

Thoughts from Tom—He covers us there with his hand

A few years ago on a crisp January day, I spotted a bald eagle while walking our dogs. It soared over the frozen and fog-shrouded St. Mary's River, coming across from Canada. It circled a few times right above me, and then settled in a tall tree on the next block.

It didn't occur to me until I started back to the house that an eagle, a bird of prey, might have been eyeing either of our two small dogs as a potential lunch. Since the river was covered with ice, fishing for this meat eater was more difficult. And my dogs were each about the size of a freshwater coho salmon. With the sun shining brightly, I kept my eyes peeled for any sudden and swift shadows approaching from the rear. Not to fear; we made it home safely.

But that episode reminded me of the watch-care our Heavenly Father has for His children. Like those two little dogs, we go on with our lives and agendas, oblivious to dangers and threats we do not see or understand. Yet God is there, protecting, guarding, and nurturing. Now that does not mean we are protected from all troubles. Some problems are brought on by our own foolishness and poor choices. And when that happens, we are obligated to face the consequences. But there are those difficulties which, through no fault of our own, we are forced to face. Someone becomes an enemy and seeks to do us harm. Physical illness wracks our bodies. Our finances collapse. A loved one dies.

God does not promise to remove these ills; rather he promises to help us through them. The same psalm that declares "the Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want" also assures us: "even when walking through the valley of the shadow of death, you are with me" (Psalm 23). Another beloved psalm that addresses the same issue is often taken out of context. How many times have you heard someone quote Psalm 46:1? "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." But the next two verses describe some of the calamities God helps us through: "Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging."

Notice God does not help us avoid the valley of the shadow of death. He does not stop the earthquake or the raging storm. No; instead, he calms the heart of the one who fears. Are you struggling? Are you dealing with some burdens? If you are a child of God, his Holy Spirit can give you untold strength to get through any trial you face.

We may be like my two dogs, who will never understand the danger they face. We may clearly see trouble squarely aiming its guns at us. Either way, let us celebrate the fact that as a child of God, He "hides our souls in the cleft of the rock that shadows a dry, thirsty land; He hides our lives in the depths of His love, and covers us there with His hand."



First Church of Christ

300 W. Spruce Street, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Know Jesus • Follow Jesus • Share His Love

January 2018

Happy New Year!
from
First Church of Christ

All Church Event!
Volunteer Appreciation Banquet
January 20th at 11:00 am



**If you volunteer your time
and talents to FCOC in any way,
we want to thank you!**

Join your FCOC family as we say thank you to those who volunteer at FCOC for church events, youth, teachers, worship volunteers, leadership, camp workers, planning events, and church support!

The Youth Group will be making desserts and serving beverages, and Dave Pietrangelo and Zack Woiteshek will be preparing the food!

***Please sign up in the lobby if you plan to attend,
so we will know how much food to make.***

Announcements

Adult Choir Practice beginning soon!



We will begin practice for the Resurrection Day cantata on January 27th from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm.

Please mark your calendars!
Contact Randy Peasley for more information.

Camp Volunteer and Planning Meeting January 27th after worship



If you would like to get involved in camp this year, we will be planning themes and curriculum and seeing where you would like to fit into the Jr. High week of camp at Wilderness! See Zack for details.

Ardis Bruno's 100th birthday is January 7th!



Please see the display by the office window, sign a card, and place it in the basket. We will surprise Ardis with her FCOC church family's birthday wishes!



We are also invited to an open house for Ardis at Freightview Assisted Living TODAY from 1:30 to 3:30 pm.

Winter is upon us!



If you can help with sidewalk snow clearing at FCOC during the week, please contact Ann Peasley, or for Sundays please sign up in the lobby, call the office, or just show up and go for it!. There is an electric start snowblower available (the cord and gas tank are in the lobby closet).



Mission of the Quarter Food Pantry



We will be collecting nonperishable staple foods, as well as toiletries and household products, diapers and formula.

Please place your donation on the Mission Table in the lobby.

Giving Information—Weekly need is \$4,200.00

December	Giving
2	\$3,665.35
9	\$3,879.29
16	\$4,526.50
23	\$2,450.10
30	\$3,771.57

Prayer Concerns (Please call the church office with updates)



Our country and those serving in the military, those adjusting after service

Kevin Farrar—Breathing issues due to RA, RA flare-ups

His House Ministries

Jeannine Kelly (Therese Boucha's mother) - Parkinson's Disease

Ron Atkins (Pam Postma's brother) - Cancer treatment is working, no growth! Continuing treatments

Brenda Brown—Health issues, that doctors would figure out how to help her

Therese Boucha—New treatment begun. Continued prayers for healing

Gary Ferns (Mary Armstrong's bro) - Tumors are dying! Continued prayers please!

Trudy Ranta—Melanoma now in her brain, in LTC at WMH

Jennifer Veum—Tumors shrinking with chemo, having monthly infusions & PT

Joanne Arbic (Anne Abbott's sister) - Stent placement successful, prayers for improvement in health

Leslie Belleau (Judy Vert) - Pancreatic cancer, starting radiation

Barb Farrar—High muscle enzymes, testing for muscle diseases

Gary Matheny (Dave's brother) - Diagnosed with stage 4 kidney cancer which is preventing a needed lung transplant, may need kidney transplant first

Rob Ward (Pam Lahti) - Going through a difficult time

Odin Eitrem—On list for a kidney transplant

Carol Garlinghouse (Swick) - Breast cancer

Gail Williams—Kidney problems

Caleb, Dianne Baker's grandson—Biopsy showed cancer, started chemo

AJ Rogers (Marion Rogers) - Health concerns

Kate (Mike Willett's grand niece) - Prayer for healing from brain surgery

Dale Brown (Wilma's son, Bob's brother) - Recovering from neck surgery. Prayers for success and complete healing

Ed Boso—Neck and back pain

Max Metro (Nancy Darling) - Praise! Home from the hospital and doing much better!

Margaret Laursen (Pam Postma) - Melanoma, to Karmanos for treatment options

Family of Kenn Filkins—Passed away

Family of Claudia Crimin—Passed away