

Village Voice



July
2026



"Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."



—Psalm 139:16 (NIV)

All the Days Ordained For Me

by Carolyn Karlstrom



I was nine years old on the Fourth of July, 1961. And on that day I died.

My family lived in Emmett, Idaho. My sister, aged seven, and I spent part of a school year there, and then the summer. I almost didn't make it out of that community.

Emmett had a public swimming pool, and our parents agreed that we could spend the hot afternoon there while they visited with a friend at home. Our dad dropped us off. His last words to us were, "Stay in the shallow end. And, Carolyn, watch out for Susie." Oh, that I had obeyed.



It took me no time at all to tire of wading in the six or eight inches of water in the kiddie pool. I felt very much drawn to the deeper end where, as I saw it, "all the big kids were." I couldn't swim a stroke.

"Susie, stay here," I instructed, and off I went.

I was fine for awhile. I repeatedly pushed away from the edge, then dog paddled back. I'd borrowed a full-face mask from a neighbor kid and was wearing that. And then, out and away, I couldn't get back. I couldn't move and I still don't know why. I



was no more than four feet from safety. But there I was, treading water one second and sinking the next. I knew immediately that I was in serious trouble. I shouted for help but got no response at all from anyone. I just gulped more water each time I submerged.

I knew with certainty that I was going to die. Then everything went dark, and the rest I've had to be told by others.

A man named Louis Johns was there with three of his children. He suddenly became aware of a child floating face down near him, unmoving. But . . . there was a face mask. Maybe the child was just playing, watching the bottom of the pool.



It didn't look right, though, and I still didn't move. He flipped me over to find me unconscious and turning blue. He thrust me up over the side onto the cement and yelled for help.



It took some time for the ambulance to arrive, as there was no phone at the pool to call for one. Someone ran down the street until they found someone at home who had one. In the meantime, someone gave me some mouth-to-mouth rescue breaths and thumped on my back, alternately placing me on my stomach and then on my back. I was lying face down when my sister first appeared at the pool-side scene, she says, and tells me I was an impressive blue from head to foot. My parents have told me I had no heartbeat and was not breathing.

I woke up the next day in a Boise hospital, apparently little the worse for wear.

The Lord clearly worked several miracles for me that day. He positioned someone near me who was paying attention and could help. He had someone available who could provide some completely rudimentary, but apparently adequate, CPR. And there were no residual effects on me physically or mentally. He chose to add 23,714 days to my life from that day to the day of this writing, which translates to exactly 65 years. Those are days and years I'd not have had without His intervention.



I'm grateful for every single one of them.

God was and is watching over me, as He has been and is watching over you. Nothing escapes His notice. And He's entirely capable of taking care of and providing for us. Some of you have miracle stories similar to mine in their spectacularity. And all of you have experienced His intervention in your lives, recognized or not.

What a fantastic and wonderful Father He is! How He loves us. We are safe in His arms and can rest comfortably and without fear there. Let us do so.



Carolyn K.

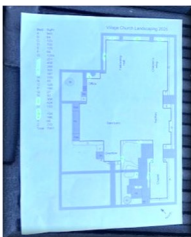


Village Church Work Bee



by Elizabeth Travis

Everyone has a hobby, and for some of us, it's gardening. We love picking out seeds and bulbs to plant, watching the little green shoots poke out of the ground and blossom into glorious flowers. We appreciate the elegant shrubs and flowering plants, the majestic trees and the shade they provide. But every gardener knows that these natural wonders don't come about by random chance. They require care and hard work if they are to flourish, and the gardens at Village SDA Church are no exception.



Bright and early Sunday morning, May 17, nearly twenty volunteers arrived at the Village Church grounds armed with buckets, wheelbarrows, shovels, and rakes, ready to tackle a seemingly monumental task; a giant pile of mulch in the church parking lot. The mulch had been graciously donated by Larry and Cindy Moore and needed to be spread



around the garden areas so that the church flowers could thrive. And so, with the leadership of Sheila Meharry and other volunteers, our little troupe of worker bees got started spreading mulch, ensuring that the church gardens were lush, gorgeous,

healthy, and ready for summer.

The two primary areas that received special care were the flowerbeds bordering the back entrances near the parking lot. Buckets and wheelbarrows were hauled up the stairs again and again to ensure the flower border near the chapel got all the care and attention it needed while great piles of mulch were carted around the other side of the church to spruce up the border by the back entrance.



This busy morning of spreading mulch and caring for the flower beds concluded Village Church's gardening program for the Spring, but the work is far from over. As Cassie Ragenovich hinted, there will be plenty of upcoming projects where eager volunteers can lend a hand. Come August, new grass will be planted, and there may be another landscaping endeavor planned for the Southwest corner this autumn, possibly involving the two

gorgeous sycamore trees that overlook the church.

As always, we at Village Church give our heartfelt thanks to all those who chose to spend a gorgeous Sunday morning volunteering at the church grounds. The flower



beds are blooming brighter than ever and we cannot wait to see what grows as the year comes along.

Thank you for your hard work, everyone! God bless.



Beth Travis



Thank you!

The Higher View

by John Kilmer

As a starry-eyed first time homeowner, I had fanciful plans to remodel my early 1900s house. How I yearned for that *expensive* new flooring! I pored over internet images and dreamed of just how I would lay squares of beautiful tile surrounded by hardwood, making for some stunning visual effects. I could think of little else.

One day after work, I dropped by Great Floors to price out some tiles. Tingling with anticipation, I hungrily scanned the numerous options for high-end flooring. Then reality hit. Yikes! The tiles I really liked were nearly \$20 per square foot! That meant I'd pay \$80 for a mere 4 tiles, not to mention the surrounding hardwood. I really liked Brazilian walnut, and it was (gulp) \$18 per square foot. Then there was the underlayment at over \$100 per short roll. My super-cool dining room floor was about to get *super* spendy!

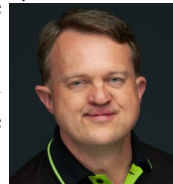


What happened next I fully attribute to the Lord. Suddenly, a strong image came into my mind. It was a clear-eyed and joyous African toddler, sitting on the dirt floor of a hut, and playing happily with some sticks. He looked up at me with the most radiant smile on his face. Instantly, the thought came to me: “You don’t need a fancy floor to make you happy.”

How grateful I am for the image of that little boy, as fresh in my mind now as though it happened yesterday. Remembering this gracious intervention by our loving Lord has saved me from many a foolish financial decision. Psalm 32:8 says, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”

Lord, thank You for not granting me my desire for fancy flooring. Forgive my materialistic mindset. Thank You for Your perfect counsel: a deep soul teaching that will last my whole life, coming to me in the most unexpected way!

John Kilmer



Adventures in Faith

by Ruthie MacKenzie

God often uses people to answer the prayers of others. This story begins probably around 1960 or 61. I was a senior at Walla Walla College Academy and our family attended the Stateline SDA church. It had an active Missionary Volunteer Department. Members were encouraged to bring their already-read church papers to church. On Sabbath afternoons these papers were packaged up to be mailed.

In the Worker or Review there were addresses of people in other countries who wanted church literature. These addresses would be written on the packages. The following Sabbath these packages were given to people to mail out.

One of these packages was sent to Southern Mindanao Mission in the Philippines. A woman by the name of Meriam asked if she could read one of the papers. On the back was an address that had been scratched out but was still somewhat readable. It belonged to my uncle, Robert Gilliland, who had lived on Old Milton Hwy, Walla Walla, Washington. When Meriam wrote to Robert (about 1992) he had just passed away, so the letter was given to my parents who passed it on to us. We started to correspond with Meriam and eventually visited the Philippines in 1999. That is another story of God's guidance.

In 1992, after we started corresponding with the family, we helped the kids through school, hired Papa Winnie as a Bible worker, and assigned Mama Meriam as our Mission Projects Inc. overseer on the island of Mindanao. From 1999 to the present, Meriam has overseen improvements to several mountain churches,

One of the churches before upgrades





The same church after upgrades

the building of several radio stations, a school, and two large churches as well as dormitories and classrooms. She has managed student aid, paid workers weekly, and distributed emergency aid to people in need.

**Mountain radio station
exterior view**



**Mountain radio station
interior view**



**A new dormitory for the Adventist College
of Technology**



Exterior and interior of a newly-constructed church

We consider Winnie and Meriam’s daughter, Gigie, to be one of our “Philippine daughters.” She completed her PhD a few years ago and has been promoted to the position of principal of a large public elementary school. Over the years we have sent Little Friends and Primary Treasures to her. She has used them in her English classes. She is a real missionary to these public school students and teachers.



Gigie, a student, and a teacher



Distributing Little Friends

Just last month, Monday, June 8, at 7:33 a.m., all 1,028 students and 31 teachers of her school were gathered in the open courtyard for the flag raising and the opening of the first day of the new school year. All of a sudden, the ground began to shake. It shook and shook and kept on shaking. The children were very frightened and were crying. Even some of the teachers could not hold back their tears. They were experiencing a 7.8 earthquake!

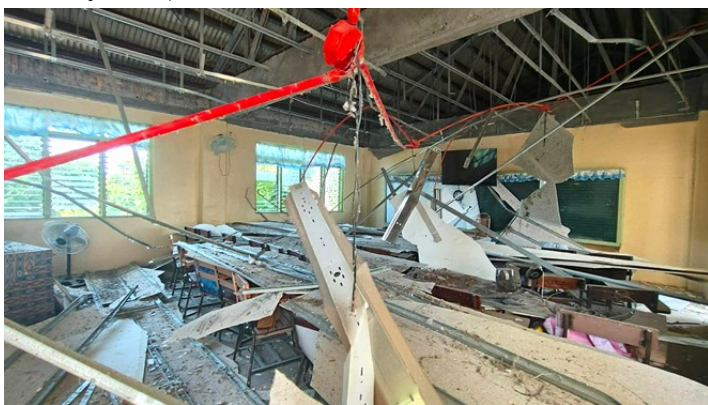
We received this message from Mama Meriam: “Ate (this word means auntie and is pronounced AH-teh) Ruth, our place is struck by earthquakes, very strong. It lasted more than minutes, not seconds. We have many aftershocks. Right now we shed tears

while the earthquake is still going on. I am just sitting on the porch. Our house is messy inside, all over the floor. It was scary and terrifying during the night with no electricity and the aftershocks continuing every two or three hours.

Tuesday while going to the city for Winnie's follow-up checkup, we passed the hospital where Winnie was admitted and we saw the patients and nurses outside the building. I am sad to see those sick people on their beds outside, using the temporary roof made of tarps."

Gigie wrote: "Thank You, Lord, for Your protection. I was emotional after the adrenaline rush! I was shedding tears discreetly, telling God, 'Thank You!' for all His providential care and leadings! I am already handling a large school now. I was reassigned last May 28. I am praying for my colleagues in other mega large schools in three- to four-story buildings.

The teachers and staff were all trying to be brave and calm. Soon the parents came to pick up their children. After all the students left, and just the teachers and staff remained, we all hugged each other. A few teachers were sobbing. I gave them encouragement and an uplifting short talk. I prayed with them before we parted ways. Praise God! (I could not hold my emotions anymore)."



This is one of the classrooms. There surely could have been loss of life in this room, but God delayed the opening of class long enough that no one was in this room when the earthquake hit.

The story continues to unfold as aftershocks rock the country and property damage is assessed, and our hearts go out to the people of the Philippines. It is encouraging to see the widespread impact for the gospel that came about from that piece of literature packed so many years ago by a young girl.

For more information you can email Ruthie. Call the church office to request her email address.



Ruthie M.



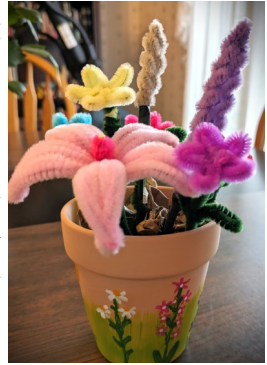
by Karen Ekkens

A soothing hour in a comfortable setting, working on crafts with friends? Sounds like fun! To fulfill the “lead a small group” requirement of their pastoral internship, Melody Fisher and Dana Colindres planned this experience. Tuesday evenings, April 14 through June 2, they opened the Youth Room at the Village Church, set up a table and chairs, and spread craft supplies on the table. While uplifting sacred music played softly in the background, they explained the evening’s project to whomever arrived to join them for the next hour.

Some nights there were only two additional participants. Other nights there were many more. Some worked on their own projects while others chose to use the supplies on the table for their creations. The projects varied from watercolor paintings to chenille



stem flowers, decorating clay pots, creating greeting cards, and much more. Paints featured in a number of the crafts, while thread and yarn were more often found in the hands of those who brought their own projects. Conversation was pleasant and often craft-focused. It was a time of creativity and camaraderie, where established friendships deepened and new ones formed.



*“The Author of all beauty,
Himself a lover of the beautiful,
God provided to gratify
in His children the love of beauty.*



*He made provision also
for their social needs,
for the kindly and helpful associations
that do so much to cultivate sympathy
and to brighten and sweeten life.”*



—Ellen G. White, Education, p. 41

Greek 101

by Patricia Williams

We entered the Youth Room every week on Wednesday mornings at 9 a.m. to the cheerful calls of “Χαίρε” and “Χαίρετε” (Hello! and Hello to you-all!). Then we settled in for an hour of our college-level Greek class. I’m calling it Greek 101.



Who are we? A wide assortment of Village Church members ranging in age from 10 to 70+ years and encompassing just as wide a range of educational background levels. Some of us hadn’t yet gained a knowledge of the grammar that was required in learning a new language, and some of us had forgotten what we once knew. The saying, “It’s Greek to me” came to my mind at various times through the course, which followed the typical September to June for classes, but we all passed our first college semester in Greek. Hooray!



The Village Church is unusually blessed to have, as our senior pastor, Dr. Stephen Reasor who holds advanced degrees in Greek. He has developed a Greek language learning system that is unique and very beneficial to the student. Not only is *repetition* a key to language learning, but the equally important key is *hearing* the language spoken. The former is well-known and used in every language class with every language. The latter is used in most language classes except, in most cases, Greek (and possibly Hebrew). Language is an auditory experience, and one in which a person begins their “study” in utero. Pastor Steve became more and more convinced of the need for Greek students to hear the language that they are learning. Thus began his passion to develop a tool that enhances the way the student learns Greek.

What resulted is an immersion experience. We students listen to him read the lessons while we look at illustrations of what he is describing.



And this is done in two ways: illustrated as a series of pictures almost comic-book style, and a video of those same frames that we watch as we listen. Yes, there is a textbook, homework pages for each lesson, a lexicon, charts, and graphs, as normally attends learning at this level. There is Bible verse memorization set to song, and we sing every week. There is opportunity in class for



us to practice what we have learned that week with one another. This is a real college-level class and we learned Greek. We are now ready to advance to the second semester next fall.

We also had fun while we learned. Our classroom experience included laughter and positive banter among the students and with Pastor Steve. We all learned to love the language, and we each plan to return next September for Greek 102. For those of you who are interested, Pastor Steve is hoping to start up another Greek 101 class in the evenings this fall for those whose schedules don't work with a morning class. I highly recommend it! It is a challenge to your brain, a key to understanding Scripture, an unsurpassed opportunity to take a college-level class, and a truly fun experience.

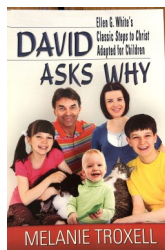
Pat Williams



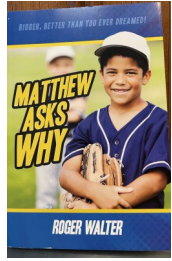
From the Library—by Marcel Grondahl

This month's selections are four new books for kids. The first one, written by Melanie Troxell, was printed in 2009, "David Asks Why." It is Ellen White's Classic "Steps To Christ" adapted for

children. The book is beautifully illustrated in full color and uses stories that are interesting and spiritual to highlight the lessons from Mrs. White's book. The author is a pastor's wife who spent years at home with her own children, so she writes from personal interaction with children. Well done!!

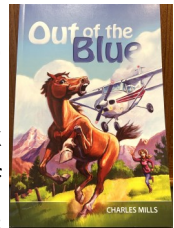


The next book, “Matthew Asks Why” published in 2024 and authored by Roger Walter, tells a story that is still unfolding. It follows the life of a boy whose inquisitive nature led him to challenge, explore, and ultimately embrace Christianity and the Sabbath, though it cost him his dream of playing professional baseball. It all began when Matthew, at age 12, and his family attended an evangelistic seminar that raised questions for Matthew. The book follows his journey from questions to answers—an intriguing journey indeed!



“Treasure On Spiglass Hill” by Paul Ricchiuti, published in 2015, is a mystery book about a spyglass and a hidden treasure of gold coins. It relates the seeking of the treasure to the Bible verse that says “The heavens declare the Glory of God.” Children will enjoy this book, but I have some questions. . .

“Out of the Blue” was written by Charles Mills and published in 2014. He has written more than 45 books and many articles. He focuses on creating fun adventures for young readers to enjoy. In this book he describes Shadow Creek Ranch, a place full of beautiful things like rivers and mountains, but it is also a place for young people to heal from their past. When a plane crash-lands at the ranch, it would change the lives of the young people in ways that only God could direct. A fun read.



Family Matters—by Bev Donahey

Parents as Wise and Loving Teachers

We all have experienced sickness at one time or another. Sometimes we know the cause of the illness. “I knew I shouldn’t eat that.” “I was cold and exhausted. Of course I got sick.” Other times we





don't know where we "caught the bug" or what caused our illness. Children can learn from a very early age that foods and activities affect our health. "Drink the orange juice. It has vitamin C so you won't catch a cold." "Only one piece of candy. I don't want you to get sick." "Eat the beans so you can grow big and strong like Daddy." "Here are potatoes so you will have lots of energy." "The salad has vitamins to keep you feeling good." We want to make meals attractive and mealtime a happy time. Do you realize that some people actually don't know that there is a relationship between their diet and disposition and health?



People need to know other aspects of health such as the importance of drinking water, getting sufficient exercise, fresh air, and adequate sleep. "Of course you feel like crying, you're tired."



The children say they aren't tired! Don't argue. They don't know that's what's wrong. "We're going to go to bed early tonight so we'll feel good tomorrow."

"I'm tired tonight. I need to go to bed early." And make bedtime pleasant. Be kind. Say "I love you." Lie down beside them or sit beside them and rub their backs or feet. When they ask for a drink, get it. It might be their way of prolonging contact with you. They want you. That's good! It's okay.

Parents can learn and teach other aspects of health by doing them and talking about them. All subjects can be taught gently. Then you end up with healthy, confident, and knowledgeable kids!



Bev Donahey has degrees in psychology and Applied Behavioral Science and shares tips she picks up from her experiences, friends and research.

The Village Pantry—hosted by Pattie Reasor



Everyone deserves a special drink, especially on our hot days here in the Walla Walla Valley. This one will leave you wanting more when the jug is empty!

Egyptian Lemonade

Ingredients:

- 2 lemon rinds, zested
- Juice of 3 lemons
- 1 can of coconut milk or coconut water for a low fat version
- 24 ice cubes
- 1/4 cup sweetener (or to taste), either white sugar or honey
- 6-10 mint leaves



Instructions:

In a high-powered blender, combine the ingredients and blend until smooth and well combined. Serve immediately for the best taste and texture.

If you grow mint in your garden you know that you only have to plant it once and that you will have it forever. I have tried to corral what was a large patch in my garden so that I only have a little bit growing, but I'm constantly looking for ways to use it up because it is so prolific.

Fresh mint can provide a potent dose of vitamins and antioxidants and it is known to be soothing on an upset stomach.



Pattie Reasor

Dear Village Voice readers,

Have you noticed how various people bring out certain facets of others? Perhaps there's a quirky sense of humor shared with your offspring, or a particular family member or colleague with whom you delight to discuss a specific topic. What one brings out in another, no one else can do in exactly the same way.

Similarly, our uniqueness matters to God. "Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality" *The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

And there's a glorious purpose tucked away within this. The quote continues, "These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls."

Expressing our praise delights the King of the universe, uplifts our own hearts, and blesses others. It's a win, win, win!

God bless you!

Karen Ekkens, editor



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