



September 6, 2019 Issue

Come Experience the Power of Grace

## Reunification

God will push away our blindness to show us His grace.

Joseph is a ruling official in Egypt, facing his brothers who abandoned him. Their fates are in his hands as they ask for food for their famine-starved families. So many years have passed that they do not recognize him as their very own brother. But Joseph recognizes them and seeks to restore their relationship with him.

Joseph instructed his men to secretly put the brothers' money back into their sacks, creating the appearance they had stolen from Egypt. When the brothers discover it, they are terrified of being executed for theft. Panicked, they beg their father, Jacob, to let them take their youngest brother, Benjamin, to Egypt to appease Joseph, promising to bring Benjamin back safely even though they could not be sure.

Blind to Joseph's identity, blaming God rather than man, continuing to trust their own strength, the brothers do not see they are not in control, that God is working and they need help beyond themselves. We often are slow to recognize when God is using a situation to bring us to confession and restoration.

Just as the brothers' hidden sin (betraying Joseph years before) created spiritual blindness in them, our sins blind us as well. God will push away our blindness to show us His grace and love, leading us to confess our sins and embrace His forgiveness. Only when we do that will we have peace in our puzzling circumstances, as we are forgiven and restored to a relationship with Him.

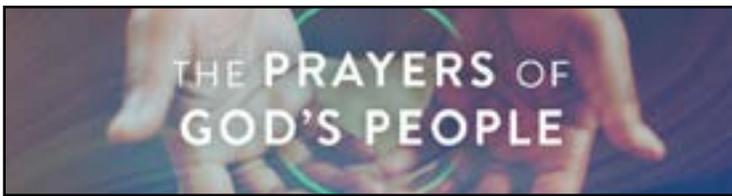
God often shows up in the most unexpected situations. God is never caught off guard by our circumstances.

Payday is bittersweet. After paying bills, we can often sit staring at an empty bank account, gas tank, and empty bellies to



fill. The good news is, God is never caught off guard by our circumstances. He is not worried even when we feel like we are barely making it from check to check. At just the right time He can provide all that we need. If everything is smooth sailing there is no need for God to step in and do the miraculous. Maybe you won't find treasure in your pockets this week, but we serve a creative God, and He loves to provide in unexpected ways. What do you need from God this week? Why not ask Him? We can be confident because God is a God of miracles.

In the toughest times, God is waiting for the perfect opportunity to bless our socks off. You may be going through an emotional, spiritual, or financial famine. Don't be afraid, God is in control. What blessings will you find in your sack today?



**HEALTH CONCERNS:**

Irene Ahl; Sharon Algar; Bill Amspaugh; Richard Ashbaugh; Ron Ashbaugh; Carroll Boettcher; Mark Boettcher; Maun Boettcher; Heidi Buchholz; Claudia Bultmann; John & Joan Burns; Ralph Chambers; Linda Cirelli; Moose Creighton; Larry Dahl; Richard Dahl; Ashlyn Dahnke; Tony Damiano; Phillip Davidson; Dianne Ewald; Harriet Feree; Walt Goedecke; Richard Greene; Esthla Guadarrama; Gizelle Hayes; Katie Hayes; Jane Heine; Carl Heldt; Evelyn Horst; Annette Idso; Christopher Idso; Richard Lohr; Susan Jerez; Donna Koelling; Alice Masherella; Fran Mayse; Donna McCullough; Suzie Miller; Howard Morrow; Tom Mortson; Tim Muzi; Lily Navarro; Tanner Nelson; Wayde Nelson; Helen Perrodin; Ben Petersen; Fred Plebanek; Virginia Potter; Martin Radloff; Shirley Radloff; Esther Riesen; Harold Stults; Kalie Ray; Joe Wells; Wally Wentzel; Marie Wood;

**MILITARY:**

Isaac Jackson; Tim Mace

**CALLED HOME:**

We give prayers of sympathy and compassion to the family and friends of Diana Wegmann who was called home on August 25, 2019.

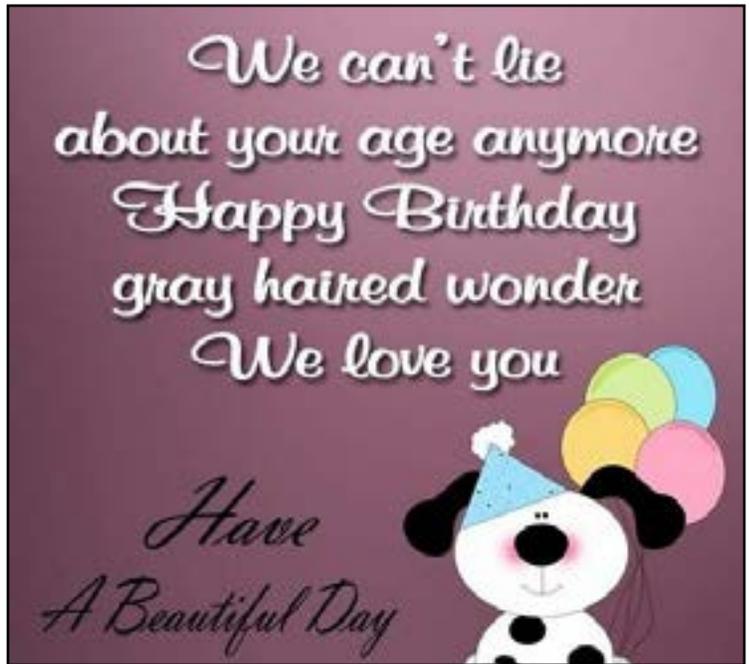
**NEEDS:**

We offer prayers to Chris Blanco for peace and healing.



**PUTTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE**

Open Door's September Prayer Force Requests include: Bangladesh youth converting from Islam face bullying and rejection. Pray these children will truly understand how God sees them. Two Baptist Kazakhstan worship services were raided and fined one to two months' wages. Guide these church leaders to navigate this distress. [OpenDoorsUSA.org](http://OpenDoorsUSA.org)



**Bless the Years!**

Celebrating the Lord's gifts of added years, Ascension is honored with over 55 members who have been blessed with long life. Rejoice with us at the Birthday Party!

**Saturday, September 14 | 3pm in Grace Hall**  
**Sunday September 15 | Birthday Cake 9:30 – 10:30am**

Be sure to take a look at the Memory Book with reminiscences of the Lord's part in these lives over the past 85 years. Thank you to Thrivent for underwriting the book publishing.

Below are the words to a hymn the choir will be singing to honor those being remembered. Perhaps these words will be an inspiration during the week. A Holy Spirit moment!

**Dear Father, Bless the Years**

Dear Father, Bless the years, this babe is small and fragile. With wonder parents muse. They strive your love to model. Speak to them of your grace, your love, your patience, time enough to share. Lord, bless them in their care.

When school-ward treks begin, young characters are forming. They've learned about God's world with delight-filled discov'ring. Then other worlds come into view, with conflict, greed, dishonesty. For them their conscience be.

The turmoil of the teens, their puzzling paths exploring, guide them O Father, friend, protecting and defending. In tough decisions, fretful choices, grant them peace, integrity. To You O Lord, they flee.

And when our patriarchs age, infirmities abiding, for those advanced in years, help us O Lord, revering. Their life, experiences, wisdom, knowledge, memories, good cheer, Almighty, bless the years.

# The Gift of Tears

By Tara Owens

Do you know who weeps more than anyone else in the first five books of the Bible?

The question caught me off guard.

As someone who has lived through and is often accompanied by dark bouts of major depression, I've been comforted by sheer liquid volume of tears in Scripture. The pages fairly slosh with them, caught as they are in God's hands, poured into and through the whole of His story. I sometimes imagine the ridges of God's fingerprints as riverbeds for them, aware that His touch is often wet because of the way He refuses to let them fall from His care.

I know that Jesus wept, and in those moments where the light seems the farthest away—in times when the world's circumstances or my own struggles eclipse what I know of God's kindness, nearness, and provision—I have sometimes very tangibly felt the present of my weeping Savior right beside me.

I know that the prophets, Jeremiah in particular, lamented long and hard, their keening a call both to God and to God's people: Things are not right! Where are You? Where is Your love? Why do Your followers act this way? Questions and anguish that flow out of my soul more often than I'd like to admit.

I even know the tears of those nearest to Christ—the woman forgiven so much that her gratitude spilled from her eyes and onto His feet, the disciples standing traumatized at the cross—all a form of heartbroken baptism, a way that we who love Him so much allow that living water inside us to spill out in embodied ways (John 4).

As I have journeyed with others in spiritual direction, I am so aware of the gift of holding not only the delightful sightings of the Spirit at work but also the sacredness of sitting in the darkness and doubt together. Tears, expected and unexpected, are often God's reminder to take off my shoes because we are on holy ground.

So how had I missed this mysterious mourner? How had I missed Joseph?

More than anyone else in the first five books of the Great Story, Joseph weeps (seven times, to be exact). He dreams, he goes, he weeps, he forgives, and, interestingly enough, there is not one time we have recorded that he and God have a direct conversation. There's no doubt God is with Joseph (Gen. 39), no doubt that Joseph's rescue of his brothers points us forward to Christ's great rescue of us.

Perhaps it is because of God's seeming silence that I missed out on the gift of Joseph's tears. But since I've seen them, I and those I companion have been comforted that God's with-ness doesn't rely on words, that there is a mystery in the way weeping connects us to the heart of redemption, and that, sometimes, even if our sorrow seems to go unnoticed for what feels like centuries, it has a place, a valued place, in the Story.



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*God's our Compass, Word, and Spirit  
Through life's journeys, it's our guide.  
When the clouds descend upon us,  
And the darkness blinds our sight.*

*Despite turmoil and temptation  
All our days in circles spin.  
Finding God's true north, His wisdom  
Calms the soul, gives peace within.*

*As life's pages unfold, open  
And our story now comes clear,  
Conflict, choices, cataclysm,  
Christ's directions keenly hear.*

*Plans consulting in the Scriptures  
Paired with steadfast hours of pray'r  
List'ning for the Spirit's guidance,  
Indecisions we are spared.*

*Navigating worldly pressures  
Faith in God enhances sight  
Sharpens focus, guides through terrors.  
We emerge within Christ's Light!*

*As we trust our Heavenly Compass,  
No one doubts the One True Way.  
Our Omniscient Pilot listens,  
While we pause to kneel and pray.*

# FIRST FRIDAY FRIENDS

September 6 marks our first gathering for the 2019 and 2020 season of First Friday Friends. Entertainment kicks-off at 11am with Don Hughes Guitar Ensemble playing our favorite songs. Then a lunch chicken salad croissant, chips, and strawberry jello is served at noon. We ask for a small donation of \$5.00 to help with the costs.

Mark your calendars and join us for Food, Fun and Fellowship. Bring a friend. We'd love to have you.

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bud Dull      Michelle Garrett  
Erma and Bob Pinkerton

Please visit the Welcome Desk to pick up directory updates and connect with these new faces!



SAVE THE DATE! Sunday afternoon, October 6 all women are invited to the Fall LWML Rally at Risen Savior, Green Valley. Watch for more details.



Thanks to Amicae, ChristCare's Fifth Saturday Tea, and Thrivent, last week over \$2100 was raised for underwriting six months of ICS's Single Mom Scholarship, benefitting moms returning to school. We are blessed to be a part of this investment in education and family stability. For more info contact ICS at 297-6049 or Jo at 742-2882.



# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Volunteers pick up doughnuts at Walmart on La Cholla, set up and make coffee, and serve and clean up. Fellowship is from 9:30 to 10:30am Sunday morning. You will serve three times a year, will be reminded, and will have 16 people with whom to trade, if needed.



Please call Ruthann Stults 219-1527 or email [stultsruthann56@gmail.com](mailto:stultsruthann56@gmail.com) to volunteer or ask questions.



September Food Collection will go to ICS, Interfaith Community Services. This month they are especially requesting meals in a can, such as ravioli, spaghetti and meatballs, etc. Always needed are canned meats and tuna fish—Jesus provided fish for hungry people—canned fruit, and breakfast cereal. Please place your items in the wheeled carts near the 2 most-used entrances. God bless you for your generosity!

# NEW LRP MEETING SCHEDULED

Thank you to those who contributed to the **August 17 Member Retention and Care Long-range Planning meeting**, in which Fellowship and Worship were studied.

If you have thoughts, ideas, concerns in the areas of Spiritual Care and Visitation, Christian Education, Worship, or Fellowship, to contribute to the Long-range Plan, please join us at the upcoming meetings or call 742-2882.

**Session 3: Member Retention and Care Study Group  
Saturday September 14 | 11-2pm in Grace Hall**

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