

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

ElderTalk Flesh vs. Spirit: a constant battle

JADAE FOX

I remember a time growing up when the family dog had found a newly-beloved toy. He was so excited to show it off to everyone. To our disgust and alarm, it was a dead animal. From the look and smell, it had been dead for some time. We immediately got it away from the dog and out of the house.

When I was reading in the book of Acts recently, it struck me in a way that it never had before, that Jesus’ body had never decayed—“*seen corruption.*” Acts 13:35-37 When you think of the word, “*corruption,*” what comes to mind? Lies, deceit, wickedness? Maybe hidden truth of a theft, or of a murder? In short, we think of corruption as something completely ruined or spoiled. I had never thought of it specifically as a decaying body. Jesus never saw corruption of any kind. “*No deceit was found in His mouth.*” 1 Peter 2:22

In Romans 7, Paul talks at length about the flesh nature and the nature of the Spirit of God that war against each other in the Christian’s heart. You can hear Paul’s anguish as he talks about the effect that sin still has on him. He says “*For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.*” Rom. 7:18-19 As a result of these two natures warring against each other, we, like Paul, can feel trapped.

“*Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*” Rom. 7:24-25

The body of death refers to a Roman punishment for murderers. If you were found guilty of murder, your body would be tied to that of your victim. You would suffer a terrible death as the decaying body caused yours to do the same.

Thank God that He has brought victory over sin. The point of this graphic image is not to bring a feeling of defeat, but to remind us of the daily need to trust in the finished work on the cross.

³⁵ Therefore he says also in another psalm, ³⁶ For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, ³⁷ but he whom God raised up did not see corruption.

Acts 13:35-37

“...He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 1 Peter 2:4

We might be inclined to think, “Well, since I have a sin nature and it is a constant struggle, why fight that hard?” Or I might say, “At least I’m not as bad as ‘so and so.’” Even, “This is just the way I am.” Or sadly, I might parade my sin like that family dog who proudly showed the dead animal.



“Torture commanded by Mezentius” - an oil on canvas painted ~ 1646/7 by Charles Le Brun. This depicts preparing for a “body of death” punishment as referred to by Paul in Romans 7:24.

If I can see my sin as the decaying body that it is, if I remember that unrepented sin in my life breeds more sin, shame and guilt, then I would not so easily rationalize and tolerate the sin in my life. The Lord Jesus died to set us free from all sin. Will we see perfection this side of Heaven? No. Even so, I never want to be satisfied with any amount of sin.

May the Lord give us eyes to see the sin in our lives, ears to hear about it from others, and a humble, repentant heart, eager to respond.

Meet Jerry and Linda Mathias LINDA MATHIAS

Ed's Note: I asked Linda to write an article for TrailNotes introducing themselves, They joined GFC at the Community Celebration. You'll enjoy this!

"Will we call you Aunt Grandma?" This was the question jokingly asked by my niece and nephew who are also Jerry's grandchildren when they learned that we were planning to marry. We knew that our circumstances were uncommon, to say the least.

I had been alone since 1993 when my previous marriage ended in separation and finally divorce. Our three adult children were understanding, but still the brokenness affected them. Rebuilding my life as a "single" was only achieved because my hope was and is anchored in Christ alone.

I moved from Bucyrus to Galion where I worked as office manager in a surgical practice which later became a part of Avita in 2008. I remained in that position until my retirement in 2013.

In the meantime, Jerry, who is my sister's father-in-law, had grown up in Tiffin and had lived and worked in Ohio and New Hampshire in restaurant management, furniture upholstery and from 1999 until November 2017 as an American Baptist pastor. Jerry is the father of 6 and stepfather of 6. His late wife battled cancer for 6 years until her death in 2013. He remains very close to her children.

In early January 2014, Jerry and I had dinner together—just as friends. Little did we know at that time that a warm friendship would lead to a happy marriage in the "autumn" of our lives." As we planned our wedding for August 16, 2014 we wanted to symbolize our marriage with "a cord of three strands" (Ecclesiastes 4:12) Our relationship was initiated by God and would be built under His authority and to glorify Him.

Over time we sold each of our homes and relocated in Mansfield in July 2016. A few weeks after moving, we faced our first crisis when I was diagnosed with breast cancer and we began a journey we had not planned involving 3 surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation. Over the following 7 months, we discovered that our God was always faithful throughout.

Last September, Jerry developed some troubling symptoms that led us to the emergency room and a diagnosis of a very mild stroke due to a blocked carotid artery that was repaired successfully. We thanked God once again for His guidance that prevented a more serious condition.

With the blessing of our loving church in Westerville, Jerry announced his retirement and last November we began to pray for God's guidance to a church in our community. Having some ties with a few people at

CALENDER OCTOBER 2018

- 7** Elder Jadaé Fox preaches on John 3 :1-15.
"Being Curious."
- 14** Jay Shifley: Missions Sunday. 
CEF Coins for Kids banks are due.
Harvest Party, 5 to 7 pm
- 21** Elder Jon Vega preaching on John 5:1-15.
"Being Open." Teen Connect" Leaders meeting after Circle Church.
- 27** Women of Grace, 10:30 am, in Tim Barber Youth Building
- 28** Presiding Elder Eric Byrom preaching on Mark 10:46-52, "Being Seekers." 

November 3: Men's Retreat with Harvest Christian Fellowship. Speaker will be Tom Kelby, president of Table Fellowship.

December 19: GFC Christmas Party, 6:00-8:00 pm.

Nichols family greets Baby Thea Renée



Andrew and Kristine Nichols welcomed Thea Renée. on Sep.12 at 4:05 am. She weighed 6 lb. 8 oz. and was 20 inches long. "We're all doing well!"

Siblings are Asher and Clara, and paternal grandparents are Tom and Judy Nichols. Congratulations all!

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(The complete list of church functionaries will return next month)

conclusion of **Meet Jerry and Linda...** Grace (namely the Kurtzes, Susan Buzza, and Beth Feia), gave us comfort and a sense of belonging here. We never went anywhere else. The door was opened and we entered. We look forward to serving here along with a congregation of loving, dedicated people.

Some Recent Events in the Lives of Us GFC Folks



Mike Solon rides into his 61st year!



Susan Buzza gets an "OMC" cake for her birthday.



Japan teacher, Garrett Kaufman and his speech contest students.



At left: The Gardner kids perform in "Aladdin" at the Renaissance Theater.

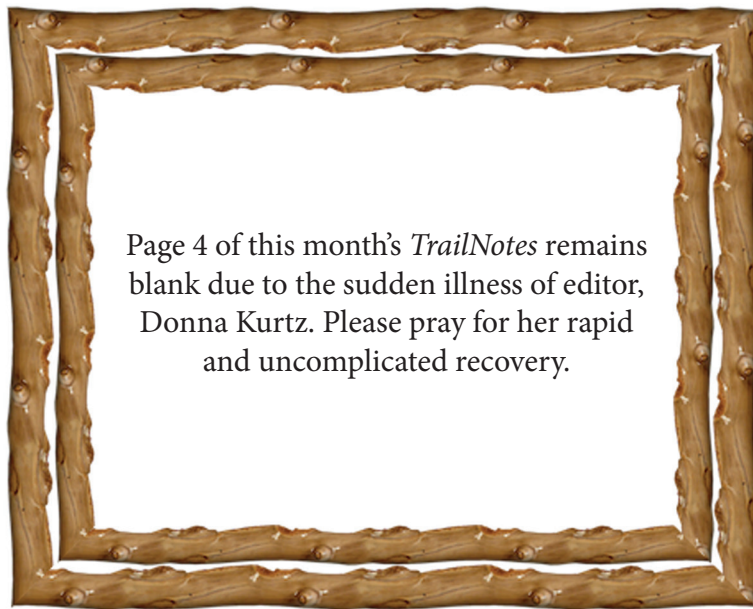


Above: elders Heining, Key, and Vega serving Mitch Schwartz.
At right: Attendees, including Randal and Paul York just back from Brazil.

Photographic Glimpses of the GFC Community Celebration 2018



Above: The Godsil Family Musicians present some Irish tunes.



Page 4 of this month's *TrailNotes* remains blank due to the sudden illness of editor, Donna Kurtz. Please pray for her rapid and uncomplicated recovery.