

We are a church with one mission: to grow followers of Jesus through grateful worship, genuine community, and generous service to each other and our world. We believe by loving God and loving people we can have an impact that really matters, and would like to tell you more about that. If you are interested in being a part of what God is doing with us, or just have some questions, **fill out the contact card** or ask the person next to you. **Please feel free to call or email too if you have any questions.**

FAMILY NEWS AND NOTES

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GOD'S FAMILY TIMES

BIBLE CLASSES
Building—9:30 am Sunday

WORSHIP
Building—10:30 am Sunday

GROWTH GROUPS
Grose's -- 6 p.m. Sunday
Irwin's -- 6 p.m. Sunday

BIBLE CLASSES
Building—7 pm Wednesday

Dinner before Class: THIS Wednesday April 26th at 6 p.m. Last chance to sign up on the bulletin board if you plan to attend and what dish you can bring to share.

Congregational Meeting: Thursday May 4th at 7 p.m. at the building.

Family Covered Dish Dinner: Sunday May 21st after services. Please note that this is the 3rd Sunday instead of the 2nd due to Mother's Day on May 14th.

Please remember to give your Betika donations directly to Sally Duriez if you desire to help with the monthly support of our lamb, Toavina.

Upcoming Ladies Days: Details on bulletin board if you might be interested in attending:

May 6th from 9:30am-2:30pm hosted by the New Brighton church
May 13th from 9:30am-2pm hosted by the Greensburg church

Happy Birthday

4/27 Jason Bracken
4/28 Rodrick Anokye
4/29 Marilyn Magas
5/1 Mary Fasanya
5/5 Nancy Sinclair
5/10 Pete Schilling
5/11 CJ Moffett & Susan Stutzman
5/12 Teri Elder
5/14 Matilda Fasanya
5/15 Becky Yurky
5/18 Mary Masterson

More next week!

Happy Anniversary

5/22 Dan & Debbie Kirk
5/24 Dave & Carol Delimpo

Announcements for family news can be

FAMILY MATTERS

Indiana

Church of Christ

724.463.7240

April 23, 2017

Is Happiness Overrated?

By Julia Baird

Is this endless pursuit of happiness just making us all miserable? We've said our affirmations, drunk coffee out of cheesy mugs with nonsensical motivational quotes ("CLIMB AS HIGH AS YOU CAN DREAM!!"), and bought millions of tomes on getting rich quick while thinking positive thoughts. According to Psychology Today, last year 4,000 books were published on happiness. From Norman Vincent Peale in 1952 (The Power of Positive Thinking) to Rhonda Byrne in 2007 (The Secret), Oprah's America has panted, chanted, and visualized while trying to be really, really cheerful: "I am beautiful, wealthy, and successful."

Even when we're really not, most of us have been getting poorer for some time. That's the funny thing about the obsession with smiley-faced happiness: the more overtly we have studied and pursued it, the less happy we have become. And the more confusing it gets.

According to a study from the General Social Survey by economists Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers of Wharton, despite three decades of economic growth in America, men and women are no happier. This fact has been lost in the hubbub over the finding that while women were happier than men in 1972, they are not now. Conservative commentators rapidly blamed the women's movement, inferring that perhaps, as Rush Limbaugh has said, feminism really was just a misguided way to "allow unattractive women into the mainstream." This is astounding logic—why not take the vote away for a few years and see if we perk up?

The broader point remains—while Europeans are growing happier, especially Italians, Americans are not. This is fascinating because it is in this country that a relentless focus on "positive thinking," from prosperity theology to corporate coaching, has emerged over the past few decades—and it is this country that is now more gloomy.

CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Nathan Irwin and family as they are in Lyon, France for language training and are preparing to move to North Africa to serve there in July.
- For Mary Fasanya's asylum request to be granted and for the girls as they are in the USA without their husband and father. Also for Ezekiel as he is in Nigeria without his wife and daughters.
- For Mayleen Niehenke's visa approval to come to the United States from the Philippines and for a co-sponsor so that the procedure can be quickly expedited.
- Bill Tonkin who is at Indiana Square Personal Care Home, 1703 Warren Road. Lois says cards and visits are always welcome.
- Nick Ruffner, John & Gail Gromley's step grandson, who had another round of chemo in his treatment for leukemia in January.
- Cliff Brown was recently hospitalized. He came home March 5th but still deals with heart problems.
- Dixie Kirk, sister in law of Dan & Debbie Kirk, whose testing of her lung showed no spots. She continues to heal from pneumonia.
- Jason Canose for healing as he continues physical therapy and thanksgivings for successful surgery to remove his gall bladder on March 15th.
- Dan Fitzgerald, a friend of Bob Reininger, for healing and recovery from a very serious operation on March 20th.
- Louanne Brown as she recuperates from carpal tunnel surgery done on March 29th.
- Samantha Jo Riley, a friend of Debbie Kirk, for healing from a gunshot wound.
- Hailynn Magas for consistent blood sugar levels and for healing of a broken arm.
- Hanna, Emma Sesock's 14 year old great granddaughter, who has cystic fibrosis and is to be hospitalized for the next two weeks.
- Emma Sesock, who fell on Tuesday April 4th and broke her jaw and cheekbone. She is now home after being hospitalized at Allegheny General.
- Peace and comfort for Emma Sesock's family on the passing of her brother, Paul, on April 7th.
- Jeff Shank, Patty Shank's brother, for healing after surgery on Tuesday April 11th.
- The Yurky family as Brenda is struggling right now. Thanksgivings that she came home from the hospital on Wednesday April 19th.
- Deb Plowman, Brenda Antonio's cousin, who has been diagnosed with lung cancer.
- Sam Kirk for continued absence of infection in his body so that his shoulder surgery can proceed as scheduled on Monday April 24th.

Prayer requests can be added to the family prayer book

In her book, *Bright-Sided: How Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America*, Barbara Ehrenreich calls positive thinking a "mass delusion." She argues that an unrelenting drive to train our brains to overlook problems and blame ourselves for failures has blinded us to inequality, incompetence, and stupidity.

The philosophy of positive thinking, she argues, developed both as a reaction to the negativity of Calvinism and a salve for the sick and anxious, but has, over time, been turned into a kind of blind optimism. At the heart of positive thinking is a belief that you can will anything you like into happening: recovering from cancer, getting a promotion, becoming a millionaire. Often, the worse things are, the more vehemently people are encouraged to be sunny. The more companies downsized and restructured in the '80s and '90s, the more popular affirmation-chanting, team-building consultants became. And all the while, as the country's wealth shot up, the gap between rich and poor ballooned.

Ehrenreich argues that positive thought has at times made us deaf to the pleas of those who warn of potential dangers—the Iraqi resistance, Hurricane Katrina, 9/11, and the Wall Street implosion. Urging positivity is not just beside the point when our circumstances are rotten, it's also dangerously distracting.

This is why Ehrenreich dedicates her book to "complainers everywhere," inciting them to "turn up the volume." But surely there's a middle way between clueless cheerleaders and grumpy prophets. The Dalai Lama shows you can strive to be content and remain angry about injustice.

What we do need to be cautious of is leaping on the nascent science of positive psychology before we are certain that we are asking the right questions. The most recent findings, for example, are that wealth makes you happy but children do not.

So ... more money and fewer kids. Can this really be the weight of our accumulated wisdom? Do we all want daisies-in-the-meadow happiness, or a less chirpy, quieter contentment? Or do we want to suck greedily on life's marrow, like Jack Kerouac, to "burn, burn, burn, like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars"? The most inspiring people are those least obsessed with their own happiness, especially those who stride confidently across the globe to create, evoke change, or wrest from life what they will. Eleanor Roosevelt believed happiness "is not a goal, it's a byproduct." I think she might be right.