



STAYING STRONG

JESUS CHRIST IS THE BIG “C” IN OUR LIFE –
relegate cancer to be the “little “c”

March 2020

“Not that I have obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”

Philippians 3:12

It is hard to believe that March is here already, and this writer is reminded of her niece’s wedding in the front yard of the family home out in the country. It was a gloriously warm and sunny day after a lot of nasty weather. It was St. Patrick’s Day and the bride and her maids wore tiny touches of green on their dresses. The nuptials were performed in the gazebo built by her father and a family friend, and the festivities were out on the lawn. That was thirteen years and three children ago.

With St. Patrick’s Day, we are reminded of quite a number of things coming out of Ireland: St. Patrick, of course, shamrocks and leprechauns and some of the greatest writers, novelists, poets and playwrights that the world has seen: James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, W. B. Yeats and a host of others.

But did you know that Ireland has a number of saints arising from its history but the three best known are St. Patrick, St. Bridget and St. Columba. These famous saints were living in a very rough and wild time in Ireland’s history. Patrick died in AD 461, Bridget died in AD 523, and Columba died in AD 597. Most of what we are familiar about Patrick are legends that say he was the instrument in ridding snakes from Ireland and that Patrick used a shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity to his converts but the historians do know that he was born in Roman Britain, possibly Scotland, was kidnapped and enslaved by Irish raiders at 16, either escaped or was released six years later. And this is where things become muddled. It took almost four decades before Patrick returned to Ireland as a missionary priest and began his ministry to the Irish people. Patrick is the Primary Patron Saint of Ireland.

Bridget of Kildare is another Patron Saint of Ireland. She was born in AD 453 to her aristocratic father but was brought up by foster parents whom she converted. This seems to imply that her father was Christian, and Bridget brought her faith with her to her foster family. At some point, Bridget entered the church and along with way founded the Abbey of Kildare, a religious house for both men and women. There were many miracles attributed to Bridget and the Abbey. She died there in AD 523.

Columba is the third Patron Saint of Ireland and is considered one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland. He was born in AD 521 in Ireland and became an Irish abbot and missionary evangelist credited with spreading Christianity in what today is Scotland. He founded the important abbey on the Isle of Iona which became a dominant religious and political institution in the region for many centuries. Many ancient tribal chiefs and kings were buried at the Iona Abbey which speaks volumes on the perceived importance of the abbey. This abbey is, amazingly, still standing and welcomes visitors to this day!

This writer is amazed that Christianity was established in Britannia at this time but, on reflection, it most likely arrived with the Roman soldiers in the conquest beginning in AD 43, with some overflow to the Irish monasteries who were busy converting the Celtic societies to Christianity. These early missionaries were literally walking in the footsteps of the apostles Paul, Peter, Timothy, Barnabus, James, John, and others – preaching and teaching out in the open-air and baptizing new converts. And they worked hard to keep those new converts in the faith – building churches and offering community support to their growing flocks. The poor were fed and health of these communities were looked after.

Are there lessons for us today, 1,500 years later? Definitely! Turn on the TV news any day of the week and see the many support groups out in our community, trying to make things a little better for our fellow citizens. It all started in the New Testament when the apostles exhorted their new flocks to take care of one another, just like these ancient missionary flocks. The Holy Spirit continues to encourage us today to help as we are able. Keep your eyes and ears open to the different volunteer programs at St. John’s and out in the community. One just might spark you to get involved and help too.

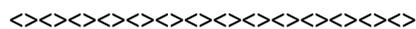


In December 2019, the Small Group talked about Careful Listening and just how important it is. Being a careful, mindful listener is much more than just listening. As this was quite a lengthy subject, it will be broken down into three parts. Part 1 was in January, Part 2 will be this month, and Part 3 will be in April.

CAREFUL LISTENING, PART 2

4. A careful listener pays attention to more than just words. Of course, words are important, but careful listening goes beyond them. Pay attention to body language and facial expression, tone of voice, looking at more than what’s being said. You may want to comment on your observations like: What’s going on?
5. A careful listener encourages the other person to keep sharing. Good listening extends an invitation for the other person to say whatever comes to mind.
6. A careful listener listens more and talks less. A good listener spends a lot more time listening than talking. Of course, there will be times when it’s beneficial to speak, but most of the time it’s much more helpful to just listen.

Next month, Part 3



Our Cancer Prayer Service was held Sunday after, February 9 at 2:00 pm with twenty-four present. Three were visitors: two were from Centenary United Methodist Church who met our group at the recent Feel Good Friday at Novant and were exploring creating their own cancer ministry, and another was previously a visitor to our Small Group devotion in January. Pastor Clocker started by asking for prayers: one responded for her granddaughter and another on their own health – both prayers of thanksgiving for healing good news. Prayers for the loss of a loved one, and for upcoming surgery, and for a family member’s health. Pastor had us look at Psalm 102 which was a prayer of an afflicted man who pours out his lament to God. He also touched on Ecclesiastes 4:9-17 and then closed with “As your days are, so shall your strength be.” We then adjourned to the Social Hall for a bit of kaffee klatch and to hear about our speaker’s work.

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Kathleen Cummins Perry is the project manager for the department of general surgery section on surgical oncology. She assists the Surgical Oncologist with investigator initiated clinical trials research in the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Baptist Hospital. She is also a paramedic and has been a caregiver to her husband who had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and she was the leader to the pancreatic cancer support group at Baptist Hospital. We learned a lot about her work and her being a part of the discovery of her husband's and her mother's cancers which both happened to be pancreatic cancer. Kathleen pointed out that we all need to be vigilant in changes in how our bodies "feel" that might be clues that all is not well and then let our doctors know.

The Small Group met on Presidents Day and talked about being totally honest with God. God wants to have a personal relationship with Him. Christianity is the only world religion that has this relationship. We can "dump" all our feelings on God and the Bible shows us this: the books of Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes and Lamentations are the moanings, groanings and pleadings to God. When things go wrong, we can turn to God and question Him. We may not be aware of the answer given, but we need to trust God, and that is the hard part. God will heal us first on the inside (spiritually). Stay in the Word!

We were given four phrases to live by:

Please forgive me
I forgive you
Thank you
I love you

THIS IS IMPORTANT: Summer or winter, drinking plenty of water will help one's body cope with the harshness of chemotherapy by keeping the body in balance and properly flushed. Water is the go-to liquid of choice: it has zero calories and does the best job of keeping the largest organ of our bodies properly hydrated: our skin!

ARE YOU BREATHING PROPERLY?

REMEMBER TO BELLY BREATHE!

Diaphragmatic breathing, or "belly breathing," engages the diaphragm, which is supposed to do most of the heavy lifting when it comes to breathing. This technique is particularly helpful in people with COPD as the diaphragm isn't as effective in these individuals and could be strengthened. If you have COPD, ask your doctor or respiratory therapist to show you how to use this exercise for best results

ARE YOU EXERCISING EVERY DAY?

When we keep "moving", our blood flows a bit better, and keeps our joints and muscles happy, along with our little Gray Cells. And since our brains cannot physically exercise, we need to do that in other ways like: working crossword puzzles; Sudoku and other math and number puzzles; word puzzles, jigsaw puzzles; journaling with paper and pen (no electronics here please); and brain-training apps.

If you are not steady on your feet, you might want to consider "chair" exercises. We received one several months ago for "chair yoga" that offers stretching and strengthening. If you wish to follow along watching TV, "Sit and Be Fit" at 5:00 am on Spectrum channel 4 (WUNL - base PBS).

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

NO Feel Good Friday -- Construction in Conference Room
Novant's Derrick Davis Cancer Center, in the back behind the main
hospital (parking is free)

Sun, March 8, 2:00 pm

Prayer and Praise Service in the Sanctuary, followed by our speaker:
Dr. Karen Winkfield, Radiation Oncologist.

Mon, March 17, 10:30 am

This is the third Monday, **Small Group Session**

Please check www.cancerservicesonline.org/events-calendar/ for additional activities that might interest you.
They have all kinds of activities going on each month. Look and see for yourself!

Trusted websites:

www.cancer-companions.org

www.cancerdietician.com

Julie Lanford, Cancer Services

www.cancer.org

American Cancer Society

www.mayoclinic.org

Mayo Clinic

www.mdanderson.org

MD Anderson Cancer Center

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" James 4:8