

musings

of Millbrook Baptist Church



FALL 2024

ISSUE No. 02

**SEASONS OF CARING
FOR ONE ANOTHER**

**STEWARDS OF
MILLBROOK**

**EXPRESSIONS
AND GIFTS**

musings

noun [plural]

UK /mjuː.zɪŋz/ US /mjuː.zɪŋz/

your thoughts or comments on something you have been thinking about carefully and for a long time:

Last Spring, while debuting Musings, we wrote:

This is a Millbrook story (sort of). It's not so much what we've been doing at Millbrook Baptist Church, but more of what we're thinking, who's among us, and what's happening in the world around us. You can read Musings today, or tomorrow, or even in a hundred years. You'll catch a glimpse of God's people, living in God's world, thinking about God stuff.

Six months later, much of this is still true. Though context is helpful. As we enter another autumn, we wade through an election season, the aftermath of Hurricanes Helene and Milton and their devastating effects on neighbors in Western North Carolina and other parts of the Southeast, and rising tensions in the Middle East. Just like the earliest Jesus-followers, and the psalmists, and the prophets of old, we're seeking to make sense of a volatile world. We're wondering what it means to be faithful in uncertain times. We're being intentional in identifying the divine presence in every facet of our lives.

But here's the other thing. Formal worship, the church gathered at a specific hour, offers one avenue to consider such questions. But it's just one hour, once a week. And for many of us, we may need more time, more space, more freedom to pursue God's presence.

We hope that *Musings* will meet you in those in-between spaces. At morning coffee. In your lounging chair. In pants with an elastic waistband. In the spaces where you are you. And we hope that *Musings* will be an invitation into the rich tapestry of Millbrook. And we hope that *Musings* will reveal a little something of the goodness of God in the land of the living.

Happy Reading!

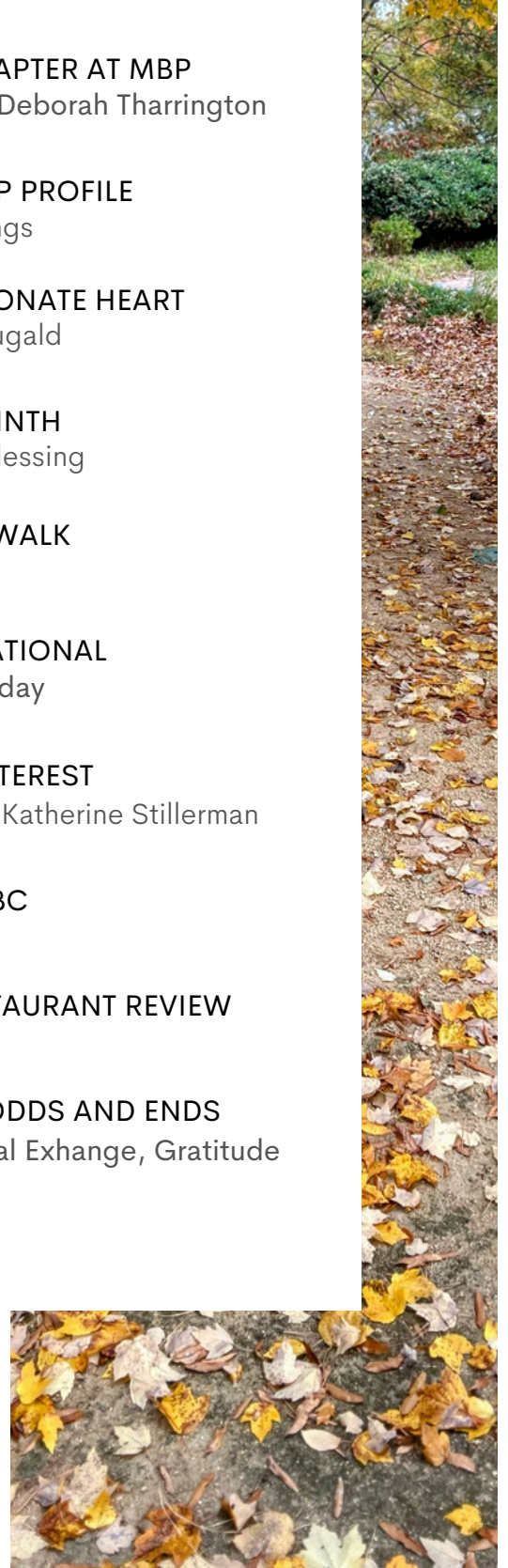


RESIDENT MUSES

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MILLBROOK BAPTIST PRESCHOOL: THE NEXT CHAPTER WITH DEBORAH THARRINGTON

Jessica McDougald

When I was called to Millbrook back in 2019, one of the first people I worked closely with was Deborah Tharrington. She and Rod have been helping and supporting the congregation for a long time - they have chaperoned and planned youth outings, served on committees, done behind-the-scenes work, led youth Sunday School - and all of this has been just since I've been here! Deborah's love for Millbrook is obvious. "My favorite thing about our church is the community it has been for my family over these many years."

Deborah has been working at the preschool since 2005, and has taught two of my three girls. Margot was so obsessed with her that we had to put the class picture on the fridge so she could point out "Bebba" every time she walked by. I loved Deborah as a teacher because I knew my girls were safe with her, so when I heard that she'd accepted the position of preschool director I was delighted. The Personnel Committee made a fantastic choice.

Deborah first came to Millbrook in 1997, after moving to Raleigh. Family friends suggested that she give MBC a try, and she connected well with a young adult group that met at the time.



Several years later, with young kids of her own, she and a friend presented the idea for the toddler class at the preschool.

The director at the time suggested that Deborah take some early childhood classes so that she could teach the class herself. Having graduated from Baylor University with an Interior Design degree, and with her Early Childhood certificate under her belt, Deborah helped set up the toddler classroom and became its first teacher.

I asked Deborah what her favorite thing is about the preschool is and it's clear that the toddler class she worked to start was a calling for her. "I love all the snuggles from the toddlers," she said, "they love to give hugs or to be held to read books." She went on: "I love all the kids and the fun things they observe and say every day. They develop so much during these preschool years and it is fascinating to watch and help them as they learn."

In her free time, Deborah likes to read. "My local librarians know me well," she says. She also likes to travel with her family, to bake cakes, and to quilt – something that she put aside when her kids were small, but would like to make more time for now. She also says that some day she'd be interested in taking lessons to pick up the violin again. This musical side of Deborah comes as no surprise to Millbrookers – she's sung in the choir, played handbells, and currently leads the preschoolers in music class on Tuesdays.

We may only be a few months into this school year, but Deborah has already introduced the preschool to some new and exciting things. She's reimagined the preschool drop-off procedure, opening up a carpool line. She's lined up "specials" every day for each class. On Mondays, the kiddos do art, on Tuesdays she leads music, on Wednesdays the kids have yoga, Chapel is on Thursdays, and on Fridays a Millbrooker comes to read to each class. She also opened an early toddler class this year – a class for 9–12 month olds and a tremendous help for parents of littles.

"I really hope to grow the preschool by adding some more classes to increase enrollment each year. I also think it would be beneficial to add some after school activities for students; a half-day child care setting doesn't always meet the needs of families." This desire to provide for the families of our preschoolers is something near to Deborah's heart and truly is a Ministry to our surrounding communities.

Deborah has a vision of growth for our preschool that I think is very prophetic. "I would love to do a building renovation to make our space more usable and adaptable to our various needs; not just for the preschool, but also for the church." What an exciting idea for the future and legacy of Millbrook!

When I asked Deborah how we, as a church, could be praying for her, specifically, in her new position at the preschool, she simply deflected – asking instead for prayers for the families who trust the most important and precious parts of their lives to us, and for prayers for the preschool staff, new and seasoned, who need encouragement and support.

I propose that we also be in prayer for Deborah. Lets pray that she will continue to feel energized and encouraged in her new role as director, and that she will feel God leading her as she ministers to our preschoolers and their families. And, when you see Deborah around, make sure you tell her what a fantastic job she's doing and how blessed we are to call her part of our church family.

STEWARDSHIP PROFILE: HEATHER JENNINGS

Jessica McDougald

For the past few weeks at Millbrook we've been talking a lot about stewardship. To me, stewardship means way more than just financial giving - it's actively taking care of something to which we've been entrusted. We can (and should!) be good stewards of lots of things: our families, our jobs, our resources, and our earth. This does take money, sure, but more than money it takes action.

When I seek to put a face on stewardship, there's one that stands out in my mind immediately: Heather Jennings.

I remember, during COVID, her coming to my house and sitting on a blanket in the yard with Camille - the presence of God to my daughter during a scary and uncertain time. I remember her recovering from donating a kidney to a friend, and still signing onto Zoom for committee meetings. I remember the countless times I've said out loud "Heather, are you sure you can add this responsibility on top of all the other ways you serve?" And I remember all of her confident yeses.

With all of this in mind, I sent Heather some interview questions about what stewardship means to her. I was hoping to get a glimpse into the part of her that compels her to serve.

How long have you been at MBC?

I started at Millbrook in 2015 when Charley was just 2 years old. I loved it then and love it even more now.

What is your favorite MBC ministry?

Hands down, the Children's Ministry.

What all do you do at Millbrook?

I tend to wear a lot of hats, I love to keep busy. I serve as Deacon, on the Preschool Committee, Finance Committee, Sunday School Director, help with Wednesday Night meals, Education Committee and I think that may be it for 2024-2025.

(Jessica's note: that's not all. Heather also serves alongside Janny Mealar every week as the elementary-age Sunday School teacher, and serves in Children's Church most Sundays. She works behind the scenes to write the check request papers for our nursery workers each week. A few Sundays ago, I saw her come into church with a handful of origami frogs that she'd spent free time making for the kids in Sunday School just because she knew they'd think they were cool. The MBC kiddos love Ms. Heather.)

What motivates you to stay so involved at MBC?

Millbrook feels like home. The children are really a hook for me, I love teaching. I adore Charley having the opportunity to grow up in a close knit church, that was a vital part of my childhood. So many good memories of church for me, and I am sure she will have the same.

What do you think it means to be a good steward of something?

Being a good steward is taking care of, or responsibility for, something or someone that does not belong to me. I prefer to look at it more broadly: you just simply do good in the world, and you get back what you put in.

Teaching Children's Sunday School and Children's Church is so rewarding - I love all of those kids as my own and they love me right back. The children at Millbrook make me proud weekly; they share so many stories of love and God's work - not just on Sunday, but of how they carried the Bible lessons with them through the week.

Stewardship is a way of life for me. My job is to be a Steward for the State of North Carolina, to protect your drinking water, to improve healthy fisheries and coastal estuaries, to ensure future generations can enjoy God's beautiful scenery for generations to come! Outside of church and work, I stand up for change in my community. I am trying to make a difference. Everyone deserves an equal shot at life, an equal opportunity, equal access to health care, equal pay... I could go on and on, but you get the point.

Millbrook runs because of the amazing volunteers we have that see stewardship as an active expression of their love for God, their neighbor, and the world. Thank you, Heather, for all the ways you serve. You are invaluable to me, to our children, and to our church!

If you'd like to get involved in our children's ministry by volunteering in children's church or to teach youth or preschoolers on Sundays, let us know - we can use you!



A COMPASSIONATE HEART

Jessica McDougald

In 2016, Matt, 10-month-old Camille, and myself were living in a run down, roach infested apartment. Matt was working a swing shift, and I was working part-time days while finishing my bachelor's degree in Christian Studies at Campbell. Despite the fact that we were a young family stretched thin, when I found out I was pregnant again, we were thrilled and I began counting down the days to my ultrasound.

When the day came, several weeks later, I pushed Camille in the stroller and got ready to see my new baby squirming around on the screen. But when the ultrasound technician and the doctor came in and got started, everyone was weirdly quiet. "What's going on?" I asked. "Probably nothing," the doctor responded. And he promptly sent me over to Wake Med to have a specialist look. I called my Mom on the way, just to let her know where we were going - and I told her that everything was probably fine. "I'll meet you there," she said in the voice she uses when she's trying not to sound worried.

Things weren't fine. Mom held my hand as the specialist told me that the baby had a spinal column defect, something called anencephaly.

The baby's skull hadn't formed, and it wouldn't. The doctors told us that the baby would survive pregnancy and maybe even birth, but likely wouldn't live for more than an hour. I could carry to term, or I could terminate. On the way home from the appointment, I called Matt at work to tell him what was happening. "I'm leaving work right now," he said.

"We're carrying to term," I declared when he walked in the door. As a minister in training, I didn't know how I would ever be able to stand before a congregation and encourage them to trust God to see them through hard situations when I had been unwilling to do so myself.

But no one shared this view. My Mom worried about me carrying, delivering, and then watching what followed. Matt worried about the ethics of delivering a baby whose brief taste of life might be traumatic and painful.

I can't tell you how many hours I agonized over this. I emailed doctors for second opinions. I sat in the shower and begged God to take this choice away from me. I lashed out in anger. When my professors asked why I hadn't turned in my assignment on prayer, I told them it was because I was currently unable to speak to God without cussing.

Matt said we needed to call Andy, my former youth minister and the closest thing to a spiritual mentor I had. Andy, who had moved right outside of Charlotte to pastor a church there, left his house and drove to mine just to sit at my kitchen table while I dissolved into a weepy mess.

I wanted him to tell me what to do. "How do I find God's will in this?" But instead of providing me with an easy answer Andy responded with his own question. "What do you think the phrase 'the will of God' means?" he asked.

It hit me that I didn't know—to me, "God's will" was like a map with a clearly designated path each of us were supposed to take, only we weren't allowed to see the map... we just had to feel our way around and hope for the best. I explained this to Andy, and he was quiet for a moment. "Well, the way I see it," he said, "is that God's will isn't a set list of things we've got to do, but an intention we need to have." He explained that he believed God's will for us was to love each other, to thrive and grow, to serve our neighbors and to serve God. Andy encouraged Matt and me to make this difficult decision together, keeping that new understanding of what "the will of God" was (and wasn't) in mind.

A few weeks that felt like years later, in my little pre-op space, I held Matt's hand and asked the doctor if she'd be able to tell if my baby had been a boy or a girl, or if it would be too early.

She'd said she thought it was probably too early. But later, in post-op—after I'd gone from two heartbeats and two sets of DNA back down to just one—she stopped by my bed to say that my baby had been a boy.

She was busy, I'm sure. She didn't have to stop by to tell me that. But her gift of compassion and kindness was one that left a trail of goosebumps on my arms, it allowed me to name my son and to grieve his loss properly. In that moment, this doctor who'd just performed a surgery that many Christians today would look down upon, was the presence of God to me.

Once I got home that afternoon, my boss texted me that she was outside with groceries. She gave me a hug, said we didn't have to talk about it, and proceeded to fill our fridge with food.

The other day I came home to find flowers had been delivered. For the past 8 years, my sister has quietly sent me flowers, every September 27, to mark the day we lost Samuel and to show me that she remembers one of the hardest days of my life. And that is what inspired me to write this article for you - because even though this was such a difficult time in my life, it's also one of the most formative ones.

I saw the hand of God at work during this experience.

A COMPASSIONATE HEART

My mom, Matt, Andy, the doctor who performed the D&E, and my boss all showed up in significant ways, reminding me that I was never alone. My sister's flowers remind me that, even now, this loss mattered. These people were the presence of God to me.

I also, and maybe most importantly, learned a lot about God during this time. I learned that God is big enough to handle me at my worst. I learned that God is not phased at all by my lashing out; I'm not in trouble with God for my pain, nor does God condemn me for my decision to terminate. There's no hurt that God cannot soothe, and no experience that God will turn God's back on.

My prayer for you, reader, is that you might see things with a compassionate heart. That you will be in tune with how God needs you to move and act in order to bring God's peace and presence to someone else. Sometimes that looks like holding their hand at the doctor, or sitting at their table while they cry, or bringing an armful of groceries to their doorstep, or taking time out of your busy day to be present, or to remind them eight years later that their residual grief is still something you are helping them carry.

Thanks be to God, ruler of all, for being the heart of my own heart and my vision, whatever befall, and for my Samuel, who I know I will hold someday.



In the Labyrinth:

Blessing of the Animals

In October, the Labyrinth Committee hosted our annual Blessing of the Animals. Barks, meows, and jingling leashes replaced the usual amens and hallelujahs, but the event was no less sacred! We gathered in a worshipful stance, thanking God for creation and the animals that enhance our lives. We were also pleased to welcome Saving Grace Animals for Adoption (they are doing amazing work in our community – check them out at savinggracenc.org), as well as the Wake Country Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit.

Miss the event, but still want a special blessing for your animal friend?

Email pastor@millbrookbaptistchurch.org for a virtual blessing.

Below is a portion of a responsive prayer read during the Blessing of the Animals:

Love changes us. When we love, we think about how our behaviors affect others. God, we love our animal friends. Make us mindful of how the things we eat, produce, and consume in our lives affect our friends. And give us the strength to make choices that are healthy for all our created neighbors.

Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our friends the animals, especially for animals who are suffering; for any that are hunted or lost or deserted or frightened or hungry; for all that must be put to death. We entreat for them all thy mercy and pity, and for those who deal with them, we ask a heart of compassion, gentle hands, and kindly words. Make us ourselves to be true friends to animals and so to share the blessing of the merciful. (Albert Schweitzer)

Here, in this place, we stand amid God's creation. Listen to it. Look for it. Feel it all around you. Think about how you might love this creation like a neighbor.

***Grandfather Great Spirit fill us with the Light.
Give us the strength to understand, and the eyes to see.
Teach us to walk the soft Earth as relatives to all that live.
(Sioux Prayer)***



A MORNING WALK

Bob Stillerman

Every morning, Jacqueline and I walk Mary Allen and Lucy to the bus stop. Well, really, Josie walks the four of us. Our walk isn't long, not even the length of two football fields. And to be honest, there isn't anything extraordinary about the surroundings. A sidewalk that competes with mature tree roots. Bushes of the usual variety. A playing field. A dog-walking station. An asphalt street. But somehow, for Josie, who is two, it's a world of wonder. There are treasures everywhere – acorns, fallen azalea blooms, sticks of every length and diameter, maple and oak leaves, dandelions, and so on. Josie grabs my hand, well actually, she grips my index finger, and we meander. With total concentration, and with unlimited wonder, my little explorer must perform her daily ritual. And for a moment, our world slows down. The emails, and phone calls, and her breakfast can wait. This is important. She's connecting with the world around her. She's a sponge soaking it all in.

In front of us, the big girls greet their friends, and we parents greet one another, too. There's chatter about last night's ball game, or who put what decoration in their yard, or the next field trip, or if the weather's really changing, or if we think the bus will stay on schedule.



Our family is connected, and the families of the neighborhood are connected, too. And even though we really ought to get our day started, be on time for that 9 am meeting, the conversations stretch well past the time the bus has come and gone.

And it's funny, even though I've only been Josie's daddy for a short while, and even though we've only been back in Raleigh for a little more than a year, it's hard for me to imagine life before this routine. It's become a part of me. A part of us.

The liturgical rhythms of our life are the same way (if we're doing them right, I think!). This past Sunday, we shared bread and cup. And we heard the words, "You are always welcome at Christ's table." Our choir sang an anthem (this week, *Holy Spirit Speak to Me*). We spoke our joys aloud, and our sorrows, too. We petitioned God to be present (not that They're ever not!) — maybe I should say noticeable to our distracted eyes. And God was!!! We greeted one another, and embraced one another, and welcomed friends, new and old. And we heard babies laughing and crying, and playing. And there were grapes, and fresh-baked bread. And Slim Jims and Doritos in Sunday School (Thanks, Ms. Heather!). We sang hymns, some familiar, some less. We gave our time, talents, tithes and spirit. And maybe even some of the rigid exterior we keep strong for the outside world. And in the realization of God's presence, and our connectedness, we passed Christ's peace.

I've only been your pastor for a little longer than a year, but it's also hard for me to imagine a time before Millbrook. The rhythms and people of this place are part of me, and I hope part of you!!! And before I did anything else today, before I took my morning walk, I just wanted tell you so. In this season of expectancy, I hope you'll take time to notice the special rhythms and people in your life. And offer God thanks for the things that are fused in us. Amen.

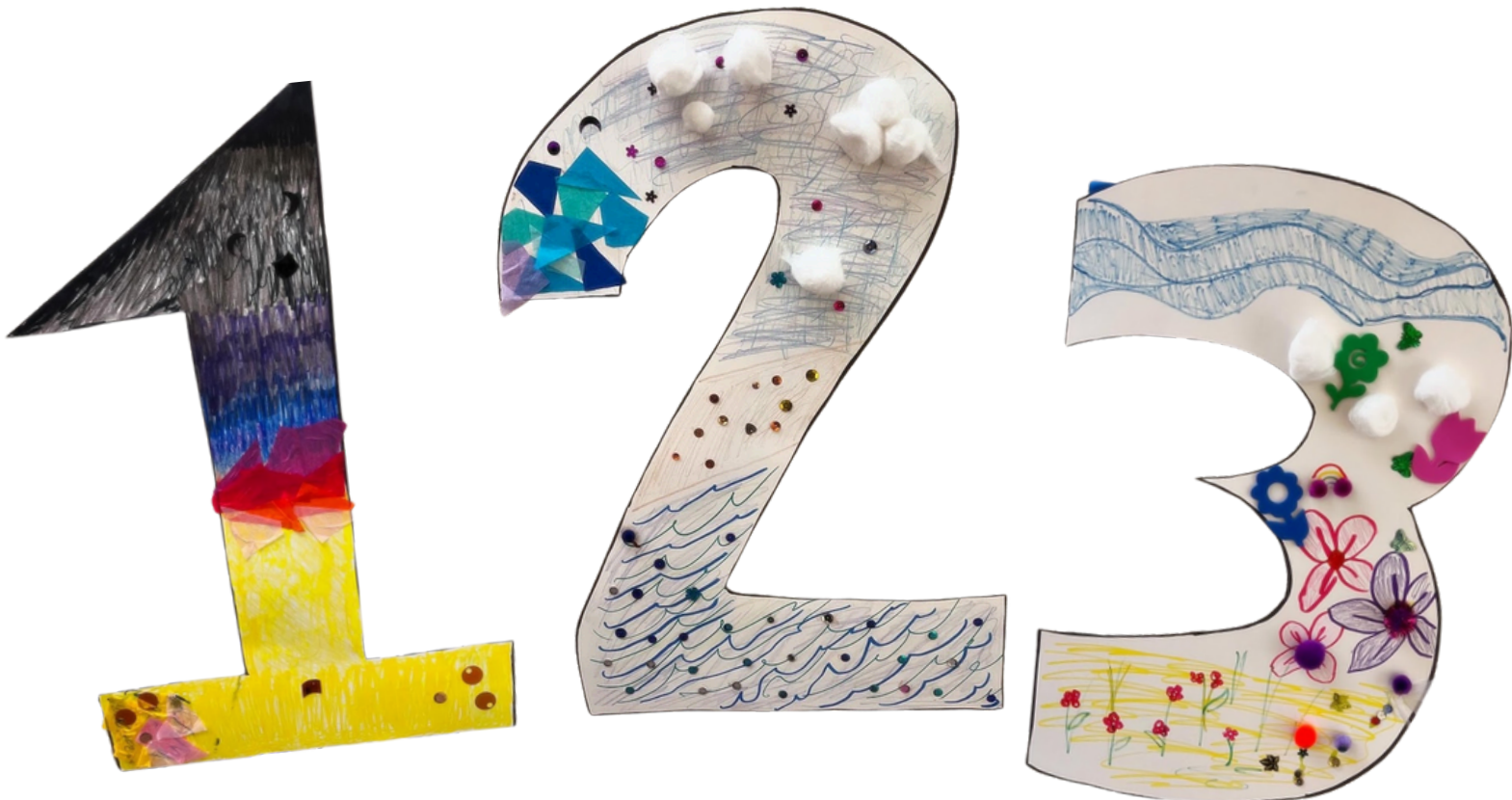
"It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end."

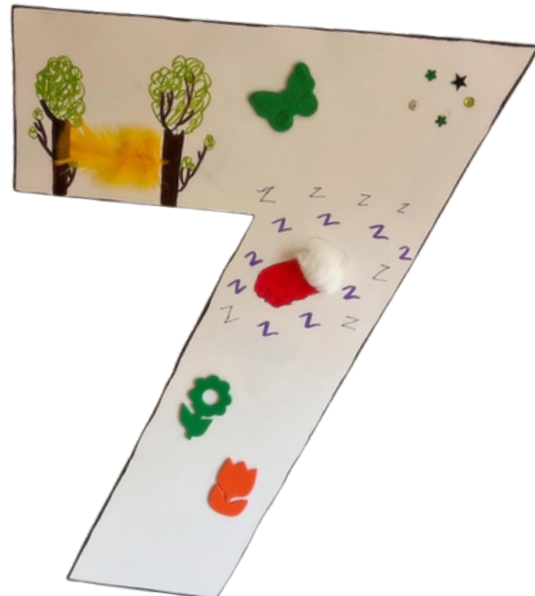
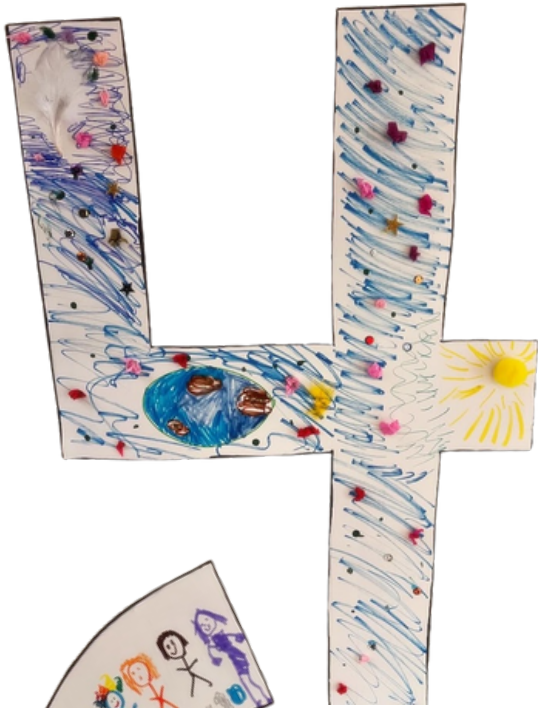
Ursula K. Le Guin



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL SUNDAY

In July, Millbrook held its Vacation Bible School Sunday, an intergenerational service including story, song, craft, science experiment, snack, relays, and assembly all rolled into a ninety-minute extravaganza. One of the highlights was the telling of the Creation story. Small groups created collages of each day of creation. The collages are on the exterior wall of the sanctuary if you'd like to check them out.



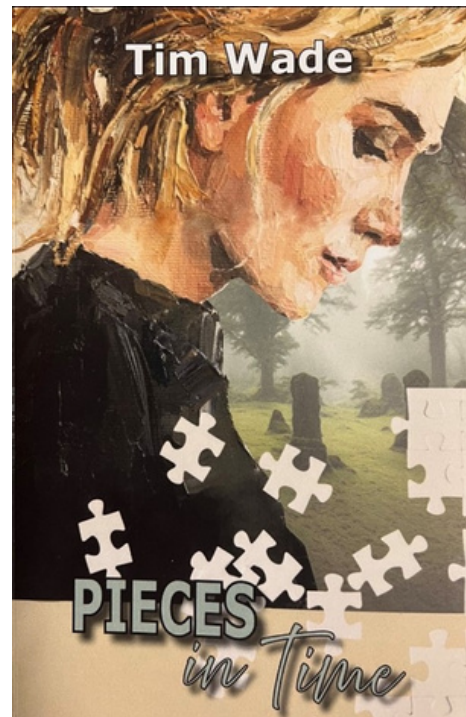


BOOKS OF INTEREST

Pieces in Time by Tim Wade Debbie Crumpler

Millbrooker Debbie Crumpler shares a review of her son Tim Wade's new book: Pieces in Time.

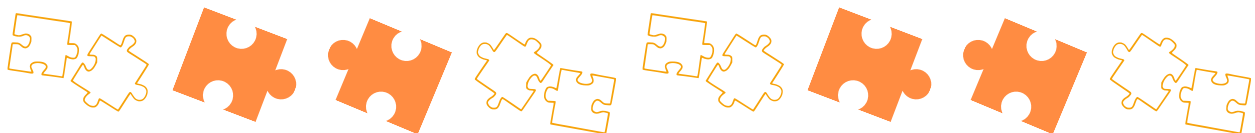
What do you do when life's events intertwine and your thoughts turn to finding a way to express those events in a meaningful way? Would anyone be interested? Would it serve a purpose? What about rejection? What if you put it in a book and told your story?



For my son, Tim Wade, the intertwining of the events in his life led to the idea for a story he thought would touch the hearts of many people. With that in mind, he began writing down his thoughts, expressing what was in his heart with God leading him.

While working a full-time job, Tim wrote what he could, in an attempt to capture feelings and emotions racing in his mind. When the rough draft was finished, I was asked to read it. While the storyline was good, I felt there were areas that needed to be developed. Writing takes determination and concentration, and after several rewrites, updates, and edits a second draft emerged.

Like before, I was asked to read the second draft. By nature I am a proofreader, and read this draft carefully, ensuring any edits I made did not in any way change his thoughts and ideas. We sat down one afternoon and went over all the markings. I was concerned he would think I was being overly critical rather than constructive. Such was not the case. Tim took my suggestions, said they were good, thanked me for taking time to read the story a second time, and went back to work on his novel.

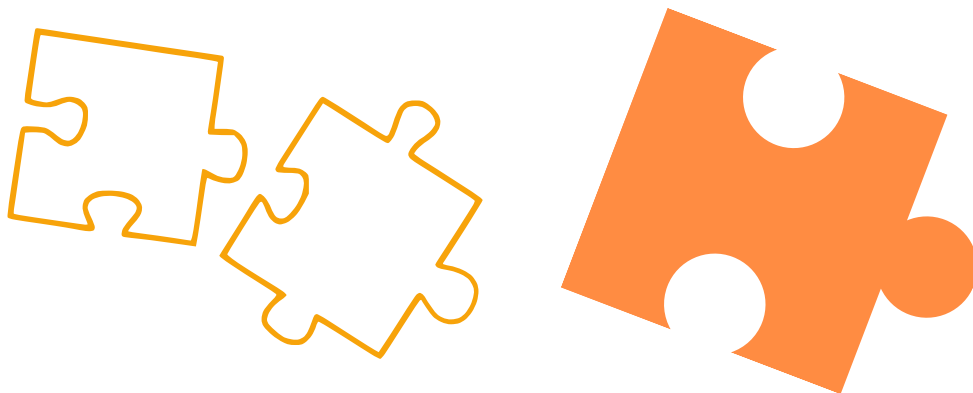


Now believing the book was worth publishing, Tim sent a proposal to Elk Lake Publishing Incorporated, a small Christian publisher in Massachusetts. Less than a month later, the acquisitions editor of Elk Lake sent back a reply kindly rejecting his book. The editor, however, did offer advice for improving the story. Determined to finish the work God started, Tim made more revisions, and sent a second proposal. This time his novel was accepted and a contract was offered. Now, more than four years since the writing and praying began, and with the help of three editors and several beta readers, the novel, *Pieces in Time*, is a finished work and has published. It only took God four years to answer the prayer.

Pieces in Time revolves around a woman named Karen Miller, who along with her husband Dave, their two sons, Nathaniel and Tyler, return to her hometown of Clinton, Oklahoma, to see her parents Gus and Edna Keller. Edna is in the late stages of Alzheimer's disease. Karen believes this visit will be her last opportunity to spend time with her mother before the Alzheimer's takes her life completely. Little does Karen know the chain of events that is about to take place, which will change everything she ever believed in. Conversations with her father lead to the revelation of family secrets that have been kept hidden for years. Why so many secrets? Karen can't believe the man she's called dad all her life is acting this way. Frustrated and confused, Karen enters into a crisis of faith in a search for answers that are proving increasingly difficult to find. Only when her father's final secret is revealed do the pieces of her life come together to reveal a picture she never thought possible.

While this book is fiction, many of the intertwined events of Tim's life make it into the story. To say they didn't touch me would be a lie. I read the final version and cried. Tim has written an amazing story using his heart, mind, and soul. This is a major accomplishment, and I am beyond proud of my son!

Pieces in Time is available on Amazon for \$17.99. You can learn more about Tim and his work on his website, iamtimwade.com. He is also available for speaking engagements where he will sign books. I hope you will order a copy. Enjoy!



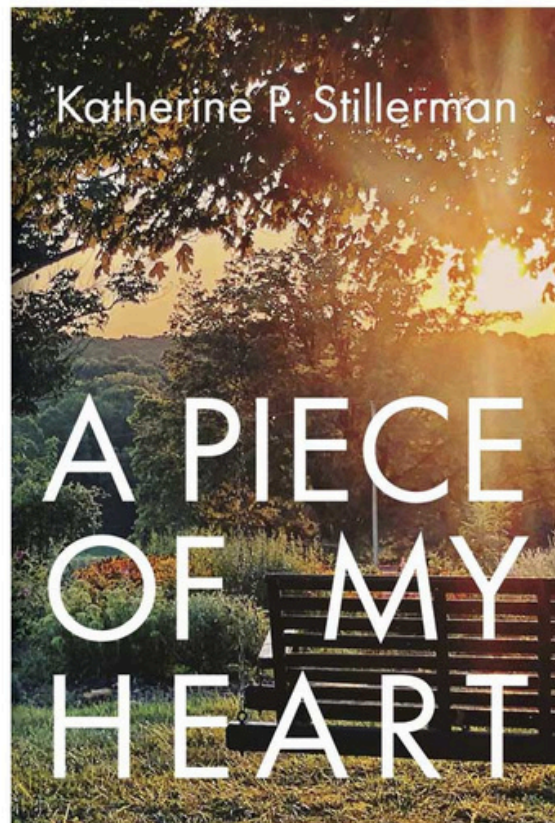
BOOKS OF INTEREST

A Piece of My Heart

Katherine P. Stillerman

Bob Stillerman's mother, Kathy Stillerman, has recently released the fifth book in her Barton Series novels. A summary and excerpt are below.

Continuing the dramatic Barton family saga, *A Piece of My Heart* by Katherine P. Stillerman is a stirring fifth installment of this epic historical series, as Hattie is finally reunited and married to her first love, but familial devotion and the escalation of World War II once again tear them apart.



With Will struggling to find his way back from behind enemy lines, Hattie must navigate the blooming lives of her daughters and the deep longing to properly begin her married life, for a story that is rich in emotional depth with truly high stakes. Interspersed with flashbacks that fill more gaps in the tangled legacy and movements of the Barton clan, this multilayered installment is in turn an intense romantic drama, a testament to motherhood, and an incisive historical portrait of wartime resilience.

Chapter 1

He must have seen me coming up the back stoop because he met me at the door in his bathrobe, coffee cup in hand, rubbing sleep from his eyes and smoothing down a lock of tousled hair standing up on the back of his head. He opened the screen with his elbow and extended his free hand to greet me.

And there he was—Will Kendrick—my first love, staring at me with those deep brown eyes I could get lost in, smiling the crooked smile that made me fall for him the first time I saw him those many years ago.

Startled, I let the pan of rolls I was carrying slip from my outstretched hand. His reflexes were quick, and he caught it before it fell.

"Good recovery," I said.

"Thank goodness," he said. "But if those are your mother's yeast rolls, I would have brushed them off and eaten them from the ground even if they had fallen."

We both laughed, and he gestured for me to come in.

"I can't stay," I said. "I was on my way to school and was just going to leave these with a note. I didn't want to bother you. I know you've had so much to deal with and so many people wanting to see you. You're probably gorged on visitors."

"Well, I'm certainly not gorged on visitors like you. Come in. I've been starved to see you, Hattie Barton."

Will had a way of making people feel welcome, even when they were intruding into his kitchen at seven o'clock in the morning like I was.

He laid the pan of rolls and his coffee cup on the kitchen counter. I set a jar of honey butter beside it and turned to him with outstretched arms.

"Oh Will, I'm so sorry about Melinda. She was such a lovely person, and I know it's been just awful to lose her. And to have to make the trip all the way from China with her remains . . . well, it must have been unbearable."

Will nodded, and his eyes filled with tears as he gathered me into his arms. We stood there holding each other for the longest time. I breathed in the musky scent of yesterday's cologne mixed with cigarettes, the top of my head fitting neatly under his chin as we embraced. His heart beat rhythmically against my cheek as it rested on his chest. Despite all the years and the distance, Will Kendrick could stir me like no one else could. It was as if a lost piece of my heart had been returned.

I could have stood that way forever, but I felt I must be the first to break away so as not to give the impression I was clinging to him. I took a step back, and he moved his arms to grasp my shoulders, gazing deeply into my eyes.

"Yes, it was difficult to watch Melinda slip away," he said. "When she realized she'd have to give up her teaching, it simply tore her apart. It had been her life's work. Those bright young Chinese women were like the daughters she never had."

She'd thrown herself into their lives, and when her work ended, I knew it would hasten her demise. I tried to get us back to the States so that she could at least see her family once more before she died. Unfortunately, I didn't make it in time. The trip home from Shanghai seemed interminable. I've never felt more bereft." Will shook his head. "Sometimes I just can't believe she's gone."

"I'm so sorry," was all I could think to say.

Will was obviously carrying a burden of guilt along with his grief. The fog from his mourning for Melinda might surround him for months, even years. I'd been foolish to hope that he might be emotionally available after losing his life partner so recently.

But Mama, who was always the matchmaker, had been convinced that Will and I were destined to be together again now that we'd both been widowed. She'd warned me not to wait too long. "Men sometimes need a little prodding, you know, and if you don't do it, one of the other unattached women in the church will."

Reluctantly, I'd taken her advice and decided to drop by the missionary house where Will was staying early the next day on my way to work. I'd brought the honey butter along with the rolls for his breakfast, remembering how much he liked something sweet on his bread. I assumed he wouldn't even be up yet. In college, he used to read and study late into the night and oversleep in the morning so that he often took his seat just as the professor would begin taking attendance.

I'd intended to leave the food on the back porch with a short note. That way he'd know I hadn't forgotten about him in his time of grief but still wouldn't think I was being too forward. And it would serve the purpose of prodding him a bit as Mama advised. Lord knows, she was right about every single, unattached woman coming around as soon as they found out he'd been widowed. Will Kendrick was a favorite among all the members at First Baptist, but women of every age adored him.

The emotional cloud seemed to lift as he continued to peer down at me. His mouth turned up in a smile, and the light was restored to his eyes. That's how it is, I thought. "Our minds can't process the finality of death all at once, only in bits and pieces. We seesaw between acceptance and denial before our grief is resolved, or at least that's how it was when I lost Charles."

"You're right, Hattie," Will said. "I did love Melinda, and I'm still devastated by her loss. But you know . . ." Will paused before he finished his statement. "Melinda was not my first love." He reached out and straightened one side of the collar of my blouse that had gotten tucked under my cardigan sweater. It was a meaningless gesture, and yet it felt like such an intimate one that it made me tingle.

I could feel the color rising in my cheeks and my heart pounding like an inexperienced schoolgirl with a crush. And I, a mature middle-aged woman! I knew better than to read too much into it. He'd acknowledged that we'd been sweethearts years ago—nothing more. But every fiber of my being hoped that it could be.

Will had always been transparent about our past relationship. In fact, when he came home on his first furlough in 1914, we had a chance encounter, where he told me he was engaged to marry. "Melinda knows all about my past, and she has shared her past with me as well. We want to build a marriage based not on illusion but on trust. From that foundation our love will grow and mature."

Will's words had brought me up short and made me more determined than ever to develop that same kind of trusting marriage with my husband, Charles, with whom I was going through a rocky patch. Ultimately, we had done just that.

The remembrance of how Will's friendship had made me a better spouse and a better person brought back my composure, and I smiled at him. "Yes, Will. I know."

We stood there for a moment longer, gazing at each other, speaking only with our eyes, until the church bell next door chimed the eight o'clock hour and broke the silence. "I have to go," I said, "before I'm late for school."

Will bent down and kissed me gently on the lips before I turned to leave. Neither of us said a word. We didn't need to.

I made my way to school, the January air crisp and cold against my face as it blew the clouds along like sailboats scudding across the ocean-blue sky. As I clutched my coat tightly around me, I felt an elevated sense of aliveness I'd not experienced in years.

Available now on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DF21KNZC>

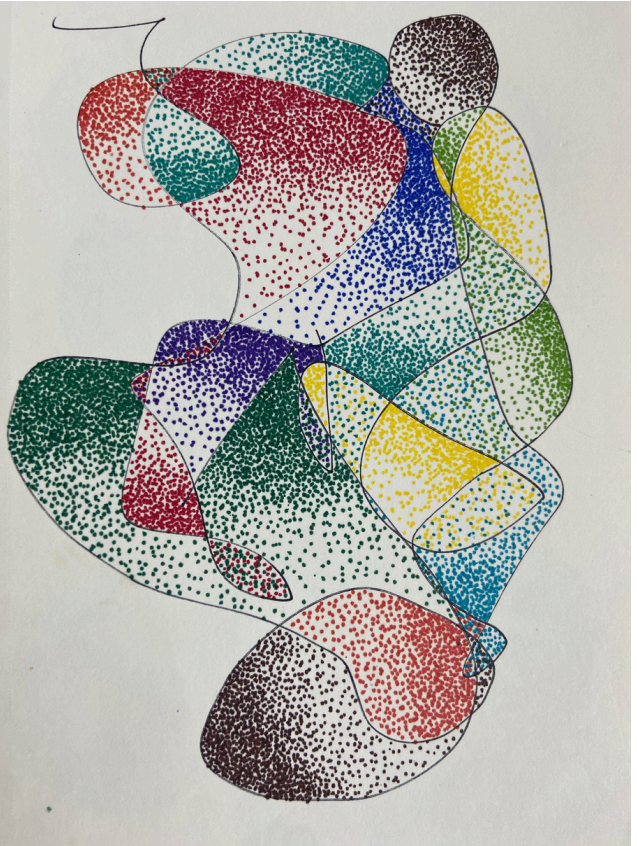
Visit Kathy's author page: historicalnovel.com

ART FROM SARAH HELMS

Sarah Helms submitted a painting she completed in 2023, as well as four Zentangles she doodled as a means of relaxation. The Zentangle Method is an easy-to-learn, relaxing, and fun way to create beautiful images by drawing structured patterns. We call these patterns, tangles. Thank you, Sarah for sharing these with us!



ZENTANGLES



ROBIN'S RESTAURANT REVIEW: **MORNING ROLLS**

Robin Griffin

Robin Griffin, our resident foodie, shares her thoughts on a nearby breakfast & lunch spot.



Right down the street in the Quail Corners Shopping Center is a little gem offering great breakfast, lunch, and brunch items. Morning Rolls is the best spot in the area for cinnamon rolls and breakfast sandwiches.

Their bacon, egg, and cheese sandwich is hands down my favorite breakfast sandwich around. Made fresh to order and they are not skimping with the bacon. The bun is the feature on this sandwich. It's basically an enlarged Hawaiian roll and its soft, sweetness is a perfect complement to the savory fillings. And if bacon isn't your thing, their options also include sausage, country ham, or a plain egg and cheese sandwich.

Cinnamon rolls are made in-house, fresh daily. And you can tell. You can order a single roll, 4-pack, or cinna-rocks, which are 4 nugget-size versions of the cinnamon rolls with some crisp along with icing for dipping.



Want to switch it up or try something different? They offer monthly specials that kick the cinnamon rolls up a notch. Some offerings include blackberry cobbler, peach brown sugar, and rum raisin (if you're interested in this one, run to get it in the month of November). My fave was the newly offered maple bacon. It was perfection with its maple syrup glaze and crispy bacon bits. I'm not ashamed to say I ended up ordering 4 in the month of September. Totally worth it!

Looking more so for lunch items? Morning Rolls also offers burgers and sandwiches, including veggie options. You can even add tater tots at a reasonable price to make a meal. And you have the option to order online to save time, though I have never waited long even when they're busy.

Now they can and do run out sometimes. That shows just how popular they are. The owner, Darryl Fuller, has a hit and a fan in me. Check them out when you're in the area or even for a pre- or post-church bite.

Website: <https://www.morningrolls.com/>



MILLBROOK KETO MEETINGS

Gerald Lamm and Cher Moss



Don't know what this is? Ours is a small group that meets each Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m. in the Kairos classroom at MBC. Keto is the practice of a low-carbohydrate lifestyle that can help you lose weight, lower your blood pressure, and help get your diabetes under control. We are a non-judgmental group that doesn't believe in weigh-ins or pressure. We support each other through discussion and sharing our progress each week. We follow the guidelines of Dr. Eric Westman, an internal physician at Duke Hospital, who has studied the Keto lifestyle for over 25 years and is one of the foremost specialists in the field. We usually watch a short video on various topics, share our weekly progress, recipe ideas, and ask questions. All to get us closer to a healthier lifestyle. Interested? Join us on any Thursday at 6:00 p.m. Questions? Reach out to Gerald Lamm (group leader) or Cher Moss for more information.

Eat Well! Be Well!

MBC SENIOR OUTING

Cher Moss and Gerald Lamm

On Tuesday, March 26, 2024, eleven of MBC's seniors took a fun day trip together, venturing to Wilson, NC to visit the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park. The installations are amazing and we enjoyed viewing them, though low wind prevented a lot of "whirling" to be seen. A delicious lunch at Parker's BBQ in Wilson followed. A good time was had by all. More good times are in the future and room for more is always available!



WHY EQUAL EXCHANGE?

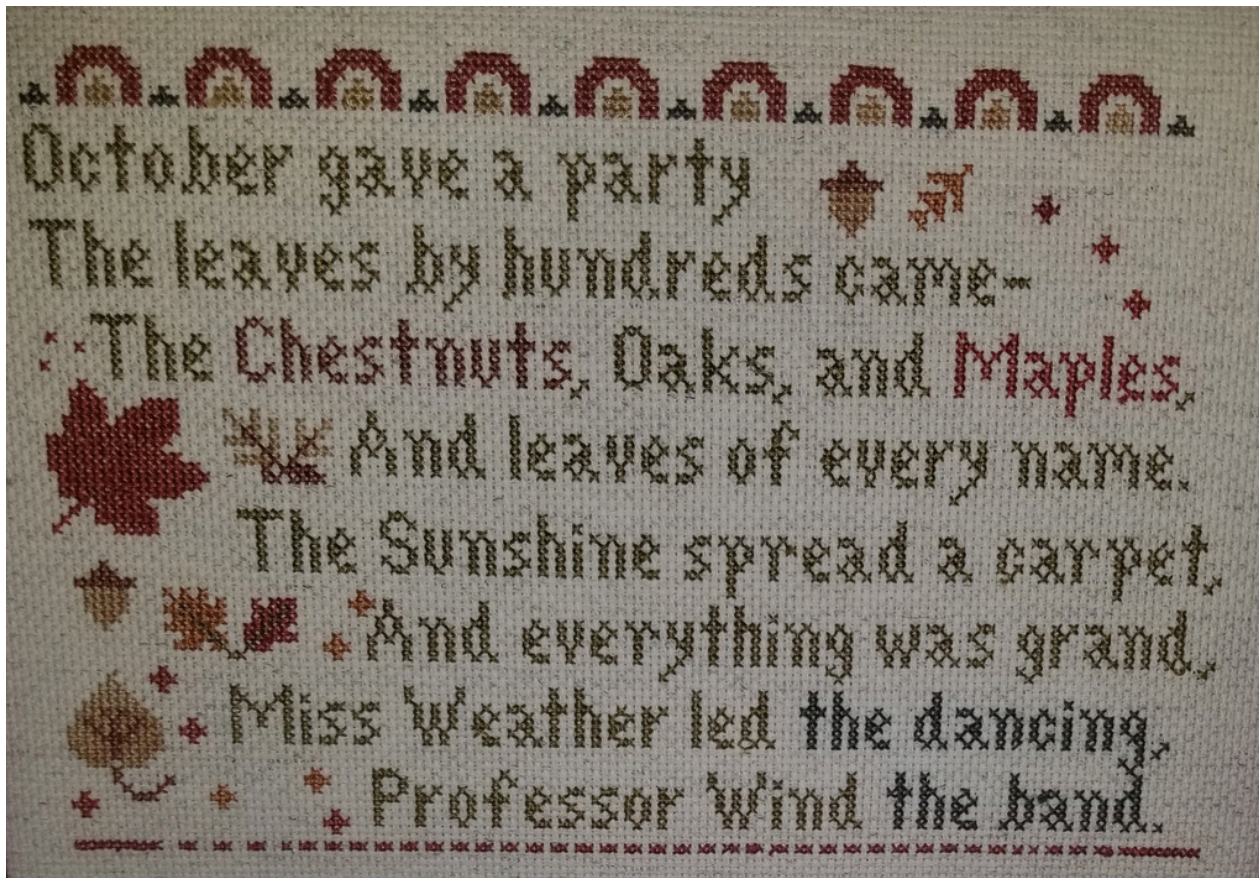
Janny and Gregg Mealar

Why Equal Exchange at Millbrook? It gives us an opportunity to make a global impact upon small family businesses a world away while enjoying a higher quality product than local outlets may offer. Equal Exchange features products we all use every day, but unlike normal suppliers, you can know the actual source of your purchases and avoid supporting impersonal corporate entities at the expense of workers in the fields and forests. Products are sold at cost, rounded off for ease of payment, but the cost is not the important factor. Purchasing fairly traded Equal Exchange products makes a difference in the lives of others. It gives Millbrookers one more option to initiate change for persons seeking dignity and better quality of life. Millbrook focuses on the sale of coffee and other items the Second Sunday of each month. However, feel free to reach out to Janny, Lucille P. or Gregg any time you need to restock.

AN OCTOBER POEM

Linda Korb

Thanks to Linda Korb for submitting an example of her cross stitching, which includes a lovely autumn poem.





WHY EQUAL EXCHANGE?

EQUAL EXCHANGE'S MISSION

is to build long-term trade partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound, to foster mutually beneficial relationships between farmers and consumers and to demonstrate, through our success, the contribution of worker co-operatives and fair trade to a more equitable, democratic and sustainable world.

EQUAL EXCHANGE'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES ARE TO:

- Trade directly with democratically organized small-scale farmer co-operatives
- Facilitate access to credit for producer organizations
- Pay producers a guaranteed minimum price that provides a stable source of income as well as improved social services
- Provide consumers with high quality food products
- Support sustainable farming practices
- Build a democratically run cooperative workplace
- Develop more environmentally sound business practices

Equal Exchange founded the U.S. fair trade coffee movement in 1986 and continues to be a 100% fair trade food company.



Equal Exchange is a worker-owned co-operative, an alternative business model based on democratic principles.

IN OUR CO-OPERATIVE:

- Each worker-owner gets one vote.
- We use open-book management, so all employees have access to information.
- We distribute resources (such as income) equitably.

In contrast to the general trend of rising income inequality, the gap between the highest paid and lowest paid employee at Equal Exchange is shrinking.



Equal Exchange's top-to-bottom pay ratio is 5-to-1



In 2018, the ratio of CEO pay to average worker pay was 361-to-1*

* Source: Forbes

RECIPE CENTRAL

One of the most-asked questions at a Millbrook gathering is "Would you share this recipe?" Millbrookers have obliged. We received original recipes, as well as a few "secret" ones procured from magazines and cookbooks. So as not to violate any international copyright laws (remember this document is published online!), we will print original recipes only. "Secret" recipes will be posted on the bulletin board in the hallway between the Church Office and Fellowship Hall. Thanks for sharing!

Marie Malpass's Honey Mustard Dressing

1 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup mustard

1/4 cup honey

2 tablespoons canola oil

3/4 tsp. cider vinegar

1/8 tsp. onion salt

1/8 tsp. ground red pepper (cayenne)

Blend well, cover and refrigerate. Makes 1 1/4 cup.

Recipe calls for dijon mustard, I use brown spicy mustard.



This Season's Bulletin Board Recipes:

- Gerald Lamm: Keto-Friendly Parmesan Baked Salmon
- Marie Malpass: Banana Pudding



WORDS OF GRATITUDE

A big thank you to all of my wonderful friends at MBC for the beautiful cards and the kind words following the recent and sudden loss of my brother, David John Hill. It is a blessing in my life to be part of a congregation that is so loving and supportive.

With gratitude,

Linda Heineman

Dear Millbrook Baptist Church Members:

Thank you for your donation to Saving Grace in honor of the Blessing of the Animals! We appreciate your generosity and understanding that animals are here on earth as a blessing from God!

Sincerely,

Molly Goldston and Team
Saving Grace Animals for Adoption

To Grady Moss (Guys 'n Grub, Millbrook Baptist Church):

On behalf of the Wake County Board of Education, I want to thank you for your gift to the Wake County Public School System. We are very fortunate to have the interest and support of the individuals in our community whose contributions enhance the financial resources available to the school system. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and consideration in donating this gift.

Sincerely,

Trisha C. Posey
Finance Officer
Wake County Public School System

YOU ARE INVITED!

Muse with us!

We want to hear your musings! How can you muse with us? It's simple. Think about any topic or expression you think might be of interest to Millbrook. Then share it with us:

- Poems
- Book Reviews
- Recipes
- Photos
- Questions
- Correspondence
- Family Updates
- Doodles
- Notes of Encouragement
- Anything (we mean it!) you want to share

Submissions can be sent via email to office@millbrookbaptistchurch.org or mailed to Bob's attention in the church office at 1519 E. Millbrook Rd. Raleigh, NC 27609.

And remember: There are no word counts. There are no deadlines. There is no right way to muse. When we have received a new batch of submissions, we'll share another magazine. We're not worried about adhering to a schedule. We'll mark time as the Spirit leads us.

Thank you for reading and connecting with us!



**1519 E. Millbrook Rd.
Raleigh, NC 27609
(919) 876-1519**

