



MAY/JUNE/JULY 2020

CHAT WITH THE CHAPLAIN

I'd guess that you are as tired as I am of the endless round of repetitive coverage of COVID-19. It's like soap operas, isn't it? You could miss a month of programming and not miss a thing. So, enough of the depressing "news" except . . .

It's here, and it's not going away. So, what are we going to do? We are going to do what we always have done. We are going to figure it out. We are going to focus on what we can do, not on what we can't.

God is the Creator. We are made in His image; so we can create too . . . not creating something from nothing, but refashioning what He has made.

We always have. It was a dirty drinking glass that created the whole paper cup industry (and all of its offshoots). It was that scrap of paper that kept falling out of a hymnal during choir rehearsal that resulted in the sticky notes we all use. When the Industrial Revolution burst upon America (mostly rural/farming), the cry was, "What are we gonna do?" Americans worked it out. We will do it again.

We've already found some ways to worship differently, how to do ministry differently, how to do home life differently. And we are just beginning.

Look around you. How can we love our neighbor? Somebody needs a helping hand. Follow President Lincoln's idea, "Wherever I have found a weed, I've tried to pull it and plant a flower in its place."

One more thing. This hasn't changed, and it won't. At Hospice of the Big Country, we are here for you 24/7. In a tough spot? Call 325-793-5450.

God bless!

__Burt Williams, Hospice of the Big Country Chaplain





BEREAVEMENT SERVICES



COVID-19 has changed just about everything in our world, hasn't it? That's true of our Bereavement Program here at Hospice of the Big Country, too.

Most of our bereavement events are on hold because of mandates from official sources. For now, until we can resume the full range of what we do in our Bereavement Program, our focus is as follows.

Direct contact with those who have lost loved ones in the past year and families now on our service are being done almost exclusively by phone. This is to limit exposure to the virus to our patients/families.

If a patient/family desires a face-to-face visit (and such visits are allowed by the facility), we are happy to make those.

As always, we are available 24/7 through our office (325-793-5450). Please don't hesitate to call.

THE POWER OF A GOOD STORY



Have you noticed that the part of a funeral service which tends to gain the greatest attention is the time when good stories are told about the deceased? That is the power of a good story.

When our boys were small, their grandparents came for a couple of weeks each year from out of state. This was a wonderful thing for our kids. During one of those visits, I asked my father-in-law if he would mind recording some of his story. He agreed. He told fascinating stories of growing up in an era that is completely foreign to kids today.

As the years have gone by, those cassette tapes have been reproduced and reproduced again as our boys have played them over and over. Their granddad has been gone many years now, but his influence lingers still.

You have a story, a unique story that will never be repeated unless you record it. Stories that grew out of a time that seems, well, like a story to today's generation will be treasured for years to come. Your influence, your wisdom, and your advice would be a treasure to some who follow after you.

Don't you wish you had your dad's and mom's stories in their own voices telling of life as they experienced it in a time that is almost unimaginable? I know I wish I'd done more.

If you think you might want to record your story, we have prepared a booklet called MY STORY that can serve as a guide. If you would like a copy, just give us a call at 325-793-5450.



A NOTE FROM BURT . . .

One of the things I get to do as Bereavement Coordinator for Hospice of the Big Country is to follow the families we have served for one year after the deaths of their loved ones. In follow-up phone conversations, I get to learn how various ones process their losses. This is very meaningful to me.

One of the more interesting experiences that those who have lost a loved one, including me, share are those unexpected memories which suddenly appear “out of the blue.” Often, these flashbacks are triggered by a sound, a fragrance, a song, a scene . . . almost anything. Too, these experiences sometimes occur at the most inconvenient times, like in the middle of the grocery store aisle or in the company of a group of friends. They sometimes evoke joy. At other times, tears. We just never know.

In our phone conversations, we often think together about what one does when such a flashback is triggered. I have found it helpful to see the experience as a reminder of the fact that our loved ones are always with us. The sudden event gives us a time to reflect. The recognition (*re-cognition* . . . to think again and perceive from a different vantage point) is that we are in a different place than we were at the time of the loss.

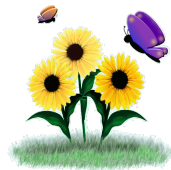
Those with whom I visit about such matters often relate how meaningful it is to pause and let the flashbacks refocus their perceptions of their deceased loved ones and of themselves. One of those Greek philosophers said, “The unexamined life is

not worth living.” A sudden “visit” from our loved one may do exactly that: help us find that life is worth living . . . again.

God bless you as you deal with the complications of COVID-19. Give us a call if you hit a rough patch: 325-793-5450.

Don't let what you can't do stop you from what you can do.

John Wooden



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