

Echo Hills

Church of Christ

August 31, 2014

A Place of New Beginnings

Captured by Grace

Days before Thanksgiving 2004 Victoria Ruffolo was making her way home after attending her niece's music recital. The cold rain was threatening to turn to snow as she drove to her Long Island home. She was almost home when a silver Nissan rounded the corner and approached her car. Earlier that evening the boys in the Nissan had broken into a car at the multi-plex and stolen a number of items, among them was a credit card. The six young people had charged \$400 in DVD's and video games at a video store and they were recorded on tape buying items at a grocery store with the stolen card. One of the items they purchased was a 20 pound turkey. That night their path crossed Victoria Ruffolo's in one of those sad life changing incidences. Miss Ruffolo doesn't remember the silver car driving past her car, nor does she remember the shape of a person leaning outside the passenger window of that car. She doesn't remember the 20 pound turkey crashing through her windshield bending the steering wheel and hitting her breaking every bone in her face and knocking her unconscious causing significant brain injury. Three weeks later she was told the reason for 8 hours of reconstructive surgery to reshape her face. Her broken palate required 4 titanium screws to hold it to a plate that held pieces of her face together. An inserted synthetic film held her eye in her now deformed eye socket. The surgery left her with a tracheotomy and a wired jaw. She heard the explanation of what happened but her mind couldn't process it. The news media kept the story alive throughout the holidays with frequent updates about Ruffolo's progress and the guilty pleas of the young men who had done this. Except for one man, Ryan Cushing, the 18 year old who heaved the turkey out the window. The charges against him would max out at 25 years in prison.

In August of 2005 Ryan and Victoria would meet in court for the first time. Nine months after the incident she was still undergoing physical rehabilitation but she walked in the courtroom under her own strength. On that day Ryan pleaded guilty to a lesser charge and received 6 months in jail with 5 years probation which included psychological counseling and public service. Why did he receive such a light sentence after this a cold callous act? The plea bargain came at the request of Victoria Ruffolo. After he pleaded guilty Ryan was guided by his lawyer to approach Miss Ruffolo. She threw her arms around the sobbing boy, stroked his hair and whispered in his ear that she forgave him, that she loved him and that she wanted the best for his life. The scene in the courtroom left even Ryan's experienced defense attorney in tears and choked up the news reporters who made their live reports. The papers called it 'A moment of Grace.' Victoria had given up her right of retribution and gotten something far more valuable, the dissipation of anger and the restoration of hope. In a gesture as cleansing as the tears washing down her damaged face and the face of the foolish damaged boy, she had single handedly saved the life of this teenager.

Grace, makes people gracious...When you encounter ultimate grace, the grace of God, it will turn your world upside down. Your sinful selfish mind cannot process it, nor can your reason really understand it. All your emotions can say is 'me? Really? You love me God?' You see, from the beginning God has only had one plan of salvation —grace. It was always grace. The word grace is used 155 times in the Bible and used 130 times by the Apostle Paul because he was truly captured by grace. He couldn't understand it and he couldn't escape it. So he spent the rest of his life telling the story of God's amazing grace. John Newton was also captured by grace and wrote the song we think of every time we hear the word. He always referred to himself as 'that old blasphemer and slave trader.' Grace is dangerous, it is God's dynamite that blows the sin right out of your soul. You be careful when you think about grace, or teach about it, or try to explain it, because grace will put an unbreakable hold on your very soul and you to will be forever captured, captured by grace.

Ephesians 2:8&9 NIV- "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast."

– *Andy Jones*

<p><u>Last Week's</u></p> <p><u>Attendance:</u></p> <p>Sunday Morning.....57</p> <p>Sunday Night.....68</p> <p>Wednesday Night.....107</p>	<p><u>Echo Hills Ministry:</u></p> <p>This Week's Sermon: David Senn, Sr.</p> <p>REACH Ministry Director: David Senn, Jr.</p>	<p><u>Recent Contributions:</u></p> <p>Contribution 8/24.....\$1,206</p> <p>Contribution 8/17.....\$1,425</p> <p>Contribution 8/10.....\$2,522</p> <p>Contribution 8/3.....\$1,810</p> <p>Contribution 7/27.....\$1,800</p> <p>Weekly Budget Needs.....\$1,681</p>
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- New classes! The Wednesday night adult Bible Class is beginning a new study on 1 Corinthians (taught by Tom James) and the Sunday night adult Bible class has begun a study on the book of James, (taught by Jimmy Arnold). Everyone is welcome to attend!

- The website has been updated with new pictures and video! Please take a few minutes to take a look at 'www.echohillschurch.org' and let Judy Van Dyke know if there's any changes/additions that need to be made.
- In efforts to keep the bulletin up to date, please remember to email Melissa Montgomery at "mdholley@gmail.com" with any needed updates and/or removals to our list. Thank you!

Serving on the Lord's Table this month...

August 3: Chris Post

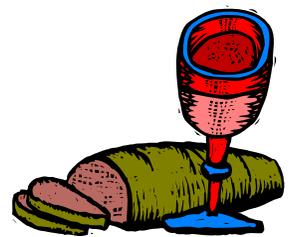
August 17: Johnnie Anderson

August 10: Brandon Montgomery

August 24: Chad Jones

Announcements...Jared Dickens

August 31: Rich Van Dyke



If you are unable to serve, please contact Chris Hayes at 948-1071 or uthayes24@gmail.com

Those to keep in your Prayers:



- JEAN MCCASLAND SUFFERING WITH ALZHEIMER'S & DEMENTIA
- CAROL SOUTHALL (Mother of Blake Southall) DECLINING VISION
- LINDA ALLEN RECOVERING AT HOME
- CALEB WILSON
- CARDS, CALLS & VISITS MUCH APPRECIATED AT:
309 ROBERT CARTWRIGHT DR.
GOODLETTSVILLE, TN 37072
(615) 851-5508
- ANITA SCHMITT (Friend of Ron & Jenny Lux)
- DAVID GURCHIEK
- BLAKE & SARAH SOUTHALL
- LARRY FOSTER
- MARGARET JONES
- JERRIE JOHNSON (Mother of Matt Johnson)
- SANDY THOMAS (Barbara Brake's daughter)
- NADINE DANIEL
- KENZIE LEDING (friend of Emily Kuykendall)
- EMILY KUYKENDALL
- MARGARET SMITH BROKEN WRIST
- ROWEENA GOOLSBY
- EVELYN ARNOLD
- JEFF & KIM BRAKE
- SLATER STOVALL (Cousin of Chad Jones)
- VINAY & SUNEETHA KUMAR
- DONNA EDMONDS (mother of Jon) RECOVERING FROM CAR ACCIDENT
- JOHNNIE ANDERSON FAMILY

<p>Echo Hills church of Christ 1106 Campbell Road Goodlettsville, TN 37072 Email: contact@echohillschurch.org</p>	<p>We're on the web! www.echohillschurch.org</p>	<p>Sunday Worship Classes: 9:15 am & Worship: 10:15 Sunday Night Classes: 6pm Wednesday Night Classes: 7pm</p>
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