

Not comfortable, but comforted

Today I'm struggling.

Sometimes it seems like tragedy has overtaken us. Hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, mass shootings. People dying. People losing their homes. People enduring unthinkable pain.

These are huge, tragic, scary events. We can often feel overwhelmed or even traumatized from just hearing about it all.

But today I'm not struggling with these tragedies. I'm struggling with our inability as believers to sit in someone else's pain.

You see, we are usually really good at taking action when tragic events take place. We are quick to take up a special contribution to aid in recovery. We will gladly send supplies to people in need or travel to help in cleanup efforts.

As long as we feel like we are doing something to ease someone's pain, we feel good.

But what about the times when we can't do anything about the trauma and pain, when nothing we say or do will make things better, when we are completely helpless to fix things, when all our resources are useless in making a situation better?

So often in these types of situations, we tend to withdraw or run away. We soothe ourselves by telling ourselves that there's nothing we can do, so we do nothing.

I often tell my clients that I can't fix things for them, but I can walk with them through it. I can sit with them in their pain. I can hear their story and have compassion and empathy. I can acknowledge that they are suffering. I can be their hope when they have no hope left. I can be silent in their presence and allow them to simply be.

I regularly hear from people how they see church as a place where they must put on their mask so they can be accepted and loved. We hide things like drug or alcohol addiction, domestic abuse, sexual sin, depression, anxiety, financial troubles, marriage struggles, parenting struggles. We hide the things that we believe will make us unacceptable and unlovable.

For many years I believed that church needs to be a place where we feel comfortable. However, I have come to the conclusion that church is not a place to feel comfortable. It is a place to feel comforted. It is a place to feel loved. It is a place to feel accepted, even with all our struggles and pain.

Can it be difficult and scary to be in the presence of such pain? Absolutely. It can overwhelm us when we are relying on our own strength, when we are trying to fix things, when we don't see the person within the struggle.

But when we are relying on God to be present, when we are seeing through his eyes of love, when we are dependent upon his provision in the situation, then we can be empathetic and compassionate, then we love the way he loves, then we can be present for those in pain. And sometimes, that's all we need to do for each other.

- Mary Jo Cochrum—*The Christian Chronicle*, Nov. 21, 2017

Cochrum is a Licensed Professional Counselor, is director of the counseling ministry of the Woodland West Church of Christ in Arlington, Texas, where she has served on staff since 2009.

PRAYER LIST

- Pauline Alvarez
- Lauren Babb (health)
- John Beiler (health)
- Cinco Ranch Church of Christ
- Betty Cox (Brent Barnick's sister—homebound)
- Jake Faires (Air Force, deployed to Jordan)
- Steven Faires, and Lexi
- Nelle Hahn (health)
- Cathy Jones (Leanne Mason's mother—broken leg)
- Shirley Kuchykna (recovering from knee surgery)
- Molly Lind (Linds' daughter-in-law)
- Clay Mason (health)
- Beth McElroy (Clay and Mary Mason's daughter—health)
- Norman Pennock (Debbie Fougerat's step-father, health)
- Ada Powell (Sharron Mason's sister—health)
- T.J. Reid (Nelle Hahn's brother—health)
- Julie Rodriguez (Babbs' friend—health)
- Wayne Thanheiser (Shirly Kuchykna's brother—health)
- Nancy Tuttle (Peggy Walls's sister—health)
- Catherine Winegeart (Perry's mother—health)

If you have any announcements or prayer requests you wish to have included in the bulletin or to sign up for weekly e-mail updates, please contact Victoria Johnson: 325-518-9205, victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org.

PRAYER UPDATES

We extend sympathy to the family and friends of **Buster Lindemann** who passed away on Tuesday, Nov. 21. Funeral services were held yesterday at Monthalia United Methodist Church.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Singing at The Heights

Please join us today at 3:30 p.m. at The Heights of Gonzales for our monthly singing and fellowship.

College Care Packages

Finals are approaching, so it's time to send out our college care packages! We are asking for donations of snack food items for **five (5)** packages. **Please drop off your items no later than Wednesday, Nov. 29.**

Ladies Christmas Party

Mark your calendars! This year's Christmas party will be **Monday, Dec. 11, at 6 p.m.** at the home of Stacia Sweeney. Please bring a dish to share and an ornament to exchange.

Pancakes with Santa

Join us **Sunday, Dec. 17**, immediately following morning worship for Pancakes with Santa. There will be crafts for the kids, pictures with Santa, hot chocolate, and of course Pancakes! Following lunch, we will move to the auditorium for a devotional. **Pancakes will be provided. Please sign up in the foyer to help with sides and trimmings, or to help with activities.** Everyone is invited. We hope to see you there!

Volunteers Needed: Wednesday Night Meals

Volunteers are needed to prepare the entrée for meals on Wednesday evenings. To help, please sign up in the foyer. **If you signed up to prepare a meal, please send Victoria your menu by Wednesday the week before.**

Volunteers Needed: Communion Prep

Volunteers are needed to prepare communion in the coming months. This task takes very little time and is a great service to the congregation. Please sign up on the large bulletin board in the foyer.

Sunday Night Small Group

There is a small group that meets in the annex each Sunday evening from **6-7 p.m.** The Lord's Supper is available.

Tuesday Morning Men's Prayer Breakfast

All men are invited to the annex each Tuesday morning at **6:20 a.m.** for a time of breakfast, prayer and fellowship.

YOUTH ZONE

TUESDAY, NOV. 28
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL
SHINER JV V. BRAZOS, 5 P.M.
THURSDAY, NOV. 30
JUNIOR HIGH BASKETBALL
SHINER BOYS V. WEIMAR
SHINER GIRLS @ WEIMAR



Caden Chrismon—Shiner Jr High Boys Basketball
Jacy Chrismon—Shiner HS JV Girls Basketball

Megan Epley—Shiner Jr High Girls Basketball