

The Christian life is a journey.

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

What does God require of you?

JERRY MATHIAS

“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)

When God created man, He gave something very special to each of us—love. He intended for us to love Him and to love one another. Like a seed, when we follow Christ Jesus, and abide in Him, and follow His Commandment...it will root deep in our heart and grow up through the years into branches and soon will provide shade, strength, beauty, and fruit to whomever comes close to it. So the question is: do we live by loving one another as our Father loves us?

So many people walk through life with no goals, or they chase the wrong things, and then life becomes meaningless. They do not realize that what gives life purpose is when we are devoting ourselves to serving God by serving others.

“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14)

Jesus Christ illustrates to all of us the meaning of serving one another and how to show God’s love to those around us. Jesus taught by example.

True servants need to be gentle and humble. Jesus entered the Upper Room to find it full of proud hearts and dirty feet. Not one of the disciples was willing to volunteer for the lowest task of washing dirty feet. Instead, they all argued over who was the greatest among them. Jesus quietly demonstrated to them

gentleness and humility by washing their feet. All believers are called to walk humbly in the Spirit of God.

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23)

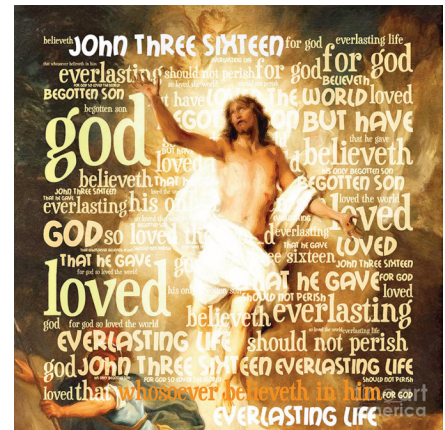


Christ Washing the Feet of His Disciples by Dirck van Baburen (circa 1594)

Being humble is not a sign of weakness: Jesus illustrates by example how an obedient servant walks in the Spirit of our Father. (Selflessness) Serving others is not an easy task. We should realize that we are humans, filled with weakness, but we must not lock ourselves in a bubble so we will be perfectly safe. We need to know how to trust in God, how to obey Him and how to use a proper perspective that will guard us against stumbling.

“Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the Light of this world.” [Jesus] (John 11:9).

Did you ever wonder what life would be like if God’s people all “loved one another” the way our Father loves us? We would all meet the needs of each other and have compassion for one another. God wants us to know that service to others can occur in unlikely places and situations. Religious and political boundaries do not exist when everyone starts where they are. God expects more from His people than random acts of kindness or loose change from a wallet. He expects sacrificial giving, such as helping a complete stranger and even loving our enemies.



“John 3:16 For God So Loved The World And The Resurrection of Jesus “ by Nicolas Bertin (circa. 2019)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. (John 3:16-17)

(Concluded on p. 4)

She laid her crown down: *a tribute to* Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor (1926-2022)

JOHN KURTZ

On September 8, 2022, “Queen Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God, Queen of this Realm & of Her other Realms & Territories, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith” died at what was her favorite earthly home, Balmoral Castle in Scotland. What most of us were probably unaware of was the fact that on that day she also laid down her earthly crown and was received into that Kingdom of which there will be no end. She found herself bowing to the One who had already been her King for many years. She had been looking forward to this!

As I learned of Queen Elizabeth’s death at the age of 96, then watched on TV and computer screen as her British subjects grieved and prepared for and so perfectly carried out her funeral and burial services, I was certainly struck by her life of service and dedication to duty.



From cover of a book published in 2016

As the days went on, there was another aspect of this woman’s life which became apparent in the words spoken at her services, in the glimpses of past film and video clips and in some of the published material: this woman had a true Christian faith and was a sister in the Lord.

True to British “reservedness” and, I’m sure, also due to “protocol,” this deep commitment was never worn overtly by the Queen. When one can make the statements she did about her faith in God and be a close friend of Billy Graham for 30 years, it seems reasonably certain that she did “walk the walk” as best she was able as a British Royal.

Here are a couple of examples of what this remarkable woman was able to communicate openly about her deep Christian faith over the years.

1. *“I know how much I rely on my faith to get me through the good times and the bad. Every day is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, take the long view, give my best in whatever the day brings, and put my trust in God...I draw strength from the message of hope in the Christian gospel.”*

(Christmas broadcast to UK 2002)
2. In a message she gave to a gathering of Anglican bishops early in 2022: *“Throughout my life, the message and teachings of Christ have been my guide. In them I find hope. It is my heartfelt prayer that you will continue to be sustained by your faith in times of trial and be encouraged by hope in times of despair.”*

There is a 30-minute special on “Billy Graham, The Queen and the United Kingdom” which will begin airing on TV on September 26 and can also be viewed online at: <https://billygraham.org/video/new-tv-special-features-billygraham-the-queen-and-the-united-kingdom/>

Not only does this give a glimpse into the relationship between Dr. Graham and Queen Elizabeth, but it also gives a moving history of

the Billy Graham Crusades in the United Kingdom over the years.

As I viewed the service held in St. George’s Chapel at Windsor Castle on September 19, I was struck by the video camera shot of Queen Elizabeth’s imperial crown as it was removed from atop her casket and placed beneath the large cross on the altar of St. George’s Chapel. It reminded me of the song, written by Chris Tomlin, which we sing frequently at Grace Fellowship: “We Fall Down.”



*We fall down
We lay our crowns
At the feet of Jesus.
The greatness of
Mercy and love
At the feet of Jesus...*

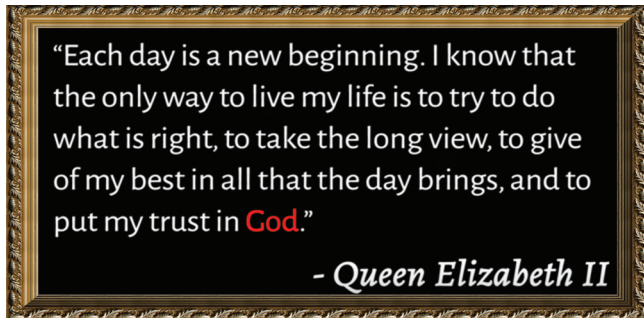
For one reason or another, I have not yet seen this correlation and/or Christian symbolism mentioned by anyone in the media. Such a pre-planned act could not have been mere coincidence!

(concluded on page 3)

She laid her crown down *(concluded from p.2)*

Obviously, the full story of Queen Elizabeth's faith will remain with God alone, but I personally look forward to meeting her, together with a myriad of others on my "bucket list," at the foot of the Throne or walking on the "streets that are golden" in Heaven one day.

To quote the most Reverend John Bishop, Archbishop of Armagh and Anglican Primate of All Ireland, at the conclusion of a Service of Reflection, delivered in Belfast on September 13 following his comparison of Queen Elizabeth to Mr. Valliant for Truth in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress: "And the trumpets sounded for her on the other side."



Betsey Wilbur Kodat celebrates 70th Birthday at Grace Haven

On July 29, 2022, Betsey and Roger Kodat arrived at Grace Haven for a birthday Chinese dinner arranged by Connie Zhu. Most of those present were from the area, but Karen Stahl from Spokane, WA was visiting the Kurtzes and came along—she had sung at Betsey and Roger's wedding. Buddy and Judy Luster also came from Athens, TN.

Here is a letter Betsey wrote to us for that night.

"Dear Friends from Grace Haven,

"Thank you for being my friends. At age 70, I look back and see all God has done for me through your lives. Whether I've been in touch or not, I am grateful we have enjoyed over 50 years of fellowship and friendship—imagine! I treasure memories of Farmies, Workers, Householders, Bible studies, worship, prayer, goofing off, meals in homes, and walks with friends. I remember what it was like to be with you. I cannot imagine my life without you.

"Maybe it's because I was with you at a foundational time in my life, but Grace Haven was a force in my whole life. There were riches here which I continue to enjoy. My faith grew strong through teaching and books and 'doing life' in community. Many things I did in my life began here. I got a hunger for knowing God's character, and I eventually put what I learned

into a self-published book, "Show Me Your Glory, Lord." I encountered the healing counseling because of personal need, and later I became a guidance counselor myself. My first visit to Haiti was with a team from Grace Haven. Haiti eventually became my home for five years and led me to Roger.

"Yes, you are part of who I am today. I thank you. But this celebration is not just about me—it is about what God has done for me and others through the community of Grace Haven. Mine is a cameo role in the drama of God's great work—many have been blessed here. I thank God for that. With love, Betsey"

Communities in Betsey's Life

Presbyterian Church (Greenville, SC)
Int'l. Church (Prague)/ Anglican Church (VA)
Family—Roger, Aimee, Emily, Alliance Ch. (NY)
Quisqueva Ch. & Compassion Int./ (Haiti)
Wooster Christian Fellowship & Grace Haven
Family—Parents and Brother Pete
Faithful ancestors

"Father, I publicly thank You in the company of my friends here for establishing Grace Haven and for the people You called to come. We cannot thank You enough for the genius of the Grace Haven community. Truly we learned how good and pleasant it is when Your people live together in unity. Hallelujah!"



What does God require of you?

(concluded from page 1)

Our Father gave His all, and He wants us all to believe and follow His Son.

- * Serving is not only for certain people.
- * Everyone has something to offer.
- * To do whatever God requires from us, even when it may seem very insignificant or unpleasant to us, can be significant to others. The only ingredient that is required is love.

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." (1 Peter 4:10)

- * Help the sick: prepare meals, send a card, call.
- * Help the elderly with their chores.
- * Pray for others: those who are discouraged, weak, sick, traveling.
- * Show you care by sending cards: for holidays, birthdays, missing you, etc.

"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." (Gal. 5:13)

"God does not look at the amount and the depth of work when it comes to serving others, but He looks at our heart, are we walking in the Spirit." (Refer to Gal. 5:22-23)

Do we serve by loving one another? He promised that each act of service no matter how small or large will be remembered by God, and no reward will be forgotten, Even a cool cup of water given out of love will be rewarded. But it might be postponed until eternity, for most of our rewards will be reserved in heaven for those who live unselfishly.

WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU?

"He has told you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

BREAKING NEWS

She's made it! The Adalem's new granddaughter was born at 3:28 am on September 27, weighing just 2 lb., 2 oz. She was then flown to the N.I.C.U. at Akron Children's hospital. Please continue to pray for this tiny baby, her parents Rachel and Aaron, and the whole Adelem family.

OCTOBER 2022

Every Wednesday: Connect Groups for all ages, 6:30 to 8:00 pm.

- 1** GFC Fall Workday begins at 9 am.
- 2** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching: Psalm 123, Neh. 2:19-20, 4:1-6.
- 6** Women of Grace Bible discovery and prayer: 9:00 to 10:00 am in church lobby.
- 6, 13, 20, 27** Madison Middle School Tabletop Game Club begins after school from 2:30 to 4:00 pm.
- 8** Fall Harvest Party 5:00 to 8:00 pm.
- 9** Elder Jadaé Fox preaching: Psalm 124, Neh. 4:7-23. 
- 13** Women of Grace Bible discovery and prayer: 9:00 to 10:00 am in church lobby.
- 15** Kingdom Men's monthly prayer breakfast: McDonald's on Hanley Rd. at 9:00 am.
- 16** Eric Byrom preaching: Psalm 125. Neh. 5:1-19. 
- 23** Eric Byrom preaching: Psalm 126. Neh. 6:1-14.
- 27** Women of Grace Bible discovery and prayer: 6:30 to 8 pm in church lobby.
- 30** Celebration Sunday

Coming UP:

- ♦ Saturday, November 5: Table Fellowship's Harvest Christian Church, Elyria invites GFC men and friends to its annual men's retreat which will be held here at GFC.
- ♦ Wednesday, December 21: GFC Christmas Party.

Grace Fellowship Church

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Eric Byrom Presiding Elder/ Pastor
(A complete list of church functionaries will return next month)