

Village Voice

September
2026



"Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers,
'Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be
saved.' " Acts 27:31 (NIV)

16-8

by Carolyn Karlstrom



It ain't over 'til it's over, as they say. And if that ain't the truth! A couple of weeks ago our church's Social Committee made 40 tickets available, for free, to members who wished to attend a Walla Walla Sweets baseball game. Rick and I were happy to snap up two of them, and off we went.

The Sweets scored one run in the first inning and another in the second. They stretched the lead to three in the fourth, the Yakima Valley Pippins having not gotten anyone across the plate. Yet. We Walla Walla fans were quite pleased with how things were shaping up. However, our opponents came alive in the fifth and sixth innings, scoring a total of eight runs during that stretch, leaving Walla Walla down 8-3. The seventh inning was a quiet one, with no one scoring, and that's when the two of us conceded the game and decided to leave. So did a bunch of others.

In the book of Acts, the 37th chapter describes a spectacular sea storm, in which Paul, a prisoner, was being taken by ship to Rome. When it became apparent that the ship was in grave danger of being dashed to splinters against the unforgiving rocky outcrops of an island, and everyone aboard lost, the sailors attempted to abandon the ship and take their chances against the raging waters and the rocks. They began to lower a small boat toward the waves. That's when Paul gave his warning: " 'Unless these



men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved,” he informed the soldiers aboard (verse 31). “This is not the time,” he was saying, “for anyone to give up, let go, try to go it alone. Everyone should stay on the ship. This is where the group’s safety lies. It’s not over yet, even though it may look like it.” The soldiers cut the rope to the escape boat.



The morning after the game, I took myself to the Sweets’ website to check out the final score, just for fun, not expecting anything but a loss confirmed for our team. Instead, my astounded gaze fell upon this headline: “Sweets Storm Back With 13-Run Eighth to Claim Series.” I read the article that accompanied this proclamation in stunned disbelief. There’d been a bunch of singles, several doubles, some walks, a few passed balls. The end result was 13 runs scored in one inning, the eighth, with a win of 16-8, Walla Walla. And we missed it. We should have stayed aboard the ship!



Friends, we’re living in dangerous, scary, confusing, and tumultuous times. This is not the time to give up hope, to concede the fight, to jump ship. We must press close and tight, encourage one another, let Jesus hold us all, singly and together. The end is in sight. It need not end in disaster and loss, but, if we remain put, in glorious gain and ultimate safety.



Remember: It ain’t over ‘til it’s over. And it ain’t over yet. But it appears it might soon be. Let’s stay where we’re safest. Let’s stay on the ship. Together.
16-8.

Carolyn K.



“Then they were glad that the waters were quiet,
and he brought them to their desired haven.”

—Psalm 107:30 ESV

Editor's note—this inspiring account took place in July when the Lower Dry Creek fire was actively burning. It was written by the mother of Village Church member Jason James.

Wildfire Miracle

by Shirley James

I want to share some facts that I have learned since the wildfire that swept through much of our Valley last Wednesday. Weston was evacuated. Some of our city workers stayed by to make sure the water tanks remained full.

My husband and I were blocked out before the evacuation because Highway 11 was closed. But there was a young man who is very dear to us who had chosen to stay in. He made constant rounds to vantage points to ensure that the fire remained at a safe distance from his home and family in case the need to evacuate arose. He also kept an eye on our pets. He was giving us updates every hour or so. In his last update he told us this story.



Another young man was with him as he made the rounds. When they were at the road along the cemetery, on the northeastern boundary of Weston, they saw the fire cresting the last hill before the wheat field that borders Weston. He said the flames were at least 15 feet high, the sound was deafening, and it was close to his home. The other young man became extremely panicked and, though he wasn't particularly a believer, he knew where to turn in his fear and helplessness. Our young man said he was videoing while the other young man was praying earnestly. Just as he finished, a sudden single blast of wind arrived. It was so strong that they had to stagger to stay standing. When they looked up again, the flames had disappeared and there was only smoke in their place. Later I was shown photos as proof. My husband and I were in awe, praising God with tears of joy! But that wasn't the end of the story.



The next day, we were back home and one of the two city workers who had been manning the water systems walked across to our house and passionately told his story. He said he and another worker were up on Janie Lane which is somewhat the southeastern border of Weston. They stood watching as the flames were coming up over the last hill before the wheat field that would reach Weston. He said he looked at the other worker whose home was on Janie Lane and said, “Well, are you ready?”

At that very moment, there was a blast of wind that hit so hard that he had to grab the mirror bracket on the truck to keep from being swept off his feet. He said they looked at each other and said, “WHAT WAS THAT?!!!!” Right then, the flames went down and turned in the opposite direction.

At that point, we told him the story I just told above. His eyes got big and he said, “God definitely saved the town of Weston last night.” Later, I saw the other city worker who was with him and he related the same story. But there’s more.

Later my husband ran into a man who means muchly to us and has a beautiful farmstead just



north of Weston. When my husband told him the above story, he said with emotion that he had experienced that same gust of wind, and he knew God had saved his homestead.

Then one more affirmation I heard came secondhand from someone who talked to a person who had been on the fire line.



They told him that several of the firefighters said they had never seen anything like that blast of wind in all their years of fire-fighting.

So, I choose to believe that those of us who live in Weston are abiding on sacred ground. Many of us were praying, and God chose to show His might and power and care for all of us in that blast of wind that came when that young man put his whole trust in our God who cares about the well-being of each of us, our pets, and our homes.



I pray that we will show Him our gratitude by turning our hearts to Him with renewed determination to give our lives and hearts more fully to Him so He can use us to serve Him for the good of others that don't know Him. It is my belief that His coming is not far away. And, God, I thank You with all my heart for what You have done.

"No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. 'He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.'"

Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son."

—Steps to Christ, p. 100



Village Church Block Party 2026



Church members and visitors relaxing in the shade of pop-up canopies

Despite somewhat smoky skies, approximately 250 people attended the Village Church Block Party Sunday afternoon, July 26.



Painting a child's face



Children at the face-painting booth

About twenty Village Church volunteers assisted, along with



many from other valley organizations including KLRF, SonBridge, Gospel Outreach, and the College Place Police and Fire departments.



Forming a balloon poodle



The Pathfinders sold burgers and fixings



The water slide was a major draw for kids who wanted to be wet! It got set up a bit late, so the Fire Department helped us quickly fill the pool.



Bounce house



Many thanks to all our volunteers, and a special thank you to the Pathfinders and the Center Thrift for their participation and help!



Eliza in the driver's seat!

Dandelion—"Not Our Favorite Flower"

by Joy Turner

written in 2022, following the start of the war in Ukraine, but
the subject matter remains relevant today

I read a short sentence today about the dandelion: "Not our favorite flower, but it really is beautiful." It was accompanied by a picture of single plant that had pushed it's way up out of the soil near a concrete sidewalk, it had one very yellow flower. Opposite the sidewalk was a mix of clover and grass.



Immediately, I thought of other instances in which I've seen dandelions and I started into philosophical pondering. One dandelion can be a thing of beauty if one takes the time to actually look at it. However, dandelions in this day and age are mostly relegated to the category of pest, and not many will take the time to identify beauty in them. We find dandelions everywhere most people don't want them to show up. They will be in a yard where there is supposed to be just well-manicured grass. They will be in a vegetable garden where there is supposed to be just well-cultivated dirt. They will be in driveways of rock where no growing things are to be harbored at all. And they will even show up in the middle of concrete, asphalt, and other supposedly impenetrable substances. Wherever there is a crack and a wee bit of dirt, a dandelion will find a way to make a home.

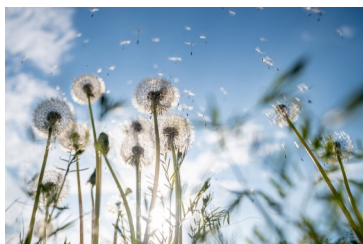


With this kind of tenacity, if it were a human or an animal, it would be admired. Why isn't the dandelion admired? Maybe because it 'colors outside the lines'? Maybe because it tells a tale about the human's lack of attention to detail about their garden,

yard, or driveway? Maybe because it can make a human feel guilty by its ability to bring a bright spot to a soul who never sees the sunshine any other way?

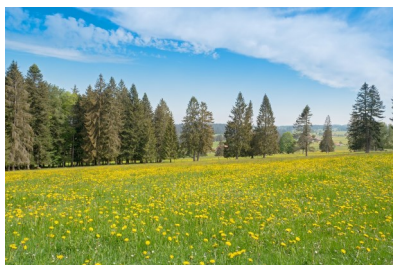


Here's what I see in my mind when I see a dandelion. I see a huge field where the rays of light from the morning sun are touching the golden worshipful dandelion heads! A complete meadow of dandelions in full bloom is a thing to see and remember! The golden field soon turns into beautifully-shaped delicate, white orbs and becomes a banquet to huge flocks of seed-eating finches. The goldfinches, house finches, and pine siskins arrive at just the right time for a feast.



I see a small yellow-haired boy proudly handing me a bouquet of yellow posies. Dandelions don't stay pert and beautiful long, but when they are offered from a tiny hand, they are lovingly put into a little vase of water gracing my kitchen until the pollen ring on the counter is all that's left.

One more thought about the dandelion lingers in my mind. There is so much heartache in this world, most recently Ukraine. There's not a day goes by without my heart breaking. If the



camera had been lifted towards the sky, in that picture described at the start, one might have seen blue sky—blue over yellow—Ukraine's flag. I am going to let the dandelion remind me of the beauty and tenacity of Ukraine's people. Every

evening we see on the news people who love, who care, and who will fight for the right to put down their roots and keep them growing even under the harshest of treatment and growing conditions. We see a people who are determined to return to their

country and rebuild. If you've ever tried to pull a dandelion from the ground, unless you have a proper tool, you will have left a portion of its root there, and it will grow again into a beautiful yellow sunflower!

What view will you take of a dandelion when you see one next? Will it be as a pest, or as a plant of beauty, creativity, resilience, and tenacity providing sustenance to birds, bees, animals, and humans? Will the dandelion become a symbol of sunshine and good will to your soul? Will the dandelion become a catalyst of good will, spurring your heart to bring help and hope to others?



Joy Turner



Introducing Joy—I am a new member here at Village Church but I am not new to the Valley. I obtained my BSN, RN at Walla Walla College in 1977, retired now from a perinatal career. Together with my husband, Ron, we are parents to Alexander and enjoy



being grandparents to his two children. My happy place is reading, writing, knitting/crocheting, learning new arts, and observing and admiring God's handiwork in the world around me as we travel about—just maybe we're not done traveling yet in our Airstream, and maybe I'll write about more "unwanted beauty" I see.

Family Matters—by Bev Donahey

Family Meetings

Successful organizations evaluate their operating style occasionally. All supervisors and employees are requested to give feedback, expressing their opinions on their experience with the group, their appreciation, suggestions, and requests. The people involved need to be honest and open-minded. Being defensive or



harsh ruins the meeting. Valuing each comment, considering it thoughtfully, and valuing the member that gave it helps the members to be open. Giving recognition of the accomplishments and efforts of each member strengthens the loyalty of the members to the organization and improves productivity.

It's the same with families! Before children arrive, it's a committee of two! Sit and list what you like and what you wish



were different. Make plans for the future, long term and especially short term. What do you want to do in the next week and the next month to improve your life together? In families with children, there need to be two meetings regularly: one by just the parents, and the other with the parents and children together. Before the children are able to thoughtfully participate,

the parents can express their own thoughts, then try to express the thoughts of the little ones as they think they might be. Write it all down. Review the comments from the previous meeting, and recognize the results from them. List specific things to do to improve family life for each person, then in the next two weeks, do them and talk about it, giving and seeking feedback. Make sure that more appreciation and recognition for good things are mentioned than requests for changes!



Begin and end each meeting with prayer. Express gratitude for God's love and guidance and for each family member by name, then ask God's Spirit to fill the heart of each family member. If there is an extra person in the family besides parents and children, like a grandparent or other person, sometimes include them in the meeting, and sometimes have the meeting with only the parents and children. God bless you and your family!



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

When the school year begins and lunchboxes make their daily return, it's always nice to have a homemade treat on hand. These vegan brownies are rich, fudgy, and wonderfully gooey, yet they come together in just ten minutes. They may not be a health food—and they're not meant to be. Some recipes exist simply to bring a little joy, and these brownies do exactly that.



Chocolate Brownies

Ingredients:

- 4 Tbsp. ground flaxseed
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup melted Earth Balance, or your favorite vegan butter
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup vegan chocolate chips
- 1 tsp. oil



Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Lightly grease a 9 x 9-inch baking pan.

In a small bowl, stir together the ground flaxseed and water. Let the mixture stand for several minutes until it thickens into flax eggs.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the melted vegan butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar until smooth. Add the flax mixture and vanilla extract, whisking until everything is well combined.

Add the flour, cocoa powder, salt, and baking powder. Stir just until no dry streaks remain, being careful not to overmix.

Spread the batter evenly into the prepared pan and bake for 35–40 minutes, or until the brownies are set and a toothpick inserted near the center comes out with a few moist crumbs.

Allow the brownies to cool in the pan for 15–30 minutes before slicing.

Optional Chocolate Topping

For an extra-indulgent finish, melt the chocolate chips in a microwave-safe bowl for about 1 minute, stirring until smooth. Mix in the oil to create a silky, spreadable glaze, then pour over the warm brownies and spread evenly. Let the chocolate set before cutting into squares.



These brownies are delicious on their own, but the chocolate topping makes them feel just a little more special.

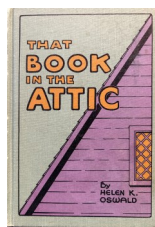
When my children were young, I loved tucking homemade treats into their lunchboxes. Years later, when they were away at boarding school, those homemade cookies and brownies became even more treasured than anything that came from a store. There's something about a homemade treat that reminds us we're loved, no matter how far from home we are.



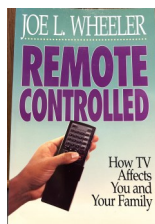


From the Library—by Marcel Grondahl

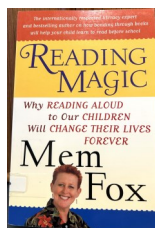
Book #1 is familiar to me as I have sold several copies of this very book on eBay for SonBridge and the Center. “That Book in the Attic” by Helen Oswald was originally published in 1939. It is the true story of a girl who passed through the fires of affliction and persecution that she might obey God and His word. Helen had 13 brothers and sisters in a family that grew up on the prairies of South Dakota. A visiting evangelist held meetings under a tent in the town, and Helen discovered Bible truths that changed her entire life. She suffered greatly from ridicule about her new-found faith. What has this to do with that book in the attic? Read it to find out!



Book #2 documents the dangers of TV. It was published in 1993 by Joe Wheeler who is best known for his book series of traditional Christmas stories. Now, 33 years later, what he wrote about the effects of TV on the family have only gotten worse as the standards have dropped year by year. He documents his findings regarding violence, sexuality, and the occult with factual data showing what these programs do to traditional family values.

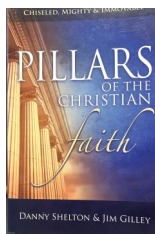


Book #3 is for parents with children, “Reading Magic” written by an expert in the field of reading, Mem Fox (yes that is her name!), who lives in Australia. The main takeaway from this book is simple: Reading aloud to our children will change their lives forever. She makes a big claim as to what this simple technique could do if carried out. Her claim is that if every adult caring for a child would read aloud a minimum of three stories a day to the



children in their lives, we could probably wipe out illiteracy within one generation!

Book #4 is co-authored by Danny Shelton and Jim Gilley, published in 2010. The title of their book is: "Pillars of the Christian Faith." It describes the foundational principles that undergird our church. These are God's unchangeable truths and they are chiseled, mighty, and immovable. These two founders of 3ABN defend the traditional doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist church with vigor and clarity.



Waiilatpu Pathfinder Bus

by Michael Jeffery

The College Place Village Church Pathfinders, known as the Waiilatpu Pathfinder Club, have a long-standing history of owning a bus for club transportation. Prior to purchasing the 1986 MCI coach in 2007, they had been operating a Blue Bird school bus. The Blue Bird school bus is what I remember using when I joined the Waiilatpu Pathfinders as a teen in 1995.

In the fall of 2025, the Village Church Finance Committee approved the action to actively search for and purchase a newer bus. Brent Tungesvik, UCC Transportation & Safety Officer, volunteered to assist us. He began looking far and near to find just the right bus. We had certain criteria—like it needed to be newer than 1986 to aid in finding shops willing to work on it. The new bus also must be MCI make and have a Detroit series 60 engine and Allison transmission.



Brent called me in December of 2025 and informed me he had found the bus for us. He then flew out to inspect the bus and finalize payment. The bus was driven to Tennessee, then to California where it was repainted. After getting painted, it was

brought to Spangle, Washington. Here it sat from April through August while some preventative maintenance was done, including replacing the radiator mounting brackets which we had to have fabricated in Spokane.

The Pathfinders did get an opportunity to see the bus when we attended the UCC Pathfinder Fair in May. It was dirty and there were parts on the ground just waiting to be put back after the brackets were installed. But there was still much excitement.

Tuesday, August 11, however, was an even more exciting day as Brent called to inform me that the bus would be coming to College Place the following day. I could hardly sleep that night as I thought about what this would mean for our club and our church. Wednesday evening, August 12, the bus was delivered to the College Place Village Church where we parked it to be shown to the congregation on Sabbath.

I had been dreaming about not only the day when we'd get to



show off the bus to those who had faithfully donated to help us buy the bus, but I also dreamt of the first trip we would be able to take with these Pathfinders on the bus. So, since we

had waited so long for the bus, we decided to immediately do a short trip with the Pathfinders. On Sunday, August 16, we loaded the bus with any Pathfinders and staff who showed up. Then Don Veverka, our parent driver, drove the bus from the Youth Center out to Baskin Robins in the Eastgate area.

The kids (and adults) were all so excited to be loading into our bright, shining new bus. It was beyond amazing. The kids were all over the bus—checking out the overhead



storage bays, the arm rests, the bathroom, etc. “Wow!” was the word of the day for sure.

As we sat and ate our ice cream, the Pathfinders talked excitedly about the new year starting up in just a few weeks. Of course, as we had pulled into Baskin Robins the staff were surprised to see so many at once and asked what the occasion was.

Our club is overwhelmingly blessed. We are blessed to have such a loving Creator who cares about even



the small things with us, who came to this earth to die for us so we might be with Him one day. We are blessed to have such a caring and very giving church body who has helped us

raise money to pay for this bus. We are blessed to have our pastoral team who go above and beyond, even sacrificing personal time sometimes to spend a few minutes with our youth each week. And we are blessed to have so many individuals who are willing to donate their time to



work with these Pathfinders each week, all year long.

As we start our new Pathfinder year, with our new bus, I would like to make a request of you. Would you please keep the Pathfinders and staff in your prayers throughout



the year? Pray for safety as we go on outings with them. Pray for mentoring opportunities between the staff and Pathfinders. Pray that Christ will find his way deeper into the hearts of not only the Pathfinders but the staff as well.

Michael and Tonia



Thank you for supporting our club through the years. Please watch the bulletin board for further fundraising updates and opportunities, not to mention photos of the Pathfinders going places in the new bus!

God Bless, Michael Jeffery



All are invited to attend the Prayer Summit

To be held at Camp Mivoden
October 2-4, 2026

Speakers will be Jerry and Zac Page (father & son)

Registration cost is \$175

(registration ends September 27)

The conference does offer some scholarships.

Website <https://www.uccsda.org/prayersummit26>

Dear Village Voice readers,

I recently listened to the chapter in Patriarchs and Prophets about the death of Moses. It describes the vision God gave Moses prior to his death, showing him many things to come including the future of Israel in the promised land, their sin and captivity, the birth of Jesus, the Jews' rejection of Christ, the long, dark ages following the destruction of Jerusalem, the second coming of Christ, the end of sin, and the recreation of the earth.

I have often wondered, since God planned to resurrect Moses and allow him to watch the whole story unfold in real time, why did He reveal the future to him beforehand?

Perhaps because Moses was so burdened for the honor of God and so aware of the frailty of Israel, God was reassuring His friend He sees the big picture, His glorious purpose is continuously moving forward. He wanted Moses to know the work, the sacrifice, and the triumph are all His. He wanted

Moses (and us) to rest in the glorious assurance of salvation in Christ.

God bless you!

Karen Ekkens, editor



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