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March 2021

Steve's Slant

Lenten Journal, Week Two: What “beasts” have you encountered, internally or externally?

Last Thursday I got the call that comes to almost everyone, eventually, the one none of us ever wants to get.

It was from my sister, with the news that her sweet daughter, Annalisa, her only child and my only niece, was in the hospital and it did not look good. Annalisa suffered from a chronic disease for many years and it suddenly looked like she might die of it.

She was gone within twenty-four hours. Annalisa was warm-hearted, fun-loving and remarkably generous. She loved sci-fi movies and cats, and she loved to laugh (among many other things). And she loved her two uncles, and we loved her.

I can hardly bear the thought of the world without her in it. Of never seeing her again. Of not seeing another Star Trek movie with her. Of never making her laugh, or hearing her laugh, ever again.

In light of the steadily mounting death toll from COVID, I was already aware that I had been holding a lot of grief inside. But now my grief has a name, and a face. The person who has passed is someone I knew, someone I loved dearly.

Not surprisingly, the grief I now feel around losing Annalisa has affected me altogether differently than the ambient grief that had slowly been building up inside of me over the last year.

Within minutes, all the things I have learned about grief over the course of my life and my ministry came flooding back, partly because those lessons were hard won, and hard earned, so they run very deep. And partly because I was starting to feel some of those familiar things again.

Like the fact that grief is not some decorous emotion one feels upon losing a loved one, because it's the right and seemly thing to feel. Rather, the experience of grief is much more like having a wild animal running around loose inside of you. And not just a nice sleek one you can partially domesticate, like a ferret, but a big powerful one, more like a buffalo that stomps around, bellowing threats and causing havoc.

And, yes, grief does unfold in stages, but they're not discreet or linear. That is, they don't play out one at a time and in a straight line. You don't get to finish up the denial stage before you move on, say, to depression, which you then get to process for three uninterrupted weeks.

Quite often you feel several of these stages, sometimes even all of them, all at the same time. Then, one day, you may feel like you're finally just inches from reaching the acceptance stage where babies make you smile again and music makes you want to dance again, only to wake up the next day so depressed you can't even tie your shoes, and you spend the day walking around aimlessly inside your house, in your slippers, fuming with anger and bargaining with God.

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Please call 828-298-9092 to leave a message for us at the church. The phone will be checked remotely, or in person several times per week.

Thank you!

March Birthdays!

Betty Siviter	March 2	Evva Hamilton	March 6
Catherine Showalter	March 7	Patrick Sanderson	March 10
Amber Crumpler	March 11	Bill Sanderson	March 15
Wendy Meyer	March 18	Anne Hamilton	March 20
Harriet Cowel	March 22	Dennis Stockdale	March 24
Jonathan Crumpler	March 26	Andrew Pulsifer	March 27
John Bishop	March 29		



The Warren Wilson Book Group will meet via Zoom at 11:30 am on Thursday, March 11th. Sandy Fisher will lead the discussion of "The Moment of Lift" by Melinda Gates. It promises to be an interesting discussion. If you are interested in joining us contact Sandy Brauer and she will forward you the link to the Zoom meeting.

(Submitted by Sandy Brauer)

Dear faithful friends,

As we begin 2021, we do so grateful for YOU. Your support of One Great Hour of Sharing and the Pentecost Offering was a blessing to many during a year when the need was even greater than ever. **We really can't thank you enough.** Your very generous gifts are helping individuals and communities in need all around the world.

We are so excited about [One Great Hour of Sharing](#) (and [Pentecost](#)), and want to support you with your digital and in-person promotional efforts. We also have a new Facebook Group – [Special Offerings: Promoting Presbyterian Mission Together](#). Join the group and interact with other church leaders, sharing stories and ideas, learning from each other and Special Offerings staff as we work to build God's household, together.

Deidra May

Mission Specialist for Special Offerings & the Presbyterian Giving Catalog

ADULT CHURCH BUDDIES

A group of very special individuals are committed to maintaining a relationship with our Children and Youth by being CHURCH BUDDIES. During this time of Covid lockdown, it is especially important to keep in touch with our children. We are one of the links that tie them to the Warren Wilson Church.

During normal times we can gather at Lake Owen or at the Montreat Playground to spend time together. We eat and wade in the creek or play basketball while making memories that will last many years. During Halloween several of us visited homes (porches or yards!!) to deliver treats. For Christmas, several BUDDIES delivered Christmas gifts in person to their child. Other send cards or gifts. There is no right or wrong way to be a BUDDY, simply maintain contact with the child or young person you have chosen.

If you talk with or meet these individuals in the grocery store, be sure and thank them.... they are a special group.

Thanks, Sandy Brauer

CHURCH BUDDIES

Don and Vickie Collins

Betty Siviter

Robyn Castelliani

Ken and Eloise Murchison

Pat Crumpler

Nancy and Rick

Garrison

Sarah Anne and Tom Eller

Anne and Jamie Dale

Bob and Corise Gambrell

John and Susan Laney

Fran and Burnace Roberts

5 CENTS A MEAL

The presbytery's 5 cents a meal offering funds a variety of activities to help the hungry and those in need. When combined together, our small gifts support many important programs in our area and throughout the world. Our congregation has generously supported this offering for a number of years.

Ordinarily, the children pass a basket to collect this offering during worship on the first Sunday of the month. Of course, that method is not available right now, but the offering still needs our support. During the month of March, the 5 cents a meal offering will again be an option for on-line giving. In addition, you may mail a check to Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church, Attn: Receiving Treasurer, 101 Chapel Drive, Swannanoa, NC 28778. Please make your check payable to Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church with a notation that it is for the 5 cents a meal offering.

Thanks for all you do to support those in need.





OUR HEALING PRAYERS GO OUT TO: Susan Runholt and family, on the death of her daughter Annalisa, Steve's niece; Virginia Howell and family, on the death of her husband Carl, Carla Greenfield's father; Corise Gambrell's brother, Louis Holleman and family, Jon Hettrick and his family; Jon's mother, Marjorie Hettrick; Fred Porter, relative of the Griswolds; Mark Laabs, friend of the Griswolds; Blake Joslin; Ric Morton and family; Ellen Ballow, friend of Sandy Brauer; Kim Reece, daughter of Nancy and Rick Garrison; Sandy & Paul, dear friends of Carolyn Cole, and Pat Crumpler.

WE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING HEALTH CARE WORKERS, AND PEOPLE WORKING AT MEDICAL FACILITIES: Carolyn Cole; Richard Riddle; Laura Bethany Riddle; Kristin Williams; Lisa Mallory; Stacy Balzano, Toby & Sally's niece, and all those working to provide medical care to others in this time when both need and risk are great.

OUR PRAYERS FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS GO OUT TO: Natalie Cowal; Carla Presnell-Smith, and all those helping to keep essential services open for all of us.

"Never forget the three powerful resources you always have available to you:

Love, Prayer, and forgiveness."

H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Steve's Slant continued...

It's a full contact sport, is grief. And here in the United States, I often think that as a people we're not very good at it.

I say all these things, and I share this story with you, my story, because in light of everything we've lost in the last year, and all the people we have lost in this span, some of them people you have known and loved dearly, I suspect that you, too, have been carrying around a heavy load of grief inside.

So, if you wake up and find yourself wanting to yell at God but can't quite account for why you feel that way; or you just want to stay in bed when you have other things to do; or you realize while you're cooking dinner that you're too sad to care that you burned the chicken, there is likely a reason for that.

Here is some good news; it's a theme I've shared before but it bears repeating now: you're not alone.

Some very good friends called me from Minnesota last night to say they were sorry for my loss. They wanted to hear the story of how Annalisa passed. They had known her for many years and they were shocked to learn she had left us--that she had been stolen from us, as I think of it.

At the end of our conversation, they said they wished there was more they could say, more they could do, to support me and to support my sister, Susan, whom they have also known for many years. They were frustrated by their sense of not being able to do much to help mitigate our pain.

But then they said, "We're with you."

I thanked them for the call and told them that was the very best thing they could say, and the very best thing they could do, even if that was only from a distance. Because such companionship and solidarity is perhaps the one thing that matters most in times of crisis and loss.

Because, really, at the end of the day, we're all just walking each other home.

Clerk's Report

At its February meeting, the session:

1. Approved the collection of the 5 Cents a Meal offering in 2021.
2. Designated Sharon Lytle as the Commissioner for the October presbytery meeting.
3. Discussed what criteria should be used to decide when to return to in-person worship.
4. Approved the purchase of new video equipment to allow live streaming of worship services with funds to pay for the purchase to come from earnings of the general endowment.
5. Allocated \$6,000 from the PPP Fund to be given to organizations assisting other during the pandemic with the specific organizations to be identified by the Community Engagement Team.
6. Authorized payment of \$250 to the Swannanoa Valley Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Corporation with the funds to come from the tithe of the Waldrop bequest.



Ken Murchison

PALM SUNDAY

At Warren Wilson
Presbyterian Church we are
mothers and fathers, single
and married, gay and
straight, young and old,
black and white,
prosperous and poor,
uncertain and sure, broken
and whole - and everything
in between. Together we
are the many faces of
humanity, yet as a joyful,
caring and loving
community of faith, we are
committed in our diversity
to be one in Christ!

Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church
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The Extended Family