



# The Chalice

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Heart Shapes – July, 2017

## “From Stone to Soil”

Recently, I have seen a photo of a protruding rock on the side of some mountain trail. As hard, resistant the side of the rock appeared, what caught my eye, was a split in the solid rock. Through the crack opening was a beautiful flower growing in all its glory! I have looked at that photo several times as I reflected on the message it might have for me. I discovered that this photo image said something about the resilience of life. And the good that comes from living with the broken places, when there is acceptance of “what is” as we move into ‘what can be’.



If we listen only to the news of the day or see only the images from the news, we are shaped by the sensationalism of fear and threat. It captures our attention and we lean into the message of no hope, no mercy, no grace. We become harden and protective of self and ours. The seeds of mercy, grace and compassion fall on ‘rocky’ soil with no chance of sprouting new life.

Our beliefs and values stay in direct conflict with our decisions and actions. We close in and become hard of heart and rocky in understanding of the great commandment of ‘first love God, then love others as we love ourselves.’

One parable from New Testament scripture (Matthew 13: 1 ff; Mark 4: 1 ff; Luke 8: 1 ff) describes a sower sowing seeds and the place the seeds land – to the side of the path, on rocky soil or on broken dirt. Where the seed is planted, determines which seeds grow and thrive. The seeds that fall on the softness of broken dirt, ready to receive and germinate the seed, allows new growth and production. Life abounds in the soft places, the broken-up places.

Like the photo of the rock and the blossoming flower – life will pursue. Despite the rocky path, the scary news, the destructive way, the painful losses – life will blossom out of the impossible places and bloom again. If God created the world and declared it good - - - will our hearts and minds still believe?

The ancient poet Rumni has some words:

*Don't claim in spring on stone some venture grows  
Be soft like soil to raise a lovely rose - - -  
For years you've been a stony-hearted man  
Try being like the soil now if you can!*

If our hearts are like the rock, then perhaps our hearts have broken, broken open.

Through those very places of cracks and splits and brokenness, the Light gets in and the flower blossoms out. Sometimes the hard rock softens into rich dirt and with the Light, the seeds take root and blossoms into something beautiful.

May our hearts blossom with abundant, beautiful flowers, through the places of cracks, splits, brokenness shared with the Light of Love, Hope, Faith changes stone into soil.

Peace for today,  
Sheila



Elder Emeritus Myrtice Landrum Kilpatrick, 95, passed away Sunday, July 2, 2017, surrounded by her family.

Miss Myrtice lived her life by her motto: Others

*Others* by Charles D. Meigs

Lord, help me live from day to day  
In such a self-forgetful way  
That even when I kneel to pray  
My prayer shall be for others.

Help me in all the work I do  
To ever be sincere and true,  
And know that all I'd do for You  
Must needs be done for others.

Let "Self" be crucified and slain  
And buried deep: and all in vain  
May efforts be to rise again,  
Unless to live for others.

And when my work on earth is done,  
And my new work in heav'n's begun,  
May I forget the crown I've won,  
While thinking still of others.

*Refrain:*  
Yes, others, Lord, yes, others,  
Let this my motto be,  
Help me to live for others,  
That I may live like Thee.



Words cannot express how much our family appreciates the outpouring of love shown to us over these last couple of weeks!

The food, the help, prayers, visits, flowers, calls and cards were wonderful! We knew we were covered!

Mother was loved by you all and she knew it and felt it just as she stated in the "little book" read from at her service. We always knew she could write a book and she proved it!!!

Thank you,  
Pam & Doc Crawford  
David & Judy Kilpatrick  
Doug & Melissa Kilpatrick  
And family

## Interfaith Hospitality Network of Athens

The Outreach Committee and the Board are pleased to announce that....

We at First Christian Church, Watkinville, are excited about joining as a support congregation with Union Christian Church in the ministry of the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Athens (IHNA).

Information on IHNA is being provided below from their website.

Here are some “notes about our Group”.

Union Christian Church will host the families once a quarter (for one week). We, along with Ashford Methodist, will be support congregations. All Churches will be working together.

This is a Church-wide endeavor - for all ages!

On site duties/responsibilities may include: meal preparers, evening host, overnight host, van driver.

Minimal training is required for participants dealing with families. Here are the training dates scheduled - at Union Christian Church:

Tues, Aug 8 - 9:30 AM Sun, Aug 13 - 2PM

Tues, Aug 15, 7PM Mon, Aug 28 6PM

Two coordinators will be needed from FCC-W to work with Union Coordinators on schedules. Union Coordinators are Patti Clark and Kelly Hansford. Please let Sheila or Outreach Chair Pam Gunter, know if you are willing to serve in this capacity.

FCC-W has worked with the IHNA in the past - quite a few years ago. Others may have worked with IHNA or other groups in the past. I'm sure there are some fond memories of some meals shared or some conversations from those experiences.

SAVIOR AND SAVIOR. If you believe it is My Hand that has saved you, then you must believe that I am meaning to save you yet more, and to keep you in the way you should go. Even a human rescuer does not save a man from drowning only to place him in other deep and dangers waters. But rather to place him on dry land - and more - to restore him to animation and health, and to see him to his home. GOD CALLING (Book).



## Constitution Committee

The Constitution Committee requests that all revisions be submitted by August 1. The committee will review all suggestions for revisions and begin the work of wordsmithing the current constitution.



## Youth Committee

The youth have enjoyed a summer of fun. Pictures include the children at Camp Christian and participating in other Youth/Church activities.





**Noah is one of the first to pull a block!**





## Clutter or Treasure?

Could this be the day I have dreaded for so long? I really must sort through my books and determine which ones to keep, which ones to give to the library and which ones that really must go to Goodwill. I tackle this mammoth project with all good intentions.

I started with my cookbooks. After several hours of thumbing through at least 200 plus cookbooks with another 200 plus to go, I found no clutter at all. There is the Julia Child cookbook autographed by both Julia and her hubby—that is a treasure! Then the Martha Stewart cookbook, again autographed by the old gal—that too is a treasure. There are all the Ina Garten cookbooks, the Junior League cookbooks from all over the South, the family cookbooks handed down to me, the church cookbooks, cookbooks that come closer to being coffee table books than actual cookbooks. Ahhhh so many cookbooks filled with wonderful things to try. Well, I don't cook much anymore and one would think I should 'weed' out about 95% of these books—NOT! They are all treasures, not so much for the content but for the memories they bring to mind.

Next, I turn to the gardening books—they fill the huge bookcase in the living room, they are stacked under tables, on tables and beside tables. They are beside my bed, beside my favorite chair and beside my desk. Again, hours of sorting and wouldn't you just know it—there was not one bit of clutter among them! There are books on design, books on perennials, books on trees, books on bulbs and books on botany (these are not great reading but a must for gardening.) I found books written by some of my favorite gardening gurus, Walter Reeves, Elizabeth Lawrence, Ryan Gainey and of course the professor who taught me 'plant identification', Tara Dillard. Again, every book is a treasured 'friend', therefore, they were returned to their place in the bookcase or on the stack.

I was nearing the end of this 'clean out' project when I took down all my books of inspiration for sorting. I'll be quite honest here, there were not a whole lot of those books to be sorted. At least nothing compared to the cookbooks or gardening books. I stopped for a moment and thought that maybe I should spend a little more time shopping the inspirational section of the bookstore than the cooking and gardening sections. Oh well, I'll think about that another day. However, I did find a thin little book which had been long forgotten: I've Got to Talk to Somebody, God by Marjorie Holmes. It is a woman's conversations with God. I bought the book years ago in the book department of Davison's

for the exorbitant price of \$3.95. I paused to wonder what was happening in my life that I felt the need to search for an inspirational book. Whatever it was, the concern has long since been resolved and resolved via my conversations with God.

Ms. Holmes compiled a book of prayers for women who were tired, worried and/or overwhelmed. The book is a little simplistic for my taste. There seems to be nothing theologically touching to me. Ms. Holmes offers prayers for peeling potatoes, scrubbing the floor, making the bed, doing the ironing and several other tasks which I don't feel the need to pray over. However, there is one prayer which did and does touch my heart. It is a prayer about the garden. It is as follows:

*The Garden*

*This is my garden, God, this is my garden my own small precious portion of the earth that you have made.*

*I will dig and hoe and tend it, I will grub in the soil that is cool and moist and scented with spring.*

*I will find you in that soil as I crumble its clods or press these small seeds deep into its dark flesh.*

*What a joyful thing, the feel of your silent soil. It clings to my fingers, it is hard and certain beneath my knees.*

*It receives my little offerings – these tiny plants, these slips and cuttings, these infinitesimal seedlings, with a kind of blind uncommenting magnificence. I am a trifle awed before it, I am filled with an amused humility.*

*How insignificant I am that I should be entrusted with this miracle to come. No, the earth will surely reject my anxious efforts my foolish hopes. Yet I know a happy patience too. Wait – only wait upon the Lord, as the Bible says.*

*And sure enough. The silent teeming forces of creation set to work and soon the miracle has come! Onions and lettuce for the table. Shrubs to be trimmed. The incredible colors and fragrances of flowers.*

*I think of that first garden where life began.*

*I think of that final garden where Christ prayed. ("In my father's house are many mansions," he said. I feel sure that among those mansions there are many gardens too.)*

*How marvelous that man's existence began in a garden. Perhaps that's why we feel so wonderfully alive in a garden and so close to you, God.*

I'm left with only one thought. Tara Dillard always ends her blogs, her books, and her notes with 'Garden and be well'. I wish that for each of you.

Garden and be well!  
Nancy Watkins