

# Hook, Line and Sinker

## With Tony Hooker

Bear down, Chicago Bears! Put up a fight with a might so fearlessly.

We'll never forget the way you thrilled the nation with your T-formation.

Bear down, Chicago Bears, and let them know why you're wearing the crown.

You're the pride and joy of Illinois! Chicago Bears, bear down!--Jerry Downs

Holy cow! I know, I just stole the catch phrase of an announcer who is most closely associated with those dreaded Cubs, but this year's Bears team continues to surprise me.

After last night's amazing comeback ( their seventh of the season) the Bears find themselves on the winning side of a playoff contest for the first time since 2011. The fact that the win came over the hated cheese head wearing Packers of Green Bay makes it so much sweeter for us die hard Bears fans, because frankly, the Pack has owned us for most of the past 3 decades. How one sided has the rivalry been? The 3 wins in the last 4 contests that Chicago has earned equals the number of wins they had over Green Bay since 2011! 3 wins in 14 years against a team that we play at least twice a year, every year. Think about it. 30 of the last 40 times the Bears lined up against the Pack, they took an L. Aaron Rodgers, whom I unaffectionately refer to as Lord Voldemort, once stated that he was the Bears "Daddy," and for the entirety of his career with the Packers, he wasn't wrong. Of course, I like to delude

myself into thinking that fear made him feign injury so that he wouldn't have to play us when he was with the Jets and Steelers, but I suppose tearing an Achilles tendon, as he did in his first game with New York, might be an extreme measure of avoidance. I wouldn't put it past him though. He is Lord Voldemort, after all.

The Bears, division champs for the first time since 2018 exceeded my expectations this season. They seem to have a competent coach and management crew for the first time in a long while, as evidenced by the fact that Joe Thuney, a 2025 free agent acquisition, is the first Bear offensive lineman to earn All Pro honors since Ollin Kreutz, back in 2011. 14 years. Same season as Chicago's last playoff win. Coincidence? I think not.

What does it all mean? Who knows? As a lifelong Bears fan, I'm accustomed to taking their successes as they come. We could go out and lay a complete egg next week in the next game and get crushed by the Eagles or 49'ers. I would be disappointed, of course. As a fan, we always pine for more, but old age has given me just a bit of perspective (about the Bears only, I'm still salty and irrational when it comes to my STL Cardinals!) and to me, anything after this is gravy. Come to think of it, I should probably apply more of this rationale to everyday life. After all, we all have struggles that we have to overcome. The rest is just the good stuff.

## Pastor Stahl's Weekly Message of Faith



Hello Everyone!  
I hope everyone is having a great week! Last Thursday night, there were horrible thunderstorms throughout our area. It was really windy and rainy and the wind was howling! Lots of trucks off the road on Interstate 57. Behind the parsonage is a big backyard that goes out into an open field. There are trees in the back yard that are very tall. The night the storm hit, I was wondering how the trees were handling it. The winds sounded really violent and horrendous. I was almost afraid to look out the window on Friday morning.

Friday morning came, I looked out the window, and the tall trees were just fine. No damage, just a few little branches on the ground. They had come through the storm with flying colors. We pray for those who did have significant damage.

That got me thinking about our faith, and the crises that we have to endure in our faith journey. God did not Promise that our future will always be peaches and cream when we make Jesus our Lord and Savior. The storms will come; the winds will blow against our boat out on the sea. But we worship the Master of the Seas, the One Who Holds our hand through the storm.

It is said that trees have to go through storms to develop their strength and endurance. The same is true with us. Our

faith is stronger when we have come through a crisis. We can lean on God, Who Will Carry us.

"Don't be afraid, for I Am with you.

Don't be discouraged, for I Am your God.

I Will Strengthen you and Help you.

I Will Hold you up with My Victorious Right Hand.

For I Hold you by your right hand, I, the Lord your God.

And I Say to you, 'Don't be afraid. I Am here to Help you.'

(Isaiah 41:10, 13)

That is a Promise straight from the Throne of God. The Lord Wants to Help us in our times of sickness and distress. He doesn't Say that we won't have any problems, but He Does Promise us that He Will Hold our hand through the storms.

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God Stands forever." (Isaiah 40:8)

Let us place our Faith in the Rock, the Lord Jesus. "Whoever hears these Words of Mine and does them, is like a wise man who built his house on the rock; the rains came, the winds blew and beat on the house, and it did not fall, for it was founded on rock."

(Matthew 7:24, 25)

God Bless all of you!

Pastor Jeff Stahl

Countryside and Ogden United Methodist Churches

## Ramblings from The Village Idiot

Some thoughts on the new "food pyramid": First off, it's visually jarring, because the "base" is at the top and the pointy end is on the bottom. Next, it is not entirely clear what all is in it. It took me some minutes to identify as many items as I could, and I was one short. The bowl just above the line had me stumped. It was just to the left of two peanuts and a bunch of bananas. It contained something white, with something red in the middle. It was officially deciphered by the Secretary of Agriculture, who identified it as rice and beans.

As someone who makes rice and beans fairly often, I can tell you that the picture of that bowl is a display of ignorance. It shows white rice with a dollop of red beans on top. But as anyone who has actually prepared or even just eaten rice and beans knows, rice and beans is a dish where the two things are mixed together. Plain rice and beans is good for sopping up cooking juices and sauces. It can also be made into a standalone dish by adding other things like chopped onions and small amounts of meat. Thus, rice and beans is often used to stretch expensive meat items.

The New York Post did a piece on buying groceries based on the new pyramid. A single person's groceries would cost \$175 a week at Whole Foods or \$164 at another store they went to. Shopping at low-price chains would knock that down some, but probably not enough. Besides, a fair number of people are more than dubious about the meat and poultry sold at some low-price chains.

One thing the new guidelines omit is fiber. And that's one thing a lot of us could benefit from eating more of. It's good for our digestive systems. Among other things, eating enough fiber makes sitting on the pot a relief that doesn't require straining to rid your colon of a load of thick, sticky, putrid mud. Apples, dried beans, peanuts or peanut butter, fresh vegetables, and unrefined grains (e.g. oats and hulled [NOT pearled] barley) are good sources.

Another thing the new guidelines ignore is sodium - i.e. salt. Too much salt in the American diet is a major culprit and killer through high blood pressure. Curiously, the chart has a can of green beans. And just about anything canned on store shelves is loaded with salt. Except the "lower salt" items, which cost a lot more. Frozen vegetables (like the frozen peas in the chart) are usually OK on salt, but frozen main dishes are usually loaded with salt.

Another thing is the vague terminology "healthy fats." Highly saturated fats - especially cholesterol-laden animal fats like butter fat or beef tallow - aren't "healthy"

at all. OTOH, the Admin has an irrational distrust of "seed oils" - a category which includes soybean oil, corn oil, canola oil, peanut oil, safflower oil, sunflower seed oil, and others. The irrationality can be eye-rolling. Peanut oil is a great cooking oil - high smoke point - that is low in saturated fat. I have read recommendations for using peanut oil that claim peanuts aren't "true seeds", so peanut oil isn't "really" a seed oil.

The new guidelines also seem to have abandoned the whole idea of a "balanced diet." This idea is based on how much of a given mix of nutrients our bodies can actually use. If we eat too much protein, a lot of it gets wasted. If we get enough of some essential amino acids but not others, a lot gets wasted. If we eat too much sugar, starch, or fat, we put on fat. And obesity is causing huge health problems here in the US. On the other hand, if we don't eat enough of something, our bodies go wanting. Best known are vitamin deficiency diseases, but there are others.

One guideline I'm in favor of is avoiding highly processed food. However, meeting it would require a huge change in American dietary preferences, and a corresponding change in food production. The terms "highly processed foods" and "real foods" are, alas, not well defined. Author Michael Pollan uses the term "food" to mean things our grandparents would recognize, say pre-WWII - things found only around the edges of the store. (As noted in a previous column, processed items are now creeping in there, too.) Stuff in the aisles is mostly highly processed (dried beans and other legumes being notable exceptions). Most fast-food menu items are highly processed.

Around 70% of the calories Americans consume consist of processed foods. So - if we avoid them, what do we eat simply to get enough calories - assuming we can afford it? And who's going to produce it? These questions need to be addressed if we are serious about "eating healthy."

A recent news item about food does suggest a path forward. It said that about 2/3 of the food that makes it to grocery stores winds up being thrown out. I suppose some of it is highly processed food. But one goal achieved by the processing is long shelf life. Not so with fresh, perishable items. So it seems reasonable to assume that a large portion of the food that gets thrown out in this country is "real food" - fresh eggs, dairy, meat, and produce. And a lot of fresh produce gets thrown out simply because it's not cosmetically perfect. I think we can learn to salvage and use a lot of that.

### DEADLINES

Classified Friday @ Noon

News- Friday @ Noon

Ads- Friday @ Noon

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1 John 4:7-21  
New International Version  
God's Love and Ours

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the

world.  
15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God.

16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.

18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

19 We love because he first loved us.

20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.

21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

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Adult Bible Study Wednesdays - 9 a.m. (Aug. - June)  
Men's Bible Breakfast - 7:30 a.m. Second and Fourth Saturdays (Lincoln Street Lounge)  
• Youth Group • Sewing Circle •  
• Men's Club •  
Call the church office for more information.

**TOLONO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
301 N. Bourne St. Tolono  
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Office phone: 217-485-3610  
e-mail: tolonomethodist@msn.com  
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Minister—Mike Zylstra  
e-mail: fccvgmin@frontier.com  
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Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.

**COUNTRYSIDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
1807 County Road 1000N, Urbana  
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Worship-9:00 a.m.  
Nursery Available during worship  
Wednesday  
Wednesday's Bible Study 1:30pm  
Facebook Devotionals on Thursdays - 1:30  
Crossroads Youth Group meets on the last Sunday of the Month from 5-6:30pm; dinner is provided. (Ages 7 & up)  
Please contact the office for more information 217-688-2422  
"Love God; Love Each Other"

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