



GraceNet

Knoxville, TN

June 2015

Your First Day in Heaven

The day of your death was a surprise. Oh, you knew you were ill. Your walking was more like a shuffle and though all your life you struggled with weight, now the pounds were coming off without the crazy diets of the past. Your major, and yes, most panicky symptom was your breathlessness.

It was that sharp pain that staggered you as you made your way to the breakfast table. Then in rapid succession there were three more jots. You collapsed. Your daughter raced to you, but it was too late. You were less than a month from your ninety-first birthday.

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My first day...but how do I speak of days when there really is no darkness. The very first think I noticed is my skin. Yes, my skin! In my earthly life my skin was always a problem. Sun damage, faulty genes and whatever, had kept my dermatologist on speed dial. But here my skin was translucent, smooth...young!

Immediately there was no sensation of pain; no aching joints. I started hopping. My lungs were filled with air. I was vibrant, filled with energy – ready to climb a mountain. And I will climb a mountain and more!

Before me was a city. I use the word 'city' but it is only the best word I can come up with, though totally inaccurate. The one word description of this place would have to be: "perfect!" Beauty, symmetry and dazzling in every way should be part of the description of this place. The streets are of gold and radiant colors are reflected from every angle.

If you think of the most picturesque city or town that you have ever visited and multiply it by one thousand times, you may only begin to approach what heaven is like. The architecture of the city is simply indescribable.

There is not one inch of the city that is not pleasant to your sight and interesting to your mind.

The design and makeup are perfect in every detail. Every gate to the city is open. A river runs through the city and its water is crystal clear. On the sides of the river are trees laden with fruit. Indeed all around the city and in it are gardens rich in all kinds of vegetation and animals. Greenery and flowers make up a kaleidoscope of a kind never seen on earth.

With all the splendor and amazing sights, the greatest thing about heaven I have yet to mention. Way beyond my experience with the environment of heaven is the stupendous climax when you see God's face and the Lamb. The elation you feel exceeds anything you have ever known. Excitement, joy, exhilaration, euphoria, bliss, rapture and a hundred other words like these filled my heart and mind. Nor do I find these emotions and thoughts to fade or even diminish.

Heightening the effect on me, are seeing the heroes of the Bible. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua and King David are there. The twelve disciples are there as well as Paul and Mary and Joseph. Incredibly, and unexplainably, I know them all instantly and by sight and can converse with them. Then there are my loved ones! Joyous reunions make this first day and every day special. I have a super memory and I meet millions of others who like me had faith in Jesus Christ and His death on the cross for my sins.

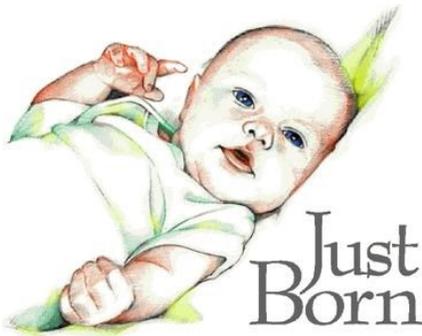
The Bible said that every tear would be wiped away -- no more sadness --- no more pain. It says that everything will be made new. Now, for me what was a hope and something I believed would be, is now my reality.

(Continued on page 2)

First Day in Heaven ***(Continued)***

You are not there yet. Stay on the pathway that Jesus Himself pioneered. Fix your eyes on Jesus and His promises. And though you cannot imagine what it will be like, try anyway! Remember always: Jesus has prepared a place for all believers in Heaven!

~ Pastor Rich



Lucas Bernardes Campbell

Born:
April 28, 2015

Proud Parents:
Colin and Claudia Campbell

Our Grace Family

Meet Larry Belt

Larry Belt began life in Marion, Ohio and has been married to Sylvia, celebrating 53 years of marriage on July 1st! Their time together produced daughter, Kristin, sons, Kevin and Kenneth, and six grandchildren! The letter "K" must stand for something very special because mention of any of these offspring certainly brings a soft glow to the countenances of both Larry and Sylvia. But back to Larry himself--Larry lists having worked as a young 24-year-old manufacturing manager who was sent to study telecommunication equipment manufacturing techniques. This prepared him to employ, train and manage many of the new employees at a new plant in Johnson City, Tennessee, which in turn employed nearly 2,300 personnel. Small wonder that Larry would love to be the President of the United States for just two years, which would result in much change of direction! The attached picture of Larry proudly holding a "catch" attests to his love of fishing anywhere, especially in the Canadian northern lakes. Grilled salmon, no less, is his favorite delicacy. His first solo flight as a pilot in 1978, and then on to airplane ownership and logging over 4,300 hours of fantastic flights all over the US and Canada, serves as some of his most memorable moments. But, if he had all kinds of time and money, he would drive a motor home to Alaska to explore the area with Sylvia and friends. Larry feels a deep compassion for helping people and believes he can serve as President of the Grace Board of Directors and truly hopes that his service to us reflects his strong conviction that "I am a child of God and know that through Jesus and His sacrifice, I have a reserved place with Him in a living eternity!"



GraceNet is published monthly by
Grace Lutheran Church – LCMS

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Articles for GraceNet are due by the 1st of each month for the following month's edition.

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If you have a special event you would like to have publicized in GraceNet, please submit the information to

Debbie Booher by the 1st of each month for publication in the following month's newsletter.

2015 Confirmation Class



*We are so proud of these young people.
Please keep them in your prayers as they start
a new chapter on their Christian journey.*

*Joseph Linsey Angelino
Garrett Michael Bloom
Nicholas Harold Boyd
Jacob Scott Cook
Sarah Anne Duncan
Dominick Waters Frizzell
Kaylynn Olivia Marjonen
Zachariah Elwood Smith
Ethan Lee Eckstrom Spradlin
James Ralph Stovall II
Erin Nicole Strickland
Evan Chase Thompson*

Congratulations to our 2015 Graduates!!

James Bretscher
L&N Stem Academy

Jonathan Bueckman
L&N Stem Academy

Nathaniel Ford
Maryville High School

Lexie Glisson
Karns High School

Gabriel Grebe
Bearden High School

Cooper Lawson
Halls High School

Logan Mackley
Hardin Valley Academy

Cameron Schneider
Hardin Valley Academy

Rachel Straub
Grace Christian Academy

Steven Elseroad
Samford University, M.S. Accounting

Josh Heidel
University of Tennessee, B.S. Mechanical Engineering

Josh Krebs
Maryville College



We're Proud of You!

Fathers and Grandfathers Honored in June

During the month of June, we will display books in the library which celebrate fathers and fatherhood. New among these titles are two books for our youngest users from *Jillian Harker* and illustrators *Kristina Stephenson* and *Daniel Howarth*. ***I Love you, Daddy*** (J Har) finds Little Bear and Daddy Bear exploring the world around them. Little Bear believes he can do it alone, but soon learns that he needs a helping hand from Daddy. ***I Love You, Grandpa*** (J Har) has Little Bear trying to be just like his Grandpa Bear. So when Grandpa shows him a few simple tricks for fishing, digging, and climbing, Little Bear realizes just how crafty, clever and wise his Grandpa is. Also from Harker are ***I Love You, Mommy*** (J Hr) and ***I Love You, Grandma*** (J Har) as Little Bear's adventures continue.

Another new picture book in the library is ***Goodnight, Ark*** by *Laura Sassi* (J Sas) The animals on Noah's ark cannot sleep because of the storm, so two by two they crowd into Noah's bed. Ride the ark with Noah to find out how he calms them in the midst of the storm.

New Non-Fiction Titles

A Trip Around the Sun: Turing Your Everyday Life into the Adventure of a Lifetime by *Mark Batterson* and *Richard Foth* (248.8 Bat): Foth, a father, grandfather and college professor, teams with Pastor Batterson to share their personal journeys following Jesus. Using their experiences and biblical principles, they guide their readers into living life to the fullest by thinking big, taking risks, and recalibrating their compasses when needed.

Praying Through the Names of God by *Tony Evans* (248.3 Eva): The Bible includes more than 85 names of God, each giving a description of who God is and how He relates to His creation. Each of God's names reveals an aspect of His nature suited to a specific personal need. Evans provides a prayer specific to each of God's names.

Wisdom From Women in the Bible: Giants of the Faith Speak Into Our Lives by *John C. Maxwell* (220.92 Max): Maxwell shares valuable lessons from nine women of faith: Ruth on decision-making; Sarah on patience; Rahab on disappointment; Miriam on discouragement; Mary on being asked to do the seemingly impossible; the Samaritan woman on feelings of unworthiness and more. Each chapter concludes with a personal reflection and questions for discussion.

New Fiction

The Song by *Chris Fabry* (Fic Fab): Explores the temptations of stardom and tests the limits of the promise that love is the power that heals.

Do You Believe? by *Travis Thrasher* (Fic Thr): When the stories of several desperate people come together one climatic night, they come to understand how amazingly God works in our lives.

My Heart Stood Still by *Lori Copeland* (Fic Cop): On a take off of the Robin Hood legend, the three McDougal sisters scam others and give their profits to the poor until they are caught and hauled off to jail. Things go from bad to worse when their transport wagon is attacked by Comanche warriors.

A Faith of Her Own by *Kathleen Fuller* (Fic Ful): As childhood Amish friends Anna Mae and Jeremiah reconnect after a 6-year estrangement, they must set aside former hurts to work side-by-side. Their respect for each other is also renewed as they learn how to heal and how to be a healer.

Chasing Sunsets by *Karen Kingsbury* (Fic Kin): Book 2 in ***Angels Walking*** series Mary Catherine grew up in wealth, but pursues meaning in her life through charity work. When she volunteers at a local youth center, she meets LA Dodger Marcus Dillinger. Though her intention was to remain single, she is drawn to Marcus until she receives devastating news from her doctor.

The Love Letters by *Beverly Lewis* (Fic Lew): Marlena is called upon to care for her estranged sister's baby taking her away from her Old Order Amish home and boyfriend. But a few weeks turns into more than she had hoped.

Double Cross by *DiAnn Mills* (Fic Mil): Book 2 in ***FBI: Houston*** series. Two FBI agents find themselves having to use a felon to lead them to the scammer targeting the elderly in their area. As the unlikely trio uncovers evidence on the scammer, the agents must decide whether they can trust the felon who claims redemption or are they being led into a double cross.

The Legacy by *Dan Walsh* and *Gary Smalley* (Fic Wal): Book 4 in the ***Restoration*** series Doug Anderson has been slowly drifting away from both his family and his faith. Attempts to reach him have been futile. But sometimes one has to hit bottom before being ready to change.

Find these and other materials new to the library along with titles honoring fathers on display throughout the month.



~ Mary Schultz

From Pastor Justin . . .

The American War on Christianity

By Joseph Callahan

Writer, Artist, Business Owner, Human Being
05/05/2015 www.huffingtonpost.com

It is pretty hard now days to turn on the television or open a newspaper without hearing about "the war on Christianity" and see devout believers lamenting on how horribly they are "persecuted" in America today. With gay marriage, abortion and atheists removing God from every aspect of the government, it seems pretty obvious that we secular citizens are using separation of church and state as a new battlefield against religion. How horrible a life American Christians must be forced to live.

In Iran, Christians are being executed for their faith. In Myanmar, you can be thrown in prison just for owning a Bible. In North Korea, well, you face death just for believing any God exists. The 2015 report from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) shows that **13 million people have fled** seven countries (Syria, Iraq, Nigeria, Central African Republic (CAR), Eritrea, Burma, and Afghanistan). Many of those displaced are Christians, and mostly due to fear of violence and/or death.

The Bible, and distributing it, is restricted in over 50 countries worldwide, and spreading the gospel will land you in jail or executed in many of those. But none of this compares to the wholly American horror of (possibly) being forced to bake a cake for a gay wedding! How could we compare the American "war on Christianity" to the Christians (and other religious beliefs) persecuted worldwide? I mean, our own little bubble, and our own discomforts in the first world are all that really matter. The rest of the world isn't us, so we shouldn't compare ourselves to them, right?

In America today, you can proudly say, "I'm a Christian" and carry a Bible with you everywhere you go. You can go to any church you want to without being arrested. You can say anything you want! You can even proclaim that you worship the Giant Spaghetti Monster, and all the persecution you will receive is strange looks from some people. Yet, in this, one of the most religiously tolerant nations, Christians are screaming persecution just because our laws are changing to embrace everyone's belief structure. By not allowing one faith to force their beliefs down our legal throats, the country has launched a "war" on (one specific) faith.

Let's say, for one minute, that this perceived war on Christianity is real, that American liberals and atheists want to persecute believers out of a sheer sense on malevolence. What should the Christian believer do in face of such hideous mistreatment? Let's turn to our Bibles.

Persecution should come as no big surprise if you read your Bibles. In John 15:20b (NIV), Jesus states "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also." Well, what exactly happened to Jesus? I think being beaten and executed counts as persecution. So, since "the world" (Non-believers) persecuted Jesus, shouldn't Christians expect persecution? Even Paul warns Timothy, "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution," (2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV).

So, Christians, at least those who read their Bibles, should not be surprised at persecution, weather real or perceived. They should, in fact, expect it. Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer..." (John 16:33 KJV), and the Apostle Peter said, "If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name," (1 Peter 4:16 NIV). So, not only should Christians expect persecution, but they should embrace it as a way to glorify God and be more Christ-like. The last thing they should ever do is complain. "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you," (1 Thessalonians 5:18 ESV).

Now, American Christians don't face death or jail, like many believers in other nations do, so they are forced to find this persecution anywhere they can. They have to look hard to find it, not to whine and lament about the injustice of it all, but to grow and rejoice in their faith. It makes me wonder, if we are truly waging a war on Christianity, then aren't we really doing them a favor?

Why Be Good?

If we are forgiven by God's grace, we wonder, "Why try to be good?" St. Paul takes that question up in the last part of Romans 5 and the first part of Romans 6. "Where there was more sin, God gave more grace." (Romans 5:20 and 6:1) Someone paraphrased this in a perverted way as, "If we like to sin and God likes to forgive, we can both be happy!"

But, Paul goes on in the first part of chapter 6 to say this is totally wrong. The reason why it is wrong is that we have been baptized, and our baptism changes everything. We are now different people under new management. Martin Luther's way of talking about it was to say because of our baptism we are like raisins baked into a cake with Christ. That was his way of explaining how baptism joins us to Christ.

When I was in high school we read Pygmalion in a literature class. You may know it as My Fair Lady. It is the story of an uncultured flower girl transformed into a society lady through the careful tutelage of a gentlemanly expert in speech accents. There were times when the former flower girl wanted to revert to her old ways. But, she was always brought back to her new position as a lady because she had become a new person and was no longer that crude flower girl. I always thought Pygmalion makes a good parallel to us in our baptism.

As concerns us, the person we were has been drowned and put to death in our baptism. In a preview of our resurrection from the dead when Christ comes again, we have also arisen from death to be a new person joined to Christ. In our baptism we were joined to Christ in such a way that it is as if we were on the cross with Him and also as if we came out of the grave with Him on the first Easter. We are now new people and do not want to go back to our old ways. All of these things are only a restatement of Romans 6.

In our baptism we die to the lordship of sin as a relentless power that would dominate our lives. It still lurks nearby and desires to entice us. Sometimes we slip and fall into it again, but with sincere regret afterward. Think about putting on your finest outfit to go someplace important. You have a little extra time and decide to do a small messy job. You believe you can be careful and not get dirty. But, something slips, and a little blob of greasy muck lands on your good clothing. Now you sincerely wish you had never touched that job while nicely dressed. Sinning is like that.

Someone said ethics in the New Testament is simply a matter of being who God has already made you to be.

~ Rev. Phil Bohlken

HealthLine is a 30-minute Medical Education television show hosted by Grace's very own Sheila Wittke.

AIR TIME: Sunday afternoons at 6:00 p.m.

STATIONS:

CTV COMCAST Cable Channel 12 (Knoxville)

CTV CHARTER 193 + WOW Channel 6 (Farragut)

AT&T U-Verse Channel 99

Direct TV and Others: You can stream HealthLine on your computers, but it must be done at the time it is aired. Go to CTVKnox.org, click the CTV icon and watch.



JUNE 2015 SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND GUESTS

07 - Understanding Glaucoma: Leading Cause of Blindness - Dr. Matthew D. Lowrance

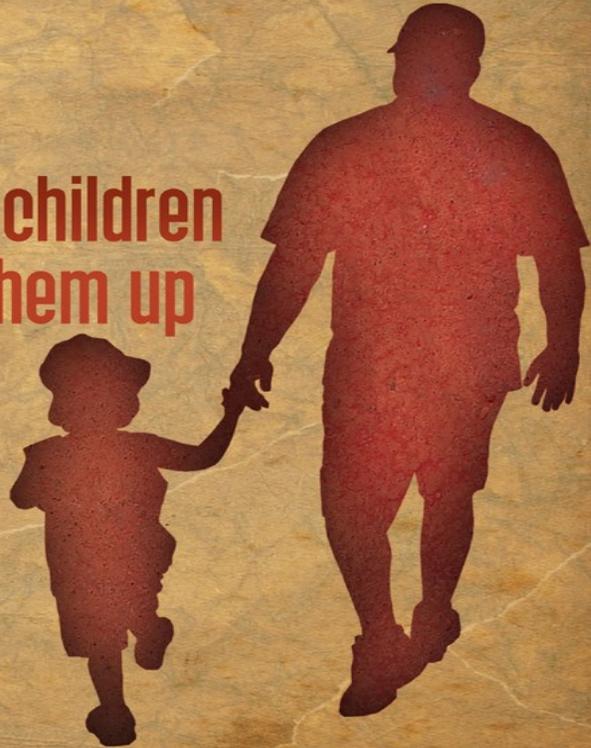
14 - Surgical Options for Thyroid Cancer - Dr. Michael Kropilak

21 - Why Mitral Val Replacement, Not Repair - Dr. Chadwick Stouffer

28 - Plantar Fasciitis of the Foot - Dr. Christine Seaworth

Fathers,
do not provoke your children
to anger, but bring them up
in the discipline and
instruction of the
Lord.

Ephesians 6:4, NRSU



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Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. (Traditional) and
9:30 a.m. (Blended)/11:00 a.m. (Contemporary)
Wednesday Worship: 6:30 p.m. (Blended)
Sunday School & Bible Classes @ 9:30 a.m./11:00 a.m.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

TO:

