

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 Bridge of Love

ANDY HEININGER

Several weeks ago at Teen DTS, I was blessed to share with the campers a metaphor: the bridge of love. This concept was not my own, but was shared with me by our Presiding Elder, Pastor Eric Byrom. The idea is to build relationships of love with one another that can withstand the weight of truth. The truth can sometimes be a heavy load on a friendship, and if the relationship is not built up first, it can topple. The building up process takes time and effort from both parties.

Let's look first at Matthew 22:39 where Jesus says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." This verse is not new to us and is quoted frequently. But how do we love our neighbor as ourselves in our bridge building process?

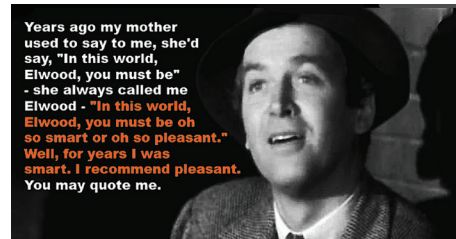


"Love your neighbor as yourself." (Photo by Michael Rucker)

My wife has reflected on this and summarized it with these thoughts. "I love myself 1) by meeting my own physical needs, 2) by cultivating my own spiritual growth in the Lord, and 3) by sharing with others and serving them to nurture relationships."

If we see others' physical needs and help them, we are loving them as we love ourselves. If we encourage them in their relationship with the Lord, we are loving them as we love ourselves. If we draw together to serve others (and also let them serve us through loving acts and shared experiences), it creates a cycle of loving one another as well as loving ourselves.

The love bridge is built by spending time together, sharing our hearts and dreams and our spiritual gifts, as well as our burdens and heartaches. These times strengthen this love bridge, but sometimes presenting the truth can be heavy. The truth can strengthen relationships, but it can also destroy them if not applied in the correct timing and with the correct intent.





One of my favorite quotes is from the movie *Harvey* with Jimmy Stewart. His character, Elwood P. Dowd, is well-loved by people, but most of them in the movie think he is crazy. He shares his personal philosophy with his psychiatrist: "In this world, you can be oh so smart, or oh so pleasant...For years I was smart...I recommend pleasant." In my opinion, this reflects the Apostle Paul's teaching of I Corinthians 9:22-23:

"To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings."

Paul built this relational bridge with others in order to share the most important truth in the history of mankind...the Savior has come, He loves you, He chose you, and He saved you! In the movie, Elwood's choice to be pleasant drew a listening ear to share his wisdom. Both men chose the relational path rather than the immediate path of truth. They built their bridges of love first, in order to have a willing audience to embrace the truth later.

SEPTEMBER 2022

- 4** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching: Psalm 119. Honoring of Sunday School teachers during worship. 10:00 am.
- 7** Connect Groups for all ages begin. 6:30 pm.
- 8** Women of Grace Bible study and prayer, 9:00-10:00 am.
- 11** Eric Byrom preaching: Psalm 120.

 Final Bible doctrine class with Andy Anchutz. Chapters 33-34, 4:00 to 6:00 pm.
 Sacred Assembly at Freer Field, Ashland. Time to be decided.
- 17** Kingdom Men's prayer breakfast at McDonald's on Hanley Rd. 9:00 am.
- 18** Elder Matt Godsil preaching: Psalm 121. 10:00 am.
- 22** Women of Grace Bible study and prayer, 6:30 to 8:00 pm.
- 25** Eric Byrom preaching: Psalm 122.
- 29** Finance Team meeting 7:00 pm.


New baby joins Gardner Family



Rosalyn "Rossi" Elisabeth Gardner

Community Celebration 2022

GFC Elders Eric Byrom, Matt Godsil, Jerry Mathias and Elder Emeritus Rick Widener from Harvest Christian Church, Elyria, greeted GFC members who arrived at the 2022 Community Celebration Aug. 27.



Then Eric, Matt, Jerry and Jadae' Fox served our delicious dinner of breaded chicken breast, parsley potatoes, mixed vegetables, tossed salad and rolls from Fergy's on Main in Ashland. Desserts were assorted cheesecake slices and fruit kabobs.

Following a time of worship, a slide show covered major events of the year. Then Matt Godsil listed various areas where people had served. The group recognized the volunteers as they stood.



(Concluded on page 3.)



ROSALYN ELISABETH was born August 8, 2022, to Amy Gardner. Bob and Kati Gardner are Rosalyn's grandparents and Ray Nethery is her great-grandfather. Rosalyn weighed 7 lbs., and her length was 20 inches.

Rosalyn's aunts are Anna Weberling and Nykera Gardner. Her uncles are David Gardner, Nick Gardner, Justice Gardner, Braylon Gardner, and Danny Gardner. Her first social event was the Community Celebration!

In September, Amy will enter the Madison Adult Education training classes for Dental Assistance, which will continue until June.

Community Celebration 2022

(concluded, from p. 2)

Eric presented the theme verse for the year, I Thess. 1:3. “We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

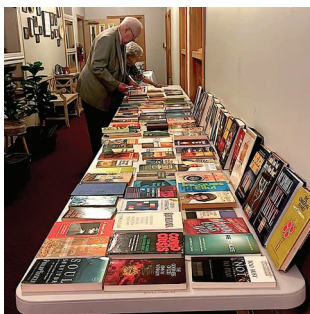
Eric asked that we memorize the verse. He also asked that we make a practice of bringing our Bibles each Sunday. The sermons will be based on Psalms 119 –134 and I – II Timothy. He would like us to take notes in our Bible’s margins (or a notebook).

Finally, Jadae’ Fox introduced two of the new members: Marilyn Martin and Heather Schade. Several led in prayer for them and a third new member, Christina Bass, who could not attend that evening.



Help yourself to books in the Gallery

The Kurtzes have reorganized their library. The tables of books are available free to you for the next two or three weeks.



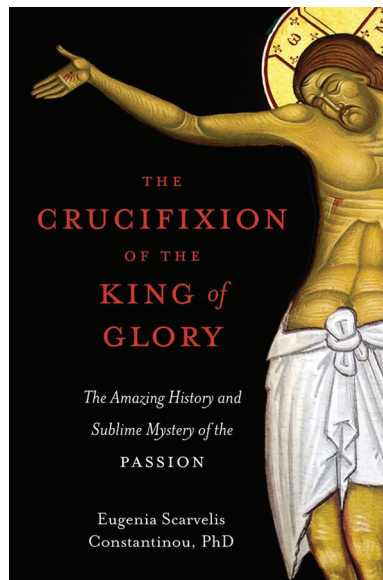
A new look at the Crucifixion

JOHN KURTZ

It is now over halfway between Easter and the Advent/Christmas season. What a good time for us to be reminded of the events and reason for the life on earth of our Lord as it reached its culmination on that Roman cross at Jerusalem’s Calvary hill in A.D. 33.

Some of us will remember reading, with amazement and enhanced comprehension, the details so well described by Jim Bishop, a Roman Catholic journalist, in his 1957 book, *The Day Christ Died*. Over the years there have been other more scholarly evaluations of that day and the event which changed history for all mankind.

New facts have come to light from various sources to enhance our understanding of what an amazing example of God’s love for us Jesus’ earthly life and death was.



However, a book has recently emerged covering not only the day of Christ’s Crucifixion but the entire week beforehand. It includes an in-depth study of the people involved, the prophecies fulfilled—closely following the biblical narrative, plus details related by both first century

Church Fathers and contemporary secular historians.

This time the author is a well-qualified Eastern Orthodox professor, biblical scholar, and lawyer, Eugenia Constantinou. Her book, *The Crucifixion of the King of Glory*, published in 2021 (Ancient Faith Publishing), is very readable, well documented and inciteful, yet not an overly scholarly account of the background, persons, and details of this event, which is literally at the crux of our Christian faith.

Throughout the book there are numerous facts and bits of background information which not only add to the reader’s understanding of the subject being discussed but will also add to one’s general understanding of the life and times of first century Judaism, along with Judea and its Roman rulers.

At 350 pages it is “just right” in length, and its details will provide all who read it an even richer understanding of what it means to say, “Christ died for my sins.” A highly recommended read! (My only “complaint” is that the book is only available in paperback.)

I hope that the author will undertake a sequel covering the days and weeks following the Crucifixion: *The Resurrection of the King of Glory*. I have recently discovered that she has given us a taste of just that. A series of podcasts were produced by Dr. Constantinou on Ancient Faith Radio beginning on May 2, 2022. These can be accessed at <https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/searchthescrptureslive> and are recommended listening.

There is much available in print and online from both our Orthodox and Roman Catholic brothers and sisters which is worth our attention today. This book and its author’s podcasts certainly belong in that category.

SHE LOVES ME

delights enthusiastic crowd

DONNA KURTZ

After cancellations due to cast COVID attacks, Director Samuel Heininger announced that *She Loves Me* would finally be presented on Sunday afternoon, August 21, at Grace Fellowship Church, after permission was granted by special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI), which supplied all authorized performance materials.

Musical accompaniment was provided by pianist, Karen Andrew. Choreography was designed by Alexi Vega, and costumes were chosen by Nykera Gardner.



Director:
Samuel
Heininger

Photo by
John Kurtz

The plot centered around the employees and customers in Mr Maraczek's (*Sarah Heininger*) Budapest Parfumerie. Employees were Georg Nowack (*Ethan Byrom*), Amalia Balash (*Abigail Heininger*), Ilona Ritter (*Amanda Heininger*), Ladislav Sipos (*Ruie C. Rutherford*), Steven Kodály (*Samuel Heininger*), and Árpád László (*Talia Byrom*).

Customers were *Hannah Schade*, *Karis Vega*, *Elise Nunn*, *Julyana K. Bass* and *Travis Byrom*. Waiter, *Angel Vega*, provided continual hilarity!

The musical was originally directed and produced on Broadway by Harold Prince. It was based on a play by Miklós László where clerks Georg and Amalia wrote anonymous and tender notes to one another, not realizing until the end of the drama that they had fallen in love with someone they already knew well.

Thanks to the talented cast and crew for telling the story with accuracy, humor, and gusto! We look forward to next summer's production!



Cast at curtain call - photo by John Kurtz



Formal cast photo after performance - by Jon Vega

Grace Fellowship Church

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Eric Byrom Presiding Elder/ Pastor
Jadaé Fox Elder
Matt Godsil Elder
Andy Heininger Elder
Jerry Mathias Elder

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