

Lifelong Significance

A Ministry Partner Publication of



*Christmas - Denny, Sue,
Jacob, Austin, Maddison,
Zoe*

The Foursome

Sue Koska

Yesterday came and went, mostly uneventful, with the exception of enrolling our five-year-old grandson for kindergarten in fall. Oh, and forgetting that a friend was coming by at exactly the same time!

It was two years ago, June 2 at 10:30 a.m. that the phone rang alerting me to three small grandchildren in Tulsa, Oklahoma who were about to enter Child Protective Services. Their father had left them in a motel room along with their mom with no money, food or means of care. Their mother, my youngest daughter, had called Child Protective Services and was willingly giving them up to their care. We already had the children's oldest brother at home, so we were notified. I was told to be there before midnight or they would enter the system.

Continued on page 2



*Jacob 13, Austin 6, Maddison 4
Zoe 2*

"God is in the business of changing things. He wipes the tears and replaces them with joy and laughter, and He does it sometimes on a daily basis."



*Church sponsored Kidz Block
Party at Mall*

The oldest child was 11 at that time. The three in the motel room were a four year old boy, his two year old sister, and a three and a half months old infant. With the help of a wonderful friend, I got the finances together and flew to Tulsa.

I was met at 9:00 that night by Child Protective Services and was driven to the motel where I stayed an additional four days trying to convince my daughter of her need of help. She finally took off leaving me with three small children, a motel room, what was left of their toys, some diapers and no car seats or means to get them anywhere. I was informed that no one in Oklahoma would be able to care for the children so I rented a car, purchased car seats times three, bought a few suitcases, and began the task of figuring out what remnants the three small children had remaining that I could take and what would be left behind.

Eventually, I arrived back in Orange County with a two year old who cried from the moment we left Tulsa until we arrived at John Wayne Airport, an infant who literally was passed around the plane with strangers helping, and a three year old with special needs. My husband picked me up with my oldest daughter and her son. We drove to our town home, loaded everyone in, and I sat on the family room floor changing diapers and wondering "Now what?"

I do not know what was the greatest shock, very small children without their parents or their

parent's choices. The shock turned to grief then anger then back to grief as we went through change after change. Today two years later, grief and shock have given way to a whole different life style, and a dependency on God Himself for strength and wisdom.

It is not hard to count the losses, there are many. You can imagine the changes that have had to be made. But today I also count the gains and my mindset and heart are seeing them outweigh the tears.

How many of us at the age of 62 get to feel the arms of very small children around your neck each day, saying, "I love you?" With the littlest one's head snuggled against my heart, she repeats, "I love you sooooo much!" My little redhead who cried for thousands of miles, giggles as she swings in a tree swing while visiting my only son and his family. She turns four this July and I have never known a child so hard to potty train. Yet, she now is on day 18 of wearing underwear and using the toilet all the time! She announces, "Now I can go to school!" And our five-year-old grandson is in his last week of special education. This September he will transition into a regular Kindergarten class because "I'm a big boy now!" He turns six in July.



Sue reading birthday card to Zoe.

Body aches and pains give way to laughter as I listen to the three of them at the park, making tunnel barrels their fort. And although I

Continued on page 3



Maddison on Merry Go Round



*Zoe and Jacob's birthday party
at Chuck E Cheese with Sue*



Austin on Merry Go Round

do not get to sit and visit as much with people I love, God has brought many to our side who have given up their own schedules at times to babysit in an emergency, others who have willingly helped out to invest in the life of a child. The last two months Olive Crest, an organization dedicated to the prevention of child abuse, has come alongside and is in the process of completing home visits in order to open up more badly needed resources.

The five year old has had fourteen cavities filled; one tooth pulled, and has been two years in speech therapy, along with weekly behavior therapy. And although he is the greatest challenge, he is also thriving and so excited to go to school where his big brother had gone! The youngest one who is now twenty-eight months has the largest vocabulary and understanding than any her pediatrician has seen! And the oldest now 13 and a new teen, has had to learn to share everything. All four children continue to grow and even thrive while I often feel overwhelmed and far out of my comfort zone.

Gains? An ever constant awareness that life is not just the size of our home or finances that should be there for two seniors but a dependency on our Heavenly Father's love. That people, especially those who cannot take care of themselves, rule in importance; that relationships are utmost; and as my own dreams were dimmed, dreams of children with new hope and a future become bright. I

have gained perspective even an ability to let what I once thought so important in order to embrace what each day with children can bring. Could it be, that's what looks to many as impossible, shows that all things are possible with Christ? I think so.

So on this day of reflections anticipating a very noisy "Kool Aid" summer, I want to reach out to all who have helped in the smallest of ways. I want to let you know that God is alive and I see Him. He is in the eyes of the children who live in our home. He is in my heart when I feel overwhelmed, and wonder what was I thinking when I flew to Tulsa that day. He was in my dad in years past when he would ask how I was and put his arm around me. Now dad sees the Lord face to face, as three months ago he changed his address from Chino Hills to Heaven. Yes, God is in the business of changing things. He wipes the tears and replaces them with joy and laughter, and He does it sometimes on a daily basis.

Have a wonderful day today wherever you are. Here in Brea, California, it promises to be a day of beauty. "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."



Email Hoaxes and Urban Legends

Retirees seem more vulnerable than most

Dr. Pete Menconi

If you communicate by email, you probably have received those messages that herald the end of the world, some eminent doom, or a cautionary tale. During the past presidential election, thousands of these unverifiable emails were clogging cyberspace each day. Many of these emails ranged from the ridiculous to the sublime. "Barack Obama's presidential candidacy endorsed by the KKK." "Joe Biden to step down as vice presidential candidate for Hillary Clinton." "John McCain declared on 60 Minutes that he was a "war criminal" who "bombed innocent women and children." Then there was the photograph of Sarah Palin posing in a U.S. flag bikini holding a rifle.

Certainly the Internet and email allows us to communicate in wonderful ways, but it is also easily abused. Often well-meaning family members and friends forward emails that warn us of health dangers, anti-Christian movements, financial opportunities, and other issues of concern. Often the information is false or only partially true. Many email messages are hoaxes and urban legends. Perhaps because they have more discretionary time on their hands, retirees seem more vulnerable to the lure of these messages than most. And Christian retirees are no exception. Here is a sampling of emails making the rounds:

- A group known as "The Second Coming Project" is seeking to clone Jesus from the DNA of holy relics.
- You must sign a petition to stop Jesus from being portrayed as a homosexual in an upcoming film.
- Airlines will not pair Christian pilots and co-pilots out of fear that The Rapture will snatch away both crewmembers capable of landing the plane.

While many of these email messages are laughable, others contain enough truth or are truthful sounding enough to be believed.

Here are a few tips on how to avoid email hoaxes and urban legends:

1. If the message has been past from email to email, be skeptical.
2. If the email message tells you "this is not a hoax," it probably is.
3. The more urgent the plea, the more suspect the message.
4. Be skeptical if the message overuses exclamation points or uppercase letters.
5. Check with online websites that hunt down hoaxes and urban legends. Here are a few: www.snopes.com; www.urbanlegends.about.com; www.truthorfiction.com.

When receiving these emails, even from family and friends, be careful and thoughtful on how you respond. As followers of Jesus, it is good for us to reflect upon his words when he said, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."



OPTIONAL PAGE

**THIS IS THE PAGE FOR YOUR LOCAL 2ND HALF MINISTRY
ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PERSONAL MESSAGES**

“Better Together”



*Do you have a story to tell?
Send article to:*

CASA Network
13646 NE 24th Street
Bellevue WA 98005
Toll Free 888.200.8552
or 425.460.3709
Web: www.gocasa.org;
www.casaacademy.org

