



# The Grapevine

JOYFUL HARVEST CHURCH • “Growing Together for Christ”

October 2020

Volume 7, Issue 1

## ***Feed My Starving Children Update - Trudy Moriarty***

FMSC is a nationwide Christian non-profit organization whose mission is to feed God’s children who are going without food in some of the world’s poorest countries. They depend on the volunteers, singles, or groups, to help fulfill that mission.

COVID-19 hit the organization hard and they were forced to close volunteer sites, but they still had contractual commitments to provide meals. They found or developed alternative ways to pack the food, even having packing sites set up in prisons where the inmates were packing food on specially designed social distancing lines.

For approximately 5 years Joyful Harvest has been having “packing session” outings to FMSC in Libertyville for our congregation and other volunteers. These outings are a couple of hours long and in that time our group works with packing the science-based meals, working in the warehouse, or even sitting jobs are available affixing labels. There is something for everyone and seeing the number of meals packed and how many children will be fed at the end of the session is so rewarding for our time spent. FMSC is now open again with extremely strict measures in place to protect the volunteers and when we feel it will be acceptable and safe to set up new sessions for our congregation, we will start making reservations again.

## ***Secret Sisters - Rose Stevens***

Hello Sisters in Christ!

It's been a while since I have seen most of you, so I hope you are all well and full of God's Spirit despite what is happening in the world around us. I hope there are notes of encouragement flowing through the mail to each one of you. If for some reason you are unable to reach out to your sister, please let me know. Times are tough and some have their hands full with other things. If you have not heard from your secret sister, please let me know that as well. There are sisters willing to help. I have been thinking about our reveal party so if you have any suggestion please let me know.

Thank you, sisters, in Christ, for sharing love and encouragement and prayers! It is so needed and makes such a difference. If you have a special note or story regarding your secret sister, I would love to hear it. Give me a call or email and let me know.

I pray for each and every one of my Sisters in Christ. We will see each other again real soon - God will see to it!

Love & Prayers

Rose Stevens

## Habitat for Humanity Update – Rod Gerlach

Habitat for Humanity of McHenry County is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing organization that offers families and individuals the opportunity to own their first home. Habitat strives to change the systems that lead to poverty housing and build a community where everyone can afford to live.

Joyful Harvest has helped Habitat a variety of ways in recent years, mostly through Saturday volunteer workdays, where we arrive at a home at various stages of the building process to help. We've also provided individuals with furnishing for their new or refurbished homes.

Our church has helped build and renovate homes in Johnsburg, McHenry, Wonder Lake, and Harvard.

### *From the Pastor*

#### *Change...*

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.* (Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens, 1859)

I'm pretty sure that Charles Dickens didn't write the above nearly a hundred and fifty years ago specifically for the strange and wonderful year that 2020 has turned out to be. Or maybe, just maybe, he was a prophet.

This year has been full of ups and downs. It started out pretty normal, but as we coasted towards spring, things started their topsy-turvy decent into what has been the strangest times most of us have ever experienced. From online worship to in-person, outdoor worship, to finally (and hopefully) moving back into the sanctuary; from wearing face masks everywhere we go to social-distancing to the jumble of crossed-out items on our calendars, this has been a wild ride of a year – something for which my seminary training fell quite short.

Life seems to have been turned upside-down. Everything that seemed normal has changed, and I'm not so sure that it will ever be "normal" again. What will happen, I think, is that our "normal" will change – we'll get used to this and it will all begin, slowly, to seem normal.

But even in the midst of all the changes that are happening willy-nilly around us, one thing remains constant: our God. This is the promise we receive in scripture: **"For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed."** (Malachi 3:6) and **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."** (Hebrews 13:8)

And God is not just unchanging, God is with us in the midst of everything that is going on. We can lean on God during the most difficult times and know that we are treasured and loved by God.

- **"It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."** (Deuteronomy 31:8)
- **"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."** (Joshua 1:9)
- **"I will never leave you nor forsake you."** (Hebrews 13:5)

Those are promises to which you can trust your life. Trust God and live into those promises.

In these trying and difficult times, we need to stay connected to our Triune God as God has revealed God's self to in the Bible. We need to stay connected with our brothers and sisters in Christ so that we can support one another, making certain that no one needs to go through all this alone. And we need to be connected through prayer in everything – it is our sure and certain hope and the promise that the future will be better.

God's peace,

Pastor Doug