

It's A Wonderful Life!

Senior Adult Fellowship

February & March 2021

'A Sermon in Shoes' – Martha Queen

Hello members of It's A Wonderful Life!

You've undoubtedly heard that our beloved IAWL co-leader, Martha Queen, "slipped the surly bonds of Earth" on Friday, January 22, and met our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ face to face.

I suspect that husband John, son Wesley, daughter Cary Ballard, you and I are all in agreement: It was way too soon. Yet Psalm 139 tells us, "And in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them."

You may have known that Martha only recently had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of leukemia and had already had a week of chemo, with more ahead of her. Whether it was the leukemia, the chemo or a combination, that took her down, I'm not sure. I imagine we'll hear more in the fullness of time.

The dynamic duo of Martha and John had been the perfect choice to follow the longtime leadership of Carla Brown. Loving, fun, thorough, thoughtful, Martha did much of the heavy lifting for IAWL, all the while doing her best to keep John's antics in check, not an easy task!

Martha and I not only served together on the IAWL board, but we were both elected to the Pulpit Search Committee. Though she wanted to continue in the hunt for a new pastor, she finally realized her health needed to be front and center and had, just last week, written a lovely but regretful letter resigning from that committee.

Members of the Pulpit Search Committee asked that I write a letter of thanks to her for her service. A night owl, I completed that letter at 5 a.m., on January 22, ready for committee signatures. Two hours later I was awakened to learn that while I was writing, she was entering the gates of glory about 4:30 a.m. That was chilling!

The following is that letter:

January 22, 2021

Dear Martha,

We've all heard about what happens to a three-legged stool when it loses one of its legs. Each leg is critical. Since the Pulpit Search Committee still has eight legs, we probably will not fall down, but we may be somewhat rickety without you.



You have been an esteemed, valuable and vital member of the search committee. We are loathe to see you go. We do totally understand, however. As each of us would do if we faced your challenges, we would want to be laser focused on getting back to perfect health – without distractions. As hard as it was for you to withdraw from the task that the whole church knew it could entrust to you, it is hard for us to be without your contributions.

You handled probably the most consuming task we faced so far – orchestrating Discovery Weekend. And it was a success! And only you could bring to the table (or the Zoom screen) the experience of being a pastor's wife. And "if the pastor's wife ain't happy, the pastor ain't going to be happy." We would have leaned heavily on you for your insights, in fact, the committee already had done some of that.

Know that we will not only miss your wisdom and wit, we will miss our weekly doses of friendship and camaraderie, though we'll be with you in spirit, accompanied by heartfelt prayers.

If you should need a ride, an errand run, a meal, a listening ear or someone to "wrastle" John to the ground, just give us a shout.

Nobody has to remind you (though we are) that we have a bond of love with you and a mutual faith in the Great Physician, who answers prayers and heals all our diseases.

Godspeed Martha,

Jerry Stauffer, chairman, Nancy Hill, vice chairman, Steve Dunn, secretary, Scotty Brown, David Cooper, Tom Hughes, Paul Laskowske and Skip Pond

Our interim senior pastor, Dr. Tim Kirk, and former Lookout Mountain Presbyterian senior pastor Joe Novenson did splendid jobs of conducting Martha's memorial service to an overflowing audience. Joe's memorable theme and apt description of Martha was that she was "A Sermon in Shoes."

She would do anything she could for others. She was a prayer warrior. She served on a variety of committees, not to fill a roster, but to be a worker. She was a gift giver extraordinaire. She was supportive and made you feel good, regardless of your station. Joe asked John what one word described her. Without hesitation he declared "generous."

Joe reported that son Wesley said, "If you're 50% of Martha, you're 100% better than anybody else." Daughter Cary, reflecting on her mother's attention to gift giving, said that a surprise set of monogrammed pajamas was delivered within a matter of hours after her passing!

Pastor Novenson quoted John of Martha's time in the hospital receiving chemo, "I just want to be a witness" to the hospital staffers. That she was, not just at the hospital, but to all whom she met – "A Sermon in Shoes."

Prayers are coveted for John; children, Wes and Cary and spouses; grandchildren; her brother; and other close family and widespread friends. Martha was indeed a Queen among us and will be sorely missed.

David Cooper, for IAWL board members Janette Barnes, vice chairman, Marilyn Bonderud, Betty Jones, Anita and Ron Kohlin, Diane and Lauch McKinnon, Chris Page and Rosa Wrenn

Birthdays ...

February

- 5 John Killeffer
- 6 Missy Griscom
Barbara Mahoney
Rosa Wrenn
- 9 Kathleen Craven
Richard Hempy
- 15 John Fowler
- 17 Ann Walldorf
Ann Williams
- 18 Marianne Thomas
- 20 Ron Rowland
- 21 Bill Neill
Roberta Thomas
- 23 David Cooper
- 26 Marilyn McBride
- 27 Linda Soules
- 28 Daryl Stewart



March

- 2 Gail Kooi
- 3 Jean Culpepper
Don Self
- 4 Debbie Joiner
Margie Richards
- 5 Jim Cate
- 6 Marye Anne Sibold
- 8 Pete Austin III
- 9 Elizabeth Partee
- 17 Ed Koehn
- 23 Janette Barnes
- 26 Faith Cochran
Deaderick Moon
- 28 Charlotte Partain
- 29 Dorothy McDowell
Mike Doubleday
- 31 Betty Winston

Prayer & Praise ...

Jean Adcox	Jim Hellmann	Elizabeth Simonds
Linda Austin	Geoffrey Joynt	Estes Stephens
Warren Baker	Jean Kinser	Roberta Thomas
Janette Barnes	Teeny Lassiter	Tim Tinsley
Jim Brewer	Ann Maddox	Herman Weaver
Dody Campbell	Virginia Marion	Rosalie Williams
Faith Cochran	Bobbie Meadows	Robert & Harriett Berman's daughter, Kathryn
Rick Collins	Janet Moon	Charles & Carolyn Hill's son, Steven
Charles Coolidge	Smith Murray	C.J. & Joan Moore's granddaughter, Maedean
Kathleen Craven	Bob Payne	Paul Ritch's, sister Martha Ann, & her husband Gene, &
Frankie Ditto	Ann Rankin	also Paul's brother, Rev. D. L. Ritch & niece, Vicky
Jeanne Evans	Gary Reid	Terry & Sherry Tucker's son, Richie
Karen Fisher	Larry Ryan	
Steve George	Don Self	
Jean Hawkins	Marye Anne Sibold	

In Loving Memory ...

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of those who have passed away.

- Family & friends of Martha Whaley
- Family & friends of Becky Parry
- Family & friends of Anne Allen
- Muecke Barker, death of his brother, Ed
- Wilma Dietzen, death of her sister, Betty Smith
- Helen Perry, death of her sister-in-law, Velma Mason
- Stultz family, death of Andy's mother, Jane Stultz
- Patty Frierson, death of her husband, Carter
- Family & friends of Dot Rucker
- Kelly McClanahan, death of her father Charles Kenneth Smith
- Sharon Thompson, death of her mother, Wanda Hall
- Joan Akin, death of her sister, Sue Payne
- Nancy Shaughnessy and son James in the death of Kevin Shaughnessy
- Dan Starcher and family in the death of his brother-in-law, Perry Gauthier.
- Bob Wilkerson, death of his mother Josephine Wilkerson
- John Queen, death of his beloved wife, Martha



1. God is with you, wherever you wander.

“Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” — Romans 8:39 (NIV)

Sometimes we get caught up in our sin. We all have moments where our mistakes take control, where our hearts are weighed down with heaviness, when we feel so far away from God. But here’s the thing: God sees all of that. He sees our mess, our brokenness, our guilt. And He loves us anyway.

There is nowhere we can go to hide from His love. There is no point in our lives where He sees us as undeserving or unworthy of love. There is nothing we can do to separate ourselves from Him.

So even when you feel like you’ve gone so far from His grace, know that He hasn’t left your side. Know that all you need is to ask for forgiveness, to clean your heart, and to trust in Him to lead you out of temptation and back into healing and light.

2. You can find strength in His name.

“I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.” — Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

There will be moments when your faith falters, when you’re lonely or exhausted or just plain sad. There will be moments where grief grabs hold of you and crumbles you to the ground, where all that you’ve believed feels empty, and when each breath feels like a chore. But in these moments, you will find redemption and power in His name. In these moments, if you choose to follow Him, He will guide you away from the heartbreak, the loneliness, the death, the loss, the toughest moments of your life, and back into His arms.

God’s word and love will give you strength, even when you feel empty.

So, trust Him. Give Him control. Give Him your fears and anxieties and aches. Give Him all of you, and allow Him to work His beauty and grace into your life. Let Him remind you, you are — a child of God.

3. You are loved, even on your darkest days.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” — John 3:16 (NIV)

God loves you so much. He loves you enough to give His Son for you, to watch His Son die for you, to put the sins of the world on His back for you. That is incredible love.

Some days you may feel undeserving, blemished, bruised. But God doesn’t see you that way. He sees how you haven’t measured up, He sees the sin you carry and commit, but more importantly, He sees forgiveness. He sees you as His son or daughter. He sees you as His creation, and there is nothing you can do to remove that beautiful image from His mind.

On your darkest days, remember that He is with you. Remember that He loves you. Remember that He will never forsake you.

Remember that His Son died for you, and all you need to do is repent and believe in Jesus and the forgiveness of sins.

Then be cleansed, renewed, replace dark with light, and start again in His name.

4. He will guide you out of temptation if you trust Him.

“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the One who is in the world.” — 1 John 4:4 (NIV)

Temptation is all around us. It will knock at your door, it will bang on your window, it will try to sneak its way into your heart. But when you feel lost or that your faith is wavering, when you feel like your guard is slowly breaking down — pray, trust. Know that God is stronger than any temptation, and if you trust Him, He will rescue you.

5. You serve an Almighty God.

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.” — Isaiah 40:28 (NIV)

Our God is so big. He is bigger than any pain we may experience, any evil we may face, any hardship that tries to break us into little pieces. He is bigger than our fear or failure. He is bigger than any doubt.

When you feel like your world is spinning out of control, when you're unsure whether you have the strength to continue, remember that God has you in the palm of His hand. Wherever you go or whatever you do, He is with you. And that will never change.

6. You have not been abandoned.

“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” — Romans 12:10 (ESV)

Not only is God always with you, but you are surrounded by a community of believers. There are so many people who care for you, who have good intentions with your heart, who long to protect and love and support you when you're low. Reach out to these people. Be open to their help. Solicit advice and kindness when you need it. Build friendships. Open your heart.

You were never meant to face this world alone.

Talk to the people you sit by at church. Extend a helping hand to someone who's struggling. Pray for a stranger, for a friend, for someone you've never met. Know that God intended His community to be here on earth and build those connections all around you. You are never alone.

7. God sees the good you are doing.

“God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.” — Hebrews 6:10 (NIV)

It can be so easy to fall into the trap of feeling not good enough. Whether it be a kindness gone unnoticed, a tired ache after a long day, feeling like you're never measuring up, or that God doesn't care — it happens to all of us. But often this is because we're too focused on ourselves to see that God is blessing us in so many ways, and often in different ways than we expect.

We should always do good; not because we want it returned to us, but out of the kindness of our hearts. We should allow God's love to fill us and shine through us. We shouldn't be hoping for a reward. But we should also know that God does see the positive things we are doing; a good deed, in His eyes, doesn't go unnoticed. He loves us and hasn't forgotten us.

8. Your faith is more powerful than your fear.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” — John 14:27 (NIV)

This world will give you so many unknowns — whether that's career-wise, love/relationship-wise, health-wise, status-wise, or even where you call home. There are moments you can't plan for, whether that has to do with your loved ones, your decisions, or how moments play out around you. In those moments you can fold, you can be anxious, you can live with regret or fear, or you can trust God.

Let your faith in the Father be bigger than any fear.

Even when times are tough, even when you're unsure where to go, even when you're filled with doubt, know that God has a plan. Know that God isn't just going to leave you in the dust. This world might not always make sense, and your prayers might not be answered in the way you hope, but that doesn't mean He's ignoring you. Perhaps an unanswered prayer is a blessing you never know you needed. Perhaps a closed door is an opened one down the road. Perhaps the pain you're feeling is a powerful lesson in strength. Perhaps you simply need a reminder that you serve an all-powerful God.

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Senior Adult Fellowship
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This newsletter is prayerfully prepared for:

A Gift from God by John P. Read

Love can't be described.
It has no shape, it has no form.
Love is not an object.
Love does not conform.

Love enters our lives
The moment we are born.
From the cradle to the grave,
Love's in everyone.

Love burns like a candle
That sometimes flickers but never dies.
Love may be invisible,
Although it's right before your eyes,

Love can leave you empty,
Love can make you whole.
Love can make or break you,
Love is in your soul.



Love is in your heart,
Love is in your mind.
Love doesn't discriminate,
Love is always blind.

Love is universal,
It encompasses the globe.
No matter where you are,
Love has a language all its own.

Love is all around you.
There's plenty of love to spare.
You cannot see or touch it,
But love is everywhere.

Love's the greatest power,
And yet it is so small.
Love's a gift from God
To be shared amongst us all.