God Today – In Life’s Valleys
by Rev. Brent Hall

In previous articles in this series, I have shared with you those times when God has made Himself known in some rather dramatic and unmistakable divine moments. I love when – as in days of old – God parts the waters and His deeds are obvious. These events build faith within the community of believers and often get the attention of the nonbeliever. These are mountaintop experiences. We all would like to live on the mountain all the time. But life does not work that way. As it is true of landscapes, so it is with life. There are mountains, and there are valleys.

Over the past 40 years of ministry, I have known my share of valleys. I have learned that God is not just God of the mountain, but He is also the God of the valley. When you are so low that someone would have to jack you up to bury you, God is still God, even though you can’t perceive His presence, power, and love.

My valley episodes came from my occasional battles with depression. Depression is known as the common cold of psychological disorders and is no respecter of persons. Depression has afflicted such notables as Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill. Churchill called it that dark dog biting at his heels. Books have been written on Lincoln’s life-long battle with depression. Lincoln wrote, “A tendency to melancholy... let it be observed is a misfortune, not a fault.” Lincoln’s boyhood friend, James Grigsby, talked about how Lincoln would “get fits of the blues.” The truth was Lincoln suffered from clinical depression. One friend said of Lincoln, “His melancholy dripped from his fingers.” In his early years in the Illinois legislature, Lincoln confided to a colleague that he never carried a pocketknife with him for fear that in one of his low moods he might do harm to himself. Lincoln found some help with his depression by being with other people and indulging in fun and hilarity. He also found help in noting that the moments of intense sadness would pass after a period. And there would be some good days.

Many of us who are not as notable also have known our battles with depression. My oldest sister, Sharon, and I confided in each other about our bouts with depression that seemed worse in winter. We were convinced we had Seasonal Affective Disorder, often associated with lack of sunlight and reduction in serotonin. For years, I thought because I was a minister that I could not admit I had a problem with depression. I feared my congregation would not understand, and the Bishop and the cabinet might think I was crazy and be afraid to appoint me. So I would prowl through my periods of depression and keep them hidden from everyone but my dear wife and sister who I knew loved me, warts and all. Finally, my depression got so bad I knew I had to do something. I listened to one of my own sermons on dealing with depression and went to a doctor to seek help. He put me on medication, and, within 2 weeks, I felt like my old self again. I was fortunate. I know in some cases it takes both counseling and trying different medicines to find the one that helps. This process can be very long and drawn out. I wish I had swallowed my silly pride and gone to a doctor much earlier. This action would have saved me a lot of misery. We all have problems. If you are dealing with anxiety or depression, don’t feel ashamed. Welcome to the human race. I wish I had saved my silly pride and gone to a doctor much earlier. This action would have saved me a lot of misery. We all have problems. If you are dealing with anxiety or depression, don’t feel ashamed. Welcome to the human race. I love the words of the playwright, Eugene O’Neill, “Man (woman) is born broken. He lives by mending. The grace of God is the glue.” I have found God’s amazing grace not only on the mountaintop but also in the deep dark valley of depression.

And so can you!
ACOLYTES

May 11 - 11:00 a.m. Brandon Cuevas and Reese Fowler
May 18 - 11:00 a.m. Clara Castleberry and Henry Forrest

NEW ROTATION - As a church, we are called both as the corporate church and as individual Christians to participate in the Kingdom of God as expressed here on earth. We are called to be the Body of Christ, embracing all parts of the body and being the hands, eyes, ears and feet of God's presence. JOIN US as we discover the impact on Paul and the early church. Schedule for May 11 - Moved by the Spirit - 3rd grade and 4th grade, Coat of Many Colors - 5th grade, Disciples Den - Pre-K/K, The Good News Theater - 1st grade, The CAVE - 2nd grade

SCHOOL KITS FOR LIBERIA - The children are working in partnership with our Mission Team to collect school supplies for Liberia. We will be collecting very specific items. If you would like to contribute, stop by the table in the skyllight hallway to pick up a tab. All items need to be turned in by May 18.

FAMILY MINISTRY TEAM MEETING, Thursday, May 8, 9:30-11:00 a.m. We are trying a new day and time. Please join us if you would like to get involved in Family Ministry and help with Fall planning. Childcare is provided.

TWEENAGERS - The May 9 event will be spent at church serving the needs of our campus property. Begin at 5:30 p.m. in the GYM. Our night will start off with a Nacho Chip Bar with toppings, lemonade and dessert. Next, we head outdoors to clean up the grounds all around the church. Please bring work gloves. If the weather is nice, we'll stay outside for games or go indoors to play board games. Pick-up time is 8:00 p.m. in the GYM. Cost: $5.00. Bring in school supplies for the School Kits for Liberia Collection sponsored by the Holston Conference of UMC (pencils w/sharpeners, crayons, markers, glue sticks, notebooks). Sign up either on the CUMC TWEENAGERS Facebook page or e-mail Ms. Jennifer (hkitty_65@yahoo.com).

VBS 2014 - Workshop of Wonders - July 7-11
REGISTER NOW at concordumc.com - under the children's tab click on the VBS link. This will take you to both the registration for volunteers and children. If you have questions, please call Kim Mink.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE
Decorating Help Needed - Wednesdays, 6:15 p.m., Room 105.
Shepherds Needed for VBS - Register at the above link.

MANDATORY TRAINING
We will have several training meetings that are mandatory to volunteer for VBS this year, which are scheduled the next two months. Hopefully, you will find one that is convenient for your schedule. At these meetings, we will brief you on your responsibilities during VBS week and discuss schedule changes. Please make plans to attend ONE of these meetings. They are scheduled on: June 2, 6:00-7:00 p.m., OR July 6, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. All meetings will be held in the Crossroads (Room 117) downstairs in the children’s area. Childcare will be provided at all meetings. Also, Safe Sanctuaries training will occur immediately after the training meeting if you have not been to that training in the last 5 years. This is also mandatory!

Our Gifts

Memorial Fund
In Memory of Audrey Greer by Mr. & Mrs. Joel Garber

CADES Fund
In Memory of
Audrey Greer by Mr. & Mrs. Richard Himes, Kaye Evans-Rackard, Mr. & Mrs. Bob Wesley
Marvin Jones by Kaye Evans-Rackard
Bill Harris by Merle Parr, Kaye Evans-Rackard
Billie Eleazer by Kaye Evans-Rackard, Ronnie Carroll, Mr. & Mrs. Jim Simpson
Sam Bolt by Kaye Evans-Rackard
Kathryn Boring Davis by Kaye Evans-Rackard
Lynn Mitchell by Mr. & Mrs. Bob Wesley

In Honor of
Deborah Thompson by William Eavenson
Peggy and Bill Shell by Kaye Evans-Rackard

Building Fund
In Memory of
Bill Harris by Roma & Phil Honey, Lisa Murdock, Mr. & Mrs. Hal Zwicke, Grin & Bear It Band
Audrey Greer by Mr. & Mrs. Richard C. Powell, Mr. & Mrs. James E. Shawn, Mr. & Mrs. Lester Ross
Judy Warnick by Norma & Dalton Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Lester Ross
Dorothy Trotter by Ronnie Carroll
Billie Eleazer by Dr. & Mrs. Paul McGowan, Mr. & Mrs. Bob Wesley

Holston Home for Children
In Memory of Judy Warnick by Cis & Bill Lee

Music Fund
In Memory of Billie Eleazer by Mr. & Mrs. Don Freeman

Youth Fund
In Memory of Rebecca Brookshire by Ronnie Carroll

Our Lives Together

The love and sympathy of the congregation is extended to John Ellis & Mary Kelly on the death of his son, Scott Ellis, on May 1.
Reservations for all Primetimer events can be made at the reception desk or by calling the church office, 966-6728. If you need further information on events, contact Janie Wendelken at the church.

Walking Tour of the Music History of Knoxville, Thursday, May 15, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. – Take a leisurely stroll through downtown Knoxville with storyteller Laura Still and explore our musical heritage – country to jazz. We will stop for an early lunch on Market Square. Cost: $17 (tour and transportation) plus the cost of your lunch. Reservation deadline: Wednesday, May 7. Money will be collected on the morning of the trip. Checks can be made out to Concord UMC with “walking tour” on the memo line.

Friendship Club, Wednesday, May 21, 10:30 a.m. – Join us for the last meeting before our summer break! Our program will be a very special surprise. You won’t want to miss our last meeting before fall. A $5 lunch, prepared by Becky Bishop, is by reservation through your Friendship Club caller or the church office.

NHC Connection, June 1, 6:30 p.m., in the Assisted Living Soda Fountain – The musical group “Possum Crossing” will perform their version of bluegrass/country/folk music. Join the residents as we visit with each other and enjoy this wonderful group.

Knoxville Museum of Art, Wednesday, June 4, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. – We will tour the new Richard Jolley room-size glass installation “Cycle of Life” and other museum exhibits before going to lunch downtown. Cost of trip: $2 for gas plus the cost of your lunch. Reserve your seat on the church bus by Tuesday, May 27.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE - MAY 11
8:45 & 11:00 a.m. – Worship Services
9:50 a.m. – The Morning Show (Gather in the Studio, E-201)
No afternoon/evening youth activities – spend time with Mom!

SUMMER ASSEMBLY – You may have missed the Early Bird Deadline, but it is not too late to sign up for the Holston Conference Summer Youth Assembly, June 30 – July 4 at Emory & Henry College. Two separate events (Junior High and Senior High), one fantastic week at one location! Each assembly is a week of discipleship featuring awesome worship, awesome people and one awesome God. Check out all the details in your Summer Events Brochure on the website or in your mail and register online by May 28 for $185.

SUMMER’S HERE PARTY – Mark your calendar for a Summer’s Here Party for our last regular meeting of Sunday Night Live and SoundBites, May 18. Weather permitting, we will play water games on the front yard following snack supper. Bring a towel and prepare to get wet!

SUMMER FUN DAYS – You should have received a brochure in the mail with information on our summer events. Please look it over (or check out the copy on our website) and see which days you can participate. You can sign up by using our online registration on the website. Please note the registration deadlines: Summer Assembly, May 28; NASCAR Speed Park & Jump Jam, June 1.

This & That
Armchair Travelers - May 9, 7:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall - Join Dave & Carole Conklin as we to travel with them on their trips to Australia.

Thank You! - David & Alicia Galbraith and family thank you for the many prayers, love and support shown to them during this tragic time.

Young Adult Group News
The Young Adult Group is vamping up and getting excited for our summer activities. Check the list of dates below for our upcoming events. If you are a college student, twenty-something, or in your early thirties, we would love to see you at one or more of these dates. For more information feel free to contact Zack Roskop at 865-466-9710 or ZackTRoskop@gmail.com.

The Living Room (Small Group) at 7:00 p.m. in the Skybox (Free dinner & discussion) - June 12, 26, July 17, 31, August 14 and 28

Thursday Night Out (Service project & dinner) - June 5 – TBA, July 3 – TBA, August 7 – TBA

Summer Fun Days - June 8 – Smokies Game, July 27 – Lazy River Tubing in Townsend, and August – Cookout and boating at The Cove

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL MANDATORY TRAINING
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**Health Kit Celebration!**

Once again the generosity of Concord UMC is overwhelming! In only 5 days you were able to complete a total of 187 health kits. Thank you Walter & Kay Weismantle, Judy Johnson, Bettye Fulton and Alice Anderson for sorting and getting the kits ready to be shipped! Also, thank you to Karen & Ralph Flanders for delivering the kits to Oak Ridge.

**School Kits for Liberia**

A few items are left that we need for our school kits. If you have not had an opportunity to pick up a tab, please stop by the narthex or reception area. The deadline is May 18.

**Sweet Potato Drop**

**Saturday, May 17 - E. Parking Lot**

(Rain or Shine)

Bagging will begin at 8:00 a.m. - Come for an hour or as long as you wish. Distribution of bags of sweet potatoes will start at 10:30 a.m. to individuals, churches or local food banks and agencies. Bring gloves and a stool or chair to sit on. For info on how to help, contact Mike Smith, 300-8150.

**Community Garden Gets Underway!**

The Concord UMC Community Garden is hopefully on the way to feeding many hungry people! Several volunteers planted 40 tomato and 20 pepper plants last week under the direction of Mike Smith and Harry Tucker. Corn, cucumbers and bush beans have also been planted. They have built one raised garden and the Youth Group built six more. Gravel, sand and topsoil has been installed in them.

This is a new project for our congregation and a work in progress. Applications for adoption of a raised bed or space in the main garden are available from Mike Smith. Space adoptions are on a first come basis.

Our garden has been approved by the Master Gardener Program and TN Agricultural Extension Service, providing opportunities for education and public use described by the TN Master Gardener program.

Volunteers can help water, weed and maintain the CUMC rows and the surrounding area on the lot. Funds are needed to buy supplies; our dream includes a sign, bulletin board, and tool shed in the future. Feel free to contact Mike (966-4109) or Harry (288-0043) with questions or your offer to help with the labor of love; donations should be marked for the Community Garden.

**Worship Services**

**Traditional**

8:45 & 11:00 a.m.

Sermon:  
*A Path Forward...*  
a path toward acceptance  
Rev. Brent Hall

Scripture:  
John 21:1-14

**Contemporary**

8:45 & 11:00 a.m.

Sermon:  
*A Path Forward...*  
a path toward acceptance  
Rev. Larry Trotter

Scripture:  
John 21:1-14

**Pastor On Call**

Larry Trotter  
531-4081

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