

A person with long braids, wearing a striped apron over a light-colored t-shirt, is shown from the chest down, focused on potting a small green plant into a terracotta pot. The scene is set indoors near a window, with several other potted plants, including a snake plant and various succulents, scattered on a wooden surface. The lighting is warm and natural. The image is framed by a decorative border of orange, teal, and white geometric shapes.

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ENCOUNTER: AT HOME

SUMMER 2021
THIRD CHURCH

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ENCOUNTER:
AT HOME

VOL. 4

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Welcome

The world around us is in full bloom: the brilliance of color from flowers, the canopies of trees, the song of the birds and the bugs and the brightness of the sun all declare the glory of our Creator! Summer lets us see nature and the purpose of each part of creation. Flowers bloom, trees have leaves, birds sing, bugs buzz and the sun shines. Every part of God's creation has purpose.

There was purpose in how God originally created, and there is purpose in today. God is a God of purpose! He is a destiny declarer, a final-word speaker, and the One ready to join us! May this edition of Encounter: at Home encourage you and your unique purpose for the Glory of God.

Many Blessings,

T3 Family Ministry

Summer Family BLESSING

May we grow in deeper understanding of our purpose as your creation, God.

May we see the honor it is to love you, LORD, and to be loved by you.

May we treasure the opportunity to love our neighbors as ourselves.

May we choose to steward our resources with Heaven in mind: choosing into rhythms of rest and restoration and out of the whirling world of distractions.

Choosing into the joy of Kingdom of God Generosity and out of personal gain through my earthly lenses.

Choosing into trusting the Circle of Love and out of self-protection and self-promotion to restrict love.

Choosing into freely giving the love of Christ to those around us through service and out of performing for religion.

May your Kingdom purposes come, and may your Kingdom will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven!

Amen.

The purpose issue

We are servant-hearted disciples with a passion for Jesus being sent into the world. Because of this, we are sent with significance for Kingdom impact:

Our highest purposes are to love the LORD our God and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We are invited to a Divine rhythm of rest and expansion to know Christ and to make Him known.

We are committed to living generously - joyfully sharing time, talents and treasure for the glory of God.

We understand that Jesus sends us with his authority, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to daily release His Kingdom, creating disciples here, near and far.





Deb & Steve
Kraayenbrink

In our 27th wedding anniversary, we received a gift we will never forget. We were celebrating the day with our kids, and to our shock and joy, there was a card with a photograph of a beautiful gift from God on the way - not only one baby to come...but TWO! Our oldest of three daughters, Jessie, and her husband, Matt, were going to be parents to twins! At that time, our youngest daughter, Erin, was a junior in high school, and our middle daughter, Heather, was just two months away from her wedding to Stephen. God would soon surprise us again; early into Heather and Stephen's marriage, we received miracle news that grandbaby #3 was on the way! And so began a beautiful new PURPOSE in our life becoming a Nana and Papa! Our family became complete with wonderful sons-in-love when Erin

and Patrick were married 6 years ago. What began as 3 beautiful daughters now includes 3 adored sons and 14 beloved grandchildren ranging in age from 1 to 14! The Lord has blessed us beyond our wildest dreams! They are each such gifts, and we are filled with joy and expectancy to see how God unfolds His purpose and His good plans in and through them.

When Steve and I reflect on what we feel our role is in being parents and grandparents, we sense that the Lord wants us to come alongside our daughters and sons in providing a space of love, acceptance and encouragement to each of them and their unique families. A practical but powerful way to do that is through prayer. During each of my daughters' pregnancies, I printed an ultrasound of each

sweet little one. Over the span of 14 years, I have continued to keep them together in my devotional, and every morning, I pray over them individually. The image of how God knit each one together in their mama's womb is a beautiful and meaningful gift to lift up to the Lord! I am so thankful that our God who "created and formed their innermost being" knows their needs from the moment they are formed in their mommy's tummies. I wake up each morning with a strong desire and purpose to pray for them that God would nurture them and grow them to be ALL that He created them to be. What a privilege to come alongside their parents with a front row seat to love and support them!

If we could encourage grandparents in one thing, it would be to take the time to enjoy it. Savor the little things and make the most of little moments. Be present when you are with your grandkids, and know that this is a unique season of life with opportunity to pour into a new generation in a profound way. Steve and I have found that while we hope to be teaching our grandkids, we end up being the ones who learn so much from them! Seeing life through the eyes of a child brings on a new perspective that maybe we didn't take or have the time for as parents to our own little ones. We have found through the years that as our family has grown in number and size, life has become more full. It can be a challenge to feel like we are able to connect with each individual as well as we would like. With the time we do have, we hope and pray that each of our little blessings will feel unconditional love and acceptance. Where we fall short or miss the mark, God's grace and love overflows!

Similar to when we were parents to our young girls, we have found that one-on-one dates and taking advantage of the simple little moments together has been so special. We long to create a space where they feel welcome and special in a safe haven. Sometimes that means taking the time to read another book, join the dance party, or come alongside them in making the mess! Sometimes it's as simple but as meaningful as just getting down to their level to truly hear and see them. When our oldest grands were babies and we had the opportunity to rock and cuddle little ones to sleep, we would whisper in their ears Bible verses that we had put to memory. We were blessed on many occasions to witness their sweet little bodies just melt and respond to these words of blessings. A sweet memory came when our two-year-old grandson at the time said sweetly, "Nana, I find that very helpful." Oh, to share the promises of

God! He is FOR them, and so are we.

We long for our crew to know who they are as individuals but also as part of the whole "team." Growing up, Steve was an athlete and coach, and I was a cheerleader. It's been a blessing to see how the ways God wired us continue to grow and develop in this stage of life. Whether it's been in music, many sporting events, the arts, dance, studies or just life...we love being able to encourage, relate, support and simply enjoy each of our grandkids' unique and beautiful interests. It's not about big flashy performances; we're just thrilled to be on the sidelines cheering them on. How special to be a team! Our hope and prayer as a Nana and Papa would be that our grandkids feel known and loved by us unconditionally and then to point them to the One who loves them perfectly!

Everyday opportunities for intentional memory-making as grandparents:

- Picnics in unique spots
- Fishing
- Watching sunsets
- Nature scavenger hunts
- Catching frogs and tadpoles
- Endless supplies of popsicles
- Flying kites
- Playing on the floor with them
- Big homemade backyard slip n slides
- Homemade bubbles
- Painting rocks
- "Beach" parties in the middle of winter
- Apple picking
- Baking together
- Craft time
- Sidewalk chalk creations
- Driveway Tulip Time parades
- Scavenger hunts
- Spray paint tree art
- Puzzles
- Water balloon volleyball
- Outdoor tea parties
- Homemade donuts
- Dressing up in old clothes we've kept over the year
- Blanket forts
- A "tour" of Pella's parks
- Making Christmas candy houses

"When our arms can't reach our grandchildren, we hug them with our prayers!"

The Hopkins Family



For a week every summer, for nearly a decade, I directed a drama camp in our town. The main goal was to give kids a positive stage experience that would ignite a love for the performing arts, encourage creativity and provide opportunity for teamwork. There were a lot of basics to work on that didn't necessarily come easy to most kids. Probably the most predominant skill I got to teach was how to "move with purpose." It's very natural for kids (and adults, too) to wander. To move one step this direction, another back. One more the other direction, and awkwardly back. To feel like they weren't sure where they were supposed to be or where they were headed next or, "What in the world am I supposed to do with my hands!" Helping them to both move and stand still with purpose was a big job, and it didn't take long for me to realize that what it really came down to was CONFIDENCE.

As I reflected on how our family has lived and learned the ways of a purposeful life, I was at first disappointed that we didn't have some sort of scripted mantra or mission statement. I'm sure some families do, but we don't. It's easy to feel like, as a family of faith, we should have some sort of clear and specific purpose for every relationship, every decision, every thought, every action. When I couldn't come up with one, it made me wonder if we have been "wandering" for 19 years. But the Spirit was quick to remind me that the confidence we have in who we are and whose we are is all the purpose we need.

You see, we may not have it written on our mirrors or have it framed on the wall, but where we have been careful to write our purpose is on our hearts. My husband and I have long been on a journey with the Lord of learning to hear His voice, to listen to the truth about who we are and who He's made us to be, and we've brought our kids along, at first, carrying them with us on our paths and then setting them down to walk on their own, beside us. And soon, maybe a little too soon for this mama's heart, the time will come for them to set out on their own path, for them to venture out into the world with the confidence that they, too, know the sound of His voice. They've spent important years getting to know Him, learning to trust Him, hearing His truth spoken to their hearts, oftentimes through the lips of Mom and Dad. But all along the way, we all have been learning what it looks like to confidently take the next step. We don't always know if we're headed in the right direction, but when we

are purposefully moving with and toward Him, we can be confident that wherever we end up, He's close. And we know that He is good.

It's pretty hard to trust someone when you're not sure if they're good. And how do you know if someone is TRULY good without going through some life with them? Recognizing and acknowledging the ways God has been good to our family and to each of us personally has been an important part of learning to confidently trust what He says and where He leads. We've learned He can be trusted and not just for the big stuff like food on the table and a roof over our heads. He's shown up in little ways that are in themselves extravagant expressions of His goodness and closeness. Like the time a few years ago I was going through boxes in our storage room and found, in a stack of random childhood memories, my very first Cabbage Patch doll's birth certificate. Do you remember those? Each doll came with a birth certificate with their given name and birthdate. I can still remember the hours and hours spent playing house with Lana Annette as a girl. My only one real wish was to be a mommy when I grew up. That deep longing never waivered. Turns out it was a real true thing about me. And as I looked at that doll's birthdate, September 1, I wept. You see, September 1 is the birthdate of my very real beloved daughter. Our only girl, tucked in the middle of 3 delightful boys. But at that moment, the Spirit whispered a reminder that He's known me and my heart's desires from the time I was little. We call them "God winks," and we have been very intentional about sharing them with each other over the years. Not a fateful coincidence, but purposeful whispers from the Lord, showing his goodness. Growing our trust.

There have been lots of stumbles on our journey, lots of opportunities for forgiveness-asking and forgiveness-giving, many times of reflective regret and needed correction. There are going to be more. But our desire to know Him and our willingness to be known by Him is something I believe enables us and each of our kids to move through life with purpose. A deep-down confidence that frees us to risk, to lead, and to dream. Because we know we are already fully loved, fully known, fully forgiven, we confidently step out - or stand resolutely still - becoming who He knows us to be, doing both the exciting and difficult things He invites us to do, and bringing His goodness and His Kingdom to every adventure along the way.



Mike & Holly
Walsh

We met in the fall of 2009 at Denver Seminary. God had brought us both there because He had a purpose for us. We stood at the front of a church on the last day of 2010 and declared the traditional marriage vows to each other. “To have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.” There are some things in life that you say even though you really don’t have the slightest clue what it means at the time, and this is a good example of that. We stood there and vowed something to each other that day that was incredibly sacred and which, left to our own devices, we would never be able to do in our own strength. But fortunately, that’s the whole idea. This was never meant to be approached in our own strength, but rather in mutual submission to each other along with the manifest presence and cooperation of a Triune, loving God. If the highest call of humanity is the greatest commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength,” and to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31), then Holly and I have been given a neighbor to learn how to love. We are each other’s closest neighbor, and before we even think of trying to love anyone else, we had better start with each other. If that wasn’t enough, we have also been given four other little neighbors in our children, and we are to learn how to love them and then to teach them how to love others as well, produc-

ing a great yield of fruit for generations.

One thing that makes learning to love your spouse more challenging is the high degree of intimacy involved in the relationship. If intimacy is a matter of sharing experiences, then I share the highest number of and most exclusive experiences with Holly compared with any other relationships in my life. There is more history there, which at times actually makes it easier for me to act more patiently and kindly to a complete stranger at the store than I may act to my beloved bride later that day. We don’t interact with our spouse for ten minutes once per week but for much of the day over the course of many years. That means our spouse gets to know us for who we really are. After a while, there is no more hiding, and all of our strengths and weaknesses, the things we are proud of and the things we are ashamed of, perhaps some of the things that no one else in the world except God knows about us come to be known by another person. That person is now able to lift us up or cut us down more easily than anyone else can. This is the person we must first be a neighbor towards, and there can be no faking it at this level. My spouse knows better and sometimes knows more about my current state of health or lack of health than I am aware.

The truth is, we are a joining of two separate kingdoms, or a kingdom and queendom brought together as one. I may not want to submit my desires for the sake of my

spouse, and perhaps I may think that I even deserve to have my desires or needs met by my spouse. The options are to live in this ongoing power struggle trying to get my way in marriage or for us both to submit our kingdom or queendom at the foot of the cross in order to join Christ in His Kingdom. The first option may sound like an easier path, but it will lead to a life of unsatisfied desire and relational harm. The second option may sound too difficult, like we are giving up too much, but it will turn out to be the only path to an abundant and satisfied life and the only path to truly learning how to love another well. We cannot love our neighbor as ourselves without the grace of God, and discipleship to Jesus is how to do it.

So the first step to loving my spouse is to become a disciple or student of Jesus. That is something only I can do; no one else can decide that for me, and I cannot decide that for my spouse. We can start with ourselves and pray for our spouse to make that decision as well while we learn to love them. There is nothing spiritually advanced about being a disciple of Jesus, as Jesus’ first disciples prove, but we are at least signed up for the course now and ready to learn. Once we decide this, we begin arranging our lives accordingly, and this gives marriage a whole new purpose. Now the routine everyday interactions, the decisions large and small, the fights and arguments, the times of apology and forgiveness, parenting struggles, breakthroughs, successes and failures are the training ground where Jesus will teach us how to love another person well.

These are some reflections on some of the ways we have learned to use our marriage as a training ground for learning to love. We are learning to view the other as God sees us. This must be intentionally focused on and developed but then protected as the enemy will be quick to try and snatch this away from our conscious attention. This is not merely a person with a personality that either pleases or frustrates us. We are married to a “never-ceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God’s great universe,” as Dallas Willard describes. This is something we can do. We can learn to view our spouse in this way, to see them for the holy child of God that they truly are. And depending on where you may be in your relationship, you may need to go back a ways to help you see them in this light.

The enemy can slip subtle lies into our minds to challenge this and have us think less of our spouse, but they are lies, and he or she really is as the quote describes, whether they seem to be living up to it or not. We have found it helpful at times to seek out prayer over us as a couple to specifically cleanse any negative images we are carrying towards each other and to re-

new the way we see each other as God sees us.

Another way marriage has taught us to love each other is by learning to provide for the spiritual health of the other. In a busy season of having several young children at home, sleep can become a scarce commodity, and being tired and exhausted can wind up being the norm. We have learned the importance of us both taking intentional time to practice silence and solitude independently to experience rest and to connect with God as a source of life and strength. One of us will stay home and watch the kids while the other gets away to be alone. We have learned to see the positive effects of silence and solitude on the balance and state of mind in each other as well as the lack of balance and unsettled state when we are overdue on this time alone with God. It is very difficult to be loving when you are tired, and there is something about taking a few hours each week to be with God that rejuvenates a sense of peace, contentment, and patience and allows us to return to the buzz of a busy home with a fresh set of legs. Keeping this time protected and not caving in to the many enticing events and activities that could be scheduled in place of this time takes intentionality and discipline.

We have also learned to prioritize regular conversation with each other. After all of the kids are down, we routinely stay up for a couple of hours just sitting and talking with each other. We don’t have the TV on, and we are not on our phones so that we are not distracted but present and attentive to each other. At times, we can have deep and very meaningful conversations, and other times, we just share the events of our day. But we listen to each other, and to truly listen to another person is a great thing that you can do for him or her. This is a very simple way of sharing life with each other and building genuine intimacy as we allow ourselves to be known by each other. We have learned to delight in sharing this time, and we will even get creative during the day to find ways to just converse, such as piling the whole family into the van and driving to Altoona or Des Moines just so we can talk while the kids watch a movie and stay content in the back.

The real answer to how we learn to love each other as ourselves is from discipleship to Jesus that, over time, brings inner transformation into Christlikeness where we are filled with God’s agape love, and that is why we love one another. But our everyday, routine marriage will be the main playing field on which this discipleship takes place. It is the place of our closest neighbors, and it is where our best resources need to be applied.

Purpose. It is what we as humans strive for. But there is more to it than meets the eye. As Christians, we have many different purposes, but I believe they are all set around three main ideas:

- 1) Loving. That's loving our Lord in Heaven with all our hearts and putting others before ourselves.
- 2) Fulfilling what Jesus has called each and every one of us to be and do.
- 3) Committing our lives to carry out what Jesus called the disciples to do in Matthew 28:19-20, making disciples of all nations and spreading the good news.

This is a very general way of describing the Christian life and goals because of the fact that God has something different for all of us. We each have our own purpose for why God put us on this earth, and finding it takes time. Being a teenager, I have not found my calling for what God wants me to do. What I have found, through the help of the many people and opportunities that God has put in my life, is what I am good at and what interests me. These are already leading me in a good direction for the next steps in life. I believe that this is a huge part of finding your purpose and finding your identity, especially your identity in Christ.

When we know Him, we know us. We will start to see ourselves the way our Father sees us, and we will start to notice the ways He is working in our lives. With being closer to our God and the Holy Spirit, we will be led by the Spirit. One of my favorite verses ever will always be Romans 8:28: "For we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." By trusting in our Heavenly King, we know that whatever happens to us or whatever we do (as long as it is reasonable and respectable) can and will be used for our good. We almost never see it right away, God's glory typically takes time to be revealed. But just because we do not see it does not mean it is not there. We may not

always be looking. I believe that all these concepts help us to find our calling here on this earth, which is a part of our purpose.

Something I have struggled to learn is the fact that it is ok to be wrong. We are not perfect people and we will not always make the correct decisions,, and that is perfectly fine. God has a net full of grace and mercy that He will catch us and wrap us up in. If God doesn't want us in a certain place, or if we made a wrong decision, He'll let us know, but we must give Him that chance. Finding our calling and purpose in life is not easy, and we could never get it on the first try. I also believe that in whatever God does call us to do, we can carry out what has been told to us in Matthew 28:19-20. You do not need to be anyone special or in any certain position to share the Good News and be light for Jesus.

We must not forget that executing this is not only bringing about our purpose but also fulfilling the Lord's purpose. Philippians 2:13 says, "For it is God who works in you to will and act in order to fulfill His good purpose." Just as in Romans 8:28, we are fulfilling God's purpose which is bringing the kingdom of Heaven to earth. We must prepare for Yahweh to come again, which literally means "prepare the way." This is exactly what we are called to do in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). In verses 19 & 20 Jesus instructs his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I commanded you." This was a part of the twelve's purpose, and I believe it is a part of all Christian purpose. To bring the kingdom of Heaven down to earth, fulfilling God's and our purpose, this must be carried out.

The Holy Spirit, all Jesus' teachings, and Him rising from the dead, literally conquering sin and death are just some of the stories and gifts we can share with others. In the end, it all requires a choice: whether we want to use all that has been given to us to fulfill the purposes God has for us or not.

Caleb Beltzer



Everything in life has a purpose. The purpose of the swing hanging in our backyard is to make us feel like we're flying and to bring a smile to our faces; the purpose of school is to help us learn; and the purpose of food is to keep us from starving. Just like those things, Christians have a purpose.

The purpose of kids who are Christians is to spread the word of God at school by telling other kids about Jesus on the playground and by being kind to others so they can see Jesus. The other purpose of Christian kids is to learn about Jesus. They do this by going to church, reading the Bible, and listening to Mr. Tim.

Sometimes living out your purpose as a Christian is not easy. You might not be in the mood to live out your purpose, other people might not like your purpose, or you might be distracted by other things and just not feel like living out your purpose. When you find yourself in places like this, do not get down in the dumps. Why? Because Jesus had the greatest purpose of all time (saving the world from our sins) and even he sometimes had a hard time living out his purpose.

Jesus did not have a job, he did not have a home, and there were a lot of people who did not like him. In fact, some people hated Jesus and wanted to kill him. His life on earth was pretty hard. Then, it came time for him to die on the cross, and his life and purpose got even harder. First, all of his friends left him. Then, people spit on him, beat him, and hung him on a cross. After that, he was separated from his Father when he took on all our sins... and that was probably the hardest thing he ever did. Even though it was hard, Jesus never gave up. He was committed to his purpose and wouldn't let anything stand in his way.

We should remember this when things get in the way of us living out our purpose. We should remember how hard it was for Jesus and that he never gave up on his purpose. This should inspire us and help us fulfill our purpose of living for Jesus.



Mission Partner highlight

by Sue Coyle

When we received the request to consider writing a short snippet of why we have been led to serve alongside others, we were overwhelmed by the thought of putting our passion on paper. In humility and in our desire to be present, we prayed we would give all honor to the Lord through our words! We began to take inventory of what that means to us. We pray you will be inspired by how God calls us all into His service. We are all called in many diverse ways, and this is just our story.

We are Bruce and Sue Coyle, and we came to Pella in 2003 to work for Pella Corporation and to share community with our family already residing here. We quickly fell in love with Pella, the City of Refuge, and started looking for ways to grow and engage.

Bruce is an amazing mechanic. He has a huge heart for walking with those in need, and he has devoted much of his time to those in need in our community. Bruce has been encouraged and inspired by Jesus to walk alongside those with broken hearts, minds, and bodies with Jesus' grace and mercy.

I, Sue, love to share about the Triune God through word, prayer and healing. A recent saying I saw that depicts me is: "Caution! I may begin to speak about Jesus at any time!" I love to share words from the Lord in writings titled: "For Today." These writings allow me to engage with different communities in my life. I get to learn from people and their perspectives.

As a couple, we share a passion for others by serving at The Well in Celebrate Recovery (CR), Getting Ahead, and Well Works. The Well staff and volunteers bring an abundance of opportunities for healing, transformation, and restoration in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ. It is an honor to be a part of these ministries. We get to see the work of Jesus in each person who enters through the doors seeking change and restoration.

At Third Church, we began by being greeters and serving on the hospitality team. Meeting people at the door was a great way for us to get familiar with people and

learn their names. This opportunity allowed us to get to know a large group of friends! Whether it is for prayer, a smile, or a chat about life, it has brought us joy and has enlarged our community. We regularly lift up the staff, pastors, volunteers, and worshippers. Third offers many opportunities for everyone in just the right ways... all you have to do is say yes.

One of our daily prayers is a short Prayer of Jabez. Jabez was a prophet mentioned just once in the Bible with a request for God to help him as he prayed and walked with the people he encountered. Jabez's prayer request is found in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10: "Bless me, Lord; enlarge my territory: Keep Your hand upon me: Keep me from evil: Help me to not cause harm." As we have prayed this throughout the years, we have noticed incredible God encounters! We see the effects of this simple yet powerful prayer, and we often share it with others. God meets our requests in His ways as we pray. We caution others to know from our experience that when we earnestly pray, it is like the Field of Dreams theme: "Pray it and they will come!" We trust and believe in God for all things and know He is our guide and provider.

One of our favorite new additions to our faith journey happened with our house. We added an open front porch about three years ago. This porch has brought so many opportunities; to wave at those driving by or having walkers and neighbors join us and sit with us. Some people even drive up and remain in their vehicles or on bicycles to join in conversations. Many of the world's problems seem to be whisked away there in idle chit chat, and prayers or words of encouragement are often shared. We are encouraged by those we have met and are excited for the many new friends we do not yet know. It has been fun to see what God can do when we create space and allow Him to define what it will be used for!

May God richly bless you! May we all hold onto the Hope of Jesus for all things! And hey, come join us on the porch, at Third, or at The Well! We would love to spend time with you!



**Be still and know
Know the Father and be known**

**Know Him and you'll make known
The love, the beauty of His great throne
He died for us all alone
To redeem the world and bring Shalom,**

**In the stillness, in the reverie
The beauty of His grace beckons me
My eyes are opened and I see
The heart that first loved me**

**Empowered by His grace
We abide with Him day by day
For His kingdom to come we pray
And for followers to be raised,**

**Be still and know
Know the Father and make Him known,**

**He gave his life for us to be
Forever with Him in eternity
Rest in His grace, and look and see
The love, the realm, of the one true King**

**Seek the Father's kingdom and His heart
And love for His children will He impart
As we with Him make disciples both near and far
And worship Him with all that we are**

**May His Spirit in us be
The seed that grows us into fruitful trees
And may our work give all glory
to the wise, the good, the Risen King**

**Be still and know
Know the Father and make Him known,**

by Patsy De Rens

Holy in the Ordinary

“It is ingrained in us that we have to do exceptional things for God - but we do not. We have to be exceptional in the ordinary things of life and holy on the ordinary streets, among ordinary people - and this is not learned in five minutes.”

OSWALD CHAMBERS

Over the past year, we have journeyed through each of Third Church’s core values: intimacy, identity, belonging and purpose. We are ending by exploring the value of purpose, but if I’m being honest with myself, I often try to start with purpose. I put purpose on a pedestal, and then, in my humanity, my purpose often becomes self-serving, a performance, or marked by extreme effort and striving.

If I’m trying to do things out of duty or performance or to belong instead of out of love for God, my actions do me no good. Our motivations within our purpose are pivotal: am I doing this to advance God’s purposes or mine? Will this bring me glory or God glory?

St. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, puts it this way; “If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don’t love, I’m nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God’s Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, ‘Jump,’ and it jumps, but I don’t love, I’m nothing. If

I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don’t love, I’ve gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I’m bankrupt without love.”

When I lay the four core values out together, instead of elevating purpose, I can see how connected they all are. When I am walking intimately with God, my purpose can come out of love and worship instead of duty. When my identity is rooted in the truth that I am God’s daughter and heir, my purpose is not marked with the striving and performance of an orphan trying to earn love and affection. When I have a deep sense of belonging in the Circle of Love and in community, competition and comparison do not take root as I live with purpose.

Our purpose should come out of a pure and enduring place: our actions are done out of a love of God (intimacy), a longing to draw out our destiny (identity) and a desire to contribute to the body (belonging).





One of my favorite quotes pertaining to purpose is from Oswald Chambers in his devotional *My Utmost for His Highest*: “It is ingrained in us that we have to do exceptional things for God - but we do not. We have to be exceptional in the ordinary things of life and holy on the ordinary streets, among ordinary people - and this is not learned in five minutes.”

The first time I came across this quote, I was in a place of deep wrestling with my purpose. I was a new mom staying at home full-time, and my world felt so small. Changing diapers, nursing, bathing and rocking had become part of my new rhythm. Even though I felt great joy in caring for and loving our new baby, I also felt more than a little adrift. And even though I knew that caretaking was incredibly important, at times it didn’t feel “big enough” or like I was doing enough (even though I was exhausted)!

I now have the advantage of time (and a little more sleep) to know that God was adjusting my lenses as I looked at my purpose, and He was taking purpose down off the pedestal in my life. He was showing me that intimacy with

Him, experiencing my identity as His child, and finding my belonging in His body was an imperative part of my purpose here on earth.

Many of us equate purpose with goals and achievement, with doing and moving. One of the reasons Chamber’s quote struck me so profoundly was because it spoke to all of the ideas that the Lord was undoing in me. Chambers talks not of DOING FOR God but of BEING WITH Him. And the holiness God is calling us to is not some great goal or achievement. Instead, the exceptional thing He is asking us to do is to be dedicated to the people and the tasks that He has placed in your life. Holy on the ordinary streets.

So what does your ordinary street look like? Is it full of tying shoes? Packing lunches? Answering ‘why’ a thousand times? Zoom meetings? Responding to emails? Meeting deadlines? Caring for a parent? Holding a paintbrush? Building a house? Does your ordinary take you across the world or across the street?

No matter what your ordinary looks like, you have an opportunity every day, in every moment, to be holy. To bring His love. To make Him known. No moment is too big or too small, no purpose above or beneath us.

From writing code to writing poetry, from building homes to building families, I believe living out our purpose should be borne out of love, out of knowing who we are and whose we are, and out of a deep sense of belonging in the Circle of Love. And remember, this is not learned in five minutes.

As we walk purposefully on our ordinary streets, whether our day seems insignificant or momentous, may we be reminded of these truths:

Matthew 5:13-14
John 1:12
John 15:15

I am the salt of the earth.
I am God’s Child.
I am a branch of the True Vine, a channel of His life.

John 15:16

Acts 1:8

1 Corinthians 3:16
2 Corinthians 5:17-21

2 Corinthians 6:1
Ephesians 2:6

Ephesians 2:10
Ephesians 3:12

Philippians 4:13

I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.
I am a personal witness of Christ’s.
I am God’s temple.
I am a minister of reconciliation for God.
I am God’s co-worker.
I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.
I am God’s workmanship.
I may approach God with freedom and confidence.
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

by Lindsay Loomans

Summer Family Activity

This issue's family activity is to garden together.

Whether you want to plant an herb garden in a pot on your deck, repurpose items to house an indoor succulent garden, or use hand-painted flower pots as front porch decor - there are no rules, and it is up to you!

We commissioned three friends to take \$30, get creative, and grow something.

Take a look to get inspired. Then make a plan with your family and get your hands dirty!

Each spring, we love to plant flowers of many varieties around our home as a family. Almost every year, our kids have painted old terra cotta pots with their own design, and then they get to choose which flower they would like to plant in it. It is so fun to see them come out each spring and how their color choices and designs have changed and developed. This year, we mixed it up by allowing them to choose a paint color to paint the base of their pot, keeping them simple and similar.

Our kids love to explore the aisles of the greenhouse, begging to buy every plant. Once they finally chose what they liked to be their plant, we added them together. To our surprise, they chose colors that worked well together and even complemented the flower they planted in them.

It is such a joy to watch the flowers grow and bring vibrant color to our home. We also love the added bonus of another reason to get outside, and nature always brings conversation about God's abundant creation.

Mark, Angie, Henry, Cora & Case Van Roekel



Krissie & Katie



We were inspired to repurpose items for this project. The planters were purchased from Bibles for Missions. The bowls were all identical. We purchased three candle stick holders and glued them to the bottom of the bowls! We then spray painted all of the planters.

It was fun to take old items and give them new purpose!

Krissie Kramer & Katie Alley

Keith (my husband) and I enjoy cooking and having fresh herbs outside our back door. We love cutting fresh varieties of Italian parsley, basil, rosemary and oregano for pizzas, pastas, salads and sauces when we have friends over or even a simple weeknight dinner for just the two of us.

The pot I plant in is a Mother's Day gift he gave me years ago. When I saw it, I loved it and knew exactly how I would use it. While the pot probably doesn't look particularly special or unusual to most people, it's very special to me because it was a thoughtful gift from him. He understands how much I enjoy my Italian heritage and traditions. The pot was made in Italy. My maiden name is Cenatiempo, which in Italian means "supper time," so the pot is perfect for my Italian herb garden!

I'm grateful for the way The Lord has purposefully created me and tied the meaning of my last name into my identity and some of the things I enjoy most.

Chris Yanner

Chris Yanner





Summer recipe

If most of us could choose a part of God's creation to symbolize our purpose here on earth, we would gravitate towards images like a beautiful blooming flower, a majestic oak tree or a leaping deer. We would be hard pressed to find someone who would choose the image of a worm. Worms, while not the most glamorous of creatures, have a lot to teach us.

Most of the time, worms burrow underground. As they journey through their tunnels each day, they mix up topsoil and subsoil while bringing oxygen into the ground. And their slime has nitrogen in it, which spreads to the soil and is an excellent nutrient for plants.

A beautiful blooming plant or a majestic oak needs good soil. The deer is dependent on berries, shrubs and plants grown in good soil to survive. So much that goes on under the surface plays a vital role in what we see above ground.

The same goes for us. While it might be easy for us to focus on the things that people see (like praying out loud, going to church, doing a service project), God cares about what goes on in the secret places of our hearts too. And if we let God make the soil in our hearts rich and full of

nutrients, it is much easier for us to grow good fruit to share like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self control!

To help us remember how important good soil is for our hearts, our summer recipe is dirt pudding with worms. The only ingredients you will need are oreos, pudding and gummy worms.

First, put Oreos in a large ziploc bag and crush with a rolling pin, or crush Oreos in a food processor.

Next, layer all the ingredients in cups: crushed oreos, pudding (already made according to package instructions), crushed oreos, and gummy worms on top!

An even easier route would be to buy pre-made pudding cups and put crushed Oreos and gummy worms on top.

So grab a few simple items from the store, make an easy, classic snack, and brainstorm a few ways your family can bring "good soil" to your hearts, homes and neighborhoods this summer!

Summer Family Resources

The best resource we have when we need to be reminded of our purpose or to be strengthened as we are living out our purpose is God's word. We've collected some verses that we encourage your family to memorize together this summer!

'Have I not told you? Be strong and have strength of heart! Do not be afraid or lose faith. For the Lord your God is with you anywhere you go.

Joshua 1:9

'My soul is quiet and waits for God alone. My hope comes from Him. He alone is my rock and the One Who saves me. He is my strong place. I will not be shaken. My being safe and my honor rest with God. My safe place is in God, the rock of my strength. Trust in Him at all times, O people. Pour out your heart before Him. God is a safe place for us.

Psalms 62:5-8

'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord, 'plans for well-being and not for trouble, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will look for Me and find Me, when you look for Me with all your heart.'

Jeremiah 29:11-13

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

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

'For I know that nothing can keep us from the love of God. Death cannot! Life cannot! Angels cannot! Leaders cannot! Any other power cannot! Hard things now or in the future cannot! The world above or the world below cannot! Any other living thing cannot keep us away from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

I can do all things because Christ gives me strength.

Philippians 4:13



Summer Liturgy

Each one of us has a unique purpose in the Kingdom of God. We have the choice to join God and His purposes for our lives or ignore Him. Our hope is that as a church family we will begin to see our purposes as intertwined with one another and the Kingdom of God. We have purpose together within the Circle of Love.

Jesus the Sent One

The original, the purposeful, the meaningful Sent One

Sent One

**With purpose, with a plan, with the anticipation for more
He is the Deliverer, the Redeemer, and the Savior of the World
Our purposeful Sent One allows for our destinies to be restored**

**Sent One is not just His title it is mine and ours
With purpose, a plan, and anticipation for more**

We are Sent Ones

**Gifted, talented, sons and daughters of the King
We are Sent Ones with the authority that comes straight from the King of Kings**

**As a Sent One, what I do today may affect tomorrow
How I spend my time might impact my relationship with the Sent One
How I choose to live my life may change my reality as a Sent One
Jesus the Sent One came so that all who declare Him LORD and Savior
will know and be His Sent Ones.**

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