

Musings From the Back of a Canoe

By Pastor Andrew Straubel

A while back, I went on a canoe trip to the Maine North Woods, one of the last true wilderness areas left in this country. The famous Allagash River flows ninety miles from south to north and empties into the Saint John River on the Canadian border. What a trip! Thankfully, the three canoes and one kayak that set out on that clear and beautiful Monday morning, also came back. We had no idea what to expect, but as we made our way down river I began to muse about whatever came to mind. After all, it was supposed to be vacation. Special thanks are in order to Scott Bruno, who suggested we make the trip. He had plans to be with us, but he had to have shoulder surgery weeks before the trip and could not make it. Thanks, Scott, we missed you! Here in no particular order are a few thoughts which came to mind:

1) Life is a journey. Once you “push off” from shore there is no going back! Anxious to finally get under way we hit the water. What we hadn’t given much thought to was how fast the current began to move us along. It had been such a long time. But off we went. Life is like that, isn’t it? Caught in a current! As I looked down river all I could see was the first bend in the river a short distance away. What lies beyond? What could I expect? Would there be rapids? Shallow waters? I began to think how life comes at us with such a limited perspective. It wasn’t long before we all found out.

2) What did I forget? As sight of the cars faded I suddenly went into panic mode as I looked at our overloaded canoe and began to think of what I had forgotten; food (check), water (check), toilet paper (thankfully, check), etc. Life can sometimes leave you panic stricken when you think of all the things you have to remember. Keys! Wallet! And, of course, phone! As I write this I suddenly realize I cannot remember where

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Sundae Sunday!



“Musings,” continued...

I put the list of things I had written down to remind me of what I had to do.

3) Look at all this “stuff!” Our 18-foot Old Town “Tripper XL” was the largest of the three canoes, and guess what? That is where all the “extras” ended up. With every stroke of the paddle in dead water (not moving) one begins to question the wisdom of bringing every item within sight. This was especially true as we had to portage one half mile around a ninety-foot waterfall. That means we had to pick up and carry by hand everything in the canoe. I think it was more like a mile. To be honest, at one point I wanted to play “Boston Tea Party” and throw a few “choice” items overboard. Thankfully, I resisted! Life can sometimes make you question the need for “stuff.” As an old book title by Doris Janzen Longacre suggests, we need to be “Living More with Less.”

4) Watch for rocks! Conditions for our journey were almost ideal: the weather was clear, and the water level was up. But, we soon realized the power of moving water. There was hardly a moment of rest as one series of rapids led to another. The first set, just moments into our trip, took us by complete surprise. “Go right! NO! On YOUR RIGHT!” Like landmines under the water, huge boulders began to spring up everywhere! It was AWESOME! (Now, that is. At the time, not so much!) I have to say my partner, not to be named but whose initials are Daryll Pope, did an amazing job calling out, “Two O’CLOCK!!!!!!...” Eleven ’O CLOCK” HARD LEFT, NOW RIGHT...WE ARE GOOD! It was exhilarating. By evenfall we were exhausted, but it felt like we had taken on the river and won! Canoe, 1; River, 0.

5) God made that! Perhaps one of the greatest muses of the trip came when we passed one majestic scene after another. I found myself thinking, then saying, “God made that!” Everything seemed so crisp and clear – the water, the sky, the moon (full at one point), the stars. A pair

of bald eagles followed us down the river. We saw moose – at first at a distance and then up close. They appeared unimpressed with our presence and curious of our activity. I found myself musing about the creative acts of God. Why do moose have heads that are disproportionate to their bodies? How long can beavers hold their breath? Sadly, I forget that our God is the creating God of the universe, and, “He made that!”

6) It sure is quiet out here! Each night, after dinner, our group would gather around the fire, sometimes talking, sometimes not. For me, the sounds of the wilderness were enchanting. The sound of the occasional lute on the water, the distant Coyote, the shriek of the eagle soaring high above, the sound of water rushing by. But the most captivating sound was the non-sound: that is, things we didn’t hear. I found myself saying, “Hear that?” Someone would ask, “What?” To which I would say, “That is the sound of absolutely nothing! It sure is quiet out here!” I think we need more quiet in our lives, perhaps incorporating times of doing nothing but listening – to sounds of nature, to the “still small voice of God,” to the Words of God.

Sitting in the back of the canoe paddling 40 miles can give a person a lot of time to think about the things that are important. Perhaps that is what vacation is all about. But let me finish by suggesting God “muses” on us. He thinks about us. Psalm 40:5 says, *“Many, O Lord my God are Your wonderful works which You have done; and Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to you in order; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.”*

Giving Envelopes for Cash Donations

If you forget to bring your giving envelope on Sunday morning, or do not have one assigned to you, blank giving envelopes are available on the table in the lobby for cash donations. Please print your name clearly on the envelope.



Windsor Chapel will be hosting a Kids' 5-Day Club again in partnership with CEF (Child Evangelism Fellowship) on July 23 - 27, from 6:30 – 8:00 pm, for children ages 5 - 12. The evening will include Bible stories, games, music, snacks and outdoor play. Please begin to pray for the kids who will come, the families who will be impacted by the Gospel message, and for a few Windsor Chapel volunteers to help along the way. If you can help in this wonderful ministry, please sign your name on the Volunteer Sheet in the chapel foyer.

Fellowship and Food

Enjoy a friendly time of fellowship and good food after church on Sunday, August 5. All visitors and members are invited to meet for dinner at noon, at the Hunan House (609-443-9404) on Route 130 South, in East Windsor. Cost is about \$10. Talk to Charlie Muldrow (609-448-8910) for details.



“This life therefore is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness, not health, but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is going on, this is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified.”
 — Martin Luther

Join us for a July 4th Picnic

You're invited to a fun-filled 4th of July Picnic! This wonderful Independence Day celebration will be held at 4:00 pm at the Straubels' home, which is located at 691 Hughes Drive, in Hamilton.

Please bring a lawn chair, bathing suit and a towel if you wish to use the pool, and a side dish and/or dessert to share.

Hamburgers, hotdogs, and beverages will be provided. The pool will be open, and the fellowship will be great!

Financial Update

(Through May 2018)

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...”

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$86,630	\$128,750
Expense	\$135,595	\$155,605

Windsor Chapel has sent \$20,882 to our missionary partners this year. That's 24% of your giving!

Our Daily Bread Devotionals

The “Our Daily Bread” devotional booklets that are delivered quarterly will be arriving soon. Unfortunately, the devotional booklets for September/October/November were sent to us instead of the booklets for June/July/August. Please look for the latest “Our Daily Bread” devotionals to be displayed on the tables in the foyer early this month.

Elder's Corner

By Ken Bills

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

Galatians 5:22 is one of the most well-known verses in the Bible. Recently, though, I began to wonder what "joy" was doing on the list. Over the years I had come to think of the fruit of the Spirit as ways God was changing my character so that I would care for and treat other people the way that Jesus did. Joy (and I suppose, peace – but that's another story) didn't really seem to fit in with that idea, so I've been thinking about the role of joy in the life of a Christian. I don't have it all figured out by any means, but I thought I could share some thoughts about it.

First, I love that Paul concludes his list of the fruits of the Spirit with the statement *"that against such things there is no law."* God has no law against joy! I read recently about a pastor from the mid-1800's who was rumored to have preached, "If it feels good, don't do it." And certainly, that is the stereotype that too many have of Christians: judgmental, hypocritical, serious, rule-bound, and joy-less. But joy does not violate God's law. To the contrary, both the Old and New Testaments have a lot to say about joy in the life of a follower of God.

Joy is defined by one dictionary as "great pleasure or happiness that comes from success, good fortune or a sense of well-being." In the life of the believer, God is the primary source of joy: *"You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound."* Psalm 4:7. Sure, we can find some joy in family, friends, good food and drink, but there is a greater joy that God puts in our hearts that does not come from food, drink or circumstances. In fact, according to the Bible, the greatest source of joy is the presence of God and fellowship with Him: *"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."* Psalm 16:11.

This broken world is not always an easy place for joy. Chronic medical conditions, financial problems, strained, broken and abusive relationships and an unending list of struggles that come in a sinful world can all make joy hard to find. And godly joy is not a matter of pretending to be happy when we are not. At times we are able to rejoice in the midst of our suffering, as when God gives us a glimpse of how he is using them for our good. Romans 5:3. And sometimes, even when it all seems senseless, God by his grace meets us in the midst of our difficulties and gives us the joy of his presence.

But the joy of the Lord does not minimize or deny suffering or preclude compassion. Jesus wept when his friend Lazarus died. John 11:35. He mourned over the failure of the people of Jerusalem to turn back to God. Matthew 23:37. We are to weep with those who weep. Romans 12:15. Violence and wars, prejudice and oppression of the poor and minorities – if these don't pain us, we lack the eyes of Jesus. If we don't ache when we see people who are spiritually blind and alienated from God, we lack the Father's heart. But of all people, Christians need not be consumed by sadness. Even while living in a world of suffering, God invites us to taste joy as he works in us and in the midst of the suffering of this world, like an oasis in a dry and thirsty land.

If joy is a fruit of the Spirit, then we can't obtain it by our own efforts. It is a work of the Holy Spirit in us. It can be tempting at times, to use Paul's list of the fruits of Spirit as a checklist to prove our spirituality or to measure our growth. But this misses the point! Galatians 5:22 is not a measuring stick, but a promise. We are to draw near to God by faith, rest in Jesus, and seek the Spirit's work in cultivating the soil of our hearts and spirits. It is then that God produces the fruit of the Spirit in us, expanding our capacity to know and experience and express joy in the Lord. The joy that God gives us goes beyond our circumstances and can then be a sign to others of God's presence in our lives. In this life, we may experience God's joy only in fits and starts, but we can rejoice, knowing that God will complete the work he has started in us, and that the cares and sufferings of this life will in the end be swallowed up in unending and unbroken joy in God's presence.

Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

Life as a Royal

Windsor Chapel is located in the United States, and most of those who attend are American. And for the most part, Americans exhibit a political DNA that is characterized by a disregard of and even a disdain for monarchies. The concept of royalty offends our sense of democracy. And yet as demonstrated by the U.S. news coverage of the marriage of Prince Harry to Meghan Markle, we remain fascinated by royalty in general and by the doings of royals in particular. The most recent royal wedding generated a re-publication of a piece about royal rules. Did you know that Royals are not allowed to vote or speak publicly about matter of policy? Royals are not allowed to eat shellfish. Neither may they take selfies or use social media. Public dress is always formal and modest, and they are expected to behave with the utmost decorum at all times.

What Christians in the United States often fail to remember is that we cannot avoid the royalty thing. We are sons and daughter of God Almighty, brothers and sisters of His Son, Jesus Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God. Unlike Great Britain's monarchy, we will enjoy a regal position for all eternity.

Eternity is a long time; our time on this earth is not. But while our time on earth is limited, it is extremely significant. We are being sanctified, being made fit and ready for heaven. And as children of the King, we are called to make disciples of all men, to practice the kingdom of God as we live among non-believers. It is not a duty; it is a privilege to share our life-giving and life-defining faith.

So, this is where we intersect with the British royals. It matters what we do: how we behave, the choices we make, the way we interact with others. People are watching. We are ambassadors for Christ in a way that is not so unlike the way British royals are ambassadors for Great Britain. The rules imposed on the royals are important, not as

an end in themselves, but in order to equip them to do their work well. If being a royal was merely a matter of diet, social norms, and polite conversation, members of the royal family would become stick figures with no ability to impact others and the world. Likewise, our Lord has issued commandments, not so that we would earn our salvation and not to define our faith, but in order to teach us and help us to share His nature, to equip us to proclaim Christ in the way we live our lives and love others. If we were to make our Christian faith about rules, we, too, would become two-dimensional and unable to live out our faith in love. Rules alone will not do it. But if we try another popular tactic and merely try to avoid offending others, the salt of the Gospel would become diluted and ineffective. Nice will not do it, either. We are called to be salt and light to a very fallen world by proclaiming the grace and truth of Christ and touching others with a living, loving faith.

Where does this leave us? As children of the Almighty and Everlasting King, we are royalty. Like our earthly cousins the British royals, we are always on display. It matters what we do and what we say. Our King has commanded us to proclaim His kingdom: His truth and grace, by and with the power of His love. He has given us His Word and His Holy Spirit to equip, enable, and empower us to do just that. But we are not bound to the rigid existence of our world's kings and queens, princes and princesses. This is not a matter of license or of carelessness. It is about looking behind and beyond the rules to become men and women after God's own heart so that we may go about the business of proclaiming Christ in freedom and great joy.

*Please feel free to contact Cindy (609-275-8557 or
clbills@verizon.net) to continue the dialogue....*

"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, "It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem." Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes." — Fred Rogers

Abounding Wonders

By Janet Berrill

Aaaah summer, my favorite season of the year. This year I was fortunate enough to enjoy one of my all-time favorite activities: swimming in the warm, turquoise water of the Caribbean. This is the fourth time in my life I have had this pleasure, and it was just as enjoyable as the first three.

One major difference between swimming in a pool and swimming in the ocean is that the ocean is home to countless forms of life. As I was swimming in the warm, clear, shallow water, I looked down and saw a small school, maybe 10 or so, of white angel fish swimming around me. These fish were so close I could reach out and touch them if I were quick enough (which, after many tries, I found out I wasn't). A short distance away I could see a large school of another kind of fish. While the angel fish were about 6" long, these other fish were about 1-1/4" long and there looked to be hundreds of them.

Seeing both of these kinds of fish interested me, so I decided to get my mask and snorkel so I could get a better look. What a surprise I had when I put my face in the water! The school of fish I saw and thought there were hundreds turned out to be thousands! There were several large schools of them swimming in the area. The white angel fish had moved on, but there were many other kinds of fish to see, fish I did not see without my mask. There was a sky-blue fish with white stripes and a yellow tail, a fish that was purple on the top and yellow on the bottom, a midnight blue fish with iridescent blue edges, a small yellow fish, and so many more that I can't remember them all.

But my favorite was definitely the one I named the camouflage fish. This fish changed its coloring as it swam to match its surroundings. Amazing! When I first saw this fish, it was by some rocks and the fish appeared speckled with browns of different shades mixed with white and other colors so that it looked so much like the rocks under it that I almost didn't see it. I watched this fish swim past the rocks and turn nearly all white as it swam over the sand. As it swam by some sea grass, it turned speckled green,

and when it passed over a patch of golden yellow seaweed, its scales once again turned to blend into its surroundings. I don't know how long I watched this fish, but it was a long time for I was so fascinated with it.

I thought to myself that had I not put on my mask and snorkel, I would never have known this fish or so many others were in the water swimming right along with me. It made me question what wonders of God are all around me on a daily basis that I just am not seeing? I am a git-r-done type of person who tends to focus too much on work, so much so that I'm sure I miss many wonders God has surrounded me with in my life. What wonders am I missing in His Word? In His creation? In His people? What evidence of God working can't I see because I am just not looking? Like the fish in the water, God's wonders are all around us. Some wonders everyone can see fairly easily (Romans 1:20), but like I needed the mask to see the fish under the water, for some wonders we need the Holy Spirit to help us to see them (1 Corinthians 2:14). It is God's Spirit Who helps us see and recognize the workings of God.

God, I praise You for the wonder of the amazing fish I was able to see in the water. I know what I saw was only a tiny bit of all Your wonders that are around me. I ask You to give me eyes to see Your wonders so that I might see more of You and offer up to You a response of praise. In Jesus name.

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*This article was first printed in the August 2011 Chapel Challenge. Janet is currently in Northern Spain walking the Camino de Santiago, a 500-mile pilgrimage from the French boarder to Santiago de Compostela in western Spain.*

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**If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter please e-mail:**

**Susan Seiboth at**

**[susan@quiltingsquare.com](mailto:susan@quiltingsquare.com)**

**Dorothy Soi at**

**[dsoi@windsorchapel.org](mailto:dsoi@windsorchapel.org)**

**Chapel Office (609) 799-2559**

**[www.windsorchapel.org](http://www.windsorchapel.org)**