

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: *The Encounter*—

“You’ll never be the same” — DTS 2020

JON VEGA



*Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this. Whether it is a brief, single encounter or the daily fellowship of years, Christian community is only this. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.*

--Dietrich Bonhoeffer

This year marked a return (*of sorts*) of Discipleship Training School to Grace Fellowship Church and our brothers and sisters who joined us from Harvest Christian Church in Elyria, OH. The weekend was a success by all the markers we set for it. As a “seed” conference, it was a success as well and promises greater involvement from other Table Fellowship churches and the Christian community at large next year!

Each of the talks by senior staff (Sam Heininger, Melissa and Ságarés Martins, and Angel Vega and myself) were focused on a personal encounter with Christ that changed our life, our mission, and our personal walk with Him. As the weekend progressed, a theme began to emerge at the core of the talks: healing and restoration. First, reconciling our relationship with Christ Himself. Then, the restoration of our broken selves. Finally, forgiveness and reconciliation of our relationship with others.

I could feel a powerful spiritual wave beginning to form just over the horizon as we worshipped Friday evening and Saturday morning.

The college students (Kera Gardner, Carol Heininger, Addison Karger, and Alexi Vega) then led small groups of students in discussion about the talk, everyday life, and how they could and would encounter God during the conference. In testament to their wonderful leadership in less than glorious pursuits, it has been a long time since the church bathrooms smelled so Clorox clean!

Of course, every good conference relies heavily on a good kitchen staff to keep things moving and young brains humming. Thank you to all the volunteers who showed up to lend a hand and make the experience of feeding seventeen junior and senior high school students a mountain of food as stress free as possible.

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## The Encounter *(continued from p.1)*

Only a few of the senior staff and none of the students had previous expectations for the Saturday night worship, but God had plans long before we did, and it showed. The Lord gave me just enough warning (in the music room) to call for the staff to begin praying in earnest as the spiritual waters rose. The wave crested and flooded over many dams that night.

My goal for the weekend was as much for the empowerment and training of the junior staff as for the students. So to see them take an active role in praying for students as the Holy Spirit moved powerfully during the worship and then see the students praying for each other while I was purposely sidelined with the sound and PowerPoint slides was amazing, just ask our own Doug Jackson (*who was drumming*) about it.

All in all, I think I speak for all of the staff and students when I say I am looking forward to what the Lord has for the youth next year at DTS (a full week) as we continue to encounter Him in powerful ways this year. With God's grace, the event will continue to grow and impact the Kingdom as many of the youth begin to step more and more into ministry and discipleship because of their encounter with Christ.



*Becky Roggio speaking at the August 19, 2020 District 5 Area Agency on Aging ceremony with Al cheering her on in the background.*

## Al and Becky Roggio's Parkinson Support Group wins 2020 Award in 9 County Area *SPECIAL TO RICHLAND SOURCE*



**ONTARIO** - The Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging has announced that the Richland County Parkinson Support Group has been selected as the 2020 Community Service Award recipient. The group was honored on August 19 at a ceremony hosted at Hawkins Corner.

*"This is the 20th year the Area Agency has honored an organization from one of the nine counties we serve," said Teresa Cook, VP of Administrative Services. "As we all know, COVID may have changed how we can get together but what hasn't changed is the outstanding way individuals, groups and organizations are working together to support and take care of one another."*

The agency celebrated outside, observing physical distancing, while guests honked in their cars.

The Support Group encourages people to bring their caregivers and other family members to the meetings. *"We don't want Parkinson's to be a dreaded disease, but rather an opportunity to learn about the disease and be proactive in managing it because every day is a gift,"* said Support Group leader Becky Roggio.

Exercise is like medication in helping with tremors and reducing rigidity. Guest speakers come to educate on Parkinson's specific topics. This includes topics on new medications, clinical trials, or new treatment options like Deep Brain Stimulation Surgery.

There is only one award in the 9 county service area: Ashland, Crawford, Huron, Knox, Marion, Morrow, Richland, Seneca, and Wyadot. Attending were the Roggio's daughter Bethany and her children, son Matt and his children, Steve and Deb McKee, Lori Barker, and members of the local Parkinson Support Group. Congratulations, Roggios!

# A letter to my grandson, age 10, on the occasion of his Baptism

DONNA KURTZ



Dear Hayden,

Your Baptism Day will soon be here! It will be one that you remember your whole life. (*I'm so glad your mom will be taking a video so we all can see it!*)

When I was in second grade (*I think*) I used to go home for lunch. We had a BIG radio that sat on the floor in the living room. I would lie on the floor and listen to "*Aunt Theresa tells Stories to Boys and Girls.*"

One day she explained how God wanted me to be in His family. He sent His Son, Jesus, to earth to make that possible. I remember she said, "*You know how much your parents love you. God loves you even more!*" Then she led us in a prayer asking Jesus into our lives. I remember thinking, "*I might have done this before, but if I haven't, I'm doing it now.*"

I think that was in December. The following spring I had to "*tell my story*" to the Board of Deacons at church and prepare to be baptized. That happened on Easter Sunday evening in the church service. I even remember how the water felt. It was one of the milestones of my life. Now I was "*telling the world*" that I belonged to Jesus!

Hayden, I think you might one

day be a leader in the church. You are already preaching! Here are some things that I have learned from my father, my husband, and my elders:

1. You encourage my gifts **when you delight in me**. My father (*your great-grandfather*) was a first-time father at 45. He taught me of the Heavenly Father's delight in His creation. Daddy built confidence in me. I developed a heart to please my father that carried over into the spiritual realm.
2. You encourage my gifts **when you call me on**. My father gave me a vision for how God could use me. "*These years are for training*" he would tell me in high school. Whether I was dishing out soup in a rescue mission or playing a piano concerto in Orchestra Hall, I knew there was a place for me in the Kingdom of God.
3. You encourage my gifts **when you let go and release me**. Once my father felt I was ready, he pulled back and let me "*sink or swim.*" A year of study, concerts, and music ministry throughout Europe when I was barely out of my teens proved life-changing. The same thing can happen in the church. Don't abandon me in the training process but when the time is right, let go.
4. You encourage my gifts **when you take time for me**. Once during a busy season Opa and I went off to a medical meeting arriving a day early for some fun. He told me, "*Now I don't have anyone to concentrate on but you!*" What happens with a statement like that? I can talk about dreams, ideas, and how our gifts mesh. Time is important. Listening is important.

5. You encourage my gifts **when you share the load**. One of Opa's ministries to me is picking up the slack. I bring excitement to his life, but I also bring him more work! Early on, I asked him, "*Does that bother you?*"

*"Oh no! I love what you do!"*

You can imagine how that freed me and gave me a better understanding of how we fit together.

6. You encourage my gifts **when you let me know what you're thinking and doing, and where you're going**. It's important to me to hear what you think God is doing. The "vision" things. It gets me thinking. I appreciate being included when you allow me to be a partner.

7. You encourage my gifts **when you share results of your ministry and acknowledge mine**. Once I was asked to write an article about going through your Aunt Karin's brain tumor trial while we were going through it. It was the hardest thing I have ever had to write. It took me months. The editor called me from California. "*This is the first time I've edited something and didn't change a word.*" All of a sudden it was worth all the blood, sweat and tears—and I wanted to do more writing.

8. You encourage my gifts **when you let me see your struggles**. You stir me to prayer and sometimes to action.

9. You encourage my gifts **when you protect me from spreading myself too thin**. Years ago the Lord asked me to protect my mornings. "*Don't fill your life with too busy days. I can only use you to the extent that I have you in quiet.*"

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## A letter to my grandson

*(continued from page 3.)*

*I need your ear; you need My heart. The area you like to be in control of, your schedule, I am asking you to release to your husband..."*

My elders have also helped with my schedule. They don't just fill jobs. I can trust them to be selective in what they ask me to do, or not do.

The Saturday after Christmas I wanted to attend a long-time Barnabas Ensemble member's wedding.

I could take an overnight train coming and going from Rochester where we were visiting our kids and be back in 24 hours. "Don't do it," said Ray Nethery strongly. "Stay and enjoy your family." I was disappointed at the time, but it was good counsel. A month later we had the newlyweds over for dinner and a delightful evening of watching their wedding video.

**10.** You encourage my gifts **when you pray for me.** You can bring me into a realm of healing when that's needed, and you can bring me the truth of God. Sometimes this results in the release of new gifts or a fresh understanding of established ones.

Be generous with your time.

Be delighted with the results.

God bless you and use you, Hayden.

Love, *Oma*

*In July, Hayden asked his parents if he could be baptized.*

*His dad, Mike Termer, is the pastor of their church, Neumann Christian Community Church in Shelby, MI. The date was set for August 2, 2020.*

*Meanwhile, his mother, Nancy, wrote to all the relatives asking each person to write Hayden a letter of encouragement that he would be given on the date of his baptism.*

**30 letters arrived!**

*The family reads a letter each night at the dinner table.*





Worship at GFC during the COVID-19 pandemic



Dancin' on the green

Singin' in the car

## September 2020

- 29 Community Celebration: 5:30-8 pm.
- 30 Celebration Sunday! Bring a picnic lunch.
- 2 Connect groups for all ages start each Wednesday: 6:30-8 pm.
- 6 Eric Byrom preaching. Eph. 4: 11-16. 10 am.
- 12 GFC Fall Family Fun Festival. (time TBA)
- 13 Eric Byrom preaching. Daniel 1:1-21. 10 am.  
Circle Church leaders Zoom meeting: 2 pm.
- 19 Men's monthly prayer breakfast: 9 am. Bring a sack breakfast and meet at church.  
Women of Grace meet at church: 10:30 am.
- 20 Guest Speaker: Jay Shifley – "A Christian Businessman." 10 am.
- 27 Robert Key preaching: "Gifts of the Spirit." Eph. 2. 10 am .

Theme for the Year: **"Growing Upward in Christ"**

Verse: Eph. 4:15–*"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head into Christ."*



The McKee Circle Church group practicing "social distancing" as they prepare to serve a meal to the homeless on August 9

## Sailing with the Spirit ANDREW WILSON

How a boating analogy helps make sense of a confusing instruction from Paul.

Paul tells us to *"be filled with the Spirit"* (Eph. 5:18), and we all nod approvingly. It sounds like the sort of thing we should do. But think about it for a moment, and it can sound rather strange. How on earth do you obey a passive verb?

If someone tells me, *"Phone your mother,"* I can do that. But what if someone says, *"Be phoned by your mother?"* Now I'm stumped. Not only is it unclear what I am to do next, it's not even obvious what the instruction means. Yet Paul simply tells the Ephesians to *"be filled with the Spirit."* It can be confusing.

As a result, many Christians aren't entirely sure what being filled with the Spirit is. Is it an experience we are supposed to have—and, if so, what kind? Is it a series of habits we are supposed to develop—and if so, which ones? Reformed and conservative believers will often emphasize the habit side, based on the parallel instruction in Colossians to *"let the message of Christ dwell among you richly."* (3:16) Pentecostals and charismatics will usually emphasize the experience side, invoking the baptism in the Spirit in the Book of Acts. So which is it: a habit or an experience?

This is where speaking English doesn't help us. In the biblical languages, there is just one word for *Spirit*, *breath*, and *wind* (*ruach* in Hebrew, *pneuma* in Paul's Greek). But in English, we have three different words: *breath* (from the Old English, *braet*, meaning *scent*), *spirit* (from the Latin *spiritus* meaning *spirit* or *breath*) and *wind* (from the German *wind*). So we don't necessarily see a connection between being filled with the Spirit, filled with breath, and filled with wind. In fact, many of us probably think of being *"filled with the Spirit"* in terms of liquid, like a glass being filled with water, which raises various questions. (*Why aren't we full already? Do we leak? Can the Spirit be spilled?*)

But Paul's original wording—*"be filled with the Spirit/breath/wind"* would make people think of being filled with air. It might call to mind a pipe or a trumpet, which can only fulfill its purpose when it is *"filled with the breath."* Or even better, you might think of a sailboat, which requires a power beyond itself (the wind) to go anywhere. Paul is using a dynamic image, not a static one. A glass of water only needs filling once; a sailboat won't be useful without continual filling.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Sailing with the Spirit *(concluded)*

Reading the metaphor that way sheds new light on how to heed Paul's instruction. When you're sailing, is being "filled with the wind" an experience or a habit? It's both!

Catching the wind on a sailboat is clearly an experience—I vividly remember that first feeling of being seized and carried forward by a mighty power from elsewhere. But it is also a habit. If you don't put the sails up, pull the mainsheet fast, or adjust the jib, you won't go anywhere, even if the wind is blowing hard.

Sailing, in that sense, is the art of attentive responsiveness to an external power. You rely entirely on the external power to get you anywhere—sailors never imagine themselves to be powering the boat by their own strength—but you also have to respond attentively to whatever the wind is doing, which comes through cultivating awareness, skill, and good habits.



Being filled with the Spirit involves the same "both/and." We pursue the experience of the Holy Spirit: Paul uses the language of filling and drenching, drinking and pouring. We rely entirely on the Spirit's immeasurable power, rather than our own strength to get us anywhere. But we also develop habits. We respond attentively to what He is doing in and through us, a capacity that comes through awareness, skill and practice. Paul mentions four such habits in subsequent verses: teaching one another, singing, giving thanks, and submitting to one another (Eph. 5:18-21).

Like the Christian life as a whole, being filled with the Spirit is both passive and active; it involves both experience and habit. We are called to *feel* things and to *do* things. God works and we work. Whatever your church background, my encouragement is simple: **Don't play down either side of the equation.**

ANDREW WILSON is the teaching pastor of King's Church, London and author of **Spirit and Sacrament** (Zondervan).



(From *Christianity Today* July/August, 2019. Used by permission.)

## A Prayer Amid an Epidemic

KERRY WEBER

Jesus Christ, You traveled through towns and villages curing every disease and illness. At Your command, the sick were made well. *Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the corona virus, that we may experience Your healing love.*

*Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.*

*Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another.*

*Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.*

Jesus Christ, Healer of all, *stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.*

*Be with those who are dying from the virus. May they be at rest. Give them Your eternal peace.*

*Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know Your peace.*

*Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers who put themselves at risk. May they know Your protection.*

*Be with the leaders of all nations. Let them act with charity and true concern. Give them wisdom to invest in long-term solutions and work together.*

Whether we are surrounded by many or only a few, *give us Your peace as we endure. Lord, heal us.*

(KERRY WEBER is an editor of *America*)

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Eric Byrom	Presiding Elder/ Pastor
Jadaé Fox	Elder
Andy Heining	Elder
Robert Key	Elder
Jon Vega	Elder
Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox	Office
Judy Nichols	Prayer Chain
Lori Barker	Missions
John and Donna Kurtz	TrailNotes
Andy Heining	Worship
Angel Vega	Dance
Andy Anschutz	Sound/Power Point

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