

Family, Faith and Favorite Things

By Linda Stephens

Favorite thing Gray wheel barrow. Several years ago, I purchased this small, gray wheelbarrow to use doing yard chores. It's the handiest "thing" ever. It's lightweight and easy to handle. In my little gray wheelbarrow, countless numbers of loads of weeds, branches, dirt, leaves and miscellaneous stuff have been hauled down our sloping side lot to the edge of the woods and dumped. It's like the Energizer Bunny, it never quits!

Coronavirus, Large Gatherings and Church Services. While, Governors in several states were urging against large gatherings, Pastor Rodney Howard-Browne told a large crowd in his Florida church he would never cancel public gatherings. Why? "This Bible School is open because we're raising up revivalists, not pansies."

At their March 15th church service, Howard-Browne told the congregation at the River at Tampa Bay Church: "Well, I know they don't want us to do this, but turn around and greet two, three people. A video shows the smiling crowd exchanging handshakes and hugs."

On March 20, county officials issued an order prohibiting gatherings of 10 or more people, including "faith-based events."

Church services were held again on March 22 and 29. Howard-Browne was later arrested by police and charged with two misdemeanor counts. He was released on bail.

"I believe there is nothing more important than faith in a time like this," said Sheriff Chad Chronister. "But practicing those beliefs has to be done safely."

"Church members are staying home to protect public health. They are willing to give up beloved Sunday services in order to love their neighbors as themselves. They're not pansies."

Over in Louisiana, Pastor Tony Spell held services at Life Tabernacle Church in Central, La., after Governor's orders prohibited large gatherings. He, too was charged with a misdemeanor. Spell has claimed the virus is "politically motivated".

By early April, it became clear that the virus wasn't sparing churches. Right here in Kentucky, health officials in Hopkins County, linked dozens of coronavirus cases and at least two deaths to a rural church that held revival services March 15-16.

Paul Prather, columnist with Lexington Herald Leader and pastor of Bethesda Church, Mt. Sterling; believes that faith and common sense are compatible. I'd say most of us can agree with what he says:

"I want to say to my friends and fellow citizens of all stripes, but especially to my fellow churchgoers: for your own sake, for all our sakes, use the brain the good Lord gave you.

"Faith and common sense don't contradict each other; they complement each other. You can trust God and acknowledge facts at the same time. God blesses us with facts. Yes, God is real. But so are pandemics."

One more thing "Cat Scan and Lab Report." Barney has hunted weeks for this story and finally found it last week when we were cleaning out old files. It's one of his favorites!

"A woman brought a very limp parrot into a veterinary hospital. As she laid her pet on the table, the vet pulled out his stethoscope and listened to the bird's chest. After a moment or two, the vet shook his head sadly and said, "I'm so sorry. Polly has passed away."

"The distressed owner wailed, "Are you sure? I mean, you haven't done any testing on her or anything. She might just be in a coma or something."

"The vet rolled his eyes, shrugged, turned and left the room returning a few moments later with a beautiful black Labrador. As the bird's owner looked on in amazement, the dog stood on his hind legs, put his front paws on the examination table and sniffed the dead parrot from top to bottom. He then looked at the vet with sad eyes and shook his head."

"The vet led the dog out but returned a few moments later with a cat. The cat jumped up on the examination table and also delicately sniffed at the expired bird. The cat sat back, shook his head, meowed, and ran out of the room."

The vet looked at the woman and said, "I'm so sorry, but like I said, your parrot is most definitely, 100% certifiably dead." He then turned to his computer terminal, hit a few keys and produced a bill which he handed to the woman.

The parrot's owner, still in shock, took the bill. "\$150 just to tell me my bird is dead?!" The vet shrugged, "If you'd taken my word for it, the bill would only have been \$30, but with the Lab Report and the Cat Scan, what did you expect?"

In closing, Barney Cat says, "HOPE is the ability to hear the music of the future; FAITH is the courage to dance to it today. We hope all our readers hear the music and dance all week long! Thanks for reading our column. Till next week.

NURSES continued from page one



Elizabeth Gaskin, RN

form of travel nurses.

Katie Williams is a Russell County native and a 2011 graduate of Russell County High School. She studied for CNA license through the Lake Cumberland Area Technology Center with Ms. Anita Pike. She was a member of HOSA for four years, and after graduating in 2011 she also obtained her CNA license in May 2011. Katie worked at Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital for 3.5 years full-time in a Neuro Med Surg Unit while working on her degree at Somerset Community College.

In 2016, Katie graduated with an associate degree in nursing from Eastern Kentucky University. After this, she worked for three years in Neuro Critical Care as a nurse at Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital. As of 2019, Katie obtained her Stroke Certified Registered Nurse Certification. Katie still lives in Russell County.

"As soon as I heard about the travel nursing job, I wanted to take it on," Katie said.

The job is through Travel Agency, AYA Health care.

"I have traveled to 37 states," Katie said. "I love to make people laugh, cook, just traveling in general, and of course nursing."

Katie expressed her thankfulness for her mother Marybeth and father Phil, her brother Adam, and her grandparents Rose and Parker Williams for the love and support through her journey of nursing.

Elizabeth Gaskin is another Russell County native. She is a 1997 graduate from Western Kentucky University RN. She has 4 children: Jeremy, Loren, Landon, and Myli Gaskin. Elizabeth began her career at Russell County Hospital in 1997.

"I was a public health nurse for 12 years," Elizabeth said. "Public health is where I learned all about disease monitoring and pandemics."

Elizabeth eventually left public health nursing to pursue a career

as a labor and delivery nurse and NICU nurse. After leaving her full-time position at TJ Sampson, she worked for seventh months as an Oncology RN.

"I grew really close to my cancer patients and remain close with some today," Elizabeth said.

After leaving oncology, she decided to take her vast experience on the road. She worked in Nashville for 10 months at a medical psych unit for a state prison. When Covid-19 came on the scene, she decided she wanted to go to New York and work along side other doctors and nurses who were overwhelmed. Unfortunately, by the time her state prison contract was up, all the positions were filled, and she was never called to New York.

"I was approached by Pro Link Healthcare for a possible COVID hot spot close to the Cincinnati area," Elizabeth said. "I am currently working in the ER for the St Elizabeth Healthcare System."

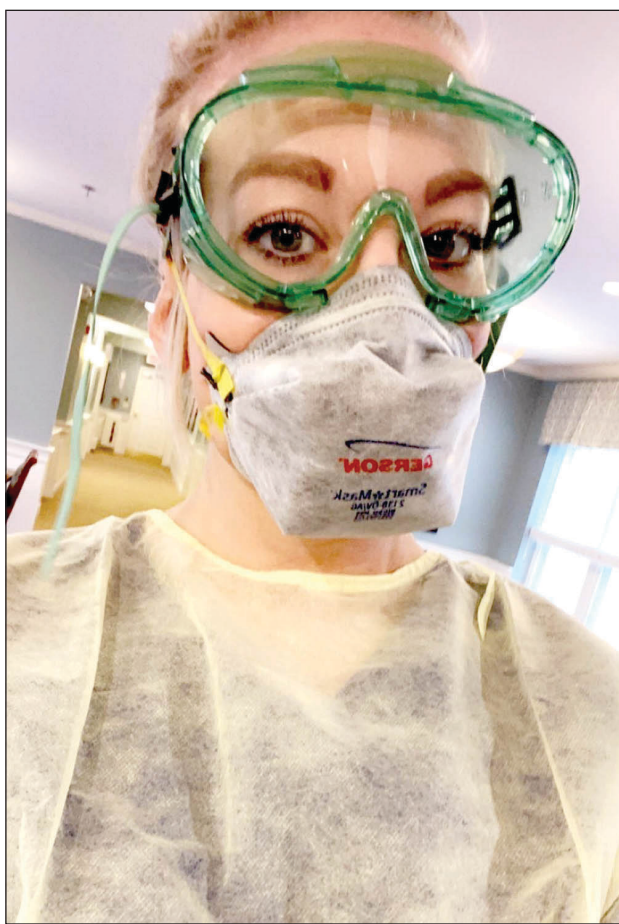
Elizabeth said that people ask if she is afraid of being exposed to the virus and becoming infected, but her answer is always the same.

"I am a nurse, and all nurses, no matter where you work, are at risk," Elizabeth explained. "I know the proper way to use my PPE (personal protective equipment), and I plan to protect myself and my family."

She said that the experience so far as a COVID RN has not been bad at all. The state of Kentucky has done a wonderful job at social distancing. So, Kentucky's COVID rate is one of the lowest. In the ER, all patients are treated the same with PPE and handwashing because it is not immediately known if a person is positive with the virus or not.

"I feel so blessed to answer the call and help those that need the care of all experienced health care providers," Elizabeth said.

Joni Marion graduated from McCreary County Central in 2006. She worked as a CNA and a waitress before becoming a nurse in 2015. Joni has two daughters. She worked at Sig-



Joni Marion RN in PPE



Katie Williams, RN

nature Healthcare of McCreary County as a floor nurse and then as Admissions and Marketing Director until 2019.

At this point, Joni moved to Bardstown and worked for Norton Healthcare in Louisville. This is when she decided to take the traveling position through Career Staffing Unlimited.

"I am now in Plymouth, Massachusetts on an eight-week Crisis Contract working with COVID-19 patients," Joni said.

The facility she is working at had an outbreak in their patients and also their staff. This is why she and others were hired to come in while their staff are recovering.

"I am working with the positive patients only, and when the normal staff of the facility return, they usually work with the negative patients," Joni said.

Joni is working 60 to 72 hours per week.

"I am basically at the facility more than I am not," Joni said.

She also stated that she is doing her best to stay healthy and clean, but as a nurse she said she does worry about over-exposure.

"I am not being exposed like a normal person," Joni explained. "I am in it and around it every single day. No matter the lengths, I take pre-

caution to wear my PPE properly. I always feel like it is on me, in my car, etc."

The entire nation is experiencing a PPE shortage. Joni explained that in nursing school she was taught to change out of your PPE in between each patient. However, with the PPE shortage, she is wearing the same gown the entire shift, face shield, and goggles. Her N95 mask has to last three shifts which is equivalent to 36 hours.

"COVID has been hard for me to understand," Joni said. "I see what it has done to people, but I see also some people that display no symptoms whatsoever. The testing we are using up here is not very accurate, approximately 66%."

She said her and other nurses see "negative" patients die, making them truly wonder if those patients are negative.

"We must operate as though everyone has it," Joni said. "That's the only way we can protect ourselves."

There are differences all over the nation as it pertains to COVID-19. Doctors, nurses, admissions clerks, janitors - all are tired - but everyone must keep pushing forward to fight this virus.

A huge thanks from all of us here at The Times Journal to our medical professionals and essential workers.