

Religious leaders are no different than others as the past two years I have found myself on more than one occasion tiresome, lonesome, and fearsome. The weight of the unique times certainly has had a toll leaving heads down rather than upward. Nevertheless, this fall, when the kiddos and I were at an elementary school fall outing, God's grace was disguised in a simple invitation to attend a Cub Scout meeting. I would have never fathomed



this would be our most prized joy this year bringing new energy, fellowship, or to play off a biblical analogy, "breathing life into dry bones". From the onset, we felt a sense of community and family that we've missed because of shutdowns and social-distancing. It was obvious the Cub Master and his wife had a fun, playful side while still being very organized. I have come to know other parents and leaders such as Anthony and Jack who embody all the positives about scouting you could ever wish for one's child. Plus, I couldn't say enough about Brett, Colton's faithful den leader, pictured here, who has been a role model for all scouts. Less than two weeks after our first meeting I even purchased a tent off Amazon, and thankfully it arrived right on the dot-8pm the night before our camping trip. Yes, we were off!

While I'm certainly bias, another aspect of the Cub Scouts that my family has enjoyed is the fact weekly den meetings took place at Tanglewood Elementary School. Yes, the same one referred to earlier. Sure, go ahead and claim that I'm being shallow because it's merely a building, but it was our school, in an established neighborhood, and just has the character that makes one feel safe and at home. Whether it's a den meeting outside under the pavilion or inside the gymnasium during the spring, each Tuesday evening this setting felt *just right*.



However, this past Tuesday, after coming back from Cub Scouts, I was reminded that not all schools felt that safe nor can we be so naive to think no such tragedy could ever occur in a SWFL school or anywhere else in our country...News reports shared that just two days before students were to start their summer break, one of the worst school tragedies, second only to Sandy Hook, hit Robb Elementary school. Although we cannot imagine the heartbreak of the families and especially in this season of sleepless nights, I believe we all suffer as a country. In fact, this will leave some wondering where is God? Whether looking downward or upward, we might wonder if God has left us?

Did Jesus' disciples think this regarding his death? Or, did they think Jesus abandoned them when he ascended to heaven? I'll let you decide on those questions, but according to the Book of Acts, two angels say to the disciples "You Galileans, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?" While initially the only appropriate action is to LOOK UPWARDS with hope in the One who is Life and Resurrection, Scripture eventually challenges us to have the courage to LOOK AROUND! Look around to see opportunities to serve, to care, to help, to build, to love, and to participate in the ongoing ministry and prayer "thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." We are to look and recognize the same power that raised Jesus from the dead we claim is now inside of us nudging us, empowering us, and equipping us to continue being Christ's presence to others. Just as I experienced grace from a simple invitation to a meeting and Colton through the kindness of a den leader, might we each look around offering grace through support and care to one another in this time of heartache. Remember Jesus might have gone up, but Christ doesn't go away! God is with us!

Prayers and Praise to God from the Past Month

Prayers for all victims and their families affected by the Robb Elementary School Shooting

Ueli Simonsmeier, ear problems, Church Family

Anne, prayers for new health concerns, Brookdale Family

(Update) **Family and friends of Nedra Ayers**, who died Sunday, Shirley Fizer (extended family)

Johnny and Michelle Blasi, COVID, Church Family

Elizabeth Larson, kidney complications, Steve Larson (daughter)

Ircania Deneri, outpatient surgery last Monday, Frequent Visitor

Dave, fell and suffers with a compound fracture of his ankle, Dean Brown (son-in-law)

Judee Buhlinger, prayers for difficulty breathing and lung condition, Church Family

Linda, upcoming heart surgery to replace a valve, Sue Fink (friend)

Justin and Jamie Edwards, both struggling with addiction, Pam Williams

Nancy Trousdale, cancer that has spread, Shirley Fizer (cousin)

(Updated) **Joan**, recovering well from open heart surgery, Judee Buhlinger (sister)

(Updated) **Mackenzie Lee**, praise to God for a successful surgery and Mackenzie is back home from the hospital, Linda Lee (granddaughter)

Rafael, wisdom, discernment and healing, Ircania Deneri (Frequent visitor's son)

(New Update) **Joyce Turney**, back home from rehab, Church Family

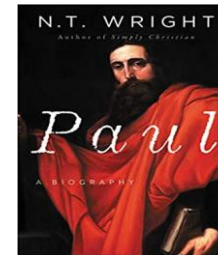
Ted Johnston, rehab and not doing well, Ron and Betty Johnston (Ron's brother)

Beth, recently diagnosed with breast cancer, Judee Buhlinger (daughter)

Ham Collier's New Address: Brookdale North Naples 1710 SW Health Pkwy Apt.129, Naples, FL 34109, Phone # 239.597.0175



Last quarter we bagged a record amount of rice and beans, and had a huge crowd of smiling faces and helpers! Please join us, once again, on **Thursday, June 9 at 6:00 for Bags of Hope**. There will NOT be a meal before we pack rice and beans.



Beginning Sunday, May 29, we will have a five-week sermon series on the early church as we study the Apostle Paul. If you want to learn more about this topic check out the following book by distinguished Pauline scholar.



Farwell reception for Grace Anderson. Grace will be attending MIT to pursue her PhD.

June Birthdays and Anniversaries

(Email the office if your name is missing)

Scott and Kathryn Hamm	2nd
Lindsey Hanna	17 th
Karen Burns	16 th
Mary Rubin	17 th
Sue Fink	17 th
Shirley Fizer	25 th
Chris and Kathy Harris	30 th

Outreach Corner

We will collect the Pentecost Offering again on Sunday, June 5. This special offering supports new church development through both regional and general programs. Half of this offering is given back to the region in which it is given.

Look for our Christmas Outreach project to kick-off this month. Stay tuned for a project that will truly make a difference - for a blessed recipient and YOU!