

The Messenger

Bringing God's word straight to your door!



Serve Humbly in Love

by Steven and Deb Koster

Servitude is not a glamorous concept. Who in their right mind would sign up for a life of servitude? And yet that is what God has in mind for his people. God knows how service to others will bless us as well as the community around us.

Service is a great way to put aside our self-centeredness and notice how we are connected, even indebted, to others. When we start seeing the genuine needs of others, it deters our own sense of entitlement. None of us became the people we are alone, but by the sacrifice and investment of many others from our earliest years. And that doesn't take into account what Christ has done for us.

Serving others not only reveals the bonds between us; it reflects the love of God.

When we notice service to us, and when we serve others, we experience God's grace. It points people to Christ. Jesus modeled grace that goes way beyond our understanding. He emptied himself for us, though we deserved nothing. His example calls us to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" ([Ephesians 5:21](#)).

In our "me-first" culture, God calls us to put others first. What a challenge!

Are we looking out for others the way we look out for ourselves? Can we put their needs ahead of our own? How are you serving in your community?

VERSE OF THE WEEK



PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Lord, teach us how to serve one another. Help us to put the needs of others first, as you did for us. Show us ways to use our gifts to bless others. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Power of One by Betsy Bossaer

During this crazy time of the pandemic I suspect all of us have had a wide range how we have responded emotionally, behaviorally, and spiritually. For myself, in the beginning I was absolutely terrified at the prospect of contracting the virus and dying. I wrote all my goodbye letters to my family and put them in a safe place. I updated all my user names and passwords for on-line accounts and recoded them with directions about each account. We updated bank accounts so our children would have access to them. I wrote out my thoughts about final wishes for my funeral. I stayed home, only going out for food. I watched my children and their families struggle to work from home and care for their young children and not being able to help as we were following the recommendations of medical folks. And, I prayed a lot.

As a person used to “doing” and “going” this time has been extremely difficult and continues to be so as it drags on and on and on. In order to feel like I was doing something, I began to use FaceBook to post videos of the choir singing from the past, and posting a daily prayer and Bible verse. It just seemed that we needed to connect with our church family even if it was virtually. I also started just making phone calls and sending texts to some of the members of our church family to see how everyone was doing. Now, none of those things are big things at all but they were small things I could do from the safety of my kitchen table.

As time went on, I decided it was worth the risk to see my family, to go to church, to be out and aboutbut always wearing a mask to protect myself and others around me.

As we are now back in a time of rising cases and deaths due to the virus, we find ourselves staying home more and continuing to take precautions.....at least most “older” folks are.

This made me think of the difference each one of us can make to others. I love quotes and found several by Mother Teresa that spoke to me:

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.

If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.

Do not wait for leaders, do it alone, person to person.

We can do no great things – only small things with great love.

Just think about the people in our church family and in your family and in your work or social circle. Think about how each one of those people has changed your life in some way.

Who knows how long this will go on or when the next time of crisis will come.

I challenge myself and each of you to be “the power of one.” Each of us can do one thing every day that blesses someone else and many of those things do not require us to leave our homes. We can call someone. We can write a note or send a card to someone. We can take food to someone. We can donate money to a worthy cause. We can pray for someone. We can do oh, so, many, small, good, things.

Just think what could happen if each one of us did one thing every day for someone else.....just think.....each of us has the power of one.

Bringing God's Word to All...

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13

¹LORD, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. ²You forgave the iniquity of your people; you pardoned all their sin. ⁸Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. ⁹Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. ¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet righteousness and peace will kiss each other. ¹¹Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. ¹²The LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. ¹³Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.

Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

⁸Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:1-8

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 3

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’ ”

⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”



Hymn of the Week, by Jenelle Foddrill

O Holy Night

The words, “O Holy Night,” were written in 1847 by a French wine seller named Placide Clappeau. He was the mayor of Roquemaure, a town in the south of France. There isn’t much known about him except that as a hobby he wrote poems.

The man who composed the music was a Parisian named, Adolphe Charles Adam. John Dwight, discovered the French Carol, “Christian Midnight” and he translated it into the English hymn, “O Holy Night.” John was an ordained minister of the Unitarian church in Northampton. He also was one of America’s first influential classical music critic. Such an oddity that a wine merchant, a penniless Parisian, and a liberal clergyman would give Christianity one of it’s holiest hymns about Jesus Christ, Savior of the world.



“O Holy Night” is one of my most favorite Christmas hymns. I often find myself thinking of my Aunt Rita when hearing this song. This song has been performed by many artists around the world. My all-time favorite rendition of this song is by Martina McBride. If you’ve never heard her version, I encourage you to give it a listen! “O Holy Night,” is a beautiful song telling the tale of our dear Savior’s birth!

“Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love and His gospel is peace. Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother, and in His name, all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful choirs raise we, let all within us Praise His Holy name. Christ is the Lord, O praise his name Forever! His power and glory evermore proclaim, His power and glory evermore proclaim!”



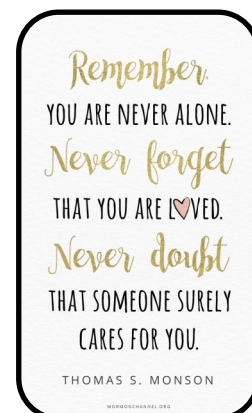
JOKE OF THE WEEK!



Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers when the youngest one began praying at the top of his lungs.

"I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE...
I PRAY FOR A NEW NINTENDO...
I PRAY FOR A NEW VCR..."

His older brother leaned over and nudged the younger brother and said, "Why are you shouting your prayers? God isn't deaf." To which the little brother replied, "No, but Gramma is!"



For those who are watching from home you may still send in your offerings to the church each week. For FPC please send to 104 N. Illinois St. and for NHL please send to P.O. Box 869.

We
rise
by lifting
others