy & Sam
10 Darlene & Sam
17 Valoie & Charlene
24 Darcy & Valoie
31 Darlene & Sam

Fellowship

- 3 A. & M. Werpy
10 S. Ross
17 K. & J. Robertson
24 Open
31 T. & K. Berry

Counters

- 4 R. Stover & S. Ryan
12 (Tues) T. Berry & K. Musgjerd
18 R. Stover & T. Berry
25 R. Stover & C. Loukota

August 31, 2021 Budget Information		September, 2021	
YTD Income	\$173,498	Checking	\$27,969****
YTD Expenses	\$213,892*	Savings	\$2019
Thrivent Mortgage Principal Owed	\$127,313	Scrip Checking	\$786
		Scrip Savings	\$315
		Building Fund	\$87,776**
		Note: to be repaid to	\$30,000***

*includes taxes pd to IRS
**includes cell tower sale
***used to cover two operating accts while moving to new bank. To be repaid semi-annually per Council.
****includes monies to repay Bldg Fund