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Treasures Among Us

Wanda Phelps

Wanda Phelps' mom and dad, Frank and Florine Harris, were from Edgar Springs. When Wanda was born, Florine was

17-18 years old; and the family lived on South Oak Street. Her dad worked at Rolla Feed Mill, and soon there were two little boys, Richard and Doug, who were born into the family. The growing family lived on South Cedar Street by then.

They often spent their summers going to Edgar Springs where they helped the family with threshing, butchering, cooking and gardening. Wanda's Grandpa Edgar would take them fishing, and she once caught a snapping turtle. She says she was scared to death by that snapper!

When she was little, they went to church at Evening Shade Church of Christ in an old school building near Edgar Springs. The summer when she was 15 years old, she and two girlfriends, Mary Anna (Harris) Melton and Francine House, were all baptized into Christ. By this time, there was a church building in Edgar Springs, but there was no baptistery; so the girls were baptized in the Licking church building.

Wanda met Geoffrey Phelps when they were both students at Rolla High School. She graduated from RHS in 1963. Their wedding was the last one at the old church building on 7th and State Streets. They immediately moved to Sedalia where Geoffrey was serving in the Air Force. Geoffrey sometimes had problems going to church back then, but he was eventually taught and baptized by Bill Snow in about 1980. After Geoffrey's

baptism, he and Wanda worked in the church bus ministry picking up busloads of kids and bringing them to Bible classes and worship services.

Wanda and Geoffrey had two daughters, Cynthia and Melanie. Cynthia lives in Clinton where she works the night shift in the hospital. Melanie lives in St. James and works in Rolla. Sadly, Geoffrey passed away December 25, 2003.

While they lived in Sedalia, Wanda first worked at a shoe repair shop selling sewing machines. She did that for about a year but wasn't earning enough money, so she went to work for Montgomery Ward. She had learned to cook when she was young, so she soon started cooking in restaurants and has been "cooking ever since."

She worked at Dairy Mart and at the Elm Restaurant in St. James. She also worked for Italo's Italian Restaurant, both in Rolla and in St. Robert. She cooked for several years at G&D Steakhouse in Rolla, where she was working on September 11, 2001. A customer came in and told them about the first plane hitting the Trade Towers, so they turned on the small TV in the back, just in time to see the second plane hit the other tower. That day is a very vivid memory for her.

She later cooked at the Walmart Distribution Center and at Presbyterian Manor. She retired from cooking as of July 1, 2015, but she still makes terrific cookies (and just about anything else imaginable!).

Cooking is not her only interest, however. She is also an accomplished seamstress and used to make most of her own clothes as well as clothing for her daughters. She even made a leisure suit for Geoffrey at one time.

Another of her interests is oil painting, especially scenery. Her main goal is to do more painting because she finds it to be so relaxing and rewarding.

Wanda has always volunteered her time and talents whenever possible. She volunteered at the Veterans' Home in St. James for quite a while. She and her mom worked in the Clothing Room helping needy people find clothing for themselves and their children. She also volunteers with the church food pantry helping those in need to supplement their food supplies. She is also involved with the ladies Bible study group on Thursdays at Park Meadows Apartments. She is especially fond of the song, "Our God, He is Alive!" She says, "It just fills my soul and makes me feel better."

She collects owls, but her real love is collecting art work. Her prized pieces are paintings done by P. J. Webber, a family friend who passed away several years ago. She also has paintings by David Plank and by the older lady who taught her to paint. She describes herself as a homebody, and home is where she enjoys being.

Wanda has a sweet, generous spirit; she is always smiling and doing something helpful for others. Visitors to her home usually come away with some of her homemade cookies or a plant or even a start from one of her plants. She is truly a Treasure Among Us.

NOTE: *This is the 25th in a series highlighting noble Christian women in our congregation. We truly have many "treasures among us" in the women who exemplify Christianity in all its facets and have much to teach us all.*

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Walk with God

by Kathy Webber

*In the beginning was God,
and God chose to create man.*

*Then God created man a helpmate;
this was simply part of God's plan.*

*Someone to walk beside man;
someone to share his life.*

*Someone to help man walk with God;
a special someone, who became man's wife.*

*Today standing before God, family and friends,
we pledge our love to one another.*

*Love is a choice, and love is taught;
as I was--by my father and mother.*

*With you, I choose to be kind and patient;
I choose to endure and to bear all.*

*I choose to walk beside you;
and as God said, to help you if you fall.*

*In this vast number of mankind,
it is you, I have chosen to love*

*But what will sustain us through life's tomorrows,
is our focused walk with God above.*

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Linda Henry



My mom was always in the Church of Christ, and my dad was baptized when I was 5. After Dad's baptism, both were VERY active, in Abilene, Texas. As I grew up, I accompanied my engineer father on preaching fill-in's and home Bible studies, and I worked with my mom preparing teaching materials for three-year-olds. My "home Church" was extremely mission-minded. Missionaries reported there every Wednesday night in the summer. They often stayed in our area on extended furloughs.

I decided to be a missionary myself during 7th grade, so I chose a career that would allow me to do missions on my own in case I didn't marry. I became an English teacher to influence teens and support myself in Australia, or wherever God supplied the opportunity in an English-speaking country. During my freshman year at Abilene Christian University, I met Bible major Calvin Henry who was preparing for a life in Latin America as a missionary. Like me, he also decided to be a missionary in 7th grade.

We worked in the U.S. for seven years in different preaching settings. We established a new congregation that grew well and prospered. We worked with others—one with elders, two without—so we would have a variety of congregational experiences. We spent two summers studying exclusively missions at ACU in preparation for the mission field.

In our first year in Costa Rica, I studied in a language school for nine months with five hours each day in the classroom and hours of daily home study. Once I became fluent in Spanish, it became natural for me and adjustments came more easily.

In the beginning we met in our home in San Jose', Costa Rica and began getting to know our neighbors, who also were new. On Calvin's 30th birthday, five teen neighbors and a couple who had done a Bible correspondence course were all baptized in a river. Suddenly, we had a congregation meeting in our house...for the next two years! When we reached 80 in attendance, we moved to a rented location.

We served 11 years in Costa Rica and found a friendly, educated culture where people accepted us as a part of their lives. Best of all, they listened to the Word and

God's commands. In the process, they became our dear friends to this day. Later we served three years in Colombia where we made lifetime friends and helped establish a congregation that has grown despite great difficulties. Lastly, we served at Baxter Institute in Honduras, a Christian college for those who want to work in ministry. After 22 years of living in Latin America, we returned to the U.S. and began training missionaries.

Currently, we serve each year in several Latin American countries, including Colombia, Mexico, and Honduras. When we go to Latin America, we visit 8-10 congregations where we have placed mission teams. We stay three weeks, one week in each congregation, and listen to their joys, challenges and struggles. My role is to "be family" to these women, who often go several years without seeing their families. Also, I conduct women's seminars for ladies' days and retreats, and train children's teachers and ladies' teachers.

In one place in Mexico in recent months, 32 women attended who already were teaching in a congregation that was four years old that week. Twenty-six of them had been taught by the four missionary women on that team, and only two of them were Christians before that team began a new work in their neighborhood! Amazing to me was the fact that they chose to attend on a week day, so many of them took off work to be there from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. They were excited and energetic in their participation. Each of the four 1½ hour sessions was preceded by an encouraging scripture lesson about sharing the Word, then a prayer by another sister. All of them were local women, not missionary wives! The missionary women continue to rotate in teaching beside the local women as they train them to teach. They are in the process of turning over the work to the local women.

My experiences on the mission field have taught me to be more focused on others' needs, more flexible in what I expect of others, more respectful of different manners of doing things. Attempting to "become all things to all women" is challenging and induces growth.

For young women preparing to enter the mission field, hear this. "You don't have to be perfect to serve God. Just be perfectly willing to accept others who are imperfect in ways you may not be. Be ready to learn, to listen, to love. There is no better life. You can live happily anywhere."

Learning how in so many ways all the women I get to know are alike continues to surprise me. When I discover those likenesses, we become true sisters and share our journeys, our tough times, our weaknesses. I learn again

in each friendship how much God supplies in my needs and in theirs.

When I encounter women on the mission field, I do what you do in your congregation. I just do it among women, most of whom have no previous knowledge of the Lord's Church. I teach women's classes, and focus on God's plan for them and on preparing them to teach Scripture. I sympathize with them and teach them to be sympathetic for hurting women who need support and encouragement. I teach future missionary women and follow up with them via Skype or mail after they are on the field. I laugh, love, giggle, do dutiful things and some silly things. It has become a normal life for me—just as normal to be there as to be here in the U.S.

By far, the hardest part is distance from family and close friends, particularly in times of illness or emergency. I couldn't just jump up and GO to be with them, nor could they come to me. Women on the mission field become instant elders' wives—not literally, but in every practical way. There is no one else in the flesh to meet the needs of these women and families.

By the same token, that very issue—becoming intimately caring and upholding them in their difficulties or loneliness or temptations—is the most rewarding part of working in missions. That bonds us through our dependence on God in those moments. It is a mutual gift.

When we were in other countries, my mom came every two years to visit. She learned to love our new Christians, despite the differences. My mom-in-law has come to love Latin women, both in Latin America and here in stateside congregations. As adults, our children spark interest in missions in their fellow members wherever they are—talking about what we are doing or praying for us in emergencies and even telling of the needs Christians in faraway places. All three children married faithful Christians. Our son and his wife have been serving as missionaries for seven years in China. All our children are active in their congregations, influenced, I like to believe, by our expectations and God's. They do not see missions as a great sacrifice. They know it is a happy, gratifying life.

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GRASS IN THE FLOWER BED

I just love tulips! They are one of the first flowers to bloom in the spring and have such bright colors. Their unusual shape really catches my eye. In one of our earlier

homes, we had an excellent flowerbed where the tulips came up every year, and my children just loved them.

During my recent reminiscing about those days, I was wishing I had tulips in my flower bed. I searched online, and to my amazement, there was a company offering pre-chilled tulip bulbs that I could plant now and even hope to have blooming this season. Without a thought, I sent off an order for those bulbs.

Within two days, those bulbs had arrived in my mail. Fortunately, they arrived on a Saturday morning. I had no choice but to get the flower bed prepared to plant the bulbs now.

Have you ever noticed how grass grows really, really well in the flower bed? I had not grown flowers for several years, and I was amazed at how thick the grass had become. My husband was a big help using the shovel to dig up clumps so I could pull out the Bermuda grass and make it look almost like a flower bed. It took most of the afternoon to get the job done. My grandson showed up just as we finished the hard part, and I let him plant the tulip bulbs.

Of course, the work hasn't ended...I will have to be constantly pulling the grass out of the flower bed. I must make sure the plants are watered regularly; and I'll have to watch out for snails and other creatures which might want to damage the plants.

But all the work is worth it because of the beauty that will be enjoyed by many.

There's another flower bed that needs constant tending - and that's me! When I obeyed my Lord and was baptized for the remission of sins, my flower bed was emptied of all the weeds and sins in my life. It was ready for planting.

I would like to think that my flower bed only contains the pretty flowers in life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. But, alas, the weeds of impatience, bitterness, sharp speech, and others often rear their ugly heads in my life.

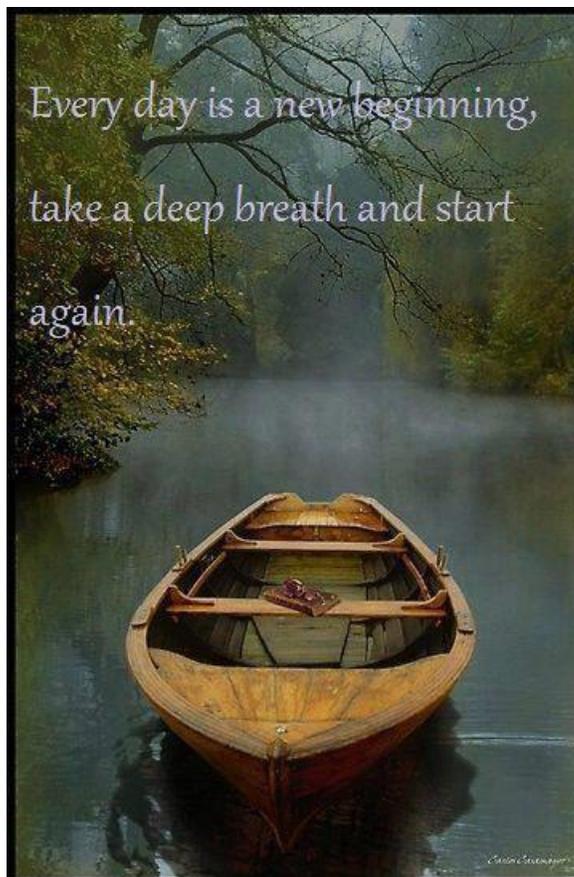
It takes a constant awareness of the "weeds" in my life and grace and help from God to keep them from coming back. I need to spend time in His word and in daily prayer with Him to keep those sins from taking hold in my life.

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Isn't it amazing how the same God
who created oceans, mountains,
and galaxies,
also created you
because He thought
the world needed one of you, too?

Emily Starski Ayers,
Casper Church of Christ, Casper, Wyoming
January 27, 2016.



Sunrise
The Newsletter For Women By Christian Women

Sunrise is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveLove.org>. Click on Resources, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

