



Love Thy Neighbor Ministries

Newsletter July, August, September 2021

Volume XVII Issue 3

Ministry Update by Steve Kacprzak

My apologies for the tardiness of this newsletter. The last three months have been a rollercoaster ride for this ministry. From on-again, off-again visitation rules at the nursing homes, to a bout of vertigo followed by cataract surgery for me, our visitation and group outreach has not been as active as we had planned. Coordination of available time to visit different residents at different facilities is very challenging. But we are visiting and sharing God's love and His Word whenever, wherever, and as often as we can.



Rose and Virginia

We recruited and trained three new volunteers during this time but facility restrictions have slowed them from starting.

The *Good Neighbor Get Together* events were restarted, with some necessary modifications, in May and they continue on the third Thursday of each month. It's so good to be back together! Our guests and volunteers are enjoying the time we spend together and the caregivers are enjoying some needed respite time. So far we've not been successful in recruiting new guests or

volunteers and I suspect that the Delta Variant has been at least partially responsible. It's interesting to note that the Alzheimer's Association support groups have not resumed in-person meetings.

We're hoping to resume our *History of the Bible Traveling Bible Exhibit* in October.

On a positive note, the *Stitches For Love* program is active, thanks to coordinator Virginia Kacprzak and her volunteers and acquaintances who continue to hand-make beautiful items. Most of the items now being made will be given as Christmas gifts.



Steve at Pueblo Springs

And speaking of Christmas, as I write this, we're making plans for our *Blessings in a Bag* Christmas gift program for nursing home residents. Watch for details in our next newsletter.

A Woman After God's Own Heart By Cecilia Anderson



I am going to tell you about a very special and remarkable lady, Geneva Patterson, who preferred being called Neva. She loved Jesus with all her heart, mind and soul and spoke of him to everyone she met. She was born in Virginia, September 4, 1912 - the same year Arizona became a state. Neva did not come to Arizona until the 1950s when she came to help her sister, May, raise her family. Neva cherished May. I rarely had a conversation with Neva that she didn't tell of some wonderful thing May had said or done. Neva knew how to love.



Neva

I met Neva in the early 1970s. We met in Choir, singing together. I remember taking her out to visit my Mom, which was a two-hour drive away. We sang the entire trip, never singing the

same song twice. Years passed and I was not an active part of her life but I did see her every week as we came to church. Neva was a nurse by trade but the job she loved most was being a “greeter” at the door of the church. She loved getting to hug as many people as possible and welcome them to the assembly of saints.

Neva never married, never learned to drive a car; she took the bus to work. Wherever she went she would talk about how much Jesus loved us. She kept contact with old friends back in New Boston, Virginia, and around the country. She enjoyed writing letters. She kept an address book but knew many of the addresses by heart. Regularly at Christmas time she would send over 100 cards with personalized messages of encouragement. Neva knew her postman well.



Neva's friends Dede and Louise

She had a couple of close friends: Dede, to whom she spoke daily in person or on the phone, and Louise, whom she prayed for and encouraged almost as often. Neva was part of a close-knit women's group for many, many years. They loved to keep each other's company. They loved to tell jokes and laugh. Neva was very active, eating out, going to Bible study, or shopping.

I got to be part of giving her 100-year birthday party. What fun that was! The whole church came. Her favorite restaurant, Chick-Fil-A, gave her birthday parties for the next 7 years. Lots of people knew Neva – only a few visited.

A couple of months after she turned 107 Neva took a fall and broke her left shoulder and upper arm. When she got out of rehab her family decided she should go into a nursing home. She had been fully independent, living in her own home, her whole life, despite being mostly blind due to her age. During the time she was in the care home she was rarely downcast. There was one day I came in to see her and she admitted she was a little down, but then, she said, she remembered she had Jesus with her! Smiling and laughing she was lifted up.



The caption to this photo reads: “Virginia about 1918. Geneva Patterson standing on backboard with her father, brother, Earl and Daniela one of her four sisters.”

We would always sing together before I would close a visit. I was able to visit with her every Monday right up until the week of Thanksgiving when the pandemic separated us. Neva died December 9, 2020. It was reported to me that she was singing and praying quite loudly all night. When the staff went to check on her in the early morning after she had quieted, they found she had passed away. 108 years, 4 months and 5 days in this life. Sadly, I couldn't be with her during this time but Jesus was.

Having a forever friend to grow old with is a real blessing of God. If you don't have a forever friend I would encourage you to let Love

Thy Neighbor Ministries help you find one.

Cecilia Anderson has been a volunteer visitor for Love Thy Neighbor Ministries since 2003.



Memorial Gifts received since our last newsletter

In memory of Virginia Dixon

From Carolyn Farley

In memory of Ken Budd

From Kathryn Farris

In memory of Richard Nickles

From Linda & Richy Nickles