

Our Faith Stories

By Soul Sisters 2019

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- Ephesians 2: 8-10

Forward

Soul Sisters is a group of thirty C3 ladies who meet at church every Tuesday for study and fellowship.

This group started first, in the 1980's as a bible study at Velma Hall's mother's home, then as a quilting group at church and again as a bible study.

I've been privileged to lead this group of ladies for approximately five years. The faces have changed, (some have remained the same); the numbers have grown, and now each week there is a good attendance.

We are truly the Body of Christ in unity though we each bring different gifts and experiences to the group. Our small group is not so small now, but we remain together, united in the cause of Christ. We share, we pray, we cry and we laugh. We study, we encourage. But most of all - WE LOVE AS CHRIST LOVES US.

Glenda Buchanan - Fearless Leader

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FLO NYEDEGGER

Born the third child, the third daughter of six children in the family, I was named on the third day of my life. My parents chose two of my great-grandmothers' names, Florence Elizabeth, for me to travel through my life with. My first home was on US 52 until my family moved into Dayton when I was around age three. This move was indeed part of God's plan since we lived just across the street from the Methodist church until our great-aunt insisted to my Dad that he take his children to church!! *Thank You, dear Auntie, for your influence* because this is where my spiritual journey begins.

As a small child I was instilled with praying at the dinner table, saying bedtime prayers and attending church and Sunday school weekly. Music has also been a big influence on my heart and mind and drawing me close to Jesus. Children need to know "Jesus Loves Me" if they never learn any other song!

Growing up in this wonderful congregation was an absolute precious way to learn of my Savior. These God-fearing, humble, salt-of-the-earth family of God neighbors did an amazing job of living out their faith as an example to me. I dearly love the memories and faces of so many that shaped my life. From my Grandmother who was my children's choir director, to the sweet lady that played piano for the children's ministry week after week, to my youth leaders, precious pastors and prayer warriors.

When I was a teenager, our church had a revival where I felt the Lord tugging me out of my seat to answer an altar call. I tried to resist by holding onto the pew, and finally gave in to the Holy Spirit! I finally let go and let God have my life. My greatest decision ever made.

I would love to be able to say, "Life has been nothing but roses since then", but God never promised that. For sure, I have fallen short many times of being in God's will, and praise God He always forgives me. For "*Where could I go but to the Lord??*" *He is my rock upon which I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.*

Larry and I were married when I was a mere eighteen years-old and this coming July will celebrate our 50th anniversary. As all marriages do, we have had many trials and tribulations, but God has seen us through them all.

My biggest struggles have consisted of our son Michael's death at age 38. He died from esophageal cancer and left a huge void in our lives. Through it all Jesus has shown me that our precious Mike is with Him in heaven and I know that I know - I will see him again. We are so grateful to have his children close in our world. My last words to my son were that we would care for his children, and we have done our best to keep that promise! Larry and I have raised them to know Jesus as their Lord. The loss of our son came just two months after Larry lost his job of thirty years, as well as Larry lost all three remaining siblings in a thirteen-month period.

Another cross to bear has been in caring for our daughter Angela. She has some special needs that continue to require much of me, and without my Jesus to lean on, I

would not be able to bear up under it all. *Thank You, Jesus.* I am ever so thankful for those God has sent along life's pathway to assist me with her needs.

After years of investment in one congregation it became apparent it was time to leave my church that I called home for sixty years. Feelings of hurt, loss, and as if divorced, we attended another church for three years until I heard God ask me, "Why are you here?" In my older years I have learned to listen to God's voice and *obey*. I quickly acted upon his call to move and came to Crestview to check it out. To this day I weep when I describe my first Sunday here. God drew me to this home where I know I should be. My faith continues to have hope in Christ alone, and may I stay strong until he calls me unto Himself. There is power in the Name of JESUS! I know my Redeemer lives. He lives in me.

DODY HALL

I was born in 1935 in Mantua, Michigan, the eleventh and youngest child of Ralph and Flossie McBrian. We lived on a farm. When I was about four, my father was found to have tuberculosis and was placed in a sanitorium to heal.

Edith, fourteen months older than I, had the disease and was in a sanitorium for two years. Shortly we moved in with our grandparents.

Our grandparents were elderly and loved the Lord, but Grandma was very deaf. They had devotions every morning and we were welcome to join them. I did join them often. Grandpa would read the Bible and then kneel to pray. As soon as he would say 'Amen', Grandma would begin. She couldn't hear but she knew. My first introduction to God.

While we lived there Grandpa became ill. He was dying, and my grandma and my mother were beside his bed. He asked my mother to promise she would be a Christian. I was asked to get my older brothers and sister to come and say good-bye. They were listening to the Lone Ranger on the radio and it was in the tense closing. They would not come in when it was over.

I went back into the bedroom - such a vivid memory for a four-year old. Grandpa put his hands up and said, "They are here - the angels" and closed his eyes in death. My older brothers and sister missed it.

We moved When Dad was released to return to work. He suffered a stroke and his left side was paralyzed. My sister Marie's husband died and she and her three children lived with us for a while.

After she left, we had no car and my mother came up with the idea that we girls could walk to town in the summer and go to Sunday School. It was a 2 ½ mile walk, but we were used to walking everywhere. We attended a one-room school that was a mile away. With our dresses on and a nickel in our pockets for the offering, we went to church. We decided to keep our nickels and bought ice cream cones at the drugstore.

Our mother tried to have devotions with us occasionally. We would listen while she read and prayed for us. Our mother worked very hard. We would go to sleep at night listening to the treadle sewing machine as she sewed most of our clothes. We had lots of pretty dresses made out of feed sacks.

When I was going into sixth grade, we moved to town. I had the best Sunday School teacher and I learned Bible stories and how to become a Christian. I did not accept the Lord though I knew how. This was a Free Methodist Church. It seemed we were only told that everything we would enjoy would be a sin. I later learned this was very legalistic. My sister and I went to revival services with our mom who asked us to go to the altar but we said 'No.'

Our dad was finally able to get out of bed and into the wheelchair by himself. My brother was coming home from the service on furlough. Mom had cleaned the house and mopped and waxed the floor. Getting out of bed, Dad fell and broke his hip. This handicapped him for the rest of his life.

When I was fourteen, I went to live with my older sister, Ella, and her husband in Michigan City, IN. He was the pastor of the Free Methodist Church there.

My sister, Edith, said, "They'll make a Christian out of you." I said, "No, I will stay like I am." She and I made a blood pact. We pricked our fingers and drew blood as we both decided we would not be saved.

There was laughter and happiness in my sister and brother-in-law's home, quite unlike ours had been. I saw happy Christians. But I remembered my pact with Edith.

Camp meeting in the summer came. I went home to spend vacation with my mother and family. Ella and husband came to pick me up to take me to camp meeting. Christian teens there prayed for me, and YES, I went forward and Jesus became my Savior.

The next morning I was by myself and the devil said to me, "You are not really saved." I answered out loud, "Oh, yes I am. I went forward and Jesus is my Savior." At this time a feeling went through me from the top of my head to my toes. *Oh, what a feeling!* I learned later it was the Holy Spirit meeting with my spirit since I was saved.

My preacher brother-in-law had started a mission church. He needed workers so I was the helper for the two and three-year old children. I was learning the Bible and loving it. I was a typical teen, loved the youth group.

After high school graduation, I attended Spring Arbor College for one year and did not have money to go back. When I went home at Christmas to my sister's, John (my future husband) came over to visit them. We had known each other in the youth group and he had been in the service for three years and had just gotten out. We fell for each other.

I did not have money to return to school. The Church was a big part of my life. John had gotten saved. We decided to get married and did in December of 1954.

When married we still struggled with finances but were happy and had a good marriage. Our first daughter, Arlene was born in Nov. 1955. Anita was born three years later. We were active in the Church. God was always there leading us.

We were too busy, even in the church. God had to slow us down. And He did and we moved on to Pines Bible Church. It was a new good place for us.

In March of 1971 John was involved in a terrible accident, was in the ICU and in a coma; the top of his head had been sewed up. One Sunday I was alone and a stand-in doctor looked in on him and said to me, "Dr. Pilicki has not told you, but your husband will never be the same. He will be a vegetable; he will not work again."

That evening the youth pastor came to the hospital to tell me the youth had held a special prayer meeting for John. This was the sixth day of his coma. At 10 pm, John opened his eyes and asked me where he was, what had happened? He told me to go home.

Two days later he opened his eyes again and asked why I was still there. PRAYER CHANGES AND CHANGED THINGS. He went back to work in two or three months.

In 1972 we bought a house in the Pines Community near the church. I taught Sunday School and was president of the women's association.

Arlene attended Arbor College, then Ball State University and became a special education teacher, later getting her Ph. D. from Purdue.

God had blessed Anita with a beautiful singing voice and she sang at weddings and events. She was married and had our two grandchildren. After thirty years her marriage ended in a bad divorce.

I retired at age 62 after eighteen years in the accounting department, working payroll. The next year John retired from the Indiana Toll Road. We traveled a lot and moved to Indianapolis. In Indianapolis John worked for a car dealer, moving cars. We enjoyed the traveling involved with this.

Then John had cancer and it returned, so he had more treatments. Arlene was battling rheumatoid arthritis that went to her lungs. She passed away in 2010. She was 54 years old.

In the spring of 2011 Anita had a serious heart attack and had an eight by-pass surgery in Indianapolis. The arteries did not hold up so they had to take her back into surgery. She was in an induced coma for ten days. Two weeks after that she came through. She later told us as she felt herself slipping away during the surgery, she saw her father praying for her and she held on.

John never quit mourning for Arlene and his cancer spread and he also had some dementia. Anita came to stay with us and help him. He passed in Feb. 2012..

Later when Anita was in rehab for a broken ankle grandson John and wife came to see her and asked us to consider moving to Lafayette where they were. Our house sold in less than a month. We moved to Lafayette in August of 2014.

Finding a church was the most difficult thing to do. Finally, because of the friendly ladies and the Bible study, I chose Crestview Community Church and joined in the fall of 2018. Just an ordinary life, but one where I have felt God's presence and leading.

CINDY MCCLAIN

Since I could remember, I was taken by a church bus to Sunday School at the Nazarene Church in Roberts Park, Illinois. I attended Vacation Bible Schools during the summer at backyard Vacation Bible Schools in my neighborhood, and in Wisconsin during our yearly vacation there.

I started attending the Bible Church in Roberts Park when I was twelve years-old, along with my best friend Terry Keller. We did prayer meetings and Pilgrim girls. I always knew Jesus, but I accepted him officially when I attended a Billy Graham Crusade at Navy Pier in Chicago.

My heart was overwhelmed with the message and I realized that I had not been water-baptized. So, while I was attending the New Lenox Community Church in Illinois I was baptized. My life certainly has had its ups and downs, on the road, off the road, but my Savior Jesus Christ has always been faithful through it all.

PEGGY JONES

I was born into a Christian family. My dad was a part time farmer and full time factory worker. Mom stayed home till I was in sixth grade. We were always involved with the church.

When I was twelve, we had a lay witness weekend at church and I committed my life to Christ. I was baptized in the Missenewa Lake. I was a faithful Christian till I got into my teenage years and then not so much. God was in my heart, but not much in my life.

When I was sixteen, I was in a bad car accident and in a coma for days. God saved my life. God has been better to me than I have been to him. I recovered from my accident but didn't really change my ways. I got married at nineteen. Three years later we had our first son, Dustin. Two years later our second son, Adam, was born.

We went to church in our small town, but when we moved to Lafayette we never really found a church home. One of my biggest regrets is not keeping our sons in church. My husband, Ken, and I have searched for many years for a church. We thought we found one and went there for many years. The church developed many problems and we never felt like a church family, so we left.

We were fortunate to have found Crestview Community Church. We fell in love with the church and people. We felt at home the first Sunday. I feel closer to God now than I ever have in my life. I am thankful to be a member of this church family.

I still pray for our boys to come to church. I have faith that my prayers will be answered. I still struggle with some of the things life brings. I am a work in progress. God is not done with me yet. He still has plans and work to do with me. I just pray that I will hear what he wants me to hear and do what he wants me to.

JANET GRANT

When I was in my teens, I never thought much about God. When I graduated high school I moved to Lafayette. Pastor Minday from Kossuth Street Baptist Church came to my house.

He asked, "If you should die tonight do you know where you are going?" He asked, "Would you want to go to Heaven?" I said, "Well yes." He told me how. I said the sinner's prayer and asked Jesus into my heart. But I did not seek Jesus then but went the party route.

When I got married, I started to think about God but He wasn't my first priority. *Married life sometimes is no picnic.*

After I had Michelle, our first child, I felt a need for Jesus in my life. I set down to read my Bible and searched for answers. John 14:1 came to my mind, crystal clear. *Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.* As if it was spoken to me by the Lord.

I knew I needed Jesus and asked him to come into my life. My life changed and peace came into it. I don't fret anymore. I trust in his love for me and believe all his

JO ANN LANE

Our mom took us to church when we were kids. As I got older I was a rebellious child; my dad and I didn't get along. We were too much alike, but I didn't drink.

I was pregnant at sixteen so Jim and I married. Of course there has been problems but we worked them out. We have been married fifty-one years.

I wasn't very good about taking our kids to church but they did go with friends.

Our granddaughter had a child, Micah, and I was helping her with him. I enrolled him in pre-school at Crestview Church; he really liked it.

About a year later he asked me if I would take him to church - he had only been to pre-school. Micah is the one who God used to get Jim and me to church and we have been coming ever since. We love it. Micah and we never want to miss a Sunday.

IMOGENE FAUGHT

Let's start with- God created me for Walter and Opal Baker. When I was 4 ½ years old, my father (age 26) went to bed one night (thought to be perfectly healthy) but didn't wake up the next morning. This was in June 1933. My mother was left with three children: myself 4 ½, Lois 2 1/2, and baby "Dude" three months old.

This was during the Great Depression years. My mother was 24 years-old with three little ones and destitute ("not a dime" she said). My father did have an old rickety truck, a blessing, but all she had for survival with God's help and a friend using the truck for work and we did survive. *Thank God.*

Later that friend, Bill Turley, became our Dad when he and Mom married. Later I had two more sisters and two more brothers.

I don't ever remember being a kid. I was always busy doing whatever was needed to help. But, I do remember *much* as a kid could about God, even back to the young ages of 8, 9 and 10, because Mom and Dad always did their best to see that we went to Sunday School and many church functions. That was good life living, and soooo important with great anticipation and expectations.

Some of my greatest teachings came when I went to visit my Grandma Baker and Uncle Cap. They really stressed over and over what Mom was already teaching as well as our other teachers. My greatest teachings were all about God, Jesus, the Resurrection and Glory. *Oh, my - there will be great joy when we all get to Heaven!*

I don't ever remember when I did not know God was in my life through the death of Jesus (His one and only Son) on the cross and the glorious resurrection celebration, the days after, until he left earth for his heavenly home, leaving us with his gift of the Holy Spirit for our direct relationship.

After many years of growing up, there were different areas, churches, schools, friends. But my knowledge and relationship with God and Jesus was, has been and is yet to this day still growing stronger. I was taught and really raised to LOVE and FEAR with the teachings in the Bible. Mainly - God is always watching and knows everything we do and *even what we think*. I remember when my Dad first told this to me.

At age sixteen in October of 1944 at the Assembly of God Church in Jasonville, Indiana during a revival service, I gave my life to Christ. I had the JOY, JOY, JOY deep down in my heart - JESUS and Me - sharing that joy. To this day we still share that same JOY, *but ohhhh, sooooo much deeper!* No out-of-body experience - just PEACE and CONTENTMENT that for *many* years it felt like that always knowing of his great love was way out of my understanding. It still is, but I'm standing on the promises of God. I believe and I trust in his Word. Glory to God!

I married John and later our children Donna and John were born. I was a telephone operator for many years.

When you have to live your life with knowing and feeling all this LOVE in kinda subdued or low--key living, all, or the best you can do is just share in the best possible way and serve others as Jesus tells us to do with LOVE.

I love Jesus with every ounce of my being - Body, Soul and Mind, and one glorious day I will be with him.. Until that Judgement day I will continue to believe, trust, love and serve to the very best of my ability with and IN HIS GREAT LOVE.

CAROLYN BELL

I was born in Frankfort, Indiana and grew up in a little country church where my Grandpa was the preacher. We were there twice on Sunday and every Wednesday night and every other time the doors were open.

I was active in Sunday School, children's group and youth group. I played piano and often was the song leader.

I graduated from high school and went to work for an insurance company in my hometown. During this time I met a boy named Bill and after dating for two years we were married in my home church. We soon moved to Lafayette where Bill worked at Alcoa. Knowing I would have to find a new church home, I prayed asking God to take me to a church where I could continue to serve him. He answered my prayer by placing me on a little farm on the outskirts of Lafayette where my landlady invited me to go to church with her. That church was Crestview United Brethren Church in Christ and I have been there ever since.

I soon became active in my new church and home and have served in many positions: Sunday School teacher, president of the women's missionary group, board member, financial secretary, choir member, etc.

God blessed us with two children who I took to church as I had been taken. When they were small my husband, Bill, came down with a cancer of the lymph nodes. God became my strength and help through those difficult months. He answered our many prayers and Bill was healed. I learned a lot about God's love and faithfulness during this difficult time.

When the kids were grown and my son went into the Army, I had a hard time letting him go. I walked the road and talked to God daily. I told Him, "But I haven't taught him everything yet."

When he was called up to go to the Gulf War my prayers became desperate. That's when God spoke to me and said, "Carolyn, don't you trust Me?" That is when I finally was able to completely let him go. It was a heart-wrenching moment, the pain of which I could hardly stand. But God brought peace and I knew he was the One in control.

When my Dad died I watched my mother go through the grieving process with God by her side. So when my Mother had to suffer for two years before God took her home, I questioned God again, "Why? She has served you all these years, why does she have to go through this now?" God, again, was teaching me to trust him on a higher level.

I have found Him to always be there by my side (often carrying me) no matter what comes my way. I know if I just trust Him and keep going forward he always makes the way!

NANCY SHAW

Once upon a time a long time ago. . . There was a little girl who felt all

alone and that maybe she was born at the wrong time in the world.

She was the third daughter born into the family and always felt like a disappointment to her parents for not having been born the hoped for 'boy' that would carry on the family's name. The dad was an only son of an only son. The family name stopped here.

Hi! My name is Nancy Shaw- oops! Nancy Hansen Shaw - I am that little girl.

This is who I am now. I was known by God at the time of Creation and that I was born at a perfect time into the exact time and space he created for me. I am not a mistake. This story of mine is about how I came to know this fact so clearly and undeniably. JESUS LOVES ME!

Mom and Dad went to church for a while when I was young... and then just stopped. I remember the cute little ruffled dresses, the white gloves, the ruffled ankle socks and patent leather shoes. But try as I might, I cannot remember any church songs, bible stories or camp experiences.

Home life was good. Dad made a modest income, my parents were good to us and taught us a good work ethic and to treat others kindly.

By the time I was a teenager my sisters were out of the house and I was feeling the rebellious nature of the 1960's.

A quick recap of the 70's: I graduated midterm in 1973. Eloped the next day and got my first forty-hour a week job two days after that.

That marriage lasted three years. My mom and dad had moved to another city. And I spent the next twelve years single and searching. What I found out during that time is that the GOD-sized hole in my heart cannot be filled with booze, drugs, wild living, loud music, fast cars, men, sex or any other thing but God himself.

I began searching in earnest for God after I asked a coworker, "Why do you smile all the time?" He told me about Jesus and invited me to church.

Hmmmm - I still didn't sign on right away. It took several years and more heartache to shake me to the core and fully open my eyes to Who Jesus truly is.

And, as they say, "God is good. . . all the time." He has never left me nor forsaken me in any way. My faithfulness to him, however, is another matter.

I believe I've broken all of the Ten Commandments. He would call me back and assure me of His Love. Then I would slip and this would happen time and time again.

Over the years I became confident in His promises, believed Him. Fully embraced Him, His Love and His way of leading.

That is not to say there is still not a daily struggle. But, as they say, "He's not done with me yet!!"

KATHY SWINK

I was born in the small town of Sweetser, Indiana near Marion where Crestview's own Larry Underwood grew up. My mother was a high school Home Ec teacher and my father owned a paper printing business. I had one sister, Rita, who was four years older than me. My friends and I all went to Sweetser School and had a comfortable, predictable life. Several of my friends' parents were also teachers so some of us had that in common and many of us went to the Sweetser Methodist Church from the time we were born until we went to college. It was like living in Mayberry where everyone knew everyone and their business. It was a safe community where people looked out for each other.

I was involved in many activities at church: children's choir, Junior Church, Youth Group, playing the piano and attending church camp every summer.

I remember my mother telling me that my parents tried to have me dedicated as a baby with water sprinkling and I cried so much that they had to stop the ceremony. So, I waited until I was twelve years old to be baptized when my parents were sure that I wouldn't make a scene in front of the the entire church.

Then I attended a class to learn about Jesus, God, the Trinity, Resurrection and many other religious terms. It was at that time that I was baptized. But I don't remember giving my life to Christ at that time.

During my high school years, we had a blind pastor. My friends and I had never been around anyone blind so it was quite an experience for all of us. Rev. Karstedt would have the high school kids in our church drive him to visit shut-ins. Rev. K also had the high schoolers involved in the Sunday service - reading the scriptures. It was a great experience for us teenagers to be a part of the service and to be able to help our blind pastor and see God working in our midst. But during all this time, I don't remember ever having a close relationship with Jesus.

After I graduated from Oak Hill High School (also Larry Underwood's school though he was older than me!!) I headed to Purdue University to study elementary education. I chose Purdue because my boyfriend was going there to study Pharmacy. I thought that was a pretty good reason to choose a college! Also, my grandpa had graduated from Purdue in 1907. I was the only grandchild left to go to college and I thought it would be neat to carry on the Boilermaker tradition.

While at Purdue, I totally got away from attending church or even having God in my life. Sunday mornings were my time to catch up on sleep.

After my junior year, my boyfriend Mike and I got married even though my parents were not happy about it. But we did graduate from Purdue and we both took jobs in the Tippecanoe School Corporation teaching elementary school.

During this time we were not attending church. Seven years later, we had our first child, Mark, and almost three years later, Craig came along. They were delightful little boys and kept us busy with both of us teaching. We had a fun social life on weekends

with many other teachers. Little did I know that my husband was having too much fun with a female colleague at his school.

It was Halloween night 1983 when Mike told me he no longer loved me and wanted to move out. Mark was five years old at the time and Craig was two and a half. I was devastated. I had never known anyone who had gone through a divorce and I was so embarrassed that I couldn't keep my husband happy.

As the reality of the divorce sunk in, I realized Mike wasn't coming home. I hit rock bottom! I tried to think of how I could end my life to put myself out of my misery. But it kept coming back to me, "If I'm gone what will happen to Mark and Craig? Who will take care of them?"

One day I called my principal and said I was taking a personal day. I took my boys to the babysitter and went back home. My neighbor noticed my car sitting in the driveway. She came over and asked how I was doing. *What could I say? Should I tell her that I wanted to end my life?* She asked if I had prayed about my situation and if I had asked God to help me through it.

I was really confused. After all those years of attending church, I had never asked God for help. I asked my neighbor, "How do I talk to God?" She led me in a prayer asking for strength to carry me through this time of my life, to help me to make right decisions regarding Mark and Craig's upbringing and, most of all, to give me peace. I thanked her and she left.

When I woke up the next morning, I felt like a new person! I had such a peace about me and knew that I could make it through this tough time. I knew God was the reason for this transformation.

Emotionally I knew that I could do what I wasn't prepared for - being a single mom. My sons' babysitter was Peggy Skinner who attended Crestview Church. She invited me and the boys to come to church. Mark had been attending Crestview Nursery School. It was a bitter cold January morning. One of the first people I saw as I walked into Crestview was Larry Underwood!

I left that day feeling like I wanted to return the following week and learn more about the God who had brought such peace to my life. That is when I truly began walking with Christ. It had been a gradual process as I grew in my knowledge of him. I knew that I wanted to have him in my life to help me and to know that I had eternal life.

They say, "It takes a village." A village of wonderful people helped me raise Mark and Craig. My mother and ex in-laws were great. They helped with the boys, the house, the yard and their time, energy and advice. My mother later told me that her Sunday School class was praying for me during all the trials. The power of prayer had been at work.

My sons' father moved to California with his new wife. Many teacher friends spent time with me and the boys. Mark and Craig had wonderful male mentors when they were young.

In 1986 a neighbor introduced me to Dave Swink. Dave worked at Eli Lilly. In 1992, Dave and I were married and combined our two families. Dave had two girls, Kim

and Denise. Now Mark and Craig had a stepdad and I had two stepdaughters. Dave was very helpful with Mark and Craig and helped them in their sports.

Over the years I have felt my faith getting stronger as I became more and more involved in Crestview with Sunday School, bible studies and small groups. I love volunteering at church and working on the Crestview Gift Shop. Crestview is my church home and I feel a part of the C3 family. If I'm not at church on Sunday for some reason, I do not feel complete. It is such a wonderful feeling to know that I have eternal life and will be reunited with loved ones someday in heaven. And what a blessing to know that God is with me every minute of every day and wants me to lean on him.

Today I am totally committed to Christ and love spending time with Him and being in His word. The scripture: *I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength* from Phillippians 4:13 is one of my favorite scriptures and totally explains how I managed to get through my tough times. It was from the strength that He gave me!

There is still so much of the Bible and God's ways that I am continuing to learn but I know it's a lifelong learning process so I'll continue to keep studying it. From the short time I've been with the Soul Sisters, I know that I can learn so much from the godly women in this group.

I continually thank God for all the wonderful people that He brought to me during the good and bad times of my life!

PAT STANFIED

I was born in a small town in Illinois during World War 11, the second of six children, while my father was serving in the Army Air Corp in Europe. My mother, older brother and I lived with her parents and her older brother on their grain and livestock farm. When my father returned from the war, he worked for a building contractor, then started his own construction business. He was a skilled builder but made some poor business and personal choices which would eventually devastate our family.

When the fifth child was eight months old and the oldest was almost ten years old, my mother contracted polio and spent about seven months in the hospital in Springfield, Illinois, about sixty miles from our home. Both sets of grandparents cared for us five children. Our father was busy with his business and also involved with another woman during this time.

Against great odds, my mother regained much of her mobility and strength but did walk with a limp for the rest of her life. She learned to play the piano again even though her hands were not as dexterous as they had been.

Polio was epidemic then. For a brief while my older brother had it and three of us others were assumed to have had mild cases of it.

When my father's business failed, he and my mother separated. He moved to Indiana, Mom got a job in Decatur, Illinois and we children again lived with grandparents on the farm for three more years.

We had always attended the small Methodist Church nearby, where my whole family it seemed were in leadership or ministry there. At home I especially remember Aunt Mirna reading or telling us Bible stories at bedtime, and Grandma teaching me to read when my brother started to school. We helped with the farm chores, gardening, canning and cleaning, cooking and sewing. Even though there were many changes and uncertainties in our family life, our grandparents, aunt and uncle were very loving and gave us a strong Christian foundation.

I remember when our beautiful old Methodist Church with pictures of Jesus on the tall, stained glass windows burned down. I was in second grade and stood crying at the school window a block or two away and watched it go up in flames.

Three years later, my parents reunited and we moved to Lafayette. Dad and Mom worked in his new construction business. Later they bought a restaurant. Dad was not home much and when he was, our parents argued a lot. At this time we went with Mother to a Methodist church but were not involved in other activities there.

I graduated as valedictorian of my high school class. My dad showed up late for that. Mother insisted I go to college so I attended Indiana University for two years, paying my own way with scholarships and working.

While at college I attended church sporadically. Then I met my future husband and dropped out of college. Our first daughter was born the next year. Seven months later my Mom had her sixth child. Our parents divorced shortly after that.

I was never close to my father, and it took many years and much prayer and soul-searching to overcome my resentment and to forgive him for his treatment of us and our mother. I was told he prayed for forgiveness and gave his heart to the Lord before his death at age 77 at the Veteran's Home.

I soon found a clerical job at National Homes where I met Carolyn Bell. She invited me to Crestview Church when it was on South Ninth Street. I began attending there with my young daughter and later with my husband. Pastor Kent Maxwell preached and taught us about the Bible and giving our lives to Christ. One Sunday I went to the altar and accepted Christ as my personal Savior.

I soon became involved in church activities, teaching Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, was in Women's Missionary Society and was the president.

A few years later we helped build the church on Ortman Lane. We enjoyed having church dinners, Easter breakfasts, Mother-Daughter banquets, and baptisms. I was baptized by immersion at the same time as our older daughter.

In 1973 my husband became owner of Amoco service station and I helped with payroll and bookkeeping. Then the country went into a financial slump. It affected my health and our marriage again. We finally divorced.

It helped me to spend much time in prayer and I began writing poetry and prose. I found a full-time job and took classes at Purdue to get my degree in accounting at age fifty.

Five years after my divorce I met and married Jim Stanfield, a man 23 years older than I. Together we accomplished several life goals, my Purdue diploma, CPA license and his becoming a pastor at 73 at Rugby Church in Hope, Indiana. He also received a diploma in Pastoral Leadership at age 78.

We enjoyed 26 years of marriage before he died of cancer at age 93. My mother died two years later at age 95, surrounded by her children.

I retired from my accounting job and moved back to Lafayette where I am closer to my siblings, and my children and their families. I also came back to Crestview Church to worship and became involved in various church activities, including Soul Sisters, a group of very supportive, loving Christian ladies who study, pray, share and laugh together. God has truly blessed my life, guiding me through joys and heartaches, sickness and health, and He continues to provide for all my needs as I approach my 75th birthday.

SANDY DOYLE

I Have been married to my husband Richard for forty years. We have three biological sons, three adopted daughters and one adult foster daughter. Our oldest son, Jeremy, died at the age of eighteen. Our son, Eric, is married with a son and daughter. Our son , Ben, is also married with two boys; our oldest daughter, Junise, died at the age of 21. Our daughters, Fabienne and Lucy, are both single and live locally. We also have a very close relationship with our former foster child, Amy, who is married and has a daughter.

I was raised on our family farm in Round Grove Township north of West Lafayette. I am the second youngest of five kids. Our parents were Christians and we attended church multiple times a week. I grew up next-door to Christian grandparents which was so amazing!

I have known and loved Jesus all my life. I made a personal public profession of faith at the age of twelve at a youth winter retreat in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin and soon after was baptized. In my later teenage years I pulled away from living a faith that was pleasing to God. Married an unbeliever at the age of 19 against the will of my parents. We moved to Southern California immediately following our wedding where my husband was stationed in the US Marine Corps.

After conceiving our first child I realized that being married to an unbeliever was going to probably be a source of pain in my life. My parents consistently prayed for my husband's salvation and within eleven months of marriage he accepted Christ and was baptized and we started attending a bible-teaching church. We had our three boys within five years.

Over the next several years I experienced some challenging marital issues due to deep unresolved pain that my husband had not dealt with from his early childhood. We went to several marriage counselors, marriage retreats and things of that nature. However, no one ever really took us to the root cause of our marital issues.

In 1998 during the midst of really significant marital turmoil our 18 year-old son, Jeremy, was killed in a head-on car crash on his way home from a high school basketball game. This would be the biggest challenge of my life because of the overwhelming grief. Along with our failing marriage, it was almost too much to bear up under. But, I realized I needed to apply my beliefs about God to my life every second of my waking hours and put all my hope and trust in him. I began to listen to Christian radio and the Bible on CD was playing every moment of my day. I would keep my mind set on God and not my situation. Our marriage was recovering and we realized we needed to make some important changes in our marriage.

In 2001 we adopted three orphaned girls (biological sisters) from Haiti. They were extremely malnourished. The 12 year-old weighed 32 pounds, the 8 year-old weighed 17 and the 5 year-old weighed 18 pounds. We had a new focus which brought great joy into our lives.

Richard and I felt led to start a ministry to our girls' village in Haiti. With permission from our church leadership, we helped educate and feed the children of the village, built twelve homes, set up medical clinics, conducted leadership training for the church and school leaders, built a new church building, had wells drilled for clean drinking water, equipped the school with desks and supplies, started a farming co-op to teach farming skills and began a handcraft industry to train men and women in sewing, clay and jewelry making so they could support their families. Today this is a fully supported ministry with its own 501C3 by the name of Nou Hope Inc.

In 2008 our marriage was again in crisis. I was so overwhelmed and didn't know if I could hold on. I realized that we had to get to the root cause if our marriage was going to survive. We began to meet with a Christian counselor and explored some of the past pain that seemed to be the catalyst for our problems. It was then that we received an incredible measure of healing and freedom. For the first time we were in a healthy and thriving relationship with Christ as the center of our marriage.

Then in 2010 our 21 year-old oldest Haitian daughter took her life. She had been severely abused following the death of her parents and prior to adoption. The death of her parents along with the abuse she had endured, followed by the adoption and being taken from her native country was more than she could bear up under. Although we knew she had significant mental health issues, she was very closed off and would not seek the mental health care that she needed to help her in dealing with her pain.

This was another devastating time for our entire family. I felt like I was barely holding on. It was at this time I really began to question God. I stopped attending church for almost six months. I made an excuse every Sunday and sent my husband and girls on to church while I remained at home. I was in a really deep dark place. I felt that I had failed our daughter and that God had failed me.

Through the love and care of my husband I finally got back to church and began to fully trust God in all my circumstances. Today I find ALL my joy in knowing Christ as the Lord and Savior of my life. He has been my Rock, sustainer, comforter, healer, teacher, friend and strength through many dark and lonely hours of my life. I have learned so much in my 59 years of life but most of all I have learned that no matter what - God loves me, he grieves when I grieve and he has a plan and purpose for my life.

The verses that have gotten me through many trials is Philippians 4:6-9: *Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again - rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon! Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing: Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me - everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.*

MARY GAMBLE

I was raised in the very small town of Green Hill in Warren County, Indiana. I was number twelve of twelve children. Our house was always

full until the older ones married and moved to their own homes.

At age fifteen, my mother passed away after a six month battle with cancer. Suddenly I was left alone with my Dad. The other siblings were gone. It was not a happy time. I loved school and would have gone seven days a week year round just to get away.

I went to an EUB church as a child. There were only two houses between our house and the church, so I always walked. I attended every activity possible. Our Bible school was two full weeks and all day! We took lunches and stayed all day. It was so much fun and we always had plenty of cookie-toting teachers.

I don't remember being baptized as a child - which always bothered me. I was baptized as an adult. Don't remember ever having that 'A-ha' moment about being a Christian because church was always a part of my life. As a child, I'm not sure if I knew Jesus or just knew about him.

There was a time after high school when I seldom went to church, but that didn't alter my beliefs. I worked at St. Elizabeth Hospital a while, then on to Purdue. While there, I found that I could attend college for a lot less money.

I married a farmer and moved to the country, so I left school which I always regretted. I did, however, go back to school at Ivy Tech. My youngest headed to Purdue and I headed to Ivy Tech. Near the end of school I had some major health issues. The doctor asked me to drop out of school for a while, the same day that I got the letter saying I had made the Dean's List.

I took our boys to church from the time they were babies. At age sixteen, our oldest, Scott, decided to join his grandmother in the Quaker faith. He went on a Quaker pilgrimage to England and Scotland to retrace the steps of George Fox, the founder of the Quaker religion. He was gone thirty-three days and I cried thirty-three days. I would spend time with his 4-H cattle every morning and cry.

Our youngest, Brent, was a member of Jackson Heights United Methodist Church. One Sunday I went with Brent, the next Sunday with Scott to the Quaker Church. (We have the same God.) I felt really blessed that on the Sundays I went with one, the other went to church by himself. They never even mentioned staying home.

I held many offices at Jackson, then things changed, and not for the better. I got to the point where I didn't even look forward to going. My sister, Dottie, told me I should leave and find a church that made me feel good about being there. She and her family were Crestview people until they moved to Florida.

Actually, my husband Ron and I were married in the original Crestview Church across from Central Catholic High School. Last October I decided it was time. I've been at Crestview since. I'm so glad to have had this church when we lost our son Brent a few

months ago (cancer). It was hard to talk to anyone, but I could feel the caring of those around me at Crestview.

I'm really glad I'm here and I'm ready to get involved.

CARMEN DELPH

My mom and dad were divorced when I was young and I stayed with my dad on the weekends. When I was nine, he remarried and he got saved. We started to go to church on Sundays.

One Sunday my dad took me to Sunday School. I was in fifth grade. At the end of the lesson the teacher asked us if we were to die did we know we would go to Heaven. If we weren't sure, we were to raise our hands and I raised my hand.

She took us individually to a little room and told me how Jesus died on the cross for my sins and everyone's sins. And, if I would believe in him and ask forgiveness and believe Jesus rose on the third day I could be saved and when I die I could go to Heaven.

She encouraged me to read my bible and continue to go to Sunday School and church to learn more about God and grow in my Christian life.

I have gone to church most of my life and have learned a lot. I found Crestview Church and the ladies group. I am a Soul Sister and am truly happy.

SHERRY KUMMINGS HUNTER

I want to say first that I was a slow learner when it came to listening to God. I went to church weekly with my family, attended Sunday School and was confirmed in my teens.

Let's go back to the beginning: I was born and raised in Lafayette and was so fortunate to have great parents, one older brother and an older sister. I was the baby, and a Daddy's girl. We were members of Congress Street Methodist Church. The American flag hung proudly from our front porch.

My faith was rarely tested. I believed in God, and believed I would probably go to heaven when I died but at that young age I rarely thought about death.

Then came a day when my faith was tested. It was in April of 1968. My Daddy was diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor with three months to live. At the time my brother was in the Army stationed in Alabama. Daddy did indeed die three months after his diagnosis. I could not understand a God that would let that happen. My perfect family would never be the same.

His funeral was a testament to the kind of man he was. The funeral home was packed for hours with friends and family members gathered to say good-bye. He was fifty-one years of age. I was seventeen. My faith was broken and I quit talking to God.

I am still in awe of the many Christians I have met along my journey that became even stronger after life-altering circumstances. How could that be? How did so many others react so differently than I did? Why weren't they mad and angry with God?

Ten months later I found my faith shaken once again. My brother, Captain James Kummings (Army Reconnaissance pilot, 24, was killed in Vietnam.) The same night we got word of this, a mother of a friend of mine died of a massive heart attack while sitting next to me and comforting me. It was surreal. *Where was God?*

I would attend three funerals within ten months. After that my prayer life became nonexistent and depression set in and stayed for many years. I began living a long life of intense spiritual battle.

Looking back, I now see how God gave me a choice to remain angry or to ask Him to guide me through the darkness and strengthen me. Unfortunately, I chose to stay angry.

Suffering is part of our being humans. It's how we react to that suffering that is the key to happiness and our becoming closer to God. There is no doubt there were many missed opportunities to serve God and I failed Him. Now I wake each morning and talk to God, asking Him to help me find ways to serve Him. It would have been so much easier to have been the one that had departed this

life than losing my dad and brother, but I realize my life goes on. This is HIS choice not mine and I should not waste it.

I spent so many years wallowing in self-pity but found God will not reject a heart that's broken.

God led me and my husband, Denny, to Crestview Community Church where we have become members. I feel God's presence in this church every time I step into the building. I now work daily on keeping a close relationship with God. I am so grateful for each and every one of my Soul Sisters. They have given me unconditional love and have shared their biblical knowledge and wisdom with me. These women are some of the most caring people I have ever met in my life. God had a plan for me as He does for all of us. I wasted so many years being angry but God never gave up on me.

MARY PLYBON

I'm Mary and I was the baby of the family. My twin brother didn't survive birth. I was born many years after most of my siblings and you would think I was a really spoiled brat. But, really, that never happened. It seemed like my parents resented me most of all.

But, my big sister, Judy (Nelson), who was eight, had wanted a baby sister so badly. And she got me. She was so happy. One time she rocked me so hard she rocked me right out of the bassinet and I went flying. I did not get hurt, but I will never let Judy forget this!

When I was eleven I had Parrots Fever. I almost died but I had been anointed with oil and survived.

Our family changed churches and we became Nazarenes.

I was twenty and Lew 21 when we married. We returned to our former church. Lew led the youth. Then we left Lafayette for two years.

When we returned Lew was drinking. He had three DUI's before 1995. In 1996 he came back to church.

We were unable to have a baby until Lewis Jr. came along fourteen years after we married. We were so thankful for him.

I had a bad tubal pregnancy later so we were unable to have other children.

I worked hard outside the home so Lewis Jr. could go to a private Lutheran School here in Lafayette.

In our adult years Lewis and I both came back to Jesus. I held many positions at church and was Sunday School Superintendent. Lewis sang on the worship team and still sings Gospel songs. Son Lewis also sings Gospel songs. Though he has had troubles in his life, he is now leading worship and mens' bible studies and loving Jesus as he should.

Lewie Jr. has our only grandchild, Gracie, born in 2013. We always take her to church.

I want to say Soul Sisters have been my saving grace through troubled times in my life in recent years. Their fellowship means so much to me. I respect their wisdom and great love for one another and their love for prayer. They are all such a blessing to me. I look forward to our time together studying, praying and laughing together. To God be the glory!

JUNE HASTE

I, June Haste, was born in Lafayette. My parents divorced when I was four. I lived with my dad and loving stepmom until I was seven years old. Dad was killed when he was hit by a train. That time was the beginning of my faith walk. I hadn't seen my mom in years until one day when she showed up at my school and took me. I was never to see my stepmom and half-brother until decades later when I was in my older years.

When I was four or five years old, I essentially died. I had stepped on a rusty nail. I was at St. Elizabeth Hospital. My life was spared but my foot was badly damaged. Years later it was rebuilt.

I remember from that day (from my child-like mind back then) that I had seen a light - kinda like a candle soft and beautiful. It was my first contact with God. It was the beginning of my faith.

In fifth and sixth grades I discovered music. I was in everything that involved music in high school.

At age thirteen, I moved with Mom and my stepfather to Bedford, Indiana.

I went on to high school and graduated from Bedford High school. I had scholarships to Indiana State University but did not go. I rebelled, quit school and signed up and was admitted to Airline stewardess school. But then I met Troy on a blind date. I had an engagement ring from another guy. But Troy and I knew within five weeks that we were in love. But, then Troy joined the Air Force.

I drove to Texas and we married. He was in Mechanics school for the Air Force.

Then he was in the top 5 % of the guys and was sent to Florida to be in isolation for a huge project - the building of Cape Canaveral. But Troy begged off and prayed and we were sent to Cape Cod, Massachusetts Otis Air Force Base. We were really living well and were twelve miles from the Kennedy Compound.

Troy and I became very involved in a Baptist Church when we were first married. Then our three children came along while we were living on Cape Cod.

Eventually we would move to a forty-acre farm in southern Indiana but we only survived there a short time. We had our fourth child while there. Then we ended up in Columbus, Indiana with the Air Force Reserves. This was a huge blessing. Troy was a Flight Engineer and Instructor. By then we were in a Free Methodist Church and eventually a Church of God.

I was a stay-at-home mom and was involved in Scout work and church work. Later we would be in Richmond, Indiana. Troy travelled a lot in his military job. Our other addresses included Wilmington, Ohio, Mt. Vernon and Greenfield before moving to Lafayette.

When we lived in Indianapolis I did payroll at a school. But shortly we would be moving to Lafayette. I didn't want to move to Lafayette, BUT GOD. . . It was a good move. I was able to reconnect with my stepmom after decades of never seeing her.

My beloved Troy passed away in 1998. We had been attending Lafayette Christ United Methodist Church where Troy and I both were active. My aunt and uncle were charter members there.

BUT GOD. . . I came to Crestview a little over a year ago. But how did that happen? Suzi Senesac came into the office where I was working one day. She invited me to the church fall festival. Then I would run into Suzi three or four times? I don't think so.

I have three grown daughters and their families. One daughter , Betty, and her husband have Cottrell's Creekside Farm near Rossville. I help there during the busy seasons.

Troy and I had counselled cancer survivors and were active with the American Cancer Society. We were trained and learned how to be caregivers and encouragers. Now I am a Soul Sister with great women and have joined the Crestview Care Team and will be care-giving again. God is good.

JANET HAHN

I've always lived in Lafayette. My parents were Robert and Mary Jane Smith. We lived in the North end and I went to Linwood Elementary, Sunnyside Jr. High and Jefferson High School.

We went to Graced Evangelical United Brethren Church which later united and became Grace United Methodist Church.

I can remember going there during my elementary school years, but our family just seemed to lose interest. So, I just went with my friends to their churches. I believed in God but no one talked much about religion at home but prayer was a nightly routine before bed and at church.

I had only one sister. She and I walked to church together and sang in the choir. I still remember a lot of the songs that we sang. I never really learned much about the bible.

I met my husband, Perry, through some friends. We married very young and had a lot of hard times that wouldn't have been so if I would have known more about scripture and trusted in the LORD. Perry went to church with me occasionally when we first married but his job and other interests took priority.

I know he believed in God. It wasn't something he talked about often but he was a hunter. He used to tell me how very beautiful and quiet it was in the woods and he could just talk to God.

We celebrated 51 years of marriage before his passing February 14, 2016. We were blessed with three wonderful daughters, seven wonderful grandchildren and fifteen great grandchildren.

The girls and I went to Grace Church but a job I had taken at a healthcare facility kept me from being able to go each Sunday, so the girls would go with their friends when I couldn't go.

Over the years I would go back to Grace and go occasionally with my daughter, Shilleen, to Sterling Christian Church of Veedersburg. Everything about that church was wonderful. I learned so much about scripture and made reading the Bible the first thing to do each morning.

I was told my sister and I were baptized when we were babies, but in going to church at Sterling, I saw many people immersed in Baptism and it was what I wanted to do. April 13, 2012 I gave my life to Christ.

My daughter, Kimberly, and her husband also went to Sterling and she also gave her life to Christ in March of 2016. She passed away on December 26, 2017. She was forty-nine years old.

During the winter months travel was hard from Lafayette to Veedersburg. We looked for a church here that was like Sterling. We heard about the Christmas gift shop at Crestview and decided to come. The ladies at the door invited us to come the following Sunday. Everyone here made us feel so welcome and I'm so thankful for everyone here.

NANCY HANKINS

Deuteronomy 11:18-20 You shall love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.) And these words I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall take them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise. You shall write them on the doorstep of your house and your household and your gates.

My story begins with this verse. I was blessed to have Christian parents who believed this. From the time I was two weeks old I have been in church, learning about our Lord. I grew up Catholic, being baptized as an infant, making my first communion and confirmation at seven and then marrying my high school sweetheart in the Catholic Church.

Glenn had grown up in the Methodist Church. His parents were godly people. He joined the Catholic Church wanting us to be unified in a marriage. Then my life became very busy with three daughters under the age of five. Many Sundays I would wonder why I was making the effort getting everyone ready but barely able to concentrate on the sermon while keeping the girls quiet.

In the late 80's our church participated in a multi-faith crusade led by Lowell Lundstrom here in Lafayette. I went forward at the altar call. My life began to change. We started going to a bible study led by Joe and Josephine Halsema. What strong Christians they were! They were Catholic and they were Bible-believing above everything else. We learned so much under their teaching.

After Sunday service we began explaining to our girls why we disagreed with the priest until one day Glenn and I decided we need to look for another church home. We lived south of Dayton so we decided to try Dayton Methodist Church. This was such a disappointment to my dad whose family had been at St. Lawrence since it was built many generations before. Thankfully, the Lord brought us to the perfect church for us at that time. Pastor John Walls was my first Christian mentor. I learned so much from him. He was truly my spiritual father. That church was packed with mature wonderful Christian people. George and Eva Wicks, Bill and Ruth Cox, the Marshalls, I could go on and on. The people of that church became our brothers and sisters in Christ as years went by, they grew older and passed on.

One of the real faith builders was when Glenn and I were sitting with George a few days before he went to his heavenly home. I was reading to him from his favorite book, John, when he opened his eyes and said, "Do you see HIM? Do you see HIM, Kids?" I knew we were in the presence of the Lord.

Glenn and I have had the normal couple challenges but remembering the vows we took so many years ago gave us the strength to move on. Our youngest daughter has her mental, emotional and physical challenges. It is through years of prayer for her that the

Lord has given me patience and empathy. A wise person once told me, “Work like it all depends on you and pray like it depends on God.” I have to confess I spent too much time thinking it all depended on me but I have learned to give it to God.

JUDY NELSON

I was #5 of 10 children. Seven of us survived those early years and reached adulthood. Six of us still survive.

Every time the church doors were open we were there. We didn't have a car. We walked everywhere or else we rode the city bus here in Lafayette. We appeared to be a devout family of believers. But everything is not always as it seems.

When I was a teenager I walked away from my faith in God. I always feared God. But we saw such hypocrisy in our father's life. He professed to be a Christian but we saw everything but a Christian's way of life.

When our daughter DeeDee was six or seven years-old, she had a bad bladder disease and was sent to Riley Children's Hospital in Indianapolis. The doctors wanted to do surgery. DeeDee said, "Mommy, don't leave me." The Holy Spirit told me, "Don't leave her."

The following Sunday we were at church. DeeDee and I and other church members went to the altar for her to be anointed with oil and prayed over. Jesus healed her completely. A little later DeeDee said to me, "Mommy, if Jesus healed me, then why do I have to take this awful medicine?" We threw out the medicine. GOD IS FAITHFUL.

However, God does not always heal even children in the same ways.

When son Randy was eight years-old, He had asthma really bad. He would go to the altar again and again for healing. He wondered why God had healed DeeDee but not him. I told him, "God knows the future. We don't." Randy had to go to a hospital in Colorado for nineteen months by himself. It was an awful time in our lives. I remember praying always day and night.

I remember that day like it was yesterday. I was fifty years-old by now. Divorced and married again. I was at home. I heard God say to me, "I love You." I knew it. I experienced Him right there in the room with me. I remember saying out loud over and over, "He loves me. He loves me!"

I had been headed for a nervous breakdown in dealing with a troubled teenage stepdaughter. God showed up just in time.

I had been divorced and then married Glenn in 1977 when I was 39. He was a good man. He is the best part of my faith story. He was good but I prayed for twenty years for him to know Jesus and surrender his life to Him.

It was 2001. Glenn had been to the doctor, came home at 4:30 with a headache. He took two aspirin and went to bed. At 9:30 he said to me, "I love you, Honey." I told him I loved him too.

He sat up in bed and died. In the ambulance I prayed, "Father, I have faith because I know you raised Lazarus from the dead." He answered me, "No, Judy."

I couldn't be angry.

Ten days before, Glenn and I went to the Passion Play at the Long Center. I knew he was a changed man. The following Sunday he went to church with me. At the end of the service Pastor asked if anyone had accepted Christ. Glenn raised his hand. This good man was now becoming a godly man.

I have had many challenges over my many years. Many health challenges. When I was seventy years-old in 2008 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. After five surgeries they decided to remove a breast.

Then in 2009 I had open heart surgery. One of my aorta valves was replaced with a cow's valve. (Most people get pigs' valves. *Figure that one out!*)

In 2010 doctors removed the other breast. In 2017 I had colon surgery (cancer). I NEVER HAVE HAD TO HAVE RADIATION OR CHEMOTHERAPY! The cancer was always caught in early stages. GOD HAS A PLAN!

After Glenn died, daughter Terry in 2002 was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. We were told it was terminal and there was no hope. However they would do treatments which could damage her heart.

She was anointed and prayed over at church. Her condition was so serious they started treatments on Christmas Eve.

She survived and is healthy again. She received a miracle.

My daughter Dee was diagnosed in October of 2017 with liver and lung cancer. Hospice was called to her home. She was the brave person. My greatest blessing came when I prayed with her and she came back to Jesus. When she was in a lot of pain she would say, "Mama, I hurt" and I would pray with her. I sat on the bed with her and held her little hand until she went to Jesus on December 19. *The Lord gives and the Lord takes away.* But, praise His Name. He is always faithful.

All seven of us siblings have been born again even though we experienced awful hypocrisy from those closest to us in our earlier years. The hypocrisy was monumental. Still, we saw enough good people who really lived for Christ that we knew there was goodness and it was something we needed. By God's grace, eventually we all found our ways back to Him.

MY LIFE IS NOT MY OWN. IT WAS BOUGHT WITH A PRICE.

My favorite Scripture is Galatians 2:20: *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

TERRI GRUBB

During a particularly harsh winter in the 1980's, the church I attended and raised my boys in was having a two-week revival.

Life Action Ministries out of Michigan had brought a wonderful team of young singers, along with their two spirit-filled leaders. The main theme was getting to know the Holy Spirit. People were coming from all over parts of Indiana and Illinois to hear the messages each night. In addition to the leaders and singers, there was a young woman who came for the first week to teach an afternoon ladies bible study. She was so humble and quiet in spirit, yet her maturity seemed well beyond her age. I thought she was amazing. Her name was Nancy Leigh DeMoss.

Towards the end of the two weeks, we were told there would be a baptismal service for all who wished to be baptized. Over the years, I had wondered if I was truly saved. I had been baptized when I was seventeen during a revival in my hometown. I listened to the preacher “loudly” assure us that we would go straight to hell if we weren’t baptized, or at least that’s what it sounded like in my mind.

My family went to church primarily during Easter and Christmas. The Bible was mostly foreign to me.

Now, two decades later, I knew that I had just been baptized as a kind of fire insurance. During a service towards the end of the Life Action revival, the leader asked the people who wanted to be baptized to come and give a testimonial. That was not something I was going to do. After a few people shared, one of the women who was a very respected and involved member of the church spoke. She said that the first time she was baptized, it was because her husband was going to be baptized, and the preacher had said the wife should follow her husband in obedience to God.

I held my breath through her whole testimony and thought to myself, “Thank goodness I got through that.” The next woman who spoke had the very same story. Sitting in the pew I tried not to think, but as God as my witness, I felt Him standing over me saying, “There it is. What are you going to do with it?” It was hard enough for me to go under water the first time I stood in front of people in a white sheet and came up soaked. Terrifying, in fact, for someone as shy as I was. I didn’t want to do it again!

Thank God in the end He won. I knew He was waiting on me to submit. When it was my turn to stand in front of at least 400 people, I explained how I knew almost nothing about God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit when I had been baptized the first time. It had no effect on my life, and therefore, I needed to be baptized again as an act of the heart in obedience to God. If I wanted my sons to obey Him in all things when He told them to do something, I had to be their example.

I have learned since that obeying God can require me to do things that are uncomfortable and at times hard, but His peace comes afterwards. . . and it’s beyond understanding.

GLEND A BUCHANAN

A few years ago my grown daughter, Julie, and I attended the Free Methodist Church on 10th Street in Indianapolis. The elderly couple who met us at the door was my parents' first pastor and wife of the little Free Methodist Church in Pine Village where my siblings and I went to church as children.

Charles began telling us a story: When we were young - we triplets were 5 years-old and Connie 4, and Mother was taking us to Oxford to the theater on a Wednesday evening. She came to the 4-way stop in Pine Village, saw the little church ahead and took us to church for the first time instead of the movies. *Isn't that a great story!*

Mother and Dad began taking us to church there. Soon we were attending three times a week - Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings and Wednesday evenings.

By the time we were 12 years-old and Connie 11, we had all been saved and then baptized in Pine Creek in Benton County. But throughout the years we were not being disciplined well in spiritual matters. Mother and Dad were busy on the farm and it *seemed* the people at church who taught us were all elderly. In high school we were all busy studying and involved in most extracurricular activities at school. Then we were all four in college and had left the God of our youth.

After two years of college I left and planned to marry Bill who I had dated in high school. I married against my parents' wishes and planned and paid for my own wedding. I became executive secretary at CTS Microelectronics in West Lafayette until our first child was born.. *I found out in 2019 four of us Soul Sisters worked there at that time - 1967 - but did not know each other then: Barb Kenens, sisters Janet Grant and Lois Benefiel, and myself.*

I attended the Catholic Church with my husband. We lived on a farm, started out with almost nothing, but through the years we became successful at farming. Even after our children were born we would party with friends on Saturday nights and go to mass on Sunday mornings and *leave God on the church doorsteps for the week.*

Julie was born three years after Bryan and Andrew five years later. It was at that time the Holy Spirit dropped into my heart, "You're not being the best mom you can be." A simple truth, but I was being drawn back to the God of my youth. It was a process.

I had read on the front of the church bulletin one time: *If you don't know God before the storms, it's harder to find him in the storms.* When I knew our marriage was in deep trouble, (the first storm) I fell back into Jesus' loving arms.

I began attending a bible study at my dad's Nazarene Church with ladies of different denominations but one faith. I was being disciplined. My roots would grow deep and hold in the coming storms.

Andrew was a hard-working little farm boy, athletic and head of his class academically at age ten. The pain in his arm turned out to be Ewing's Sarcoma - bone cancer. Our world was turned upside down, BUT GOD. (Ephesians 2:4).

It was three and one-half years of chemo, radiation, bone transplant, and bone marrow transplant. But Andrew had a Christian mom his whole life and he had faith at a young age. His faith in Christ would trump the raging battles.

Did I say there were storms in our lives? One fall during Andrew's battle, combines caught fire, cornfields caught fire, hopper-bottom semis full of grain split open spilling all that grain onto the ground. When we were gone to the hospital, we came home to find that lightning had struck the 100 foot tall grain elevator and had made a u-turn at the gravel road and come back to the house. Fortunately, the concrete steps in front of the fuse box kept our house from burning down. And, did I mention our marriage was in trouble again? This time permanently.

Andrew's battle was coming to an end. It was my greatest privilege as a mother when Andrew would say, "Pray, Mother, pray."

December 27, 1990 Andrew left us for heaven at the young age of thirteen. My household had gone from 5-1 in a few months. My husband had left, Bryan married, Julie was a freshman at Purdue, then Andrew. . . It was a deep valley. BUT GOD. .

God began opening doors for me to speak to women's groups, to area churches, women's conferences, to Purdue's Class on Death & Dying, and to Andrew's classmates at their high school graduation. (Crestview's own Jay and Melissa Underwood were Andrew's classmates in seventh grade at Benton Central.)

God has a sense of humor: One week I spoke to Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians.

After I moved off the farm and was divorced I moved into what I called my *valley house*. It was a deep valley, but God's grace and love were even deeper.

I published SAFE AT HOME, a book about Andrew, his faith and God's faithfulness. It did greater than my expectations. The books travelled to 25 states, Europe and China.

Soon after Andrew left us, I was asked to become Leader of The Compassionate Friends, the area support group for grieving parents. I led the group for thirteen years. I knew by this time I had been encouraged to become an encourager. I knew that my mission was from 2 Corinthians 1: 3, 4. Paraphrased: *Blessed be the God of all comfort, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we may comfort others.*

In spite of great trials and grief, there have been abundant blessings in my life. I am blessed with my two grown children, Bryan and Julie and their families which includes four grandchildren.

God led me to Crestview Church in January of 2007. It has been and is a good fit for me. It is a highlight of my week when I am with my church family and Soul Sisters.

I have been leading Soul Sisters bible study group at church for several years. Our numbers had grown to above twenty-five. One day Pastor Thom said to me, "Your group is getting so big, I may have to ordain you."

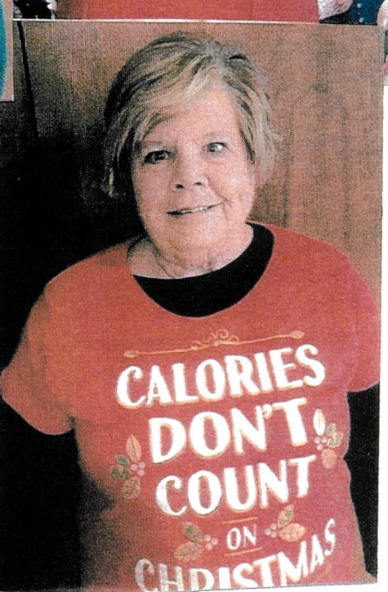
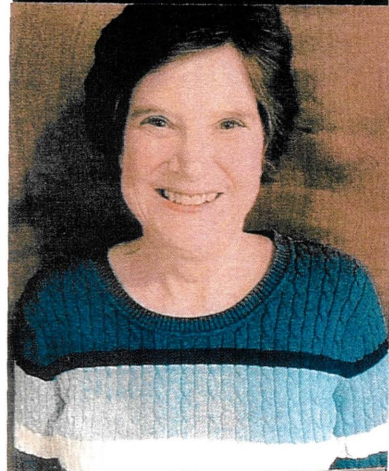
We laughed. I replied to him, "I never thought I would be a teacher."

His response: "I never thought I'd be a preacher."

Soul Sisters are a fun and loving group of ladies. This group of wonderful friends functions as the Body of Christ should. We study together. We pray for and encourage one another. We are truly blessed and grateful.



Flo Nyedegger, Dody Hall, Peggy Jones, Janet Grant, JoAnn Lane, Imogene Faught, Carolyn Bell, Nancy Shaw, Kathy Swink, Pat Stanfield, Sandy Doyle, Mary Gamble, Carmen Delph, Sherry Hunter, Mary Plybon, June Haste, Janet Hahn, Nancy Hankins, Judy Nelson, Glenda Buchanan



Peggy Jones
Janet Hunt
Sandy Doyle
Mary Hamble
Nancy Hankins
Kathy Swick
Inogene F. Faught
June Hoots

We overcame by the blood of the Lamb
and the word of our testimonies.

~from Revelation 12:11

Judy Nelson
Patricia Stanfield
Leo Nydegger
Mary Plybon
Gladys Buchanan
Rancy H. Shaw
Carolyn Bell
Dody Hall
Terri Grubb
Janet Hahn
Carnen Deeph
Sherry Hunter