

The Extraordinariness of One Hundred

The Bible promises long life to all who live by God's commandments. In the book of Deuteronomy we read: "You must follow exactly the path that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you are to possess (Deut. 5:33). The book of Proverbs echoes: "My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you" (Proverbs 3:1-3). The actual age a righteous person can hope for is nowhere specified . . . at least, not exactly. The Lord God does remind us all that "My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years." And indeed, in Deuteronomy we learn that "Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated" (Deut. 34:7).

Well, maybe. But any of us who has ever grown old (!) knows that as we age, our vigor does indeed "abate," and often our eyesight diminishes, along with our hearing. Moreover we know full well that quality of life doesn't guarantee quantity of life (even with regards to one's faithfulness to God's teachings).

Still, there is truly something extraordinary about reaching the age of 100. In our day (if not in Bible times) it is certainly the exception rather than the rule. Linda Bartel, who died early Monday morning at Bethesda Home in Goessel, reached the ripe old age of "one hundred and a half" (as she told me in a recent visit) before her body and heart finally gave out. I can't honestly say that I knew Linda well (after all, there was a lot to know!), but I did learn to know her a bit during my visits with her. Her sight and hearing had become quite limited in recent years. But that didn't stop her from "seeing" God's Spirit in whomever came to visit, and wherever she went. On my last two visits with her this summer, I took her in her wheelchair for a walk around Bethesda's "Butterfly Garden." One by one, I would wheel her up to one of the flowers, as close as I could maneuver her. Sometimes she would look closely at it, straining her eyes, and invariably would exclaim "Oh my! That's beautiful!" Other times she would simply feel the flower gently with her hand ("Oh my! That's so soft!"). I have no doubt whatsoever that God was greatly pleased by Linda's compliments!

Needless to say, Linda's was a life well-lived. She was truly an "extraordinary person," and will be missed by all who knew and loved her. But we can surely take great comfort in imagining her thoroughly enjoying the sight and feel and undoubtedly the wonderful smells of all the flowers in heaven! And who knows, maybe she will join us on a walk around one of the many butterfly gardens in heaven, when our time comes. ☺

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **Tabor College** is continuing the Music on the Plaza series! **The Mike Fetters/Tom Harder Jazz Duo** will perform with guest vocalist **Lois Harder** Saturday, August 14 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on the Kliever Plaza. The concert is free and open to the public. Starbucks will be open; bring your lawn chair or blanket and enjoy the evening!
- ☞ **The Kansas Mennonite Relief Sale Annual Meeting** will be Thursday, August 26, 6:00 pm at First Mennonite Church, McPherson. The cost of the meal is \$20.00. Please RSVP to Barb BJ Reeves at bj.reeves@live.com or 620-543-6863 by August 22. We will be checking with health information sources regarding group meetings closer to the date for everyone's protection. The funds will go to the McPherson Housing Coalition for the construction of Oak Harbor Cottages for low income/homeless families.
- ☞ **Offender Victim Ministries is hosting a "Just Desserts" fundraiser** Sunday, August 29 from 6-8 p.m. at Carriage Factory Art Gallery Park (126 E. 6th St.) in Newton. Join them for an evening of fellowship with the local restorative justice community, sweet treats, and live music! Tickets are

required: Adults (\$20), Ages 5-17 (\$10), Under 5 (Free). Find more information and reserve your tickets at www.offendervictimministries.org.

Other Announcements

- ☞ We live in a culture that seeks to blind our children to the reality of God's love for them. **Join other moms as we pray for our kids, their teachers and their schools** (Elementary, Middle and High School). We gather every Tuesday at 9 AM, starting August 24, at 609 S. Main, Hillsboro. Childcare provided.
- ☞ **School kits for MCC!!** Now is the time to get school kids for MCC since many of the items are on sale now. Here are the items that you can put in the box in the church foyer. Thanks for supporting MCC!
 - 4 spiral or perforated-pages notebooks (8.5 in x 10.5 in and 70 sheets)
 - 8 new unsharpened pencils
 - 1 ruler (flat, good quality; must indicate 30 cm; inch markings optional)
 - 12 colored pencils (in packaging)
 - 1 large eraser
 - 2 new black or blue ballpoint pens
 - 1 small **all metal** pencil sharpener, one or two holes.
- ☞ **COVID-19 protocols:** The FMC Covid response team is urging the following in regard to the Covid virus: 1. Masks are highly recommended when we gather indoors, 2. Be alert to social distancing, 3. Stay tuned for further updates as we remain sensitive to county and CDC guidelines.
- ☞ **Join Jerusalem Seminar this winter!** Bethel College and Tabor College are again sponsoring a trip to Jordan, Palestine, and Israel, from December 26, 2021, to January 15, 2022. The trip will be led by Dr. Doug Miller and will include two dozen biblical sites, such as Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, the Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, Jericho, ancient ruins, Dead Sea and Dead Sea Scrolls, Masada, Mt. Nebo, Petra, museums, and much more. There is currently room for additional persons to participate. If interested, contact Dr. Miller immediately at 620.947.2439 or dougm@tabor.edu. Cost is estimated at \$4700 per person.

Verse of the Week

“But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you,^[b] not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.” –2 Peter 3:8-9 (NRSV)