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THE HARBOR LIGHTS ALMANAC

Quarterly Women's newsletter of Our Safe Harbor Church

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Such a simple holiday, Mother's Day, has become a tear in many people's hearts. Mother's Day implies you have warm, fuzzy feelings about a mom, you have been a mom, or are currently an amazing mom to perfect children! That's not the real world. Mother's Day can bring tears from losing a mother, the emotional stress of having a maternal parent abandon you, not being cared or loved for by a mother, not ever having married, not being able to have children, or the children you were blessed with who changed your life in ways that tear apart your heart. I understand a different level of sadness, having lost a child in death. That adds a dimension that words cannot explain, and kind gestures cannot heal.

Let's focus on the beautiful impact women have made in our lives. Since the beginning, God has used women. He used them to entertain strangers by cooking meals in the tents of the plains, to gather grain on the edges of a field in a foreign land, to kneel at the feet of Jesus to wash his feet, to run to him when a death in the family occurred, and to give Jesus the suggestion, as only a mother could do, to do something at a wedding when the party was going downhill. Since then, we have the powerful testimonies of women such as Joan of Arc, Mother Teresa, Rosa Parks, Marie Curie, and Florence Nightingale, to name a few.

How have women impacted your world? How have women mentored you, walked with you, guided you, given tidbits of advice, encouraged your aching heart, cooked you a meal, took you out to lunch, met a few times at the coffee shop down the street, and came to help after surgery, the birth of a child, the death of a parent, the messiness of a divorce or to sit on the front step with you and watch the world go by? Some of the most influential women have brought me back to the Bible. They helped me return to the balance my life needed. The moments when I was confused, they cleared out the cobwebs, not simply by their words, but by THE WORD. Good advice is a nice thing to have, but Godly advice is crucial. The women who have guided my heart back to God have cleared my foggy mind, focused my wayward heart, and made me feel loved, needed, and worth spending time with. Those women have changed me with their hugs, smiles, unconditional love, continually turning my heart back to what God wants of me as a woman and mother.

-- *Marette Jorgenson*



MY GRANDMA ACHER

Written by Laurie Jaquiss

For a variety of reasons, I do not celebrate parental holidays well. The gift in it was I had a grandma who loved me. She loved me and then loved me some more. Every year on my birthday, after I was old enough to answer the phone, Grandma Acher would call and tell me the story of my birth. She knew the hour and the minute and exactly what she was doing. At the start of my life, she ensured that I had treatment for congenital hip dysplasia, usually driving around 150 miles to a clinic so the apparatus could be adjusted, and she paid for special shoes to work with it. When things went wrong at home, I could call her and talk, and if bad enough she would come by and collect me. She had every toy that came out while she raised my mother: games, dolls, 45 RPM records and books. I loved playing with those toys and games. When I was about three and a half years old, she gave me the best gift a grandma could give a kid. It was a red record player that read stories aloud and the books that matched them. The gift was I never had to struggle to read or remember when I could not read.

The holidays at Grandma Acher's were amazing. Every year at Christmas time I would stay at her house, and she would load me and a ton of gifts in her car and take them to all her neighbors. Then the next few days would be wonderful with people stopping by to bring her gifts and often me too. We moved to a town about 150 miles from my grandma. She would drive to our house and then attend any choir production I was in. During the last

few years of high school, she treated me to lunch every day at her home. She paid for all my graduation paraphernalia, from the school yearbook to a special dress for graduation and the cap and gown. When I left home to attend college, my grandma called me every week. She made sure I got home for school breaks. My grandma Acher was the first one in line to greet my roommate and I when we graduated from the University of Montana. She loved all my friends when I brought them home. She served her community for 35 years as an active 4-H leader and then several more years after that judging demonstrations and the annual 4-H record books. She was generous with her time.

My grandma Acher lived a life of quiet faith. She wasn't in anyone's face about it but quietly ran around her community being

Jesus with skin on. Anyone who needed anything was given what they needed. Anyone needing beds was given beds to sleep in. Anyone needing food was fed.

Anyone needing transportation was given a ride. I don't know how she did all that and never once made me feel envious when helping anyone else. I think the spirit of the Lord was upon her. So to those grandmas out there who are the one lifeline in a family, Happy Mother's Day. To the grandmas to be: dive in headfirst, you may save or change a life.



THE WOMEN IN MY LIFE

Written by Barbara Cassilly

Whether it's family, friends, or random people you just happen to run into, there are always women who leave a lasting impression on our lives. Some come into our lives for a season, others for a lifetime. These influences can be very impactful and even life changing. There are so many wonderful women who have influenced me over my 64 years and helped shape who I am today. In this short space I will attempt to list a few.



My mother was the absolute strongest woman I have ever known. She did not go to church with me until later in her life, but I knew she loved the Lord. I can still hear her singing "The Old Rugged Cross" as she cleaned the kitchen. We knew two things about her. She loved the Lord and she loved her family. I saw her work all summer long, canning and freezing food from the garden she tended with such care. We grew up poor, but we never went hungry thanks to her hard work. My work ethic is in great part thanks to my sweet mama. Thank you, Mama. I love you.

Growing up, we had a neighbor whom we called Aunt Lois. She wasn't really our aunt, but for many years we did not know that. She was the woman who stopped by our house every Sunday and took me and my sister to church, gospel meetings, and VBS. She taught, as well as showed me, who Jesus was. Without her going out of her way each Sunday to pick us up, I don't know if I would have ever had the kind of relationship with the Lord that I have now. Thank you, Aunt Lois. I love you.

My three sisters, AKA my best friends, taught me that life is just one big rollercoaster. The good thing was, having sisters meant that you would never have to ride it alone. They showed me that love is a strong bond that will get you through even the toughest times. They proved over and over that they were bigger and stronger than any bully I could ever face. And to this day, I know that they will love me come what may. Thank you, Joyce, Penny and Lisa. I love you.

My beautiful daughters. My three angels as I often call them. They changed my life from the moment I learned I was going to be a mom. I knew I would be their role model for many years. I knew that the women who had influenced me would now influence them through me. They watched and learned from me how to love, how to care for each other and those in need. They learned how to work in a garden and clean house. They learned who God was by my example and by taking them to church every Sunday. They learned that having each other was like having best friends you could count on for the rest of your life. And, in turn, they taught me so many things. Patience, perseverance, how to remain calm in sticky situations. But the most important thing they taught me was how to love unconditionally. Thank you, Summer, Chelsi and Kortney. I love you.

To my countless friends whom I have had over the years, you too have influenced my life and made me a better person. There are too many of you to mention, but I hope you know who you are. I am grateful for each and every one of you and I thank God for putting you in my life. Thank you. I love you.

THE IMPACT OF WOMEN

Written by Ora Davis



Having one genuine friend who loves you is a blessing, while having multiple friends is a fortunate situation. I've been blessed with many friends throughout my life, but one friend in particular always comes to mind. Connie is that special friend. Connie and I had been in a

church small group for some time. In the small group we ate together, studied together, and prayed for each other. Little did I know that Connie would be my heaven-sent friend.

When I was in my early 50's, my mom became unable to live alone. We had help coming in twice a week to cook for her and help with her personal needs, but she needed full-time care. Neither she nor my husband and I had the funds to provide for full-time help. It just so happened that she had an episode that allowed her doctor to admit her to the hospital for the allotted time and then transfer her to a nursing home for rehab. During her rehab time, I worked to get her on Medicaid so she could remain in the nursing home.

Since she was still able to get around in her wheelchair, she flourished with around the clock care, activities to keep her occupied, and me to visit three times a week. As her time in the nursing home continued, Mom's degenerative brain disease took its toll. After about three years, she had a feeding tube inserted because she could no longer swallow food, and her mental status declined as well. She stopped talking much, sometimes didn't even acknowledge me, and began to hardly have any quality of life. I was heartsick and emotionally exhausted. Being an only child and having no one to help me had taken its toll on me. My husband checked on her if I was sick, but I didn't have anyone to share my feelings with who understood. That is when Connie stepped in.

At that time in my life, I was very inhibited about asking for help. Connie told me that she

A FRIEND LOVES AT ALL TIMES...

- PROVERBS 17:17A

was going to be at the nursing home to check on my mom two days a week. She had been through the same thing with her mother in a nursing home, and even though she wasn't an only child she was the main caregiver. She knew what it was like to be tired from work while keeping things going at home and making sure the parent was taken care of. "But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24b). Connie was a godsend.

She was the sister I never had. We talked about what was going on with my mom physically and mentally and how the nursing home was taking care of her. With Connie I knew that I wasn't alone.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). As Connie ministered to my mom, she was ministering to me as well. This special relationship among the three of us lasted for a little over a year. Connie and I still have a close relationship.

Friendships are deeply valuable to women in many ways. They offer emotional, psychological, and sometimes even physical support. Emotional support helps women cope with stress, life transitions, and even loss. "Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel" (Proverbs 27:9). Psychologically, friendships with other women provide a sense of connection and community. Female friendships help us feel seen, understood, and valued. They add to our overall happiness in life. "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Most important of all, friendships with other women can help bring us closer to God. For what can be more instrumental in showing His love than a friend who shows us her love?

BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR LOVE IS FROM GOD, AND WHOEVER LOVES HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD AND KNOWS GOD

- 1 JOHN 4:7

THE LIGHT BEHIND THE CLOUDS

Written by Holly Knutson

When I first read *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, I was struck by the gentle, loving spirit of Marmee, the girls' mother. She, although a fictional character, demonstrates a woman's God-given ability to nurture, counsel, and support other women and those in their care.

One of the most meaningful lines spoken by Marmee came up as she was providing counsel to one of her daughters: "Take heart, dear one. There is always light behind the clouds."

When I think about who has influenced my perspectives and nurtured me in my faith, I realize that many of my strongest encouragers and supporters have been women. My mom and other women in my family, my teachers, mentors in the church, and many of my dearest friends have provided comfort, wisdom, and prayer during the most uncertain times in my life. These women have also celebrated with me and have rejoiced during times when I have experienced joy.

Think about your own life. Who influenced the way in which you respond to a child's need for guidance? In a loved one's time of heartache and loss, where did your gentle support and compassionate nature



come from? How did you learn to be hospitable and to pay attention to details when caring for a group of people? How did you learn to listen well to others and provide a perspective to those around you who are desperate for wisdom?

In the beginning, God created man, and placed him in His perfect garden. Then He made woman, because as He said, "It is not good for man to be alone." God saw our need for the caregiver, the counselor, the planner, the nurturer, and the one who could offer emotional support and help to build and restore relationships. The creation of humankind was not complete without the woman, and when we read biblical accounts and look back on our own experiences, it is clear that God had a purpose in this plan.

I am thankful for the community God placed in my life, and for all the women who have poured into me and pointed out the "light behind the clouds" throughout my journey. In return, may we reflect His image and respond with gratitude, pray for and encourage one another, and continue to build each other up.

THEREFORE ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER AND BUILD EACH OTHER UP, JUST AS IN FACT YOU ARE DOING.
- THESSALONIANS 5:11

WHAT IS MY VERB? **Written by Cindy Riley**

What is MY verb? Patrick challenged us on February 2, 2025 to discern how we individually act in faith. My verb is to encourage. I recently began painting bookmarks with scripture on the back to share with those I sense need a bit of encouragement.

Am I apprehensive about my gift? You bet! I see flaws in each painting. The only part of any of my bookmarks that is flawless is the scripture. That's okay. I can be courageous. He is using my willingness to act in spite of fear, to share His love and His joy. So, what's your verb?





Now faith is the
Substance of things
hoped for, the evidence
of things not seen.
Hebrews 11:1

By faith ...
Abel offered
Enoch pleased
Noah built
Abraham obeyed & went
Sarah conceived
Isaac blessed
Jacob blessed
Joseph foretold
Moses led

What's MY verb?



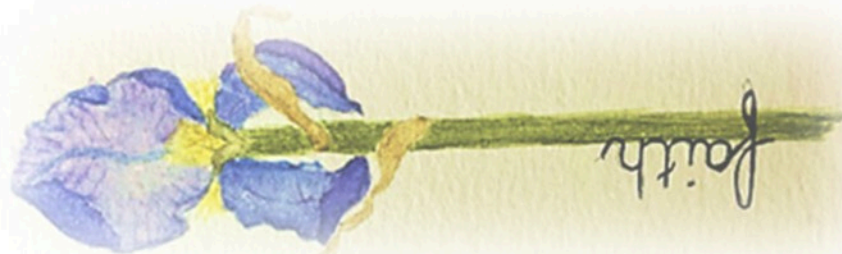
But the wisdom that
comes from heaven is
first of all pure; then
peace-loving,
considerate,
submissive, full of
mercy and good fruit,
impartial and sincere.

Peacemakers who
sow in peace reap a
harvest of
righteousness.

James 3:17-18

Now faith
is the
substance
of things
hoped for,
the evidence
of things
not seen.

Hebrews 11:1



Each bookmark is designed to print a 4x6 image that can be cut out, folded in half and glued to render a 2x6 bookmark. Or print as a 4x6 picture, then slip the print into a 5x7 photo frame card to create a greeting card.



*How can we help you? Being alone, or the feeling of being alone keeps us from doing things in life that bring us joy and keep us from loving others. Please let us know how we can pray for you, befriend you and help you in your faith walk. Be sure to visit the **Mornings With Marette** page for inspiring devotionals. Be a part of Sunday Worship along with the ministry of teaching each Monday and Wednesday morning with Patrick Mead. Our Safe Harbor is here to serve you. Let us know how we can help! — The Harbor Lights*

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WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE AN ALMANAC CONTRIBUTOR?

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