

# Living Faith Messenger

2023 Summer Edition

## From the Pastor's Desk

By Pastor Troy Billow

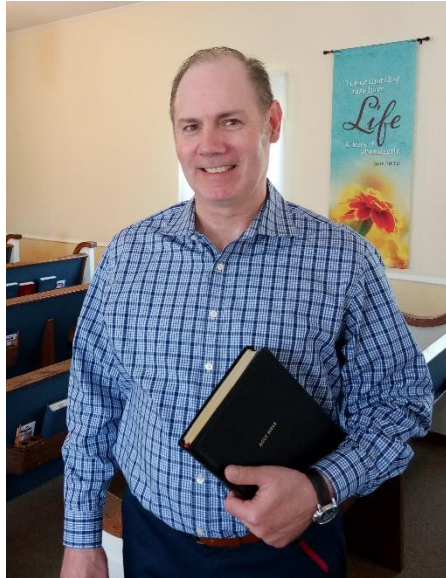
Summer 2023

### ***Walking Faithful***

Faithfulness is not easy for us, especially as we face the challenges of this life, and as we face the reality of ourselves with all our inconsistencies – not to mention our never-ending busyness as present-day Americans. What are we to do? ***"O Lord, I want you to find me faithful!"*** – is often the cry of our heart!

According to the Holman Bible Dictionary the word ***Faithfulness*** means "to be trustworthy and reliable toward God and claim his promises despite whatever difficulties we may be facing." This concept derives its meaning from the root word for ***Faith*** which in turn means "to trust even without complete understanding or seeing immediate results." This is supported by the well-known verse ***"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*** Heb.11:1 We have had some difficult days here at LF recently and Faithfulness is best seen when things are challenging and unexpected.

Where is the secret to faithfulness found? – the Bible - Gods inspired word always holds our answer - ***"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."*** Col.2:6-7 The secret is found inside this verse – do you



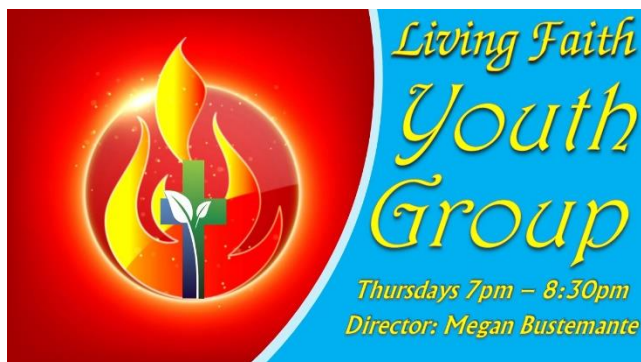
see it? As we received him by faith, we also walk in a relationship with him by that same faith. ***"As you received Christ, so walk in him, rooted and built up"***. Do you feel like you need some roots so you can grow the fruit of faithfulness? Then Paul's Holy Spirit advise to us is that we walk in our newfound relationship with Jesus each day and build up our faith and this will bring the desire of faithfulness – this scripture says it this way - we will be ***"abounding in it with thankfulness"***.

I heard a rough-cut pastor with a sketchy past once say in his sermon – ***"You can't change you! – but Jesus can change you – if you let him"***. It's in our ongoing relationship with Jesus in prayer and in spending consistent time in his living word daily that will be the catalyst to help ***"build and establish you"*** and that in turn will produce the fruit of faithfulness. We are weak, but he is strong. Let him become strong in you.

Sometimes in an especially moving service we will kneel in surrender at the alter in all sincerity moved by the Spirit because we want to "surrender all" and walk in the faithfulness and the obedience that we so desire, but that is only the first step of our faithfulness journey. After that pure moment we need to rise to our feet and learn to walk in faithfulness by relying on him in an intimate relationship daily and trust him to give you that missing motivation and consistency you are so looking for. You need him, not just you, to be more faithful to the body of Christ and to serving others. This journey of faithfulness doesn't mean newfound perfection, but it can

mean more faithfulness this year than last year. There is a future for this fellowship of Christians and the ministries of Living Faith – walk along beside me in faithfulness and let's serve the king together for his glory and his eternal purposes. His return is soon.

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## Living Faith Youth Group

By: Megan Bustamante

Summer programming for the Living Faith Community Church youth is getting a new look and I am very excited! This year, for the first time, we will be running a weekly “craft camp” during a July and into August. This change of pace will be a great opportunity for the youth of all ages in the church to work together on projects and invite friends from outside of the church to join them. Craft camp will still meet on Thursday evenings but from 6-8pm and because creating can get messy we will be outside each week (weather permitting). My prayer is that God will use this fun time together to help us create new friendships and strength existing ones.

Here are a few ways that anyone can support this new program:

1. Volunteer to attend a week or two to help students create their projects.
2. Share about this new program with any youth you know! Printed flyers will be available all summer to personally invite kids you know would love some free time to be creative.
3. Bring in snacks. Snacks are always a big deal for kids and if a few people are able to donate boxes of chips or juice boxes it allows us to keep this a free event.
4. PRAY! Pray that God will use Craft Camp to help build his kingdom and his community.

Check out the flyer for a full schedule, all the details and registration information.

# Summer Craft Camp

Join us each week as we complete a new project together!

- July 6: design a tote bag
- July 13: build a bird house
- July 20: tie dye
- July 27: canvas painting
- August 3: design a pencil case and notebook

Text “Craft camp” to (708)215-4099 for more info and to register.  
Registration is not required but there is a limit of 20 kids each week. Registering each week makes sure you have a spot.

**Who:** kids ages 3-14

**Cost:** FREE!

**When:** Thursdays

**Time:** 6-8pm

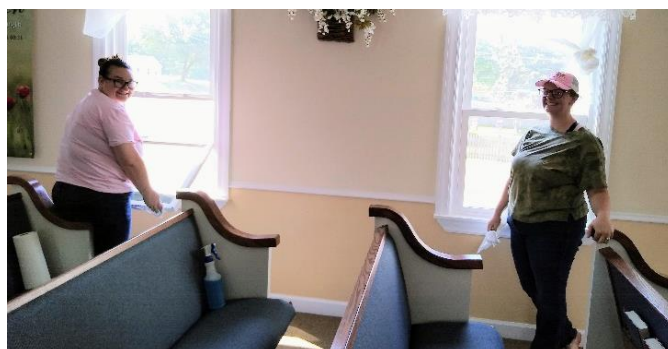
**Where:** Living Faith Community Church  
380 High Rd.  
Lockport, IL 60441

Craft camp is a program of Living Faith Community Church Youth

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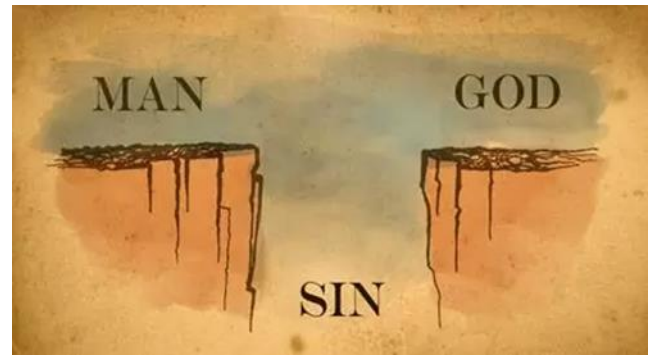
## Spring Cleaning! June 3, 2023

Thanks to all who came out on Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, rolled up their sleeves and did a beautiful job cleaning, painting and repairing God's house. For those who couldn't attend, here are some highlights of the day:







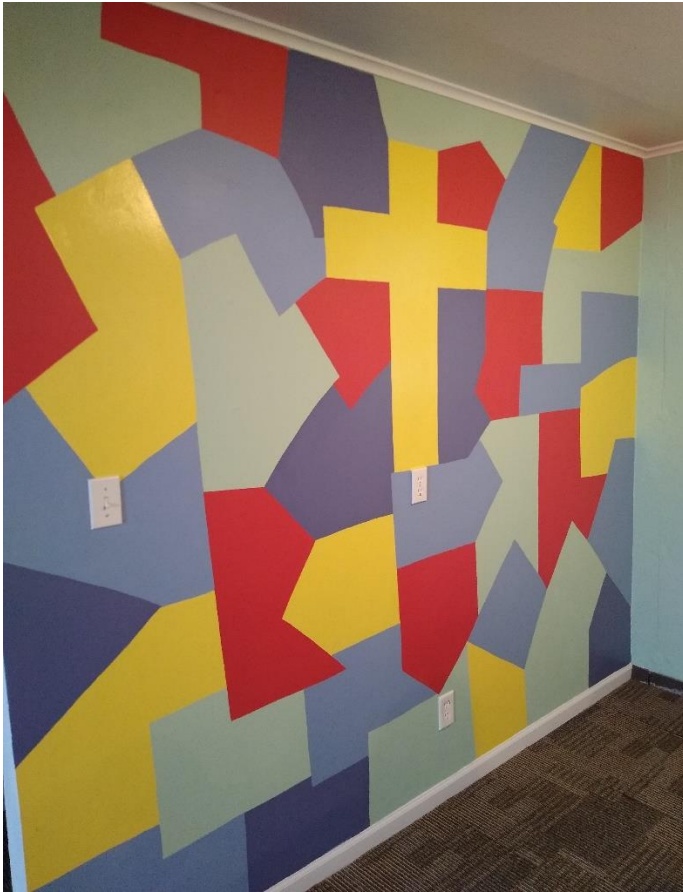


The Reality to the Believer is This;  
You're A Sinner... But...

By Rob W. Case

In the last several months, I have seen a particular dynamic rise to the surface that is becoming ever so prevalent, coming from two very different lines of thinking. One is from an unbeliever's standpoint, and the other is from a believer who is struggling with sin's standpoint. First the unbeliever; when an unbeliever looks at a believer, they tend to judge him or her as if they are supposed to be perfect, and that their works are supposed to reflect that "perfection". A believer, in their eyes, is supposed to model perfect morals, conduct, works, and abstinence from anything that is not, according to the Bible, "good" (which is why they do not desire to become a believer themselves). If the believer does not ascribe to the presumptions that the unbeliever has about them, they are either branded as a hypocrite, or they try to bring up shortcomings and humanness in light of what their idea of a believer should be. And so, they lay a guilt trip on that believer to either justify their own unbelief or they try to get the other person who proclaims to be a believer to stop talking openly about their being a believer.

The other problem is being a believer and struggling with sin. Sometimes believers have



### Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, **work** at it with all your heart, as **working for the Lord**, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from **the Lord** as a reward. It is **the Lord** Christ you are serving.

Thank you to all who participated.

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their favorite sin in that they pursue a particular habit, behavior, addiction, and/or mindset that is not pleasing to God, but feels good to them, and is pursued to gratify the cravings of the flesh. Such pursuits are sought after when life gets more and more burdensome, stress is a frequent factor, responsibility is endless, and people want a feel-good relief from it all. Truth and substance in this season of gratification are shoved to the side, and satisfying a craving becomes a main priority. In this season of indulgence, God is viewed with a perception that is toxic to their faith. Either He is seen as someone who has abandoned them, or He is seen as someone they know is right, but knows that he lacks the patience, endurance, and/or perseverance to take on the seemingly daunting task of being sober minded, vigilant, and disciplined, along with the stress of everyday life, important responsibilities, and maintaining a stable livelihood. They are quick to go for that immediate "release" and escape from the pressures of daily life.

In light of all these things it is critical to remember a few key truths. Like unbelievers, we are all sinners. Like unbelievers we will be sinners until the day we die. That is a fact, and it is inescapable. The difference between unbelieving sinners and us is that we are forgiven by the grace, power, and blood of Jesus Christ. In that, as believers we began our distinctly different and unique disposition by believing God's Word, calling us out for what we really truly are; sinners!

Romans 3:23-24 (NKJV)

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His*

*grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

Taking God at His Word is the first step to humility, and from humility, comes teachability, and out of teachability comes faith, and out of faith comes "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1)." What does that mean? It means that walking by faith yields tangible results if followed, and those results tie in with experience, which motivates and inspires one to apply faith in God's Word in one area and then another area, and in experiencing the results of applying, relying, depending, and trusting in God's Word so frequently, God's Word becomes the go-to when the world, the Devil, and/or the flesh is working against you. The Book of Psalms is a time-tested testament to this dynamic. On top of that, Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit, not only to lead us into all truth (John 16:13) which is huge, but to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:5). Walking in the Spirit helps us choose to pursue God by speaking to Him (through prayer), and walking away from the influences of the world, the flesh, and the Devil when they are trying to get us to focus on carnality, gratification, and in that, the appearance of "sweet relief".

It is important to remember...

1 Peter 5:8

*<sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

Before Peter made this plea, Jesus warned Peter of what Satan wanted to do to him. Jesus said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has

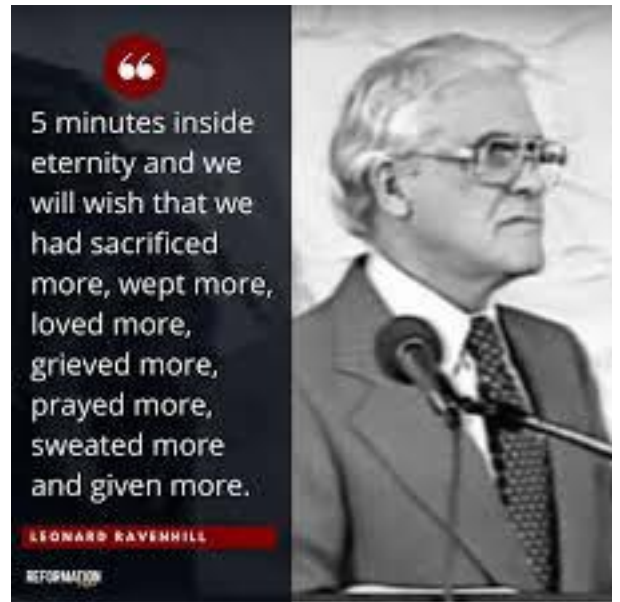
asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat." What does that mean? The sifting of wheat was a process that a farmer would use to shake off the chaff (the dry protective casing of seeds) from the edible, grain part of a stalk of wheat. While Jesus meant one thing about this process in His parable in Matthew 13, Satan meant it for something different. In a nutshell, Satan wanted to shake Peter's faith so forcefully, that his "seeds" would fall, resulting in a defeat of the all the effort put in by the sower to grow the wheat. That's why Peter warns us to be sober, which means serious minded and vigilant which means to be attentive to detect and avoid looming dangers.

And while we are always a work in progress, the underlying question that we all need to contemplate is; what are we investing in the most? Our faith which costs something to the flesh or our flesh which costs something to our faith? As sinners who are forgiven, we have an abundance of choices that we need to carefully consider, choices that will either contribute or thwart the power of our faith and resolve. And if our power and resolve is thwarted, then people will take notice. And if people take notice, then the hope that brings your faith to action will be hindered in a world that is faithless. So in essence, while we remain sinners, though saved (rescued by God through faith in Jesus Christ), our struggles and what and how we choose to handle them will be a testament to which side we will nurture, and which side in others we will give hope or hinderance to.

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Saved  
by  
Grace  
through  
Faith

*Ephesians 2:8*



## Living on the Edge: Experiencing the Christian Life at a Greater Level

By John Beechy

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[\[a\]](#) The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin[\[b\]](#) for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5

We have finally reached the summer for Living Faith Community Church and our ministry of Kingdom warriors (Tom, Katy, Allyce and John). Night of Truth was such a hit

this year with such great preaching by Pastor Joel Gilbert and Bryan Revor. Many people learned from their message great truths whether it was perseverance amidst the struggle of our Christian life, looking at the struggles as light affliction like the Apostle Paul did because Christ is of the greatest satisfaction and worth it as we learned from Pastor Joel. Or from Pastor Bryan that we are to love those we strongly disagree with like those pushing the transgender agenda or homosexual community to show them God's love so they might be saved. This is always a great time of the year to enjoy the weather and the great adventure of life. Is that not what the Christian life has the potential to be? Why are we not experiencing the abundant Christian life that Jesus promised? I mean we have the promises from scriptures themselves that we have now these great promises of a real relationship with the Living God and the spiritual authority and blessings bestowed upon us. Why as Christians in America are we not experiencing that description of abundance. There are many factors to why that could be, maybe a lack of faith, lack of properly putting the God priorities first, disobedience and lack of surrender, fear etc. In regards to evangelism and the great call that we see above that we are now New Creations in Christ or now have God living in us with new hearts (being Born again, regenerated). We have been reconciled to Christ which is have a new relationship of peace with God and brought back into relationship that was lost through the fall. Now He has given every believer a special command or job to perform as Ambassadors for Christ. We are called to passionately speak up and tell others of their need to be reconciled to God. Look what it says in verse 19 and 20. It says he has committed to us the

message of reconciliation, which is the Gospel not to only apostles, pastors, missionaries, or famous tv preachers but us. How do we know that? He is writing to believers specifically as a whole at the church of Corinth. Also, He calls us Ambassadors for Him with the message of the Gospel. An ambassador is someone who usually goes on behalf of a nation, state, country, or leader. We have this blessedness to be an Ambassador for God Himself to the whole world.

In regard to why we are not experiencing the Christian life at a greater level is because our perspectives of who God is, what the Gospel is, who we are in Christ in our identity and the blessedness of the call we have been given as people who are to be witnesses of the Gospel is hindered or lacking to a certain extent. I used the title Living on the Edge and the words a Great Adventure as alternative ways to see how we could see differently to the point of courageously, joyfully, confidently be witnesses in the world out there.

The Christian life can be so much more than we make it be and I am not trying to puff you up with some prosperity fake Christian message. I am talking about being so moved by Jesus who He is and seeing that Great Call He has given us to the point where we are excited to obey the call. We are given such opportunity and freedom in America we must take advantage of it. Other Christians in other countries do not have this same experience. They are heavily persecuted and experience resistance at almost every turn. So what could help our perspectives in regards to Witnessing to motivate us to obey the call that all Christians have been given. Some might have the gift of Evangelism or preaching which is true because you know what I certainly know I don't have the gift of

evangelism. When I go out to witness many times I am stumbling over my words, fearful of intimidating looking people, having doubts of own faith coming cross my mind when I go out from the enemy, etc. If you are looking to be impressed, you won't find it in me. The reason why I am doing it is that like most believers I think we desire the lost to be saved and I see from scriptures this call for us to tell the world about the only way for them to be saved eternally from hell. So, I am going to give a few points that might change your perspective and motivate you to reach out to the lost around you. Hopefully this will be something that will encourage you deeply.

1. God is the greatest Being alive and our identity is found in Him: God is the only self-sufficient and self-existent being from His own power. He has always existed and everything we see on planet earth, the universe, and even in the invisible realm in the spiritual (Heaven, angels, fallen angels, our spirits) was created by His spoken word. There are an estimated billion plus galaxies, and we are in just one of them. God is so big that it would blow our minds to get a full revelation of Him and that is why people fall down in scripture worship Him with great fear. But His is the God who lives in believers from conversion on. The same God who created us, the world, the universe, rose Jesus from the dead also. Now lives in us through our union with Christ and that same power and God lives in us. So that can motivate us and encourage us in great power witnessing to others that we have a Being beyond everyone else living in us. Your knowledge of God or lack thereof will affect your confidence in witnessing.

2. Spend time with God and be empowered to speak to others: As Pastor Troy tells us over and over. We must spend time with God in quiet time along with regular Church attendance and fellowship. Why? Well, when you do this, you will be filled up with the presence of God and a personal knowledge of God which will help you then speak to others.

Study apologetics or ways to defend our faith: I think a great supplement to knowing the word as our first defense to prepare ourselves on answering the objections of those who don't believe. Just recently a very intelligent guy who seemed to know a lot about religions asked me "Don't you think that this tree or all of the visible world is God?" I knew from my study of pantheism and even Gnosticism that they believe that God literally is everything. I answered him that in a sense God is in everything or that His imprint is on everything, but God is Spirit and is outside what he creates. God has an eternal soul, the tree doesn't. Apologetics will help you navigate through tough questions.

3. Our faith is of great truth and value: We have the truth above all truths out there. It is the truth, and we have the only God of truth, this is not a possibility or my viewpoint. This is the very truth. Because of that we hold the most precious arsenal in our own lives to give to others. We have the God who created everything and sustains everything, Jesus Christ the only one to rise from the dead, the Living God living in us by the Holy Spirit, and the very words of God in the Bible. if you could grasp those realities and realize they are true and real. You can experience them, and others can too. Our God is alive and is changing lives still. We go to people with this, and we have great hope.



4. Our God is all satisfying: I think you could sum up what the issue of people's motivation is with their desires. If God is your greatest desire, you will put Him first and pursue Him. But, if basketball, video games, family, money etc. is you will put those first. But, if you knew that God was so much more worth your time and love you would put Him first. God can fill you up with His presence more than anyone or anything. That is why He gave us this eternal vacuum in our soul that can only be filled with Him.

5. God loves us more than we could ever imagine: This is not some cliché, but this is the great truth of scripture. That God loves His creation, that even in their deep rebellious sin was willing to say "I will die for them to rescue them from their lostness and so they can know me, their greatest unknown joy".

6. We are the means: There is not a plan "B" to reach the lost. I got saved because someone on the 700-club said something about Jesus. You most likely got saved because someone told you something about Jesus or you read something or heard a song that broke you to call out to Christ. The Bible, though inspired by God, was written by men who listened to that inspiring calling to write. What I am trying to say is that in the Old Testament God spoke directly to some of the prophets but in the New Testament it says in Hebrews that God had spoken in these days through His Son's Gospel or through His Son. Then Jesus told the disciples the means was for them to spread that message to the world. *We* are those means. The more who do it and do it with clear concise Gospel, the more will get saved because the Gospel is the power of salvation to all who believe. God has blessed

the Gospel in our hands faithfully presented. Jesus is with us every time we bring the gospel to others. That's encouraging but we are the means God uses for others to hear. Great responsibility but also a great adventure to experience.

7. The Lost's eternal home can be the motivation we need: God is sovereign and in control of everything. It is not our job as one individual or Church to save the whole world. But we are to try our best to realize that the lost because who don't know Christ will spend an eternity separated from God in hell. Hell is God's perfect justice against sinners who refused to repent. But God's love was to rescue humanity by taking that punishment Himself in Christ. They only have to receive that provision through the gospel and will escape hell. That this God that we believe in and serve and who created the world lives inside of us as believers. He is our identity and refuge. What about those who don't hear? May we let others know that truth so they will not experience that for an eternity. Would you save a child or dog or even a stranger from a burning building if you could just bring a ladder to their window and you know you could save them? We all would. Now imagine our souls being rescued from a greater danger. Hell for an eternity which never ends. Hey, I know I could be better, also guilty in regard to all of this. Perspective truly helps and motivates us to live on the edge of our faith and in doing this with love and humility, we can experience the great adventure we call the Christian life in ways we never imagined.

8. Do not let fear lead you: It says in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind. It

is said that 365 times or more in the Bible to not fear. Why not? Because it is not a trait God has or wants us to have. He doesn't want us to be fearful as new believers in Him because the fruit of the Spirit or what comes from God's character to us is peace, joy, faith etc. Fear in the sense of being afraid to do what God says is from the enemy or own struggle to trust God. So we can make a decision to say I "will not fear" and cast it down from our feelings and thoughts. God wants us to walk in His truth, not lies. When you do this and not let go, satan will have to stop because it's all based on lies. God gives you the freedom to walk in the truth, you do not need to walk in the lie of fear.

9. Take the leap of faith into God's promises and rewards for Eternity: In witnessing it can be intimidating and fearful but if you want to experience the reality of Christ you must jump off the edge of faith. Unless you do you will not see what God can do in you and through you. Others won't know the truth you know and get to enjoy Christ. Lastly, we will miss the reward that we could get in obeying everything God has commanded. I think it was Leonard Ravenhill who once wrote, "Five minutes inside eternity and we will wish that we had sacrificed more, wept more, grieved more, loved and prayed more, and given more."



## Birthdays

### July

Troy Billow	July 2
Linda Dubs	July 2
Scott Carevic	July 3
Noah Juarez	July 15

### August

Ronnie Robison	Aug. 16
Tony Juarez	Aug. 28

### September

Dennis Pepe	Sept. 5
Liz Miller Cardenas	Sept. 8
Megan Bustamante	Sept. 19
Lincoln Callahan	Sept 22
Chucho Bustamante	Sept. 27
Edith Thompson	Sept. 28

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### Kingdom Women

Kingdom Women have a busy summer planned and we hope you will join us.

On June 27, Mark Caruso and his daughter Toni taught a self-defense class for women in the fellowship hall. We live in rough times and it is always good to learn some techniques to protect ourselves and keep safe. We had lunch together at Culver's after the class and enjoyed fellowship with one another. Our deepest gratitude goes to Mark and Toni for

lending us their time and expertise, and we hope to hold more classes soon.

Ladies, you are invited to join us on Saturday, August 5, at the Romeoville Community Pantry. We will serve at the pantry in the morning and have lunch together afterward. A sign-up sheet is available in the Sanctuary.

Gave us a starting point to continue the work He set for us to do.

This fall, we are planning a craft project for the ladies. Come and enjoy lunch, prayer, and fellowship, while creating a beautiful piece of art. More details to come.

Always remember:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Have a great summer!

Sharon Robison

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Elsie's Pantry

"Nourishing Body & Soul since May, 2000"

In May Elsie's Pantry turned 23. It is so humbling to think in those 23 years we have served over 125,000 people! We are so grateful to God that we have never run out of food in all those years. Whenever the shelves were starting to look bare the Lord provides. Whenever we feel tired, God gives us strength. He has continued to bless Elsie's as He has always done. He has taken an \$1,800 Memorial Fund from Elsie Schraeder, a long-time member of Moraine Valley Community

Church, and made sure the pantry will always be provided for. Once in 2019 we only had enough money left, (about \$1,400) to last until January, 2020. Mayor Mike Howley of Hickory Hills put the word out and soon we had more than we have ever had. Just last week Jewel in Hickory Hills offered us a pallet full of chicken breasts. Food Rescue brought us roughly 1,500 pounds of food and on July 5<sup>th</sup> we will be receiving 10,000 more pounds of food. Sacred Heart Church in Palos Hills has food drives for us monthly as well as monetary donations. Amazon in Bridgeview bring us cleaning items, laundry detergents and miscellaneous items that were returned.

We welcome back Pastor Troy Billow who faithfully prays with clients while they wait in line. Such a needed ministry!

As of now we have 25 faithful volunteers. Not one of us gets paid. Doing the Lord's work is what we all continue to do! Treating people with dignity and respect is what we strive to do:

Hebrews 13:2

*Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels! NKJV*

I personally had an experience that makes me remember this verse. A softspoken and very kind man came in about 6 years ago. He almost looked like Jesus with longer dark hair and brown eyes. He smiled and when I looked at him I just felt he was someone special. I never saw him again after that and never had that experience again. Could there have been more angels who came without us knowing? I have no doubt there has.

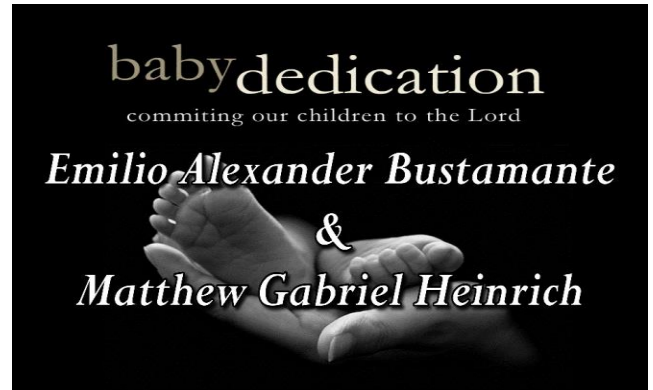
(If there is anyone in the church that could use anything from the pantry just let Pastor Troy know).





We will never forget you, Roy. Farewell, until we see you again!

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***June 25, 2023***

In Remembrance of  
***Roy Clifton Beehn***

September 26, 1941 – June 25, 2023

We will miss you Roy. You were a good man and touched many people's lives while you were with us. I am forever grateful that I was one of them. Your pain is no more now that you are with our Lord. We continue to pray for Virginia and the rest of your family and promise to help in any way we can. God Bless You brother.

Rob, Edith and Derek Thompson

(This speaks for all of us at Living Faith  
Community Church)

Thank you for all you have done throughout your decades with this church. From computers, cameras soundboards and doorbells (all of our electronic needs, you always knew exactly what to do) to getting the best price on all our larger purchases you were such an asset to us. I remember you saying once that your hands touched every brick in the old MVCC, and I know they did.



**Welcome Class of 2041!**

The Next Generation of Living Faith  
Community Church

Living Faith Community Church

380 High Road      Lockport, IL 60441

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# Living Faith Community Church Messenger

The Quarterly Newsletter Of  
Living Faith Community Church

380 High Road, Lockport, IL 60441

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