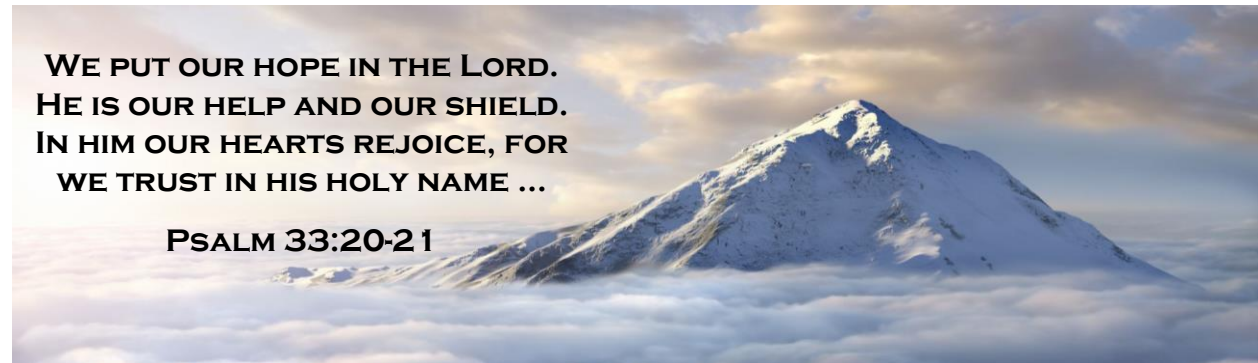


August 28, 2020



Greetings to my church family,

I trust you are doing well and staying safe during these unusual times. I am going to tell you about the major event in my summer as well as a few thoughts about what we can do now.

As most of you know, my dear mother, Ruth Ann Gasaway, passed away on July 9<sup>th</sup>. She had been battling pancreatic cancer for almost a year, with chemotherapy, blood tests, and doctor's visits. She was getting very tired of all the activity, although she did not have really bad side effects from the chemotherapy. Then she began having some problems with her heart. The family decided to have her into hospice and just three days later, she left us in the early morning hours. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, we only had a very private graveside service with just my siblings and their spouses on July 17 at the Winton District Cemetery. When the time is right, we will have a Celebration of Life at the church. We'll let you know when we can make the plans.

Ruth Ann has been a member of Atwater Baptist Church since 1958. In most of that time, she was busy with activities like American Baptist Women, Sunday School, Fellowship, and Missions, just to name a few. She has left a big hole in our lives and in the life of the church. I'm sure you will miss her as well. Throughout this time, Ruth Ann continued to trust in God and His unfailing love for her. She repeated many times that she knew God was in control and she could rest in Him. The following passage was underlined in her Bible and was read at her graveside service.

*We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield.  
In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.  
Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord,  
for our hope is in you alone. Psalm 33:20-22*

I have been doing pretty well, some days are good and some days are not so good. The 'stay-at-home' order has fit into my time as I have been getting used to the quiet of the house and starting a new routine of living.

I recently read a great statement:

“They can keep us from *going* to church, but they can’t keep us from *being* the Church.”

Brad Reiches, Wycliffe Associates.

To me this means that the *Church* is not determined by the walls of the building but by the hearts of the people who may be in that building or not. How can we *be* the Church? Here are a few things that I thought of in the context of *being the church*.

Worship: Singing songs – find tapes, radio stations or hymn books to sing praise and worship to God.

Pray: We have many topics to pray for in these days: those sick with Covid-19 and other diseases; those fighting the many fires in California and those being displaced; the new school year, the teachers and students teaching and learning in a whole new way; those lonely people in nursing homes with no contact with their loved ones.

Give: If you have some extra finance, support our church which still has expenses; local groups that are ministering to the homeless and other needy people; groups that are helping with the fire response.

Go: There is not much opportunity for us to go out and do things, but when you do go out for essential shopping, be aware of the hard work that the salespeople are doing, and smile through your mask.

I will leave you with some thoughts from Paul in Philippians 4:4-9 (NLT).

*“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 worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.”*

Have a good week.

Love in Christ,

*Eileen Gasaway*