

# I Believe Death Can Teach Us All About Life

There comes a time in life when you experience a change. No, I'm not making reference to puberty here. I mean the times in your life when you realize your view of the world, of life or of God have changed. For many people this happens around our transition to college. You are finally leaving behind your embarrassing middle school days and the drama filled high school life. It's your first time away from home and you are living in a new world. I, too, thought that college would be the first significant transition in my life. I expected it and had even begun planning for it as early as the beginning of my sophomore year as I began researching engineering programs in NC and on the East Coast. But my first big life change came a little early. It was 2008. Two deaths separated by only a few months forever changed my perspective on life and God.

Day 1: January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008. My best friend's dad died. I spent the whole day with my best friend and her family, as all of us were taking in the shocking news. I remember every second of that day but one of my strongest memories was when I left the house that night. I was driving home when I passed a car, then another car, then another. I passed Costco. I passed a gas station and the gym. Everyone around me was living their normal lives as if nothing had happened. I wanted to scream out "Hey! Didn't you know the world stopped turning today?" After spending the whole day inside the house I was convinced the world had stopped spinning and life had been put on hold. As I continued to drive home I felt like I had been thrown into the twilight zone – for everyone else the world was in fact spinning and life was still ticking away.

Day 2: September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008. As I stood by my grandfather's bed I knew it would be the last time I would ever see him. As we drove away from hospice, I got that horrible feeling again. We passed cars, a few restaurants, and a shopping center. Why was everyone moving on with life? Didn't they know my family just drove away without him? I hated what I was feeling – In that moment I felt like I had no control over my own life – I felt like I had no way to make everything right again – and I felt like God was silent.

After these two difficult deaths I directed my grief and anger towards God. Why were these things happening? Where was God? Why did God seem so silent? Before these two deaths I was aware that bad things were capable of happening, and I knew they had happened to others, but somehow I had convinced myself that I and my family were exempt from experiencing these tragedies. Well by September, 2008 I was certainly proven wrong. In just a few months my untainted world was filled with anger, grief and questions.

Since 2008 I've had a lot of time to think. Now that's not to say that I have everything figured out, but I have a few theories I'm considering. God may not have planned for those days but God was definitely there, watching over all of us, taking care of us. God was silent – but that does not mean God was absent. In the moment I wanted God to take it all back – to make everything normal – to bring back to life Freddie and Granddaddy. When it didn't happen – I accused God of abandoning me. However, as time has passed, I have come to believe that God did not abandon me, but has continued to be with my friend, our families, and me in our healing and in moving forward with our lives.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is not only an illustration of how we reach out to others in their need, but can also be an illustration of how God meets us in our own tragedy. I felt like the man that was found robbed and beaten on the road. Of course, I hadn't been robbed or beaten physically but I was in a place of deep grief and devastation. Life had beaten me down and I didn't know how to get back up. But like the Good Samaritan came to the aid of the man on the road, I believe God met me with grace and healing in a time that was dark and painful. God was not only present with me but was active in my healing process. I believe this not only for me, but for everyone. I believe that God is always present with God's children. God is with the gypsies in Hungary and God is with the Maasai in Africa. God is with Granddaddy and Freddie. And God is with our families as we continue to remember and miss them.

In my healing I have been able to look back on these experiences with a new lens. From these experiences I have learned more about life and God than through any

other experience. I learned how important it is to live in the moment, to ask questions and take advantage of everything that you can especially the small things in life. After that day I would walk through the park and notice a small flower on the ground or a tree with its first bud on it. I would smile because I knew that Granddaddy was still with me, and would always be a part of me. In 2008 death taught me about life. Live life to the fullest. Laugh as much as possible, cry when you need it, and always know God is with you always.

Lara Stocks

## I Believe in Little Acts of Kindness

I am a people watcher. Not in the creepy, stalker-ish kind of way, but in a curious, observant way. We all take the passive role of observer every now and then. Some people engage in long walks through the woods to watch for birds, others venture off the coast of Alaska to watch the whales, still some snuggle down into the comfort of their living room sofa to watch the television ... the object of my curiosity is people. I love seeing the way people interact with one another, and how they respond to the questions, acquisitions and opinions that are brought before them. We learn from observing. As children we learn how to interact with others from watching those around us – it is from observing another bike rider that we first grasp the concept of peddling and steering our own bike – we learn to write from carefully observing our teacher write the alphabet. What we observe others doing opens up the possibilities of what we also are capable of doing. Until recently I did not understand what a great gift from God this has been in my life.

I was absent-mindedly doodling in my math notebook when I overheard some classmates talking about a certain girl in my art class. None of them knew that she and I are friends. They went on and on about how ugly, gross, stupid, and poorly dressed they think she is. I had heard them say things like this before but this time was too much. It was driving me insane that they were talking so meanly towards someone they didn't even really know. Out of anger I began to scream at them telling them how beautiful, smart, funny and talented my friend is. I knew that yelling wasn't going to do anything, but it certainly made me feel better, and there was always the hope that it would stick in their minds for at least a little while. This is not an unlikely high school story, but as common as this moment is, it was a turning point for me. I haven't always been the one to stand up for people who were being abused verbally behind their backs. In fact when I was with some old friends of mine I knew that I was sometimes cruel about other people, but I thought it was harmless fun. We laughed so much I never realized that what I was doing could be extremely painful to someone else.

It took me seeing one scene play out in school to start changing the way I think about things. I was in the hallway when this new girl who had just transferred, walked by a group of seniors. Some of them were former friends of mine. They were mocking her and talking very loudly about her in a very negative way. Coming from the opposite direction was another girl in my class; she had overheard the same thing I had. Instead of just feeling bad for the girl she proceeded to give the group a mouth full about how they should be kinder and more tender-hearted. I am editing out the actual vocabulary of a regular high school teen. After the "talking-to" she had just given, she walked over to the new girl and made friends with her and told her how not every person at our school was like that little clique of boys and girls. This little act of kindness had a huge impact on me.

From this experience, I have come to believe that little acts of kindness can create a ripple effect of other acts of kindness in the world around us. I have often thought about this when hearing or reading the parable of the Good Samaritan. I wonder if anyone might have been watching as the Good Samaritan cleaned the blood off the beaten man – if maybe the Levite saw the Samaritan refuse to pass by as he did, but instead stop to help ... and maybe he watched as the Samaritan picked the man up off the ground and placed him on his donkey. I wonder how the innkeeper's life might have been changed in this meeting with a man who would take such good care of a complete stranger. I can relate to the Levite. I have spent a life-time of passing by, but it only took one act of kindness – one Good Samaritan moment to open up for me – new possibilities for how to live my life and treat others.

Clemarie Thomas

## Thank you

Dear College Park Family,  
Thank you so much for all the prayers, words of encouragement, food, gifts, and cards before and after the birth of Patrick.

Also, to the person who didn't sign the card, we want to be sure and thank you for the "Little Me" blue outfit from Marshall's.

Everyone has been so generous and kind, and we can't wait for you to meet Patrick. We couldn't be more blessed!

Sincerely,  
David and Teresa Whitehead

Dear Michael & College Park Church,  
You were so gracious to let our painting class use your great meeting hall down stairs for 12 weeks. Much was accomplished in that peaceful spacious place. We all thank you for your kind hospitality. Please accept this donation to the church.

Very best,  
Jack Stone

## Dining for Friends Party

You are invited to the biggest Dining for Friends party in Greensboro! The Community "Red" Party will be held on Saturday, May 8, 6-9 PM, at the Carriage House and back lawn of the Blandwood Mansion in downtown Greensboro. Enjoy great food, wine, Natty Greene's Beer and soft drinks while visiting with old and new friends. A minimum suggested donation of \$20 includes the big finale at the Coliseum with a dessert buffet, live 80s music and dancing. 100% of your donation to this party benefits Dining for Friends for Triad Health Project, whose mission is to provide practical and emotional support to individuals infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. No RSVP needed. For more info, go to [www.diningforfriends.com](http://www.diningforfriends.com) or see Tom Hardin or Mark File.

## Used Book Sale

The used book sale is coming up on for May 15th. We will be selling books from 7am- 1pm. Be sure to come hungry as we will also have coffee and baked items to offer!! Yummy! If you would like to donate baked goods, please contact Gwen. Thank you for all your donations so far, please continue to bring your books and other media. Just call Gwen Ware 286.6155.

### Hey! What's for dinner? CPC Wednesday Night Fellowship

#### **May 5**

Pork chops w/ Chili Apricot Glaze  
Apple Slaw, Peas, Banana Pudding

#### **May 12**

Hawaiian Chicken  
Couscous, Green beans, Coconut Cream Pie

#### **May 19**

Bourbon Pork Chops  
Hickory Slaw, Broccoli, Butterscotch Blondie

#### **May 26**

Salsa Chicken  
Roasted Asparagus, Corn, Strawberries & Ice Cream

## My Haiti Adventure...a Report.

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On Tuesday January 12, 2010 at 4:53 in the afternoon, the earth heaved and a 7.0 magnitude earthquake occurred in Haiti near Leogane, approximately 25km west of Port au Prince. By January 24, at least 52 after shocks of 4.5 or greater continued to rock the area. The original quake lasted 35 seconds. This was the worst quake to strike Haiti in over 200 years.

As of February 12, 2010, over 3 million people were affected and estimates of 230,000 people dead. Imagine the entire population of our town, Greensboro, NC, dead at the same time. 300,000 people were injured and over a million people homeless.

Humanitarian aid was flooding in from many countries. The Port au Prince morgues were quickly overwhelmed and tens of thousands of bodies were buried in mass graves. When the rescues trailed off supplies, medical care and sanitation became priorities.

Meanwhile in Greensboro, NC on January 28th, Michael Usey posted an article on Facebook that said the American Baptist Church was seeking doctors and nurses to come to Haiti for week long stints. Michael put a caption under this “Can you help?” The article said that there was an acute need for medical professionals. I felt like they were speaking directly to me. I needed to go and College Park Baptist Church made it happen.

So began my Haiti adventure.

Angela Brady-Fleming and I spent two weeks gathering medical supplies with the donations from so many people. I was amazed at the generosity; people I had never met were sending me money to buy the needed medications. We both took two checked bags at 50 lbs. each full of medical supplies.

Our flight left early Valentine’s Day morning and we flew into Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic. Only UN and military flights could fly into Port au Prince. Upon arriving in Santa Domingo the heat hit us with force. It was 28 degrees when we left home and in the 90’s the week we were in Haiti with no air conditioning. We waited at the airport for 4 hours or so for another nurse practitioner to arrive and we left for La Ramona, DR. Seven of us crammed into a tiny truck for the 1 ½ hour drive. This helped prepare us for a week of discomfort.

We stayed the first night at Casa Pastoral in La Ramona. This was what I call a way station for groups going into the Batayes of DR to work with an ongoing mission and now for groups going into Haiti. Here we had running water, although cold, we didn’t have this luxury in Haiti. Our rooms were like military dorms with metal bunk beds. The roosters start crowing at 2:30am in the DR and Haiti, and they wake up the dogs that bark all night. Ask me how I know.

The next morning we met the other team members and separated and counted drugs to be administered that week. A long day followed by an even longer night. After completing the drugs and supplies, we repacked everything and got ready to leave for Haiti. The bus came for us around 11:30 pm and we drove all night to cross the border at 7am. Rest stops were in parking lots, women squat in the left lot and men on the right. Yuck!!

We crossed the border at sunrise. I was stunned to tears by the number of aid trucks backed up in a traffic jam awaiting entrance into Haiti and the number of empty trucks leaving the country.

Another hour drive to Port au Prince. As we entered the city I started seeing large numbers of people, broken buildings and the tent cities. It seems wrong to call them tents, they are just tree branches or sticks covered by bed sheets in low lying areas, thousands of them.

We arrived at the church compound we would be staying in around 9am. We unloaded all our supplies, changed into our scrubs and gathered our tools for work. The church had spotty electricity from a generator and very little running water. There was a small breakfast prepared for us. Bread and peanut butter and fresh fruit. We reloaded the two flat bed trucks with food for distribution and our medications and headed to our first clinic.

Driving through Port au Prince I was impressed with the number of people, this is a large city. It was very surreal to me and at times I felt as if I was on the news, in a war zone. Military UN vehicles with lots of machine guns, large military aircraft overhead, military helicopters buzzing by every few minutes, buildings in rubble, everywhere. Me in a flat bed truck with a face mask. I found myself in tears so many times.

Our first clinic was at a church. All of our clinics were behind gates with guards. The building was 5-6 stories high but broken. We saw patients in the courtyard. My job as an RN was to help run the pharmacy, organize drugs, dispense drugs, give injections, change dressings, rehydrate patients with fluids, etc. It was somewhat daunting because of the scope. I had to pull on knowledge of drugs that I haven’t used in awhile because we were treating a full range of problems. What we were seeing was mostly primary care at this time. The emergency phase is over. Now they have a population of people who have no access to health clinics, very poor living conditions and pretty much no sanitation which will lead to more problems as the rainy season begins this month.

Haiti has a population of people who have had no time to grieve. As Kristie Engle the NP in charge of our group pointed out: Imagine you are 29 years old, married with 5 children. Suddenly your home is destroyed; your husband or wife and three of your children are buried under tons of concrete rubble. Do you have time to grieve, plan funerals, and have your community and family take care of you with food and comfort? No, because they are all dealing with the same. You suddenly are faced with finding food and shelter for your remaining children and keeping them safe. There is no time to grieve at all for weeks and weeks. Post traumatic stress sets in; no building is safe, you are fearful all the time. Hopelessness. I don’t think I would fair very well long term. This is a population that didn’t have much to begin with. We are so spoiled, you have no idea.

We saw approximately 1000 people during the four clinics and I would like to think that we made a difference, but there is still so much to be done. Four days of packing and unpacking, setting up and tearing down the clinics as they were held in different areas each day.

It takes all of us doing one small thing to make a difference, a change for the better. Now I hope that you can understand why it was so hard to leave Haiti and why I feel the strong need to return.

I want to leave you with the words I try to live by:

A great woman once said: “In this life we can do no great things. We can only do small things with great love.” Mother Teresa

Gwen Ware

## Passportkids Summer 2010

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Final reservations for Passportkids Summer Camp at Eagle Eyrie, June 19—22 have been made. Please remember if you are sending your child to Passportkids this year, a \$60 deposit is due. Remaining balance can be paid any time before June 19.

## Logan Turner

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You may have noticed the photo of the young man in his Air Force uniform on the sanctuary table near the front of our church. For those of you who don’t know his identity, let me introduce him. His name is Logan Turner, one of the four Turner siblings who grew up in this church. His older brother is Blake (28) who now resides in Arizona, his younger brother is Alex (20) who attends NC State University, and his younger sister is Hayley (14). Logan joined the Air Force after high school (he’s now 25), and has been stationed stateside in Mississippi and Oklahoma, overseas in Ecuador, and is currently serving in Iraq. He is fiercely loyal and protective, exceptionally funny and humor-filled (just ask any youth who attended College Park while he was growing up!), and full of love for his family, his friends, his flight squadron, his church, his pastor (ahem, that would be you, Michael), his country and his Creator. He has a special place in his heart for his dear friend Andrew Russoli, whom he met here at College Park, and whom we lost just a few years ago while he was serving in Iraq. Logan has matured into a wonderful young man, deeply caring about those who are around him, and those who hold his heart back home. He just recently sent us an email letting us know how much he appreciates his life, and how thankful he is for each day. He has seen and experienced much that most of us will never see. He has been in Iraq since early December, and is due to return to the USA in late summer. We light a candle for him every Sunday until he comes home. If you’d like to send him a card or care package (he prefers “healthy snacks”) please drop it off at the church office, and we’ll get it mailed to him right away. Please continue to keep Logan, and all of the men and women who serve our country, in your prayers.

Andrea Turner

## Youth Sunday

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May I please tell the youth what a great service they had on Sunday, May2. I have heard a lot of youth services in this church and they were always done well, but the service this year tops them all. Thank you Michael, Lin, Rydell and youth for your outstanding service.

I love you all.  
Agnes Joyner

## Community Sustainability Council Presentation

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Join us the evening of Wednesday, May 12, following the church business meeting in the Fellowship Hall for a presentation by the Community Sustainability Council. Bob Powell will share recommendations the team has put together for City Council. Also included will be background information on the status of sustainable activities in Greensboro. Please invite your friends.

## Youth Summer Mission Trip, West Virginia

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This summer, July 24- 31, our youth will be going to Colcord, WV to help families in the community who need but cannot afford home repairs (restoring roofs, rebuilding porches, repairing walls and ceilings, replacing flooring, or painting). We will worship with the community on Sunday morning, and the congregation will cook for us on Tuesday night. As important as every nail we drive is the relationship that we build with the community and the home owner. This will be a wonderful Appalachian experience for the youth. Cost of the trip is \$300 per youth. Sign up for the trip is posted outside Lin’s office.

## Wieners to the Rescue

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The last week of October 2008 I was called by the animal shelter to come rescue an elderly, grumpy dachshund named Grady. He had been on quarantine at the shelter ~ taken there by his family after biting a child. I went and indeed he was old and appeared to be a typical grumpy dachshund that was misunderstood. Grady came home with me to hopefully be placed in a retirement living situation with an under-standing adopter. After all of his medical needs had been met I put Grady up for adoption. Twice he was adopted out to what seemed like perfect matches for his senior needs.

The adopters would return Grady with an explanation that he was destroying things to get out of their homes ~ Grady exhibited none of the described behaviors experienced by the adopters in my home. He was a bit on the grumpy side but rarely was much trouble and was always quick to jump in an available lap for some attention. Even though he was no trouble ~ he was an extra dog to my already large pack of dachshunds and it was just not possible for me to take on another permanent family member. I spent the next few months praying for Grady to pass away peacefully in his sleep. He had a stage 4 heart murmur and a grumpy disposition ~ but did not seem to have plans of dying anytime soon.

Shortly after returning from the second adoption attempt, Grady began jumping the gate each time I would leave and run next door to our neighbor. This practice continued for several weeks ~ I would leave and within minutes Grady would be over the gate and on her front porch. She was a lonely lady after suffering several major losses in her life. She had lost friends who did not know how to comfort her and she had resigned herself to a life of loneliness. Grady would appear and would quietly sit. By nature, dachshunds are wonderful at bringing forth laughter in the soul with their long bodies, short legs and silly antics. He would hang on her every word and believed in her more than she believed in herself. His visits next door became longer and more frequent ~ until finally it was official. He had become a permanent fixture in her recliner. She would marvel at how he would listen to everything she had to say ~ and he was her mighty protector. He did not give a damn about the losses she had suffered or about the guilt that she carried. He cared only for her and that she loved him. So began my quest to make Grady's life eternal. After months of praying for him to just die peacefully ~ I found myself praying that he would never die. Seeing them together brought joy to my heart knowing that they had both found one another! I would come over and join them on the front porch for visiting ~ and just like Grady, I was finding someone that I enjoyed to visit.

Just a few days after Christmas, Grady died suddenly at the feet of his chosen owner. I was summoned to come quickly as she thought Grady had just died. I walked in the door to find her holding Grady and sobbing. He had a heart attack and passed away within moments. Gone ~ and there was nothing that I could do to bring her best buddy back. My heart was broken for her and for Grady ~ and I wasn't sure any of us would find our way out of our grief. He had chosen her as his own ~ pushed his way into her heart ~ and now he was gone just as quick. As we went through the process of getting Grady cremated ~ she began to tell me all of the pain she had suffered in her life. Grady loved her regardless ~ or what I really believe is that Grady loved her because of all of it. He knew she needed him just as much as he needed her.

It was not easy to say goodbye to Grady and his pawprints are not easily filled. A new rescued wiener dog fills the spot in the recliner next to her now ~ but I clearly understand that there will never be another Grady. He was an angel that saw two people who really needed him. I believe that God sends us angels and most of the time they are shaped like wiener dogs!

Alison Schwartz

## The Power of Laughter

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I believe in “The power of Laughter.” I don't mean “all-purpose-utilitarian- laughter,” like when a relative tells an off color joke I've heard a hundred times before or when a co-worker repeats a lame one-liner from last night's late night monologue. Those laughs are the equivalent of answering the question, “How are you?” with “Fine”: it is expected, but requires no real commitment on my part.

I mean the power of real laughter; laughter that I can't help but let out, gasping for air, and wiping away tears. It is powerful because for the few minutes when I am laughing, I've voluntarily given up control of breathing, emotions, and composure, and if I am laughing with someone else, the normal rules of interaction are thrown out the window. We can be loud, snort, slap each other on the back, convulse, and it is all acceptable. When I am truly laughing, I am not worried about how I look, or planning on what to do next. I am simply living in the moment.

It is in moments of real laughter that people in my life have upgraded from acquaintances to friends. I can't forget the late night when Jeff Sasser and I quoted the movie “Raising Arizona” over a campfire. I don't think we ever managed to finish an entire line of dialogue without breaking each other up. Or when a whispered phrase in the back row during choir practice turned a Sunday morning anthem into an absurd, ribald image that opened the floodgate on stifled, forbidden laughter between Daniel Ingram and me. More recently, Mike Bauman and I laughed so hard listening to a Patton Oswalt bit about KFC bowls, neither of us could catch our breath during our summer radio show.

A friend once told me that they could always tell when I was in a theater, because inevitably there is a point during any movie when I am the only person in the theater laughing.

It is intoxicating to make other people laugh, and can be tempting to cling to the power. I found that the best laughing requires a give and take between all people present. Real laughter with trusted friends can dissolve distance over a phone call and can part the clouds of grief for a few moments at a funeral. Nancy and I believe so strongly in the power of laughter, that when our son was born, the name “Isaac” which means, “He will laugh” was the only male name we ever seriously considered for him.

True laughter is harder to create than Hollywood would lead you to believe. It is a universal language that God has given us. This would explain my ability to enjoy sitcoms on Univision when the only thing I understand is the over the top laugh track.

For me to be able to give and receive true laughter with another person is an exchange of a holy gift. For a few precious moments, we acknowledge that although we live in a world almost totally devoid of reason and are powerless to do anything about it, by grace we can share a moment when we are okay with that.

M. Cravey

## New York City Summer Trip

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Have you been dreaming about a trip to New York City but couldn't afford the outrageous hotel rates? Think of this--a place in Midtown in the middle of it all (a few blocks from Times Square, Broadway) with a nightly fee of \$80-\$100 for up to 7 people. Small, but well situated to be able to do most everything within walking distance. (Who needs a lot of room when you are going to be out and about anyway?) Dates available: July 1-August 20 ish. Contact Angela Brady-Fleming via email at [fleming1301@yahoo.com](mailto:fleming1301@yahoo.com) for more details.

## The Power of Story

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Many of you probably saw the *New York Times* article about the father and daughter who read together for 3,218 days in a row. The part of their story that was most meaningful to me was the idea that by reading together, they created a shared language.

This is something I have experienced in my own life, from my mother's first readings of *I am a Bunny* on through the wardrobe into the Chronicles of Narnia. Mike and I have read several books out loud together, including the entire Harry Potter series, and we often reference the books we have read.

To some extent, book clubs also fill this role, as we gather together to talk about a book we have experienced. In my life, there is little that inspires, angers, or moves me to tears more than a story. *I believe in the power of stories, both fictional and non-fictional, to teach us the truth about the world around us.*

The world that we experience, that Jesus came and lived in, is full of gray rather than simply black and white. For me, stories are about making sense of the gray. I see the truths of what the Bible is saying much more easily in a story. Jesus was telling parables for people like me who need a story to make those connections.

When Owen Meany and Asher Lev live courageously, it seems easier for me to follow them than it does when I hear a Bible verse about the same thing. When, in the Lord Peter series, Harriet Vane learns what it means to bring her heart and her intellect together, I realize that those are possibilities for me as well. When Jefferson learns in *A Lesson Before Dying* what it is to be a man, I learn more about my own humanity. Madeleine L'Engle, my favorite author, writes about this concept as “story as truth.” Stories around us, fictional and non-fictional, are the gateway to more than just facts. They teach me the truth about the difficulties and rewards of life, about the kind of life I can choose to live.

As Mike and I have invested here at church, I have come to realize that sharing life with the people around us is a form of telling and listening to those stories. Lingering over meals, drinking lemonade at baby showers, going to funerals, laughing and crying together, all of these are a powerful part of telling and listening and creating a shared language. Many of us grew up calling this a “testimony;” I am more comfortable with the idea of learning to write a good story with my life. Learning how to show up when people need me. Learning how to forgive and how to be vulnerable when it is hard. Learning to love and to be loved.

These days I am happy feeling my heart quicken when Frodo chooses to take the ring (though he does not know the way), rejoicing when something good happens to a friend, and listening, carefully listening, when those of you around me teach me how to live with the stories you tell and share.

Kari Baumann

## Seed People for Tessera

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The Tessera service is looking for 30 people to attend the early service as a core of people on which to build. Right now we have a good group of about 30 people on average in attendance, but until we get about 75, it will still seem somewhat empty. Please pray about being one of the 30; you could of course attend the 11:00 service as well. Tessera has communion every week, some great singing, weekly sermon talk back, and fantastic coffee served by "Brew Unto Others." It's crucial to grow a new service as quickly as possible, and we need your help. Could you give up 45 minutes of sleep on Sunday mornings to help us out? The commitment we are asking for is 6 months. Questions? Call any of the staff.

# I Believe in The Golden Rule

If there's one thing I've gotten from Jesus and his parables it's that life isn't fair, but we have the capacity to make it better through everyday acts of love and kindness; by simply stepping outside our comfort zone and crossing the tracks. This is especially true of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, which not only teaches us to love our neighbor as ourselves, but also challenges us to think about who in our communities we consider our neighbors. To whom will we extend our resources ... our care ... our kindness ... our grace? Most of us were taught a similar principle in school – The Golden Rule –you know – “treat others as you wish to be treated.” These are words that we have heard said over and over again, but here I stand believing it has more meaning than that of empty words. This is because when I think of the Good Samaritan or the Golden Rule, it forces me to move beyond my own comfort zone. For me, this realization did not come in the form of a sudden epiphany. Instead, as I have encountered the divisions of our communities and have witnessed the prejudice of people, I have come to believe more firmly in the actions the words necessitate.

My childhood started as many children's do, doing well in elementary school, blissfully coming home everyday to a cozy house with both parents and enjoying a nurturing environment where the dark sides of the world were shielded from me. It wasn't that I hadn't experienced cultural diversity; in fact, quite the opposite, yet I still didn't completely understand the concepts of socioeconomic diversity and poverty. I went to GUM routinely, however it never occurred to me that some members of society considered those residing there “lowlifes.” I was just helping others out, which was what I was taught you are supposed to do. I had many friends in my ACES after-school program whose home lives varied so much from my own.

Then something changed with my transition into middle school. I slowly began to see beyond my own windowpane, realizing my elementary school was in the “projects,” and my hometown was larger than my backyard. I was not repulsed by any of these revelations; I was simply shocked at how unaware of other socioeconomic conditions some people, including myself, could be. After my parents divorce in second grade, I moved many times and experienced a variety of neighborhoods. As a result, I have witnessed the ways that the differences between people are often met with prejudice, judgment and hate. I have seen how quickly people can be to judge another person based solely on one's appearance, possessions, location of housing, or religion—and this has instilled in me a determination never to judge anything or anyone before experiencing it.

I have never passed by a beaten man on the side of the road, but I have friends who have been treated poorly by well-meaning Christians... and who still have to deal with prejudice of store owners. I have seen the struggle of a homeless man who, despite his efforts could not buy his own lunch. I do not say these things to make praise of my experiences or to make trophies of my friends, but simply to point out that an everyday person, at an everyday high school still encounters division, injustice and prejudice. These experiences lead me to the strong belief in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

My parents early on stressed to me the importance of helping those less fortunate than myself, and through College Park I have had opportunities to live that out by serving at GUM, building a habitat house or through youth mission trips. I have also had invaluable friendships that have made me more aware of the divisions between people within the same community. I know I am still early in my life and have much to learn and experience, but I believe in a time as divisive as this, that this Good Samaritan story has enormous wisdom. It is my hope that we will find ways to bridge together our people and our communities through everyday acts of love and kindness; by simply stepping outside our comfort zone and crossing the tracks.

Naethan Burch

Save the Date!  
June 10, 7:30—8:30 pm  
Nate Usey's Eagle Court of Honor  
College Park Church

1601 Walker Avenue, Greensboro, North Carolina 27403-2318  
Church Telephone: 336-273-1779; Fax: 273-9637  
www.collegeparkchurch.com cpbcbdo@bellsouth.net  
Alliance of Baptists - American Baptist Churches - Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
April Peanut Butter Donations = 70 Pounds  
Total Peanut Butter Donations for Year = 232 Pounds  
Total Other Food Donations for Year = 0 Pounds  
Grand Total for Year = 232 Pounds

**Every Member a Minister**  
Lin Bunce, Associate Minister  
Phyllis Calvert, Treasurer  
Cindy Dillon, Minister of Small Groups  
Susan Finley, Handbell Director  
Rydel Harrison, Minister of Music & Worship  
Kathy Kirshner, Deacon Chair  
Georgia Murray, Office & Media Manager  
Helen Morehead, Sexton  
Blair Ramsey, Super Fast-Footed Female  
Ralph & Tammy Stocks, Missionaries  
Michael S. Usey, Pastor  
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Our Communion bread is graciously donated  
by Great Harvest in Friendly Center.



## This I Believe: Balloons from Bright Sunday

- ♦ I'm doing good for others.
- ♦ I believe that God loves all that He created wherever we are in life.
- ♦ I believe in magic everywhere!
- ♦ God has a sense of humor.
- ♦ I believe that we can see God in many things, like pets.
- ♦ I believe God loves everyone equally and as his own.
- ♦ I believe he wants a relationship with us and can talk to him.
- ♦ I believe that God is . . . No matter what we think.
- ♦ I believe smiling makes you happy.
- ♦ I believe that God wants a relationship with everyone of us, even me.
- ♦ This is the year.
- ♦ I believe this church has many saints; present, past, future. Look around, listen and watch.
- ♦ God loves you.
- ♦ I believe peace is possible.
- ♦ I believe that we should love each other unconditionally and that God looks at the heart, not our actions.
- ♦ I believe that God gave us animals to feel unconditional love when we do not get it from people.
- ♦ I believe that God has a special blessing for you today!
- ♦ Life is worth living.