

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

JUNE 2026

My morning reading this day was Job 3, Job's lament that he was ever born. In the previous two chapters, Job, who had it all, through no fault of his own, lost everything, including his health. Such overwhelming hardships in life can leave one so discouraged as to make one wish they were never born as Job does in chapter 3. This is life, so fragile. Life can go 'south' leaving us in despair and even losing hope in God which is the ultimate outcome of depression.

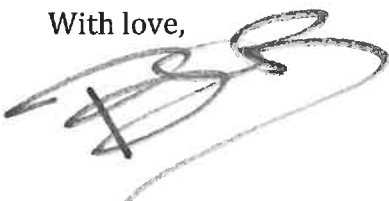
But on the other hand, freedom from struggles in life can equally distance one from God even if lip service is given to God. Yesterday, Marsha and I sat out on our porch enjoying the warmth of the sun and the coolness of the breeze. Ah, finally summer. (I think we had spring that morning from 10:00a.m.-Noon!) This is one of the joys of living in this part of our wonderful country. We endure the winter season, and the tradeoff is summer when we get to sit and enjoy all the beauty that this 'neck of the woods' has to offer. But there can be a problem opposite of what Job was going through but just as disturbing. We can have it so good that we can lose sight of the source of our goodness and become lax in our relationship with that source, the love of God.

Summertime is a more relaxed time of year, and relaxation is good for the soul in bringing refreshment and renewal. But we must be careful in all our relaxation that we forget who we are and our calling in life. Life in the church becomes more relaxed and that is understandable. The weekly youth program takes a break because the youth are not in school and are not able to attend. That's understandable. We make up for this by offering one of the best VBS programs I have ever seen. But why does attendance on Sunday morning decrease in the summertime? Sure, some people are traveling but also some become too relaxed to make the effort. In the wintertime, harsh weather conditions can prevent people from getting out on Sunday morning; in the summertime, is it too nice to worship? At its last meeting, the Session approved the suspending of the Monday soup kitchen for July and August because our dedicated volunteers need a break. They work hard all year to provide this service to the community, and we must give them time off or the whole program could run out of energy. But the need for food is no less just because it is summer; in fact, because of the times in which we are living with the cost of groceries on the rise, the need may be greater. I couldn't help wondering if some who are unavailable in the other 9 months of the year might have more freedom to step in for the summer months?

The intention of this little epistle is not to put anyone on a guilt trip about enjoying the blessings of the summer experience we have. Indeed, enjoy you summer; Marsha and I plan on doing so. But do not lose sight of who you are and for what you have been called. The first question in the Westminster Confession makes clear: *'What is the chief end of each person? Answer: To love God and enjoy God forever.'* As you enjoy the summer, may your enjoyment not diminish your love of God and may it open up new possible ways to serve God in the lives of others.

Job lost the meaning of life in his hardship, understandable; may we not lose the meaning of life in our having it so good.

With love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'MS' or similar, written in a cursive style.