

Western Mountains BAPTIST CHURCH



Pastor Tom's Corner

ALL THINGS NEW

Here we are, launching into a New Year. Most of us are certainly ready to put 2020 in the rearview mirror, me included. It is funny though. January 1, 2021 is just another date on the calendar. COVID 19 has no idea we turned the page on a calendar. The challenges or hard circumstances we may be facing do not understand that we just turned the page on a calendar.

In other words, our circumstances have not likely changed all that much, simply by going from December 31, 2020, to January 1, 2021. Yet, many of us have HOPE for new and different things in this new year. What is that hope based upon? Well, for the unbeliever, I really have no idea. In fact, I might even say that it is a false hope. But, for the believer, there are reasons to be hopeful.

Lamentations 3, verses 22 and 23 say this:

- 22 The LORD's loving-kindnesses indeed never cease,
For His compassions never fail.*
- 23 They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.*



What is beautiful about this passage is that we do not need to wait for the turning of the page on a calendar. We need only wait for the sun to come up on another day. His compassions – His mercies are new EVERY morning!

This means that the bad day I had yesterday does not need to ruin my day today. It means that my failures of yesterday do not need to be dragged forward into today. God is encouraging us to confess those failures – those sins, and repent of those failures or sins, and start fresh each and every day.

I remember asking an older fella once, how are you doing? His answer surprised me. He said, "Well, I am on the green side of the sod." I think that, for him, it meant he was having a pretty good day!

Are you on the green side of the sod? Thank God for another day to enjoy His Creation, and thank God for His compassions – His mercies that are new every morning.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens. — Ecclesiastes 3:1

CoVid Testimony

2020: Well that was pleasant, NOT!!! With all its challenges, (COVID-19, social and political unrest), there were also many blessings.



As a medical professional, I was not laid off. And, we have had zero cases of COVID-19 at the facility where I work, due to the vigilance of our staff. Many weekends were spent camping, where we could easily social distance, and unwind from the chaos around us.

After months of not getting to hug my grandkids, we finally decided we could do it, as long as masks were worn and heads were turned in opposite directions. I have to tell ya, those first hugs were awesome.

Our extended family usually has a large family gathering on Easter and just before Christmas. No Easter gathering was held, so with the anticipation of not being able to gather for Christmas, we held an earlier gathering at a state park pavilion where we could social distance, but still enjoy each other's company for the day.

There were some strange happenings. Up until 2020, I had never hit a deer. I hit 3 within 4 months this year! Each of them got back up and went into the woods after, and of course there was barely evidence of these encounters on my Tacoma.

My daughters turned 40 and I turned 65! Where did the time go? With no hope of retirement within the near future, I celebrated by cutting back to 32 hours a week.

I am grateful to God for protecting my family through these difficult times and for His many blessings. Love to All!

— Rosie Bates



“Kids’ Corner”

What kind of magnet are you?

When I was younger, I enjoyed playing with magnets.

Magnets are fascinating and sort of strange. I find if I hold one magnet near another one it will pull them together. You can even pick up one magnet and the other one will not fall off. If you have ever played with magnets, you know what I mean.

BUT if I turn the magnets back-to-back what happens? They push each other away, right? No matter how hard I try, the other magnet keeps moving away.

Watching these magnets helps me remember something about each of us. If we turn our mouth **UP** everyone can see our nice smile. When we have a smile on our face, others are pulled toward us just as when I turn the magnet towards another magnet. In fact, when we smile we can always be sure others will want to be as close as they possibly can.

BUT, if we turn our mouth **DOWN**, everyone can see an ugly frown on our face. Do you think others will want to be close to us if we look that way? No. We will surely push others away like opposite ends of the magnet with our ugly frown.

Each day we just need to decide what kind of magnet we will be. We can be a magnet that pushes others away with our frowns, or a magnet that pulls others to us with our smiles.



Let us pray that we will all be magnets that attract with our smiles and that we will be able to see all those smiles soon.

— George Woodford

God and Suffering

Recently a friend asked that question we've all wondered about. How can God allow pain and suffering to happen to good people? That question has been weighing heavily upon me. It's no secret I believe in God. So I study to learn more about Him. I chuckled at that statement because I was hard pressed to "study" in school. Another story for another time perhaps. For the last week or so my daily devotional and on line Bible studies have covered this topic quite well. Some may say happenstance or coincidence, I don't believe in that. Everything happens for a reason. You might think for a minute who does she think she is? She's no expert on God. I definitely am not. However, it's not just coincidence that I lost my only child. That, I would say, qualifies me in the suffering category. But haven't we all suffered in some way? My suffering may seem bigger or smaller than your suffering. But suffering is suffering. No one likes it, it's not something we want. It hurts.

Jennie Allen (author, speaker and Bible teacher) said about suffering, "we can do two things with suffering: we can absorb it and let it change us, or we can let it crush us. Suffering will change you, or it will crush you."

When we were in Boston, and the two weeks prior, I had never experienced watching something that broke me so much. It hurt so much to watch DJ (my son) deteriorate before my eyes. I had come to know the Lord about a year and a half prior to his illness. If there is a time for my faith to be tested that was it. But I don't ever remember being angry with or at God. I do remember DJ's struggle vividly. But it was in those "I'm so lost" moments that I cried to God. "Please Lord give me strength and guide me in all this." It's hard to explain, but God saw what I needed and He got me through every day. God is always faithful.

Psalms 25:8-10 Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He instructs sinners (we are all sinners) in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble His way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.

Tony Evans (Christian pastor, author and speaker) said this about suffering and crisis, "God allows crisis because He wants you to get to know Him, for the power that He has. For the deliverance He can bring by the crisis He allows. When God puts us in a crisis He is giving us an opportunity to see Him at a level we haven't seen Him at before. He wants you to come to Him in a crisis so you can discover His great power." So you might say "that's not fair," "why does God do bad things to good people?" All I can say is, have you taken the time to get to know Him. Don't wait for a crisis. He's a loving God. He created you and He loves you. Don't shut Him out of your life. Talk to Him, pray to Him. He's waiting to get to know you.

— Pat Pray

Cards Ministry

The WMBC Cards Ministry has a new contact person. Dot Lambert has returned to the role she originated when WMBC began. Many thanks to Tammy Dunphy for her service this past year and many thanks to Dot for stepping up to take on the ministry once again. When asked if she was interested to take back the "job," Dot excitedly said yes, and added, "I just prayed to the Lord yesterday asking Him if there was something I could be doing for the church." When you receive your birthday card from WMBC this year, know Dot had you on her mind and most likely said a prayer of thanksgiving for you.



Cookies

The goal of 800 cookies for the kid's Christmas party at Free Street Church was met and then some!



Christmas Stockings



This was our 15th year providing Christmas gifts to Edgewood Nursing Home residents. Thirty five people enjoyed the generosity of God's people from WMBC.

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Thanks to Ondrej Paska (See Matthew 14:24-33) 01-04-2008

PETER FINDS HIS FAITH TO BE MUCH STRONGER IN THE WINTER

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.

— Jeremiah 17:7

Weekly Meetings @ WMBC

Mondays @ 6:30pm—Men's Bible Study

Tuesdays @ 9:00 am—Sewing Class

Wednesdays @ 9:00am—Women's Bible Study

Saturday @ 6:00pm—Prayer Meeting

Missions Ministry

Mission Ministry leader David Fletcher, is asking for a committee of interested folks to help him with making decisions and giving input into this Ministry. If you have a heart for Missions work, and would like to help serve in this way, please see David. If you want to find Dave, he is one of the guys running the sound booth.



Prison Ministry Opportunity

"I was a prisoner and you came to visit me." Matthew 25:36



Not every Christian can visit prison in person, of course. Despite COVID-19, WMBC is encouraging members to "VISIT" in other ways. It is possible to visit the incarcerated in an envelope, through a caring ministry of correspondence. Kairos international of Maine can securely match the name of a man or women behind bars with Christian volunteer PENPALS who offer encouragement, connection, hope and Christ-centered friendship. Adults are encouraged to write notes or letters. Children can draw pictures. All correspondence is screened by proper authorities. If you are interested in becoming a PEN PAL to an incarcerated individual please contact Dale Gilmour at (207) 578-0289, or dale.gilmour@gmail.com.



We are looking for contributions & ideas for future newsletters. If you have ideas to share, please contact the Newsletter production team of

Pat Pray, Crystal Fitch or Luci Milewski or email:

newsletter@westernmountainchurch.org

What's Happening @ WMBC

January

1st—Happy New Year!

2nd—Men's Breakfast @ 8am

3rd—Lord's Supper

5th—Leadership Team @ 6:30pm

9th—Women's Fellowship Meeting @ 1:00pm

10th—Guest from the First Choice Pregnancy Center

10th—Sliding Party after church

19th—Pastor, Elders, Deacons Meeting @ 6:30pm

23rd—Women's Fellowship Meeting @ 1:00pm

30th—Bridging the Gap

February

2nd—Leadership Team @ 6:30pm

6th—Men's Breakfast @ 8:00am

7th—Lord's Supper

13th—Women's Fellowship Meeting @ 1:00pm

14th—Teen Challenge Choir & Testimonies

14th—Sliding Party after church

16th—Pastor, Elders, Deacons Meeting @ 6:30pm

27th—Bridging the Gap

27th—Women's Fellowship Meeting @ 1:00pm

March

2nd—Leadership Team @ 6:30pm

6th—Men's Breakfast @ 8:00am

7th—Lord's Supper

13th—Women's Fellowship Meeting @ 1:00pm

16th—Pastor, Elders, Deacons Meeting @ 6:30pm

27th—Women's Fellowship Meeting @ 1:00pm

27th—Bridging the Gap

But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. — Romans 5:8

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