

new life news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER NEW LIFE CHURCH OF CHRIST JULY 2017

Why God?

There are many times in life when we are left asking this question? Why did this happen? Why did God allow it? Why did this young person die? Why does this older person hang on in great pain when all they want is to go to heaven? Why did I lose my job? Why did my spouse leave me? Why do bad people prosper? Why? Why? Why?

This is not new. The Old Testament prophet Habakkuk asked God, "Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted." (Habakkuk 1:3-4) Other prophets had similar thoughts, but it was a man named Job who has the most detailed story of asking Why God?

If you are familiar with Job's story you know that he was a righteous man who lost in quick succession his fortune and his reputation and his children. At first, Job handled it ok. He had friends who come to comfort him and they sat with him in silence for a week. But then the talking started and the friends began to probe into Job's life because they believed there must be a hidden sin of Job's that would explain why this ruin has come upon him. The more they talk the more exasperated Job got and the more he justified himself to them. As he became righteous in his own eyes, Job began to blame God and question God. Finally God, himself, answers Job.

If we expect God to explain himself and give the rationale for His actions and to help Job to understand, well if we expect that we will be sorely disappointed. God speaks to Job and the first thing he says is, "'Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.'" (Job 38:2-3) Later God says, "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!" (Job 40:2) This is not a gentle and kindly explanation of all that Job doesn't understand.

Essentially, God's answer to Job is that as God I am so far above you that you cannot even begin to understand. I encourage you to go read Job chapters 38-42 to get a feel for God's response. It is not that God is being mean to Job, but rather that Job has no real understanding of what he is saying or asking.

When you and I are in those times when we don't understand and when we want to ask God, "Why?" or "Why me?" Those are the times that we need to trust God the most. We might not get the answers we want, but what we do have is the assurance that God is in control. Trust Him and cling to Him even without understanding. His plans never fail and His strength never weakens and His wisdom never falls short and His love never wavers! I leave you with Job's final response to God.

Job 42:2-6

"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.

³ You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?'

Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

⁴ "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.'

⁵ My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.

⁶ Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

I asked Becky Sharp to share a little about Sonshine Singers and her experience as the director. It is incredible watching God work through this ministry for so many years. The Christmas and Spring musicals are a highlight in the church calendar and are always well attended and received. The following article is based on questions that I asked Becky to consider as she gleaned through the many memories.

Around 1995, the church decided that groups such as the youth choir ought to be classified as a ministry and we needed to come up with a name for the group. Being that we were singers and that we needed to shine for the Son, the name "Sonshine Singers Youth Choir" came to be!

Becky began directing the newly named Sonshine Singers in 1981 with a couple years off in between. After 36 years, averaging two musicals a year, Becky has directed nearly 72 productions. I asked her if she had a favorite musical during that time?

The "Secret of my success" had a great message in the story of a transformed life. Back in the day, the musical used to hit the road. There weren't a billion other activities for kids to be involved in, and there were plenty of kids and parents available to help with all the equipment, kids, food, and more. It was a lot of work, but we had a ball!

The last few musicals, written by Christy Semsen include "Back to the Cross", "Back to the Manger," "All about that baby," and "Star Quest." The messages and music in these musicals are fantastic and easy to use because they meet the needs of our very diverse youth choir including five year olds through high schoolers.

"Santa bowed at Christmas" was also a very special, tender, tear-jerker musical. Interestingly, Jason Sharp was playing the part of Santa and his wife Michelle, who didn't know him at the time, came to watch her cousins in the musical. She watched "Santa" intently and after the play she asked her aunt who the cute guy was that played Santa? Jason was given the pretty girl's phone number and the rest is history!

Through the years, Sonshine Singers has endeavored to share God's message through drama and music in a fun way that kids enjoy being a part of and sharing with others. Becky estimates that there are well over 200 children that have participated in this ministry during her time as director. Sonshine Singers do so much more than simply prepare a musical production two times a year. The group works hard to include youth of all ages, encouraging them to grow closer to Christ and to one another.

Sonshine Singers is a close group because the younger kids learn from and look up to the older youth, and the older ones help teach and mentor the younger ones. The kids all get along amazingly well and form a close bond through working so closely with each other for each musical adventure. Our prayer time very special at the end of each rehearsal. The students join hands because they are a "Sonshine Singers" family, and share many prayer requests, praises, and all sorts of things that are on their precious hearts. Just about everyone shares something along the way. Our choir motto is, "Give God your best and He will bless and take care of the rest!" It is such a blessing to watch these young people grow and mature in the Lord as they go from the young ones being mentored, to the leaders who take on the role of mentoring. There is so much joy in celebrating the many who have given their lives to Christ through the years. Beginning at age five and through high school, to giving their time and volunteering on the other end as directors and leaders, Sonshine Singers is such a blessing and an honor!

Given our mission as a church that is following Jesus by loving God, loving people, and making disciples; I asked Becky what we can do to support and serve the Sonshine Singer's ministry in the future? As a director of musicals for many years, I can truly appreciate how she responded.

Continue to pray for the kids and the directors as well as continue to support them by attending their performances and encouraging them. There is always room for more dedicated volunteers to help. There are many areas where you can help in preparing for our performances: rehearsals, staging, crew and stage hands, sound, costuming, props, lunches, and meals for dress rehearsals, setup and teardown on the day of the performance, as well as kitchen help the night of the performance. There are plenty of opportunities to be involved with the Sonshine Singers youth choir. As always, thank you for the continued financial support that enables us purchase musicals and supplies.

I just want to offer our appreciation for Becky and for the many volunteers that work with the Sonshine Singers each and every year. It is such a blessing to see young hearts and minds developing into ministry leaders of the Church today. Thank you for your tireless efforts in not only preparing heart-warming and challenging musical productions for us to enjoy, but also for reminding us of how important it is to invest, train, and equip the next generation for the Lord.

I was reading in James this past week (I encourage all to read) and the phrase, "let perseverance finish its work", really stuck out to me. Ever since my life changing stroke a few years back, it seems like I am always waiting for something.... and it can be very frustrating. There are times I question, haven't I waited long enough, but then I read that, and the verse goes on to say so you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything, and I'm reminded God is continuously working in me and my family. I think sometimes we rush things, and simply do not let God work in us like he wants to. It is a good idea to not only practice perseverance and patience but to also teach are kids these values as well because God can use those "waiting room" moments to work and grow in each of us and strengthen our families.

Jason

July Birthdays

- 1 – Robert McCready
- 3 – Carol Cogar, Cliff Hardin
- 4 – Spencer Benick, Kiona Cover, Evan Basye
- 5 – Lauren Johnson, Riley Johnson, Alex Kistler, Mary Mowry
- 6 – Addison Noe, Rich Tucker
- 7 – Ken Baker, Jon Beveridge, Kim Landis
- 8 – Kim Dixon, Cari Johnson
- 9 – Brad Sharp
- 10 – Jennipher Fletcher, Phyllis Shaffer
- 11 – Karla MacTavish, Dan Noe, Martha Hamilton
- 16 – Jason Sharp, Joey Lucci
- 17 – Tabby Hamilton, Ginger Kunz
- 19 – Ralph Walker
- 20 – Becca Sharp
- 22 – Carla Armstrong
- 26 – Carol Wilson
- 27 – Karen Carroll
- 28 – Olivia Lucci

On Saturday, June 17th, we left for a mission trip to Diamond Willow. The group consisted of Chris & MaKenzie Frontz, Emily Broughton, Elli Arnett, Sarah Renfro, Chrystie Harber, Stephanie Kistler, Mikayla Vail, Tabi Hamilton, Sarah & Grace Johnson and myself. We arrived at Diamond Willow around 10:30pm on Sunday, June 18th with Natalie Greer standing on the porch ready to welcome us. On Monday, the mission began. We had classes on what to expect and what the week would look like. We got to go to the Akta Lakota museum to learn about the culture of the Lakota Indians. It was an interesting and informative event. On Tuesday, we went to the reservation to invite the 2nd-5th grade girls to come to camp on Wednesday. They were very excited to come. When the vans arrived on Wednesday with the girls, we learned that we had 37 girls, one of the largest turnouts. Teams were assigned and the adventure began. We even got to witness a baptism in the Missouri River of a young boy that works at the camp which got some of the girls thinking about what it means to be baptized. Seeds were planted.

Our mission here at New Life is following Jesus, loving God, loving people and making disciples. I saw that mission played out by the young girls here New Life. They taught lessons about Jesus, showed God's love by opening up their hearts and arms and just loving these children. They would carry them on their backs, give hugs, play games with them and just be there to listen to them. I saw a group of girls that when they first arrived were, quiet, withdrawn and shy and within a day, become vibrant, smiling and very outgoing. Our girls made them feel safe and loved. I learned that these girls from the Crow Creek Reservation had seen a lot of loss in there short little lives. I also learned that they don't care if we have a master's in theology, have the bible memorized, or know all the answers, what they care about is feeling loved. God's love was truly exemplified by our young girls here at New Life. It was an honor and privilege to work beside them. They are the future of our church. So, if you think you are not educated enough or don't have what it takes, think again. If you have the love of Jesus in your heart, open arms to give hugs and an ear to listen, you do have what it takes. Prayfully consider what God is leading you to do. Don't be afraid to take the plunge. I was for a long time, but was so blessed by the experience and am so looking forward to next year. ~ Sherri

CHURCH EVENTS FOR JULY

- **July 4th Independence Day Office Closed**
 - **Honduras Mission Trip**
July 8-16th
 - **Lifeline Event**
July 12th
 - **Comfort & Joy Sewing Ministry**
 - **July 19th @ 5:30pm**
- **July 31st – August 11th Safety Town**