

Good News and good news

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Being a Gatekeeper...

by Judi Sweeney

When Pastor Joe first shared our monthly verse (*"For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God."* Psalm 84:10), I found myself drawn to the word "gatekeeper." Different versions of the Bible substitute the word "doorkeeper" for "gatekeeper," and that idea brought back to my memory several instances of my own door or gatekeeping.

As the oldest sibling, I felt it was my duty and privilege to answer the door when someone knocked. At the sound of a knock or later, the doorbell, I would fly to the door trying to beat my mother or father. There were a lot of door knockers when I was a child. The milkman and ice man (we had an original ice box for storing our cold needing food) knocked at the backdoor almost daily. I loved opening the door to these kind men who knew my name and greeted me like I was a grown-up, but they always waited until my mother or father appeared before they would come into the kitchen with their goods.

As I grew older, I actually started opening the front door. That was more exciting to me then, but I didn't recognize the danger at all for quite a while. People came to the door to sell cosmetics, encyclopedias, brushes, and much more. One day my mother was busy with my younger sister, and I heard the knock. "I got it," I yelled to my mother. I opened the door, then opened the screen door. "Come in," I said politely. I had never seen the man before, and I had never invited someone in before. I tried to do it as my mother had let salesmen come into our home. My mother came around the corner and stopped in her tracks to see a stranger already in the house. I don't remember what he was selling, but my mother sent him on his way quite quickly. Any person who would come into a home on a child's word was never going to get her business. I then got a very serious lecture about how dangerous it was to let people you didn't know into the house. That lesson stuck with me.

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Summer Service 9:30 am Begins June 2



Memorial Day

Chicken Barbecue

Eat-in or Take-out
Full Chicken or Hot Dog Meals
Tickets go on Sale May 1



My Ministry Features...

by Judi Sweeney

Starting with this newsletter, we are introducing a new feature of the newsletter – My Ministry. Each of us has been given talents, skills, and Spiritual gifts we are to use in the world. Some of our ministries are at home, others in the neighborhood or at work. Some of us are called to places far away. We want to encourage all believers to minister to others where God leads us to serve, love, and share the truth of God's love and salvation. I started with an article about Bridget Reynold's ministry to people in need. She wrote this herself. In the following weeks and months, my hope is that you will share your ministry with me via writing or just talking with me. May our ministries bring encouragement to all those in our church family!

good news...

These are the birthdays of people age 65 and older and couples with anniversaries from May 22nd to June 10th.

Birthdays:

Berkeley Burnham	May 26
Nancy Olson	May 23
Gretchen Mollins	May 23
Deb Arnold	June 7
Joan Hume	June 10

Anniversaries:

Stu & Lucille Rideout	May 27
Gregg & Cindy Jorritsma	June 4

Altar Flowers

If you are bringing altar flowers, please contact Deb Arnold and Judi Sweeney to let us know who the flowers remember or what they celebrate.

My Ministry...

by Bridget Reynolds

I was excited when Judi asked me write an article for the newsletter "My Ministry." I believe every believer is called into ministry even when we work in a secular job.

I've worked as a professional driver for the last 8 years. My first job was driving special needs students to school at Van Pool. I got to know the students and their families well. Some had younger children caring for their older disabled siblings. Some were facing temporary homelessness. I drove all over Massachusetts in rich neighborhoods and public housing communities. I discovered community is so important because no one can handle everything alone. During my time at Van Pool, I drove an 8 year old boy who lost his Mom to a drug overdose and his Dad was serving time for drug related offenses and theft. This boy lived in public housing with his grandfather and was active in speaking out about drugs and crime, a lifestyle that never pays off. He pulled together a neighbors-helping-neighbors

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Monthly Prayer Verse • Psalm 84:10-11

**Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere;
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of the wicked.**

Blue lettering indicates those groups that have updated information.

Adult Sunday School Class

This adult Bible Study meets weekly during the school year from 9:30 - 10:15 am in the Conference Room. Starting on January 21st, the class will be taught for awhile by Patti Barney using the book *Psalm 91*.

Monday Morning Women's Bible Study

Meeting weekly at Phyllis Cobiski's home at 23 Gilbert Street from 10 - 11:30 am. The group will be starting a new study called "Breaking Free" on January 8th. Contact Pauline Dwelly for information.

Women's Monday Afternoon Bible Study

This group will begin a new study using the book *Grounded in the Faith* which has twenty-four low prep, in-depth sessions that are meant to ground believers in the basics of their faith. Topics include justification, sanctification, evidence for the inspiration of the Bible, the Trinity, God's attributes, Jesus' humanity and divinity and much more. The cost of the book is \$20. We'll begin this study on April 29th. Contact Susan Gainley.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

This group meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 6 to 7:30 pm. The group meets in the Parlor. Contact Karen Bessette for more information.

Overcomers - NEW

This new women's Bible Study meets on Monday nights at Jeannine Fish's home. Contact Jeannine for details.

It's All About Jesus

This Bible Study group meets to learn more about Jesus through the Scriptures. The group meets on Tuesday evenings at 6 pm. Contact Jade Ford for more information.

Men's Bible Study

This group is currently in the book of



Exodus, working through the Bible with a Bible Study entitled *The Essential 100*. We're discovering the 100 most inspirational passages in God's Word that truly identify the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. We meet on Tuesday from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in the Conference Room. Contact Brian Roth.

Understanding Spiritual Gifts - Zoom

This Zoom Bible study biweekly on Wednesday nights from 6:45 pm. They are Studying Spiritual Gifts, a study by Kay Arthur (available on Amazon). Contact Marcia Cummings to get a Zoom invite for the class as well as for more information.

Christian Yoga • Balanced in Him

Meeting every Wednesday night in the parlor. Contact Holly Kularski for information.

Prayer Group

This group meets weekly on Fridays at 9:30 - 11:00 am in the Conference Room. Contact Nancy Olson for details.

Celia Daniel's Bible Study

This Bible Study meets in the Multi-Purpose Room on Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:00 pm. Contact Celia Daniels for more information.

Sweeney Bible Study

We continue with our life application Bible studies. Our next meetings will be on May 23rd and June 6th. Contact Judi Sweeney.

Living Single - NEW

This new group for singles aged 30+ meets on Thursday nights. On first and third Thursdays in each month, they meet in the Conference Room. On 2nd and 4th

Thursdays, they do activities in the area. Contact Bridget Reynolds for details.

Men's Saturday Breakfast and Study

The monthly men's breakfast and Bible Study is on the second Saturday of each month. Contact Dale Wadsworth for information. **The next breakfast is June at 8:15 am.**

Drawing Closer

The Bible Journaling Group will meet in the Multi-Purpose Room from 9:30 - 11:00 am on Saturdays. Contact Deb Arnold.

Parents of Little Ones Bible Study

This new group will meet at the Hulsebus' home on the first Saturdays of the month. This group is starting a new study called "Grace Based Parenting" by Dr. Tim Kimmel. Please reach out to Brian or Jessie for more information.

Jr. KICK

This group for students in grades 6 through 8 meets from at 2:00 to 3:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Ignite

This group for high school students meets from 4 - 5:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Sharing Christ Through Cards

Watch the newsletter for the next session.

Joy 'n Hope

The Cancer Care Ministry supports people with cancer as well as their caregivers. They also pray for people whose life is impacted by cancer each month. See Melanie Silva Fortier for more information.

Celebrating Our Moms... by Mary Beth Kularski

On May 12th, the younger students celebrated their Moms! We focused on Ephesians 6:1-3 ESV, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." We also looked at the commandment about parents, "Honor your father and mother that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." (This is the first commandment with a promise.) We played a couple of games together and matched famous mothers and their children in the Bible, a real test of what we have learned. It was such a blessing to see that they have been soaking it all in like sponges. Together we made cards and planters to show our appreciation for the awesome moms with whom we have been blessed!



Big Hugs...

by Crystal Caron

We studied the story of the Prodigal Son this week in class and did a fun craft that's symbolic of how happy the father was to have his son back home. What wonderful assurance to know that God is always waiting for us with open arms even if we veer off path in life. He's always there waiting to offer that all-encompassing big hug.



The Story of Elijah...

by Sue Caron

After the reign of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel divided. The northern tribes became more and more pagan. Ahab became king and he and his wife Jezebel were very wicked. They worshiped a false god named Baal. God's prophet Elijah was told to go to Ahab and tell them to follow the One, True God. They refused and Elijah told them they would not have rain for many years. Because of the drought food was in short supply. God took care of Elijah leading him to a brook and sending ravens to feed him. When the brook dried up, Elijah was told to go to the home of a widow and her son and ask for bread and water. The woman only had enough for one last meal with her son. Elijah said, feed me first and trust God to provide until the rain returns. She did and God took care of them. The woman's son died of an illness and Elijah prayed to restore life to the boy and it was so. Elijah returned to Ahab and Jezebel and challenged them to build an altar to Baal. Elijah would build an altar to God. They would each pray to their own god to send fire to light the sacrifice. Ahab, Jezebel, and their 450 prophets prayed to Baal for many hours and nothing happened. Then Elijah dug a trench around the altar, filled it with water, and poured water over the altar. He prayed to God. The altar, the water in the trench and even the stones burned up! God showed his power, and still Ahab and Jezebel wouldn't believe. Jezebel was SO MAD she said she would have Elijah killed. He ran in fear for his life. He wanted to give up. He got some sleep and God sent an angel to feed and strengthen him for another long journey. He traveled forty days and nights to Mt. Horeb where God sent a fiery chariot to take Elijah to heaven. After the lesson, the kiddos made cards for their moms.

Following God's Instructions... by Karen McGrail

We started with prayer and a short video. The story was from 2 Kings 5. After taking Elijah up to heaven, God raised a new prophet named Elisha to speak God's message and show God's power. Naaman was a commander in the Syrian army who stole an Israelite girl. This girl, instead of being bitter, helped Naaman. He had leprosy and the girl told him about the prophet Elisha and her God who could heal him. So, Naaman met Elisha who told him to dip in the Jordan River 7 times. Naaman was at first too proud to do this, but eventually he did it and was healed. Elisha did not want any payment for this because he said it was God's grace, but his servant went back to Naaman and accepted the money. He then lied to Elisha regarding taking the money, and so God punished him with leprosy. His servant learned the difficult way that there are some gifts money can't buy -- especially GRACE (God's Riches at Christ's Expense). The lesson was teaching us how important it is to obey God even if He asks you to do something that may seem strange. We then created tissue paper crosses that looked like stained glass as well as mosaic crosses to remind us of God's grace. We ended with several Bible trivia questions.



Gatekeeper...continued from page 1...

Gatekeepers in the Bible

Remembering about these kinds of incidents made me want to understand what door or gatekeepers were all about in the Bible. The first gatekeeper was an angel. In Genesis 3:24 we read God's instructions to a cherubim who was to keep Adam and Eve from ever re-entering the Garden of Eden, "He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life." So, from the very beginning, God's gatekeepers were supposed to keep sin out.

By the time of Moses and the Exodus to the Promised Land, God had established gatekeepers. God called His people to be in fellowship with Him, but there were restrictions to this. Sin was not to enter into the place where God fellowshiped with his people. Gatekeepers kept out those who would try to sin within this special place. Once in the Promised Land, one grandson of Aaron (Moses' brother) put a man named Phinehas in charge of the gatekeepers of the Tabernacle. They guarded the entrance to the Tabernacle tent day and night, keeping the unrighteous from coming into the place where God dwelled and opening the door each morning so that people could bring their sacrifices and offerings to the priests.

Samuel became a gatekeeper himself. In 1 Samuel 3:15 we read, "Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD." Samuel, only a young boy at this point, was given the job of gatekeeper -- locking up the doors in the evening and opening them in the morning. He did what Eli's sons couldn't do because of their evil nature.

Later, Solomon, son of David, finished the work of his father by building the first temple. David had appointed 4,000 Levites (the gatekeepers' tribe) to guard the gates of the temple day and night, and 4,000 more were appointed to praise God with musical instruments. (1 Chronicles 23:5). These men were divided into divisions headed by Levi's sons -- Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The family of Kohath was

specially designated by David to be both gatekeepers and musicians of praise. The original member of the family, Korah, had been part of a rebellion of the people in the Wilderness against Moses and God. Korah and others had wanted anybody to be able to come into the area of worship and offer sacrifices without the questioning of the gatekeepers. There would be no one gatekeeping, keeping unrighteous and evil people away from this special place of God. The Lord would not accept this, and He sent down fire on Korah and 250 of those who felt the same way he did. Korah died, but his sons carried on and became faithful gatekeepers. (Note that Psalm 84 was a song the sons sang.)

When the Kings of Israel were evil, people who shouldn't have been let in came into the temple and performed all kinds of evil sin with impunity. The gatekeepers themselves committed some these sins. When the Kings of Israel were righteous, the gatekeepers did their jobs -- they guarded the gates and worshipped God through music.

But the people of Israel, even the religious leaders, always slipped back into their sinful ways. Then one day, Jesus appeared in Jerusalem in the final week of his life. He went into the temple and drove out all of the merchants and moneychangers. He cleansed the temple, fulfilling what gatekeepers should do once and for always.

Personal Gatekeeping

So, how does this apply to us personally? The idea of gatekeeping can apply to the church and the people within it. It also, though, can apply to each believer. The Bible tells us that our bodies as believers are temples for the Holy Spirit ("Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?," 1 Corinthians 6:19). We need to be gatekeepers of our hearts, minds and souls. We are to shut the door on unholy influences, sin, and temptations that keep us from following the urging of the Spirit. We need to open the door when the light shines and bring in all that God offers us to fulfill His purpose for our lives and for the Kingdom. It truly is better to be a gatekeeper in the house of my God!



Spring #2
This CLEAN UP
Saturday, May 25th
8:30 am - 12:30 pm

We'll be cleaning up the Green and parking lot so everything is ready for the Memorial Day Chicken BBQ on May 27th.

Is God calling you to be baptized?

Our annual baptism service is on Sunday, June 23rd. See Pastor Joe or a Diaconate member if you are interested.



Meeting Dates Vacation Bible School for Helpers and Teachers

If God is calling you to help out at Vacation Bible School this summer (July 22 - 26), please make note of these meeting dates. The meetings will be held from **6:30 - 7:30 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room in the Church Office Building**. The meeting dates are:

May 23 • June 12 • July 10



My Ministry...continued from page 1...

program in the housing community working to keep drugs out of their community. At 8 years old he tutored younger kids, and even mentored teenagers who had already turned to drugs, pleading with them to give it up before they suffered the consequences. I was one of his biggest cheerleaders.

I had a pre-school student who needed walking aides, and additional support inside the car seat to help her sit safely. I learned how to use her adaptive equipment to get her safely into and out of the van even though it was her parents' responsibility. After a year, Mom wrote a letter to my supervisor thanking me for going above and beyond because she was battling post partum depression after giving birth to this child's baby brother. Mom was afraid that she would hurt her daughter. This little girl even learned how to talk while in the van because of the singalong songs I played.

I worked for two years at St. Francis adult day care. I was supporting families as they came to grips with needing more support for their family member. Once I was driving a blind woman past a cemetery. I don't know how she knew we were going past a cemetery, but suddenly she asked how the people got out of their graves. Taken by surprise, I said "Jesus." She pointed out that no one who got out of the grave had health problems, no walkers or wheelchairs. Again, I said "Jesus." She wanted to know more about Jesus. While I shared the

Good News with her, I said she could go live with Jesus, but she needed to let me get her home first. I told the family and the Chaplain at work about her decision for Christ. She died three days later. Several other participants who were in the van that day began to actively seek Jesus.

Now I work for First Student driving the big yellow school bus for a district that is largely diverse: blacks, whites, Asians, Muslims, Jehovah Witnesses, and Christians. There are huge economic differences within the district causing lots of arguments between the haves and have nots. The middle school and high school kids are trying to discover for themselves who they are apart from family influence. I had a 12 year-old boy remind me of God's grace when he was bullied by a girl for his Christian belief, and she stole his Bible to try to prove him wrong. She spent the rest of the ride reading the Bible trying to find something to use against him. The boy told me not to write her up because she needed grace. That boy had it right.

I have elementary school kids talking about family struggles. I may be a bus driver, but I can show Christ's love through my actions. A Christian mentor told me to remember that I am the only Bible some people will read, so I need to live it out with my actions. I don't have the strongest prayer routine, but before I leave my house I often pray "God use me," and I find that He does use me in ways I never expected.

Women's Retreat • Camp Monadnock



Luke 13:22-35

N C B S O M E G Y A U U
L H O U S E G A L L I V
M A P M N L W T O W N S
C A S T E A C H I N G M
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VILLAGES

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COME
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JERUSALEM
KINGDOM
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SOME
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BEHOLD
DOOR
GATHERS
JOURNEYING
KNOW
PROPHET
TEACHING
TODAY
TOWNS
WHEN