

“Write What You Know: Brief Reflections from a Tired Husband”

By Rev. Dr. Jeffrey A. Schooley

With apologies, this is not going to be the most detailed, focused, or nuanced newsletter article because one week after Brienne’s surgery, she is still in the hospital and her discharge date – while rationally inevitable – is still a murky mystery at present. Maybe I should’ve tried to write this before her operation, but I just didn’t assume the level and extent of the complications she’d experience and thus thought I had plenty of time to write this. Heck, I thought getting some of my writing/admin type duties would be the bulk of my work as I also tried to stay nearby her during her recovery.

For some brief context, Bri had a surgery on Thursday, March 20 and was released that day, as was the plan. The first few days of her recovery seemed normal enough. Pain, pain relievers, lots of naps. It was hardly a vacation, but neither was it torturous. But then, on Sunday (March 23), she spiked a fever. She’d had a low grade fever off and on since the operation, but this one got up to 101.5. Talking with her surgeon’s on-call nurse, we were directed to go to the nearest ER. After 6 hours at Wood County Hospital, Bri was transported to Toledo Hospital, which is where she had her operation. She has not yet (as of Thursday afternoon when I’m writing this) been healthy enough to be discharged.

This article isn’t really about Bri’s situation specifically, but rather about some little, incomplete reflections I’ve gathered along the way. I may be at her side as her husband, but I’ve never figured out how to entirely turn off my “pastor brain.” So, here, in no particular order and far from rigorously vetted, are some reflections.

1. Vulnerability – We are all just so, so, so vulnerable. Oh, sure, when everything is working right in our bodies – especially when we’re young and healthy – we can feel invincible. After all, we’re made in the image of a God whose primary adjective is “Almighty.” Some whisper of that Almighty origin still rings in our ears. But really? No. We’re not. We are a series of fragile, highly complex, interconnected systems in which a breakdown in one system can send ripples through the entire body. Maybe we should’ve paid closer attention and read the subtext of “The Skeleton Dance” song. You know the one. “The thigh bone’s connected to the hip bone” and so on. It’s all connected.
2. It’s All Connected – Picking up where I just left off, I don’t think fragility, complexity, and interconnectedness applies only to the human body, but to every other sort of “body” – specifically the Body of Christ and the body politick. For both Church and state, a breakdown or injury in one part of the body ripples out into the rest. Anyone who has lived through “church drama” can attest to as much in the church. Anyone reading the news these days knows this is true in our body politick, as well. My as-yet-complete reflection on this boils down to this: We don’t respect just how fragile, complex, and interconnected everything is. The “burn it all down” impulse is natural enough when systems feel truly broken, but those words are more coping mechanism than strategy. Any real strategy for healing the broken places has to respect the vulnerability.
3. Bearing Witness to Pain – Pain sucks. I say that as a theological confession, as much as an extension of frustration and worry. Bearing witness to pain – that is, not being personally in pain, but attending to someone else’s – is its own sort of pain too. The helplessness in not being able to fix the thing that hurts can begin to hurt itself. And yet, bearing witness to



pain is also important. Suffering in solitude only compounds the suffering. We all want – indeed, probably need – someone to see us in pain. Not to fix it. Not to rank it. Not to do anything with it, other than acknowledge that it is real. Bearing witness to pain validates its realness, not because we want it to be real, but because we feel like we’re going crazy if no one else can see what we feel so deeply. This has probably been my least favorite part of being with Bri in the hospital. It may, ironically, also be the most important thing I do. But beyond medical pain, I suspect bearing witness is part of the Church’s mission. In a broken world that’s ravaged by sin, Christians have the courage to bear witness to other peoples’ pains. Heck, we even train for it every Good Friday as we sit at the foot of the cross and sing “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” I think one of the reasons our church is growing and thriving is because we are a people who are willing to bear witness to the pains of others. To wit: I know that La Conexion is so grateful for our love and support during this time of sporadic ICE raids and all the heart-wrenching insecurity that’s instilling in immigrant communities across America. La Conexion loves the support we’ve given them. But, truthfully, we ain’t done much. What we have done, though, is sit with them in that pain, acknowledge that it is real, and stay may constant in our companionship than the pain is constant in its hurting. Most of the time when pastors writes about “bearing witness,” we’re just using a more sophisticated phrase for “evangelism.” But this experience has me thinking that “bearing witness” is much larger than I’ve previously assumed.

4. Purpose – Bri has had great nurses around the clock, but one nurse – Maddie – stands out from the rest. Maddie is young, bright, and leaves me with the sense that she’s a natural or intuitive caregiver. She’s also pleasantly chatty, which does help keep the mind off of the pain. While checking in with Bri (I happened to be out of the room at that moment), she asked what Bri did for work. Then she asked what I did for work. And then she became effusive in her admiration for both of us. She authentically thought it was great that Bri served folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities and was impressed that I am a pastor. She saw the heart of service that underlies both of these vocations. And for as heart-warming as her praise was, I think it also left both of us a little melancholy. Because, yes, Maddie is right. Bri and I both love the work we get to do because it is more than mere labor or toil. Our work is run through with purpose and value. And once you peel back all the layers of pain and vulnerability and confusion that comes from a medical crisis, the throbbing pain for which there is no sufficient narcotic is the loss of purpose. I know Bri is feeling it – desiring much more to be at work than in a hospital bed – and I know I am too. Each of you have made it clear to me – both individually and collectively as a church – that my priority is to be with Brianne. And I have appreciated that. Lord knows I wouldn’t want to compound the grief of this season with worry over my employment or employability. But at the same time, I really *want* to be at work. I love the work I get to do. And sure, for both Bri and me, we have tasks that aren’t our favorites in the course of our jobs, but both of us would trade the present circumstances for even our least favorite work duty because our work feels purposeful, and sickness feels purposeless. All this to say, where you have purpose in your life, be grateful for it – even the less than enjoyable parts of that purpose. Purpose is why we’re here. Health is the means by which we live for purpose, which is the ends for which we live. Sickness is frustrating because it forces us to elevate the means over the ends, which is incongruous with our souls’ design.

And so there it is. Four future sermons, I’m sure of it, but none of them as yet complete. By your prayers, may the day come soon when I can round out these reflections and we all be healthy and present together.

Thank you for your prayers for Bri and your forbearance with me. Amen.

APRIL FYMS PAGE

Family and Youth Ministry Monthly Updates



W2W Group

Water into Wine the casual women's group will meet on April 8th at 7pm. We will meet at the church in the back room as for April we will have a spring themed crafty "paint and sip" night so look for more details soon!

WE MEET

A Wednesday time of community and learning

We Meet will be continuing throughout the month of April! We will continue our study of the Screwtape Letters until April 9th. We will then move to individual lessons April 23 and 30th. Dinner is at 5:30 and lessons begin at 6:15.

Remember, We Meet is a time to gather and commune as you are; we meet is from 5:30 - 7:00pm but feel free to come and go when you can. You are welcome here!

LENTEN STUDY

40 Days of Reflection

Our daily lenten study will continue through April 20. There will be a daily verse and reflection posted on our Facebook page as well as an ask to put so many coins in your One Great Hour of Sharing boxes based on each reflection. If you do not have access to facebook but still would like the daily reflections. Ask Amanda to be put on the daily e-mail list. Boxes will be brought back into the church on Easter Sunday.



HOLY WEEK PLANS ON ANOTHER PAGE! LOTS TO DO AND SEE!!

PAIRS AND SPARES

Our Young Adults group (ages 21-40ish) will be meet April 25th at 6:30pm at Brewing Green/Jack and Do's Pizza for dinner and conversation. Join us for a fun time of conversation and friendship.

DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Our Lenten Study!



Each day I will be posting a verse and refection during the time of Lent. You can see this on our Facebook page or have it sent to you just ask Amanda to add you to the daily e-mail list!



CAMP OFFERINGS

Camps available for ages 3 - 99!

Don't think that camp is just for the youth! Kirkmont offers, and our church gives scholarships for, camps for almost any age or group check out what Kirkmont has to offer from the list below, check out kirkmontcenter.org for more information or talk to Amanda to see how you can get your camp journey started!

PYC Jr/Sr	Rejoice	YOU AND ME	ADULT
June 15-21 Grades 3-12	July 6 - 12 Grades 3-12	July 12 -13 Ages 3-17 (With Adult)	Sept 5-7 Ages 18 - 99+

Palm Sunday Pot-Luck!



Join us after service on Sunday
April 13th for a Church Family
Pot-Luck and to welcome the
new members!

Meat, rolls, and dessert as well as table service
will be provided you only need to bring a salad or
side dish to share!

Come and let us break bread in joy together!

ALL are welcome!



Kids crafts as well as a
community project
will also be provided!



holy week

Events Calendar

Sunday, April 13, 2025 – Palm Sunday

10 a.m. Special Hymns and Lessons Worship
NEW MEMBER SUNDAY

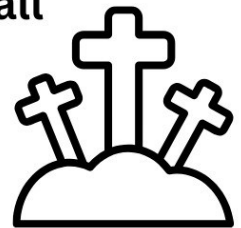
11:30 a.m. Church potluck and new member welcome meal to follow worship



[No WeMeet on Wednesday, March 27]

Thursday, March 28 – Maundy Thursday

6:00 p.m. Dinner-and-Worship in Fellowship Hall
*Communion will be served at your table



Friday, March 29 – Good Friday

7 p.m. Special Bowling Green Ministerial Association-led service at St. Mark's Lutheran Church

*Featuring a special Good Friday Cantata sung by multiple church choirs.



Sunday, April 30 – Easter Sunday

10 a.m. Easter Sunday Worship

Communion worship service featuring special music with a brass quintet, the Presby bell choir, as well as the choir
One Great Hour of Sharing Offering and Fish Collection





It's Spring clean-up time! The **Green Team** is planning to **work outside** of the church on

Saturday, April 26 beginning at 9 am. We'd love your help! We'll be weeding, raking, pruning and generally making the outside of the church beautiful. Bring gloves and garden tools if you have them – or you can borrow from us. We appreciate your help! The Green Team is planning to add plants to the northwest corner of the green space in the near future. This is the area in the corner between the labyrinth and S. Grove, closest to Wooster Green. We're planning on adding a native tree and some shrubs, with a bench to create a small haven in our outdoor space. If you want a better idea of what we're thinking, take a look at Bob Callecod's model in the Fellowship Hall.



Thank you to Corky Dunsmore for sharing some of her gardening knowledge after We Meet on March 12, and to everyone who came to dinner and stayed to learn and chat.

Corky had seed catalogs and took requests at the meeting. This is the perfect time to start seeds for your garden. Talk to Corky for more information.

Did you know that the Wood County Library has seeds available, using their old card catalogs? You can stop over there and see what they have (and thank Michael Penrod while you're there).



Presbyterian Women are planning a Spring Retreat for the morning of Saturday, June 7th. It will be at the church & start with a breakfast before the program. More info next month!!



First Friday for April will be April 4th at 6:00 pm at Smokey Bones, 512 W Dussel Dr in Maumee. Please RSVP to Nettie Rose by Wednesday, April 2nd. 419-262-7889, nettierose@aol.com

10 Ways YOU Can Help the EARTH

1. Turn off the lights
2. RECYCLE!
3. Save leftovers
4. Be nice to the worms
5. Share a book
6. Plant a tree
7. Use both sides of the paper
8. Save water
9. Clean up trash
10. Put underwear in the freezer when it's hot



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**The office is closed daily for
lunch 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.**



Helping Hands



The Project is Evolving.

Our church will provide all the hygiene and cleaning items for the project.

On average 35 to 50 families pick up personal care and cleaning items during the monthly distribution. The healthcare items offered are being standardized so that patrons know what items they can expect.

If you would like to support the project, please donate items from the list below.

- ⇒ laundry detergent, dryer sheets
- ⇒ dish soap
- ⇒ body wash
- ⇒ shampoo, cream rinse
- ⇒ toothpaste, toothbrushes
- ⇒ baby diapers (sizes 2-6), wet wipes
- ⇒ feminine hygiene products
- ⇒ paper towels
- ⇒ toilet paper

Donations can be placed in the box located in the church lobby for collection on April 6th. The donated items will be taken to First Christian Church for distribution on April 11th.

If you want to contribute but don't have time to shop, a monetary donation can be made. We will do the shopping.

Volunteers are needed to help distribute the cleaning and hygiene products, join us on April 11th from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at First Christian Church, on the corner of Poe and Haskins Roads.

We are making a difference in people's lives. Thank you for supporting this community project.

D ACONS
Following to Lead | Leading to Serve

Terri McNamara, Ellyn Stout, Scotty Huntington, Libby Dachik, Kathy Sweeney, Lee Liebetreu, Dave Horger



CHORAL SCHOLAR APRIL RECITALS 2025

06

APRIL 2025

**KARLI CHRIST
VOCAL RECITAL**

2PM

BRYAN RECITAL HALL, BGSU

06

APRIL 2025

**KOURTNEY HILL
GRADUATE CHOIR RECITAL**

6PM

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

11

APRIL 2025

**SAMUEL SCHEELE
MICRO-OPERA CONCERT**

8PM

BRYAN RECITAL HALL, BGSU

15

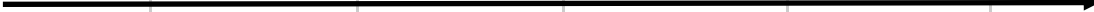


APRIL 2025

**ZACHARY ORTEGA
COMPOSITION RECITAL**

8PM

BRYAN RECITAL HALL, BGSU

April 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
ESL=La Conexion English as a 2nd	YG=Youth Group	Med. Grp.=Meditation	HYT=Horizon Youth Theatre	OEA=Overeaters Anonymous	TL= Trumpet Lessons	SC=Sort Clothes DS= Deacons
		1 1 Book Group in Library 2 Green Team Mtg. 8 AA in FH	29 Sorting Clothes 3:30 K. Hill recital rehearsal 5:30 We Meet 6:15 Book Study	3 9:30 Deacons' Shop is open 9:30 Staff mtg. 5:30 ESL 6 Bell rehearsal 7 Choir rehearsal 7 MR in FH	4 6 1st Friday at Smokey Bones in Maumee	5
6 10 Worship 11 PW Board Mtg in Library 6 Kourtney Hill Masters Recital 4 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	7 Closed	8 1 Book Group in Library 5:30 Session 5:30 ESL 7 W2W-craft/sip night in CYL 8 AA in FH	9 9 Sorting Clothes 4:30 Trustees Mtg 5:30 We Meet 6:15 Book Study	10 9:30 Deacons' Shop is open 9:30 Staff mtg. 5:30 ESL 6 Bell rehearsal 7 Choir rehearsal 7 MR in FH	11 4:30 Helping Hands at 1st Christian Church	12 10-1 WC Mobile Health Clinic in the church parking lot 5:30 Phi Mu Alpha Recital in FH
13 Palm Sunday 10 Worship & New Member rec'd 11:30 Church Potluck 4 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	14 Closed Holy Week 	15 1 Book Group in Library 5:30 ESL 8 AA in FH	16 9 Sorting Clothes NO WEMEET tonight	17 Maundy Thurs. 9:30 Deacons' Shop is open 6 Dinner & worship in FH 7 MR in FH	18 Good Friday 7 BGMA Good Friday Worship Service at St. Mark's Lutheran, BG	19
20 Easter Sunday 10 Worship/Commun ion 4 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL	21 Closed 4:30 Kindred Spirits Jeff on vacation 	22 Newsletter Deadline— May 1 Book Group in Library 5:30 ESL 8 AA in FH	23 9 Sorting Clothes	24 9:30 Deacons' Shop is open 5:30 ESL 6 Bell rehearsal 7 Choir rehearsal 7 MR in FH	25 6:30 Pairs/Spares at Brewing Gr/Jack & Do's Pizza	26 9 Gr. Team's Outside Clean-up morning
27 10 Worship 11:30 Deacons' Mtg (Library) 4 Girl Scouts 7 MRG-GL 	28 Closed	29 1 Book Group in Library 5:30 ESL 8 AA in FH	30 9 Sorting Clothes			



April 2025

April 03 Jan Marcin
April 05 Lyn Long
April 07 Kathy Sweeney
April 12 Lowell Nees
April 14 Michael Botts
April 16 Linda Smith

April 18 Jeff Schooley

April 20 Don Boren
April 28 Rosemary Apple
April 29 Judy Martin
April 30 Mike Evans

(if your birthday doesn't appear here, please contact the office with your date of birth mm/dd/year)

2025 Officers of the Church

SESSION

Class of 2025: Jen Coddington, O'Leo Loki,
Donna Nelson-Beene
Class of 2026: Dar Bevelhymmer, Karla Geyman,
Chris Williams
Class of 2027: Anne Moser, Christine Guenther, Lisa Lawson
Moderator: Rev. Dr. Jeffrey A. Schooley: Clerk: Anne Moser

DEACONS

Class of 2025: Terri McNamara, Dave Horger
Class of 2026: Kathy Sweeney, Lee Liebetreu
Class of 2027: Libby Dachik, Scotty Huntington, Ellyn Stout
Chair: Terri McNamara Secretary: Libby Dachik

TRUSTEES

Class of 2025: Sue Clark, Chet Marcin
Class of 2026: Lowell Nees, Dana Nemeth
Class of 2027: Rosemary Apple
Co-Chairs: Sue Clark & Dana Nemeth
Secretary:

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We are on Facebook.

