

# PastorCare

## West Michigan

*Shepherding the Shepherds & Sheep*

April 2019

## When the Care Givers Need Care

On December 31, 2018 I received a wonderful email from a dear friend with a timely description of how he believes God works in the lives of His people.

*I have been meaning to send you a note this Christmas Season since we received your email. I hope and pray that Sue is doing better with the use of her arms. That must have been terrifying to say the least. After reading about Sue, your job and the infestation of mice in your new home it sounded like the plagues in the Book of Exodus meets the Book of Job. Everyone is quick to say that God never gives you more than you can handle, but the truth is that God never gives you more than He can handle. I just wanted to let you know that that you have been and will continue to be in our prayers. Have a Blessed New Year!*

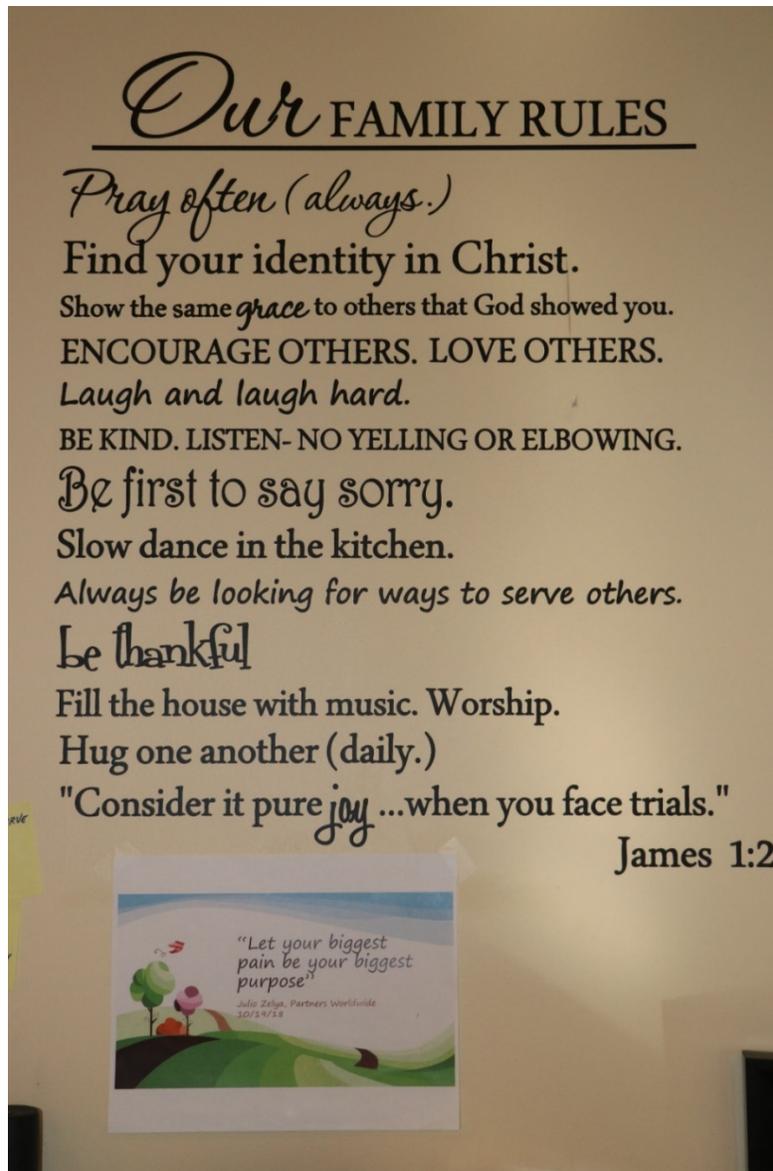
God never gives us more than He can handle. In the midst of adversity, Sue and I have experienced the goodness of God and the generosity of His people. We have experienced an outpouring of love and prayers from so many wonderful people. One dear friend blessed us with this beautiful arrangement for Christmas. We are here to testify to the truth that our God continues to bring JOY to His world even when His people who are in Christ are going through tough times.



***My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:2-4 (NKJV)***

I don't remember ever hearing anyone quote James 1:2 as their life verse.

However, our friend Fred Mellema has James 1:2 painted on his kitchen wall! I was impressed, so I took a photo of it.



Fred said one of the first things he did when he moved into his house in Lowell four years ago was to have these words painted on his kitchen wall where he would see them and be reminded every day.

## **“Let your biggest pain be your biggest purpose.”**

God's desire is to refine our character. He knows that our pursuit of happiness is often the counterfeit replacement for joy. Happiness fades quickly in the midst of pain and adversity. True joy depends on our relationship with Jesus, regardless of the difficulty of our circumstances. God patiently teaches us how to press on through the challenges and adversities of life in a world that is sinful and broken.

God tests our faith to produce patience in us. Patience is listed as one of the fruits the Holy Spirit produces in our lives when we are totally surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. God says let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Patience will take us much further in God's direction than anger or resentment ever will. God is using my shoulder injury and Sue's Polymyalgia Rheumatica "PMR" to teach us a lot about patience. God is also using our adversity as an opportunity for developing many wonderful new friendships.



After my rotator cuff surgery on June 7, I took many walks through our neighborhood at different times of day and night. On one of my walks I noticed a man standing on his driveway talking with the mailman. So I crossed over to the other side of the street so I could say Hi to him. As I approached his driveway the mailman drove away. I said hello and extended my right arm to shake his hand. That led to a wonderful conversation that lasted 1.5 hours. A new heart and soul friendship was born. His name is Melvin Crawford. Sue and I are so blessed with our friendship with Melvin and his delightful wife Mary!



In July I started physical therapy at Hulst Jepsen with Kerri Boeve. She is a wonderful physical therapist and now we are friends! After I asked Kerri to share her story with me, I told her that one day I would like to share her story in the PastorCare Newsletter to bless and encourage others. She graciously agreed. I also invited three of the physical therapist aides to share a little of their story.



*I love the physical therapy profession and the opportunities that I am given to help impact people's lives. I have worked hard through roughly 19+ years of schooling to get here. I have listened to hundreds of lectures, taken what seems like a million notes, and studied countless hours to learn each required lesson that is necessary to be a competent clinician.*

*However, I find it ironic that sometimes the shortest and most simple messages are the ones that are the hardest to grasp. You know, the ones that we hear several times and still need to receive multiple reminders.*

***The messages that don't require hours of studying, but, instead, a simple moment to just stop and listen. That message for me is as follows: just have faith. It is simple. Have faith that everything is a part of a greater plan.***

*We all go through ups and downs through life and it can be difficult to understand why things happen when they do. Physical therapy is rarely a place that people enjoy seeking out. Most people are told by their physician that they must attend, due to an unexpected injury or a planned surgery. It can seem to be by chance or because of bad luck. During therapy sessions, we share stories, we laugh, and we play games to build strong relationships. But no matter how positive therapy is, it can still be a trying time for patients. A time of questioning 'why me', 'why now', and 'how long will this last'. An unplanned and unpleasant surprise. But it is all part of a greater plan.*

*During the 'get to know you' phase of therapy, patients often ask me "what nationality are you" or "where do you come from". My quick response is always "I am Korean". This often leads to questions of "are you adopted" and "do you ever wonder about your birth parents or what life would be like if you were still over there?". I feel lucky to be resolute in my answer. I have said it so many times that it almost feels scripted, but it comes from a place of true peace. I do not know why my biological parents were unfit to care for me, but because of this, two individuals across the world were able to have the gift of a second child. In*

turn, I have been blessed to have grown up with two loving parents (and a sister) that have supported my wackiest endeavors, loved me through the worst of my temper tantrums, and challenged me to grow into the person that I am today. It is because of them that I have been given so many great opportunities—opportunities that I probably would not have had otherwise. I have faith that these circumstances in my life were all part of the greater plan, and I am exactly where I am meant to be.

As a physical therapist, it is my job to treat physical impairments. To provide education, compassionate care, and support. To increase range of motion, strength and improve movement patterns for a smooth return to normal life. But, I hope that I can also teach a much greater message that I, myself, am constantly returning to. I hope that I can be the person that believes in each patient, even when they do not believe in themselves. The one who can be a daily reminder for them to 'just have faith'. Faith that this moment is temporary and that it will get better. Faith that life does not happen by chance. Faith that God uses each experience to lead us to new people or opportunities that we may have not otherwise encountered.

God's plan for each of us is magnificent. It may or may not be what we would choose for ourselves, but in these moments we can just have faith that we are exactly where we are supposed to be.

Kerri Boeve, Physical Therapist | DPT, Cert. MDT  
HULST JEPSEN PHYSICAL THERAPY



*My name is Zoie Hulst. I am a junior at Grand Valley State University studying Allied Health Science with a Pre-PA emphasis and Spanish. In my free time I am probably working on my PA school application for this upcoming spring, traveling, volunteering, or working in a health care environment. My entire life I have wanted to go into the medical field. I have a passion for getting to know people and what lights their soul on fire. This aspect of my personality has led me to the path of pursuing a career as a physician assistant. Every day as a college student is a challenge, but I trust this path God has placed before me. I have had the privilege of working at Hulst Jepsen Physical Therapy over the last couple years, and there I have gotten to know so many people and their passions. It is such a blessing being able to hear so many stories and meet so many people on this journey towards becoming a health care professional.*



*My name is Taylor Pratt and I am a sophomore at Cornerstone University studying exercise science, with an interest in Physical Therapy. I also work at Hulst Jepsen Physical Therapy and that is where I met John. My family, friends, and faith are the most important aspects in my life. I have such an amazing and supportive family, they have encouraged me through every step in my life. I believe that God has a reason for every person that has been put in my life, whether they were a good or bad influence, there is always a lesson that He wants me to learn along the way. The relationships I have made with people in my life have showed me how strong God's Love is and I am continuing to learn that.*



*My name is Ellie Dionise and I am a junior at grand valley state university studying biomedical sciences. I enjoy meeting people and building relationships with them. That is why I love my job as a physical therapists aide.*

*The most important thing in my life is my mom, dad, and brothers. I always look forward to going home and spending time with them. They always make me laugh and push me to be a better person. I am so grateful to have them in my life.*

We never could have imagined all that God has been teaching us about patience as we discovered the horrendous mouse infestation in the house we purchased in August. God has taught us so much about patience and endurance through Sue's illness. You can see the joy in their smiles.



Through it all, God found a way to connect Sue with her wonderful new friend, Dr. Karen Garibaldi.

We are so grateful for the progress Sue is making with her Polymyalgia Rheumatica "PMR". The movement is returning to her arms. The strength in her arms is returning more slowly. So far Sue has not had any flair-ups with her PMR, and for that we are very thankful! Sue will have to remain on Prednisone until January 2020. If she has any flair-ups, it will add months of continuing to take Prednisone because of the very slow and gradual process of weaning off that steroid. Sue has also started physical therapy at Hulst Jepsen.

We thank God for Jim Broersma, one of our early responders who coached us and guided us through the process of evacuating our house and how to safely clean the few things we took with us. Jim also told me I needed to find a building hygienist. I didn't even know they existed. There is no doubt that God guided my Google search for a building hygienist to connect me with Jim Strobridge.

When Jim Strobridge read through the email I sent him and looked at the photos of the mouse infestation, he said it is the worst he has seen in his career of over thirty years. He even asked permission to use the photos to warn other clients about what can happen when rodents are not properly dealt with. We gave him full permission to use everything because we want to help others avoid what we have been through. Jim has been coaching and guiding us by phone and through email every step of the way through the demolition, decontamination, and remediation process.

Part of our journey through 45 years of marriage is learning to make all of our decisions together in unity without me persuading Sue. We have made incredible progress over the past three years. It has been very important to both of us through this time to not proceed with anything until we reach a decision together without trying to persuade each other, that we are both at peace with. It has slowed down and improved our decision making process.

## **We Decided Not to Take Legal Action**

Sue and I receive lots of advice and recommendations from people who have our best interest in mind. Not everyone agrees about what we should do. Many people advised us to take legal action against everyone involved with our purchase of this house: the realtor, the home inspector, and the former owners. We sought wisdom and advice from attorneys, other professionals, family and friends.

When we lacked wisdom—we asked God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach. We asked God to confirm His wisdom in our hearts with His Word and His peace.

God guided us not to take legal action against anyone. He confirmed our decision with His peace. Some folks think we are crazy. But we believe our legal system would have driven us crazy. It is so easy to become consumed with anger, bitterness, seeking justice, and even revenge. We believe it was wiser and healthier for us to leave it in God's hands. We are moving forward in faith.

## **We Decided Not to Sell the House**

It would have been easier to walk away from that house. No one would have faulted us for doing so. Many people said if it was their house, there is no way they would move back in! One lady told us when she found four mice in her house, she sold the house and bought another house. We decided not to show her the mouse infestation photos.

We learned something valuable and helpful from every person who shared their thoughts, ideas, and messages they believe they received from the Lord for us. We received every comment, every statement, every question, and every recommendation as an expression of love and compassion and concern for our well-being.

We made our decision together by listening to God and remaining faithful to our shared family values.

- We will not take any chances with Sue's health.
- We will be absolutely certain it is safe for Sue before we move back into that house.
- We will separate our feelings about the people who sold us the house from the house itself.
- We know God is the Master of cleaning, restoring, rebuilding, and transforming.
- We have the freedom to sell this house later if we want to.

Jim Strobridge, our building hygienist, was the only professional who was right about the mice being everywhere and behind everything in the basement. Jim was the only one who said from the beginning and remained consistent to the end that they were also in the kitchen. We believe God connected us with Jim, so we decided to trust and act on his wisdom and expertise.

We had to know for sure if the mouse infestation extended into our kitchen. Therefore, I purchased an inspection camera for taking photos under the cabinets and inside the walls of the kitchen. After I sent the photos of mice activity under the base cabinets to Jim, he said there is no question the cabinets should be removed along with two feet of drywall. Because the kitchen cabinets were stick built on site in 1978, there was no way to remove them and reuse them.

Jim Strobridge was right again! We found mice nests and mice feces under every cabinet base. When we opened up the walls, they were clean with zero evidence of mice activity. I feel great about this! Now we know for sure that we have removed and cleaned everything related to the mouse infestation! There are no lingering questions or doubts about anything that could negatively impact Sue's health.



**Sue's well-being is worth the cost of a new kitchen!**



## We thank God for the incredible gift of our friend, Forrest Cousino!

Forrest was in the group that received our December Newsletter on Friday night, December 19. Saturday morning I was moved to tears by his wonderful reply.

*I read your letter and am pleased that your wife is feeling relief. I offer some advice on how to proceed & an overall approach to the decontamination and reconstruction. I am the founder of Pastors R & R. My company, Cousino Restoration, which I started over 45 years ago, does these type of cleanups. We are specialists in contaminated condition clean ups and sanitation of the worst of the worst.*



A **DKI** Member Company

On Friday, Jan. 25 Forrest sent Mike Stevens and Kelly Streichert on a 200 mile journey from Perrysburg, OH to our house. On Saturday, Mike disinfected and sterilized the entire basement and contents with the SteraMist machine. Mike is the Division Manager of Cousino Medical Services.



A **DKI** Member Company



SteraMist was developed by the US government after 9/11/2001. The mandate was to develop a biological solution that will kill anthrax upon contact without harming anything else. SteraMist kills anthrax, Ebola, and other bacteria and pathogens in the air or on hard surfaces instantly on contact. Cousino Medical Services is the leading company in the nation using this technology.



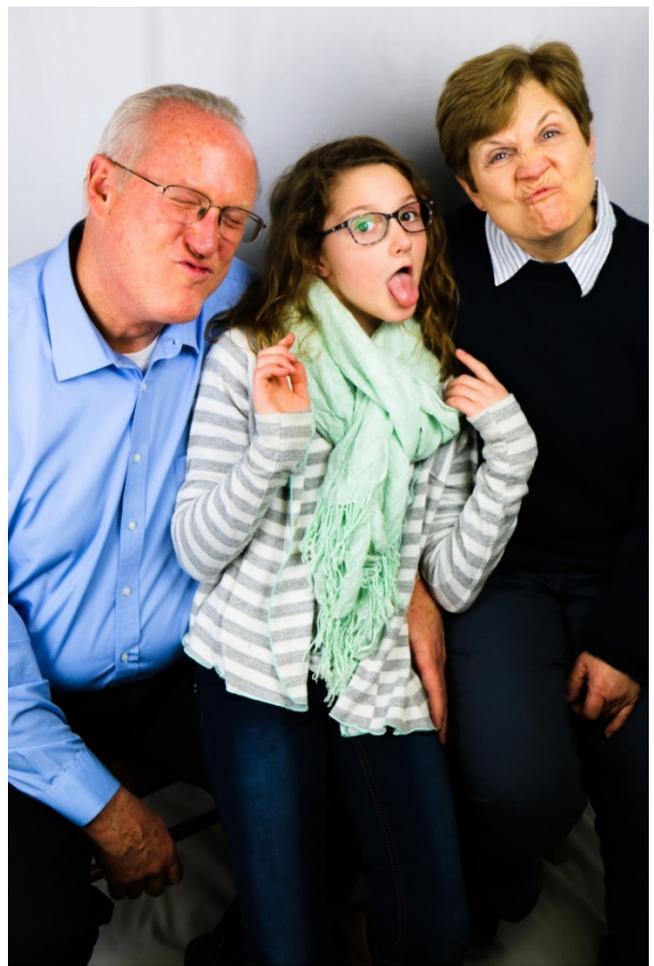
On Tuesday, March 19, 2019 Mike Stevens returned with Heidi Adoure-Zehain, one of his best technicians to decontaminate and sterilize our entire main floor, garage, out building, and storage trailer.



## **We have good reason to believe our house is the most bacteria and pathogen free house in West Michigan!**

When Sue stopped by the house after work on Thursday March 21, she said it smelled and felt so clean and fresh. Her joy filled statement was music to my ears! We want you to see how much better Sue is doing. We believe these photos are worth thousands of words!







Our house in Byron Center serves as the main office for PastorCare West Michigan. We host Board meetings and confidential coaching sessions.

I am currently being coached by Carlos Hidalgo and by Jay Hidalgo. They both encouraged me to begin leading pastor small groups in addition to my one to one confidential coaching. The timing is right and I am acting on their recommendation.

I have been meeting one on one with several pastors every week to explore their interest in participating in a pastors small group. I have been greatly encouraged to learn there is a high level of interest in participating in a small group. There are three or four different areas of focus for these groups.

We designed our basement rebuild to accommodate a variety of small groups for pastors. It will be one large room about 25' by 25'. On the left side there will be a gathering area with a couch and chairs. On the left side back corner there will be a small video studio for those who want to grow and refine their communication and presentation skills. On the right side far back wall under the window there will be a small conference table with chairs. On the right side we will have a ping pong table. We believe it is healthy and enjoyable for pastors to play together as well as pray together.



We thank God for many contractors, service professionals, and realtors who have made inspections, answered questions, gave recommendations, and submitted estimates: Jim Strobridge, Strobridge Health and Safety; Forrest Cousino, Cousino Restoration; Ted Brummel, SERVPRO of Southwest Grand Rapids; Phil McCormack III, Construction Services of West Michigan; Dave Richardson, Richardson Building & Home Improvement; Mike Cooley, Jr. and Frank Brenner, River Town Painting and Construction; Jeff Uherek, ProCare Restoration Services; Kyle Gummere, Windpoint Realty; Larry Martin, Keller Williams Rivertown; Rob Hilaski, Godwin Heating & Cooling; Tim Begoske, Field Controls; Chris Hall, ICCF Construction Supervisor, Community Homes Initiative; Mike Holcomb, Home Inspector General; Luis Tauler, Tauler Heating & Cooling; Brian Dewilde, West Michigan Insulation; Joe Dykhouse, Leading Edge Insulation Services, and others.

We thank God for wonderful volunteer workers: Randy Luth, Andrew Smith, Jeff Smith, Aaron, Sarah, Alex, Logan, and Addison Seaberg, Steve VanderBroek, Tim VanderBroek, Gary Tenhaaf, Shawn DeWitt, Paul Worster, Paul Marco, and others.



The response to our GoFundMe page has been amazing. We received the first half of our goal in one month from 100 people!

We set the goal before realizing we would have to totally rebuild our kitchen. Being blessed with a lot of volunteer labor has been a tremendous help in reducing costs.

<https://www.gofundme.com/healing-for-my-wife-and-rebuilding-our-house>.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support for the ongoing and growing ministry of PastorCare.

Please make checks payable to:  
PastorCare West Michigan  
8056 Burlingame Ave. SW  
Bryon Center, MI 49315.

Secure Online contributions are made through PayPal on the website: [www.pastorcarewm.org](http://www.pastorcarewm.org)

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*Shepherding the Shepherds & Sheep*



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