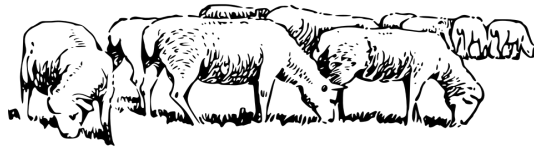




# Flock Quarterly



*Good Shepherd's magazine for parishioners by parishioners*

## THE GOLFER'S PRAYER TO ST. ANDREW

*The greens maker is my shepherd,  
I shall not hook or slice.*

*He maketh my ball to drive low hard and lie-down,  
Straight down green fairways;*

*He leadeth me safely  
across still water-hazards;*

*He restoreth my card.  
He leadeth me in the paths of accuracy  
for thy game's sake.*

*Yea, though I chip through the roughs  
over the valleys in the shadows of fescue and bunkers,  
I will fear no sand or bogies.*

*For his council is with me,  
My putter and my irons,  
they comfort me.*

*He prepared my tactics for me  
in the presence of mine opponents,*

*He anointeth my head with confidence  
Thy cup shall surely not be over run,*

*Surely birdies, eagles and pars shall follow  
me all the rounds of my life,*

*And I will dwell in the club house with the front runners forever and ever*

*Amen*

*Author Unknown*

*Welcome to the Thirteenth Issue of*

## **FLOCK QUARTERLY**

Good Shepherd's magazine for parishioners by parishioners

STAFF --- Graphics Editor Laura Rosato --- Content Editor Richard Reid

**In our Winter 2023 Issue:** The Parishioner Interview profiles Patti Curtin. Columnist Denise Junker explores the distant world of the Desert Mothers. Our Art section reveals six wreaths by Debra Nelson. Richard Reid imagines a tale of two boys sledding on a legendary hill. Ed Kushall recounts the story of the Gideons and their Bibles.

**In our special section on Golf, (starting on page 13) you'll find anecdotes from seven parish golfers; a remembrance of Bruce Mason; an essay from Fr. Lance linking golf and religion; Greg Hartline's account of how he became a golfer; Mike Rosato's story of how he uses golf to connect people by organizing tournaments; and a smattering of quotations about the game from the famous and the anonymous. Always something new and different in *Flock Quarterly*.**

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**Remember:** You're never too young or too old to contribute. Material from our children and teens as well as from adults of all ages are always welcome.

### Guidelines for Contributors

*Types of Material* . . . Essays on diverse topics; Humor; Bible Reflections; Interviews with Parishioners; Short Fiction; Original Photos and Artwork; Original Poetry & Prayers

### General themes for any issue to inspire your submissions

Family; hobbies; your vocation; religion; the weather; people/things/places you remember; a great day; something/someone you're thankful for; current events (avoid being overtly political)

### Special topics & themes appropriate for upcoming issues to spark your creativity

*Spring Issue Themes* (published in February)

Ash Wednesday; Lent; Easter; Black History & Women's History Months; Valentine's Day

*Summer Issue Themes* (published in May)

Pentecost; Mother's Day; Father's Day; 4th of July; end-of-school; graduations; summer; vacations

*Fall Issue Themes* (published in August)

End of summer; Labor Day; autumn; back-to-school; Halloween

*Winter Issue Themes* (published in November)

Advent; giving; Thanksgiving; Christmas; the new year; the ending old year; winter; Epiphany

Please make text submissions in Word format (never as PDFs) or handwritten and try not to exceed 2,000 words – but don't be intimidated by that number: shorter pieces are always welcome, too.

Unsure of your article or art idea? The Content Editor is happy to discuss and plan it with you.

Always submit original photos in .jpeg format

If your original artwork on paper is 8 ½" by 11" or smaller, it may be submitted for scanning

### Issue Deadlines for Material

Spring (by January 28th)

Summer (by April 27th)

Fall (by July 28th)

Winter (by October 28th)

Email material to Richard Reid ([writer2363@gmail.com](mailto:writer2363@gmail.com)) or telephone (585-347-4839)

*You are part of the Good Shepherd flock . . . please contribute to Flock Quarterly!*

## COLUMN

## A SAINT'S CORNER: THE DESERT MOTHERS

by Denise Junker

The Desert Mothers were ascetics that lived during the third century to sixth century in modern day Egypt, Israel, Syria, and Turkey. Three of them are recognized in our Lesser Feasts and Fasts on January 5: Sarah, Theodora, and Syncletica of Egypt. There were Desert Fathers, the most well-known is Anthony the Great, some working very closely with Desert Mothers and their legacy assisted by the Desert Mothers, but their history has been presented, known, and studied for much longer than the Desert Mothers. The main book on the Desert Mothers, *The Forgotten Desert Mothers: Sayings, Lives, and Stories of Early Christian Women* by Laura Swan, its first edition published in 2001 and now with a second edition published in 2022, has been utilized by many to lift up the Desert Mothers sayings and lives.

Before I go any further, I want to be precise about terminology. There is much overlap in these terms. Ascetics are people who live a highly-disciplined life with many practices of abstinence. Eremites are ascetics that live lives of solitude, other words for them being hermit or anchorite. Cenobites or monastics are ascetics that live lives in community, other words for them are monk or nun. I stated “ascetics” at the start because the Desert Mothers, even though intending and primarily living as eremites in caves or single-person dwellings, they often ended up becoming a spiritual director, having disciples, and/or joining, even leading, a monastic community due to the wisdom they had learned during their eremite time. When possible, some would leave their monastery work and spend the rest of their life back in their eremite form. Probably due to this mixing of living situations, sometimes you will see the term Desert Monastics utilized for referring to the Desert Mothers and Fathers. Lastly, the title for the Desert Mothers is Amma, a term for “Mother” but it also means a spiritual woman.

The movement to the desert was a way to separate further from the influences of society and culture. It was not to turn their backs on society or to run away but to guarantee the solitude and space to fully live their lives of prayer and God-centric existence. Even as Henri Nouwen was discussing the whole sphere of the Desert ascetics in his book *The Way of the Heart*, he describes what it meant for any eremite to flee from the world. The fleeing was to gain solitude. The solitude is not a place of private therapy and restoration but the place for conversion and transformation through struggle and face-to-face with our real self, exposing to our own self fully our sins and demons, to overcome worldly concerns and to become fully immersed in Godly concerns.

Once that transformation has happened, that is when the eremite might be called out of their predominate solitude to share their knowledge. During their eremite time, it is not only prayer but study, manual labor, fasting and other methods of abstinence that create the learning and reflection opportunities needed for this transformation. I think Nouwen’s summarization really says it all: “The wisdom of the desert is that the confrontation with our own frightening nothingness forces us to surrender ourselves totally and unconditionally to the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Out of all the Desert Mothers, Amma Syncletica (her icon is included with this article) has the most sayings and information saved about her. Many of her sayings are direct and biting as they spoke directly to the matters at hand. One reason for the survival of her account is that she came from a wealthy family. She first lived her ascetical practices in the family home. With the death of her parents, she sold everything and gave it to the poor. She moved her and her blind sister to live in the family tomb outside of Alexandria. She was reluctant to become a spiritual advisor, but people eventually sought her out to learn her ways. She had this to say about the work of becoming closer to God:

*It is a struggle and very hard work for those who are drawing closer to God—at first. But then comes indescribable joy. Those who want to light a fire first get assailed by smoke and weep and, by doing this, obtain the desired fire; in the same way we too have to kindle the divine fire for ourselves with tears and afflictions since it says ‘Our God is a consuming fire.’*

She lived into her eighties, suffering through great pain in the last years of her life. Since there are actually so many sayings and explanations for what Ammas Syncletica, Sarah, and Theodora were able to leave behind, I will not quote more. I highly recommend the Swan book, which is in a more historical format or *The Desert Mothers: Spiritual Practices from the Women of the Wilderness* by Mary C. Earle, which takes the Swan book and turns it into more of a prayer format.

*Continued*

In *The Way of the Heart*, Henri Nouwen did another summary that I found absolutely enlightening. He discussed the Desert ascetics form of prayer. He states, “To pray always — this is the real purpose of the desert life.” The only caveat I wish to note is that he discusses Hesychasts, Eastern orthodox ascetics of the fourteenth century, and does roll them in with the third to sixth century Desert Mothers and Fathers. But, since he cites the Desert Mothers and Fathers in the same section, I feel this discussion of prayer is still befitting. Following intently and literally on the need to pray incessantly (1 Thessalonians 5:17), “real prayer” is prayer that “penetrates to the marrow of our soul and leaves nothing untouched,” he summarized the prayer process of the Desert ascetics as a seemingly simple three step process with some examples:

1. The prayer of the heart is nurtured by short, simple prayers.
2. The prayer of the heart is unceasing.
3. The prayer of the heart is all-inclusive.

The phrases are simple like “The Lord is my shepherd” (not the whole psalm, only the phrase) or simply “Lord.” These are not to reflect on the meaning but to embody these terms. To embody something, to really live it, is through unceasing repetition. Then, all of our concerns and whole self are in the prayer and the prayer is “all-inclusive” by including everything. So inclusive that when we say, “I’ll pray for you,” we do not mean a nicety but a complete commitment to bring their prayers and our own to God completely. The prayer having been done in the deep presence and love of God will then overcome any burden.

I would like to close with this prayer from Lesser Feasts and Fasts for the three Desert Mothers on January 5:

*Fix our hearts on You, O God, in pure devotion, that aided by the example of your servants Sarah, Theodora, and Synclitica, the vain pursuits of this world may have no hold upon us, and that by the consuming fire of your Spirit, we may be changed into the image and likeness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with you and the same Spirit be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.*

*Note:* The topic of my next installment will be Dietrich Bonhoeffer; his feast day is April 9.



## INTERVIEW

### “MOST OF MY EXPOSURE TO CHRISTIANITY AS A CHILD CAME FROM MY NEIGHBORHOOD FRIEND, CHERYL”

An Interview with Patti Curtin by Content Editor Richard Reid

**Richard Reid:** How did you come to attend Good Shepherd? What drew you here?

**Patti Curtin:** Tom and I, with our three young children, moved to Webster from the Buffalo area in July of 1988. Tom had recently been hired as a writer at Buck and Pulleyn Advertising in Irondequoit. After house searching for several months, we fell in love with an adorable little colonial on Lincolnshire Rd., which happens to be about two minutes from Good Shepherd Church. One early autumn afternoon, shortly after our two oldest started at their new school, the Deacon from Good Shepherd paid us a visit. With welcome basket in hand, Sharon Karl rang our doorbell and invited us to come to church. I was so charmed to be cordially invited in such an old fashioned but wonderful way, that we showed up that Sunday, three children in tow, and were instantly made to feel right at home. We had “church shopped” a bit in Williamsville, but hadn’t found just the right place. Good Shepherd felt right and we soon became engaged: Tom as a lay reader and me as a Sunday School teacher.

**RR:** Your story seems like a textbook example of welcoming done right. What keeps you at Good Shepherd?

**PC:** We were drawn in by the church family, but after Fr. Anderson retired and Fr. Lance became the new priest, we found that his loving, grace-filled homilies, along with Karyn’s beautiful music, were our weekly inspiration. So, we’ve been here ever since: 35 years this fall!

**RR:** Were you originally from the Buffalo area?

**PC:** I was born and raised in the Buffalo area, first in a southern town named Elma, then Depew and Lancaster. I have two brothers, both younger, who both live out of state with their wives. My dad was a home builder, my mom a bookkeeper/accountant. I went to what is known today as Buffalo State College where I received a bachelor’s degree in Social Work. I went on to a master’s in Education from Nazareth College.

**RR:** Is your employment in the education sector?

**PC:** My work experience has been varied, but mostly in education. I’ve worked as both a teacher and an administrator and am currently still working at the Webster Montessori School. I’m not sure about retirement: maybe next year?

**RR:** What was your religious experience growing up? Were you a cradle Episcopalian or originally in another branch of Christianity?

**PC:** I had very little church experience growing up. Most of my exposure to Christianity as a child came from my neighborhood friend, Cheryl. I sometimes went to church and attended Bible camp with her. I came to the Episcopal church on my own. My friend was Presbyterian, but I wandered into the Episcopal church across the street and liked it better. I brought my mom and she made peace with God there. I imagine you could have called her a disgruntled Catholic. Tom and I were married in that very church.

**RR:** Your friend, Cheryl, seems to have played a very important part in your life. Tell us a little more about her. Have you remained close?

*Continued*

**PC:** I met my friend Cheryl when I was very young and went to church with her family whenever I spent the night at her house on the weekends. Bible camp was during grade school summers. I started attending her church youth group in high school and became a committed Christian then. I didn't invite her to the Episcopal church because I guess you could say her family were evangelical Christians and wouldn't have allowed it. Sadly, I've lost touch with my friend. The last time I saw her was at my mom's funeral eight years ago.

**RR:** How did you and Tom meet?

**PC:** I've been married to Tom for 43 years. We met at college when I was 19 and got married two years later. We have three grown children (Jeff, Elise and Kara), two sons-n-law (Rob and Scott) and two grandchildren (Orion and Leila).

**RR:** What life skills and interests do you bring to your religious life at Good Shepherd?

**PC:** I have had four main areas of service at Good Shepherd over the years. One that many parishioners know is our annual Lenten Book of Meditations which I have been doing since 2008. For that, I recruit writers, compile and edit their submissions, and shepherd the booklet through to its publication. For that project, I bring a lifelong love of writing and my skills as an editor and proofreader. I also taught Sunday School for somewhere around 15 to 20 years, drawing upon my training in education and the joy and satisfaction I find in teaching children. The third service segment is food. I participate in the Meal Ministry program (which makes it easy for parishioners to bring meals to parishioners in temporary need). I also serve with a Meal and More, which offers meals to the needy at Christ Church in Rochester. I volunteer there once a month, which I have been doing for about five years now. Lastly, my empathy and desire to pray with others led me to join our Healing Ministry team, led by Amy O'Neil. We pray with parishioners in the church's comfort room or on an individual basis, at one's home or via Zoom.

**RR:** Wow, all that work must keep you quite busy on top of your time spent working for a living. Do you do anything for yourself?

**PC:** I enjoy gardening, hiking, yoga, traveling, reading and I'm passionate about writing. One outlet for that passion is my blog, The Morning Message, which I started almost exactly five years ago, shortly after my father died, perhaps as a way of processing my grief. Although I've journaled spiritual writings for most of my life, I had never before shared any of it. My daughter, Elise, encouraged me to share what I write. I feel that my father's spirit after his passing inspired me. Over the years, I can see the history of the times we live in and my reflections on whatever is happening as a kind of growth and change. I'm sure that what I have learned at GS is in there somewhere. I have about thirty Good Shepherd friends who are on my email distribution list for the blog as well as 20 or so others who've requested it. Once in a while, I share it on social media.

**RR:** What would you like the parish to know about you as a person that only a few close friends, or perhaps none, may know?

**PC:** Even though I appear quiet and serious, I really love to have fun and especially, to dance. I sometimes embarrass myself dancing a little too enthusiastically! Dancing to classic rock is my favorite, I guess.

**RR:** I believe you participated in the Education for Ministry program. How was that experience?

*Continued*



**PC:** Yes, I have taken EfM and graduated during Covid shutdown when there were Zoom classes only! I found the experience both challenging and fascinating. I loved learning the biblical history and examining Christianity from many different perspectives. The discussions were great and I enjoyed hearing everyone's "take" on the readings. I highly recommend giving EfM a try, as it really helped me on my spiritual journey.

**RR:** It's been great getting to know you better. Anything you'd like to say that we haven't touched upon?

**PC:** My last word is that I'm very grateful to Lance, Karyn, Barbara and every Good Shepherd parishioner who has welcomed us into the fold, invited us to participate in various ways and made us feel like members of a caring family of friends.

**RR:** Thank you for sharing your story with the parish, and for all your many ministries.

## ART

### Autumn Wreaths by Debra Nelson

Wreaths are a form of artwork that provide a cheerful welcome to your home or any room in the house!



*Autumn Blues*



*First Harvest*



*Cornucopia of Color*



*Bows & Bees*



*Whisper of Wind*



*Glowing with Gratitude*

## ESSAY

# ROCKY RACoon CHECKED INTO HIS ROOM ONLY TO FIND...?

by Ed Kushall

This article is not so much about Rocky but about what he found when he checked into his room. Perhaps you may have guessed the answer. Rocky Racoon checked into his room only to find Gideon's Bible. Of course, if you are a Beatles' fan you would have known that right away.

Whether you have travelled around the country or around the world there is a good chance that in the nightstand or in the drawer of the nightstand's in your hotel room you found a Bible. Have you ever wondered how that Bible got there, well, *"It's a long and Winding Road"*, yet another Beatles reference. Here's the story.

It all started back in 1898 when John Nicholson and Samual Hill shared a room at the Central Hotel of Boscobel, Wisconsin. I had never heard of Boscobel, Wisconsin (yes, it's a real place), anyway by the next morning these two men had formed a vision of an association to help traveling Christian men.

In May of 1899 the two men met again and were determined to proceed with forming this association. They invited others to a meeting at a YMCA, however only one other man joined them, W. J. Wright. After prayerful consideration the three men choose GIDEONS for the name of the organization. The ministry was formed as an association for Christian traveling salesmen to encourage other Christian men who regularly travelled.

The Gideons is a businessmen's organization. In 1901 the wives of Gideons were recognized as the Gideons Auxiliary, they are the prayer warriors of the Gideons and they also have their own Scripture distribution ministry, they distribute Scripture to nurses, doctor's offices, and woman's shelters.

The name was chosen because Gideon was able to accomplish great feats with a few men with God's help. You can read all about Gideon in Judges chapter 7, but here is the short version on how Gideon defeated a mighty army with God's help.

When God wanted Gideon to bring an army to take on the enormous Midianite army, he brought 32,000 men. Through a series of tests God reduced Gideon's army from a force 32,000 to just 300 men. But God had an even odder plan in place. They won't even have to invade or attack to wipe out the [Midianites](#). He had them create as much noise as possible by blaring trumpets and smashing jars. This confuses the men in the Midianite camp, and they end up killing each other in the chaos.

The Gideon ministry started out with very modest expectations: to provide one Bible to be kept at the front desk to aid in the spiritual needs of traveling business men. The ministry began to grow. In 1903 the first camp outside the United States was formed in Toronto Canada.

The ministry did not begin with Bible placement in hotel rooms. Hotel Bible placement began in 1908 when the Gideon convention held in Louisville Kentucky approved the recommendation to place Bibles in the bedrooms of hotels. Other noteworthy beginnings in 1908 included the first observation of Mother's Day in the United States, the founding of General Motors and the Bureau of Investigation, now known the FBI.

The first placement of Scriptures was only 25 hotel Bibles, by 2000 Gideons distributed more than two Scriptures every second of the day, in more than 80 languages, in over 200 countries.

*Continued*



By 1950 50 million scriptures were placed. In 1971 President Richard Nixon was presented a commemorative Bible after the 100 millionth Scripture was placed, in 1978 President Jimmy Carter received the 200 millionth Gideon Scripture at the White House on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. In 2008 President George W. Bush was presented a Bible to commemorate the first Billion Scriptures distributed. It took 93 years to reach one billion Scripture, the second billion was reached in just 13 years. On average, more than two copies of God's Word are distributed per second and over one million Bibles and New Testaments are distributed every four days.

I have been a member of this association since 1992 and have been involved in the placement of Bibles in hotels as well as distribution of New Testaments at schools, nursing homes and jails. Gideons and Auxiliary are organized in groups called camps, I belong to the Wayne County camp, each camp might have between ten and twenty members. The camp members distribute Scriptures within their respective camp area boundaries.

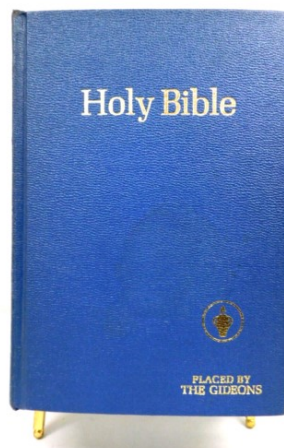
Since its inception the ministry has expanded from just placing Bibles in hotels. In 1941 the Gideons began giving New Testaments to those serving in the armed forces, the same year the Auxiliary began giving New Testaments to nurses. In 1946 students in grades 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> began receiving Testaments. In 1972 distribution to college students was established. Today testaments are given to hospitals through the hospital's office of chaplains, in prisons and nursing homes by the Gideons.

In 1948 the Netherlands became the first country in Europe to establish a Gideon ministry. In 1949 General Douglas MacArthur requested the Gideons to send a representative to establish a ministry in Japan making Japan the first country in Asia to have an active Gideons ministry. In 1989 the first countries behind the Iron Curtain were opened and a camp was organized in Kishnev Moldova

Let's get back to Rocky for a moment, you see Rocky lived in the Black Mountain Hills of Dakota and Rocky's girl, her name was Magill and she called herself Lil, but everyone knew her as Nancy. She ran off with another guy, his name was Dan, so Rocky went into town and checked into a room at the local saloon only to find Gideon's Bible. Rocky had come equipped with a gun to shoot off the legs of his rival. Now Lil and Dan were in the next room and Rocky burst in and said this is a showdown, but Dan drew first and Rocky collapsed in the corner. Now a doctor, stinking of gin, patches Rocky up and he falls back into his room only to find Gideon's Bible. Gideon checked out and he left it no doubt to help with good Rocky's revival. Apologies to Paul McCarthy and John Lennon the authors of the song quoted above.

Now what could have happened if when Rocky checked into his room and found Gideon's Bible if he would have picked it up and opened it? He might have found some guidance on the first page titled HELP IN TIME OF NEED where suggested readings are listed for various situations, or perhaps he might have just opened it and read something to dissuade his plan to shoot the legs of his rival!

The billions of Bibles and New Testaments distributed throughout the world are seeds, and like in the parable of the Sower, some land on rocks, some land on futile ground. But some lie dormant for years in that drawer by the bed just waiting for the right time to sprout and bring forth fruit. Today there over 250,000 Gideons around the world placing Scriptures to help with Rocky's revival.



## FICTION

## SUICIDE HILL

By Richard Reid

Ben, whose boyhood coincided with parts of the 1950s and 1960s, loved winter. Not that the ten-year-old particularly liked cold weather or wearing heavy coats and hats and gloves, it was just the one time of year when you could expect to wake up on certain mornings (especially those days when schools were forced to close) and enjoy SNOW! Sure, there were sometimes flakes or even a dusting before Thanksgiving and occasionally after some flowers and trees began to bud in the spring but that snow almost never accumulated and was generally gone before you knew it.

For Ben, snow meant that the dead-looking bushes and bare trees all had their gloomy shades of brown replaced with a majestic white coating glistening under the weakened rays of a winter sun. That color reminded him of the white paper he painted on when he had art in school. Instead of applying paint or crayons to the snow however, he would be creative in a different way – by sculpting it – round, into snowballs, or shaping it into a rectangle for the walls of a snow fort, or even into whatever shape an Eskimo igloo might be called. Best of all, he liked to flatten the snow so it became smooth and slick, the flakes pressed so close as to become almost like ice, all the better to run his flexible flyer sled along - downhill, of course, at as fast a clip as possible.

Not every snowfall brought the best snow for sledding. Dry snow wouldn't pack right, even if you spit into it to help it along. Besides, a boy only had so much spit; never nearly enough for a snowball fight. Dry snow just wouldn't bear the weight of a sled down a hill for any kind of decent run, even when gravity and the frozen ground did their parts. Yes, it had to be a somewhat wet snow. On a hill, the pressure of a shoe or boot, the runner of a sled, the weight of a body on thick cardboard or in a garbage can cover (with the handle removed from the top, of course) all pressed the snow crystals together for that desired, conducive surface.

"What ya staring at?" Jed asked Ben as he approached his friend.

Ben had a yard with a hill that led from the sidewalk down to the garage for the family car. Just before Jed arrived, Ben had been sledding, going under the arched rose trellis and along the path that separated the right half of the back yard into two gardens, all the way to his back fence. Jed appreciated a unique advantage of being Ben's friend: his hill for sledding, even if it was only about 40 feet long and perhaps twelve feet below sidewalk level. Had he been a skier, Jed would have called it a bunny slope: good for little kids, like his five-year old sister, Becky, who had accompanied him. When Jed, with his flexible flyer in hand, announced he was on his way to Ben's house, his mother had insisted he take Becky with him.

"Nothin', just this hill," Ben replied pensively. "It's not as much fun as it was last winter."

"What d'ya expect? We're bigger. The hill's the same size it always was," Jed observed.

"Jed! Take me sledding! Take me sledding," Becky implored.

"Pipe down, ya little squirt, I'm talking with Ben," the annoyed brother snapped.

"I'm telling mommy what you called me," she yelled and turned to head home. Having just started

*Continued*

kindergarten only a few months earlier, Becky had not yet learned the proven value of flattery as a way to twist a boy into complying with a girl's wishes; it was still tears and playing the mom card. Jed's first thought was, good riddance, but remembering his mother was still mad at him over the broken cereal bowl he had dropped earlier that morning, he caught up with her and gently led her back to the entrance to Ben's yard. Placing Becky in front of him on the sled, before kicking off, he cast a glance at Ben who sensed it meant, "Aren't you glad you're an only child?"

The three spent 25 minutes enjoying brisk seconds of speeding cold air against exposed flesh followed by slow walks back up an occasionally slippery hill. Becky took turns sledding with both boys so that the one not with the child could get a running start from the sidewalk's curb and hurl himself down onto the sled as its runners touched the slick hill, juiced for extra speed on its downward run. Finally, she agreed to solo – but only from the hill's midpoint. Before too long, she braved it from the top of the hill as the two boys cheered her on. It seemed a shame that no adult was present to give both boys points for resisting the temptation to deposit little Becky into a snow bank even once. After taking a happy little sister home, Jed and Ben headed to Ben's basement, each with a cup of hot chocolate handed to them by Ben's mother when they arrived.

At first, their talk was innocuous: who would beat who to the draw on television: Steve McQueen's bounty hunter Josh Randall with his sawed-off Winchester 1892 rifle on *Wanted: Dead or Alive*, or Chuck Connors' rancher Lucas McCain's customized cycling lever Winchester 1892 rifle on *The Rifleman*? After a few minutes of lively exchange, Jed finally got to the real purpose of their conversation: Suicide Hill. Ben had heard of it, though he had never been there. It was a good walk from his house, probably close to two miles, though one could save some time by cutting through a cemetery instead of walking around it. The huge hill had been created about six years ago when they built that highway extension. They said it easily gave you a downhill run of maybe 175 feet -long enough for an exciting experience. The only problem with it, if you saw it that way, was when you got to the bottom because there wasn't much space, maybe 40, 45 feet, before you encountered an unforgiving iron fence hence the name, Suicide Hill, so dubbed by an unknown wag.

Jed wanted the two of them to go right now, before the recent snowfall had been worn away from the hill's constant use. He rattled on about how awesome an experience it was – personally told to Jed by his teenage cousin when his family had gone to a relative's house for Christmas ten days ago. Half-listening, Ben was remembering a dinner conversation from a few nights ago. His father had commented on a brief article he had recently read in the local newspaper, to the effect that police had to break up a battle between two teenage gangs that had erupted over using Suicide Hill. There had been drinking. "Juvenile delinquents! Send 'em all to reform school," he carped. Ben was sure his parents would not want him to go there. Still, it was 11:15am on a Saturday. Lots of kids his age would be there now, not those older teens who caused that trouble. Besides, he wouldn't be alone. Jed was with him to help, if there was a problem, which there wouldn't be. No harm in going now, he told himself.

Slipping out of the house with just a shout to his mother to the effect that he and Jed were going out to play, Ben set off, with Jed and two sleds, a little anxious about the hill, a little guilty for not telling his mom what they were up to, but eager to prove to Jed he was up to the challenge. They said a kid once broke his leg when his sled slammed into the fence but never, Ben was certain, had anyone ever died there for surely that would have been the story bandied about, not one about an injured limb. Despite its name, didn't everyone have fun there? It was perfectly safe for a ten-year-old who knew how to handle a sled, that's what he mulled as they navigated toward Suicide Hill.

While walking through the cemetery, Jed spied a tombstone with dates for an eleven-year-old boy on it. “Ya’ think he died on Suicide Hill?” he asked mischievously. Seeing the years on the headstone, Ben knew Jed’s question was just good-natured kidding since the child had passed long before the highway extension had created the hill and he told Jed just that. To himself, however, Ben admitted he could have done without his friend’s kooky humor just now.

Arriving there, watching the sledders in action for a couple of minutes, Ben saw the truth of what he suspected: all you had to do was to steer your sled sharply but carefully to the left as soon as the ground leveled out and you came to a safe, slow stop since the space at the bottom of the hill was easily three times as wide as the distance to the fence. And if you only had a cardboard box, a garbage can lid or some other improvised sled, well, you just shifted your weight to turn it, dragged your feet to come to a stop, or fell off it into the snow if you got too close to that iron wall of doom; no one was stupid enough to hit that fence.

Jed started up the hill then turned back to see a non-moving Ben. “Ya’ comin’ or what?”

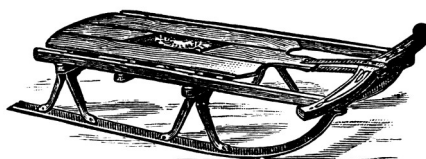
“Right behind you,” Ben assured.

Trudging up the hill gave Ben time to decide he’d take his first run lying prone so he could steer with his hands to get a quicker, sharper turn than his feet might provide if he sat. Waiting at the top of the crowded hill for their turn to go down, Jed suggested they choose to see who went first. Odds or evens he asked. Ben chose odds, said, “shoot” and won with his one finger to Jed’s two. Best two out of three, Jed quickly interjected – and lost that round to Ben as well. Jed held his friend’s sled while Ben got into position. No push, just let me go, Ben told him.

Jed’s grip removed Ben began accelerating. As the cold wind crashed into his face, he realized the hill was bumpier than he expected. His traveling speed, almost faster than he had hoped for, meant it was already time to turn left as he began to level off – but what were those two kids doing standing there with their sleds upright, an alarmed Ben asked himself. That’s no place to talk! Get out of the way! Of course, he couldn’t hit them so he waited an extra second and a half before turning, missing them by about six feet. Still, the sled wasn’t even close to that monstrous fence.

Coasting to a stop, he looked back for a following Jed who was nowhere to be seen. Oh, wait, there he was, waving at Ben from on top of the hill. Rising, Ben pulled the sleigh away, making sure he was clear of the ‘landing zone’ for the other sledders. Still, Jed had not moved. “Come on,” Ben yelled, waving his arm for emphasis. Certain that Ben was finally watching him, with a running start, Jed hurled the sled and himself onto the hill. Maybe it was the extra speed, or maybe he turned the sled too sharply before he reached flat ground, but Jed and his flexible flyer took a spectacular flip that elicited gasps from a few onlookers, including a horrified Ben.

Running over to his fallen comrade who had finally slid to a stop, softly whispering, “Please God, don’t let him be hurt,” Ben stood before a motionless figure for two tense seconds before the prone boy stood up. Seeing his friend’s concerned face, a smiling Jed exclaimed, “Didn’t I tell ya’ Suicide Hill is awesome!!”



## SPECIAL THEME

# GOLF

by Content Editor Richard Reid

To American humorist Mark Twain has long-been attributed the observation that golf is a good walk spoiled. Golf is also a lot of other things to many diverse people. In this issue, our first with a golf theme, we will explore a few of these many aspects.

The seven parishioners who have contributed their anecdotes and photos to *Flock Quarterly*'s first theme section on golf touch upon some of these viewpoints, as do the quotations from other players of the game of golf. There's also original art sketch -- of a golf bag from a person best known at Good Shepherd for her music.

If parishioners who have arrived at Good Shepherd since 1998 have ever wondered about Bruce Mason, the man whose name is attached to Good Shepherd's annual golf outing, then Mary Lou Mason's recollections about her late husband ought to be of interest.

You'll also find three essays about golf. First, Fr. Lance sketches some of the links – pun intended – between golf and aspects of the Episcopal liturgy, religion, and life in general. Then Greg Hartline offers a concise account of how he became a golfer. Finally, Mike Rosato tells how he has become a serial “connector” of people by organizing over 50 golf tournaments in the last 25 years,

We've barely scratched the surface of the topic with all this material. Please let us know what you think of it – and if you'd like to see *Flock Quarterly* offer a second golf focus in a future issue.





## ESSAY

## BRUCE MASON

### *MARY LOU REMEMBERS BRUCE*

By Richard Reid

*Author's Note: On September 24, 2023, Good Shepherd held its 25<sup>th</sup> Bruce Mason Golf Tournament. Since this issue's Flock Quarterly has devoted a special section to golf, it seemed appropriate to include a remembrance of longtime parishioner Bruce who passed away in late 1997. In September, on the telephone, I chatted about Bruce's life and involvement with golf with his widow, Mary Lou, now "blessed" she assures, to be residing in Florida for the last several years with her son, Ted and his wife, Stephanie.*



Bruce, a graduate of Webster High School, joined the Air Force for four years, serving in England and in Lake Charles, Louisiana, rising to the rank of sergeant in the Air Police. After he left the military, returning to New York, he followed the well-trodden path to employment with Eastman Kodak. Working in the film development section, he met a secretary, Mary Lou, and love also developed there. Marrying in 1955 at All Saints Episcopal Church in Irondequoit, they soon had a family: two sons, Tommy and Ted, and a daughter, Deborah.

Bruce and Mary Lou arrived at Good Shepherd in 1956 when Fr. George Anderson was its rector. Before too long, Bruce began serving on the Vestry. As a member of the Building and Grounds Committee, he did a lot of painting at church, among many other tasks. Bruce, Mary Lou explained, didn't like working indoors very much, which led him to a career outside as a structural steel worker and certified iron welder for 35 years. He was also an officer in Local 33 of the iron workers union. When Bruce got involved in something, Mary Lou indicated, he always invested himself fully. He was a member of the fraternal organization, the Masons. As a member of Valley Lodge No. 109, he rose in it to become a grand master.

It was only after he retired that Bruce first crossed paths with golf – not as a player but, rather, as a welder. Could he repair someone's golf club? Indeed, he could and did. Word spread. Seeing the enjoyment Bruce got from doing this, Mary Lou encouraged him to seek training to not only repair golf clubs but to learn to make them. Bruce found such help at Golfsmith in Austin, Texas, journeying a few times there over the years to further enhance his skills. His basement became his workshop.

Of course, Bruce began playing golf by this time as well. No, Mary Lou reports, he never had a hole in one but he enjoyed the game immensely. He was a member of the Winged Pheasant Golf Links in Shortsville for several years and then, at age 66, God called him home. His friends at Good Shepherd immediately named the next golf tournament they played in for Bruce. It became a fund-raiser, for groups in the community such as Honor Flight, and for the Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund.

"I still miss him," Mary Lou says, "but God has his way of doing things." And so did Bruce: his golf clubs are still being used by some Good Shepherd parishioners to this day, remaining prized by all who have them.

## ESSAY

## GOLF AND SPIRITUALITY

by Rev. Lance Robbins

When asked to write some ideas on golf and spirituality I was intrigued. What to comment on and what exactly could the connection be between the spiritual life and the game I've come to love so much? Here are some thoughts and ideas, in no particular order of importance.

To begin, let's state the obvious: there are 18 holes on a regular course. Always, there are 18 holes. We might play various courses but it is always 18 holes. The services found in our prayer book follow the exact same order every time we gather. Each week, with some variations, we enjoy the basic structure of the liturgy. Like the liturgy, there are variations during the golf outing. Depending on how we are playing, we use different clubs as we approach the green, just as we use different readings each week in church. I like the consistency of it all- we know what to expect when attending church just as we know what to expect on a course. Each of the events are the same every time but with different experiences when we play or worship. Familiarity coupled with change add to the excitement of worship and golf.

Second- the golf ball. Really just a round sphere and yet there is a wholeness and a sense of being complete with something perfectly round. In Celtic spirituality it is the intertwined knot within a circle that symbolizes the eternal love of God for us. Further, there is something mystical about seeing a ball launch into the air. While it is hard to explain, perhaps it represents an extension of ourselves being set free from the confines of earth. We of course do this during our liturgy. Using our imagination, our hearts and minds travel quickly from one place to another as we visualize the people and places that make up our prayers and readings.

The game of golf can never be perfected. Of course, the spiritual journey that we are all on will never be perfect either. Both the game of life and the game of golf involve, at times, tremendously difficult challenges. In both instances we experiment on how to make things better; we decide what changes are needed. Perhaps the secret to both golf and life is our approach. Are we ready to meet the demands of both with a positive attitude and the willingness to accept the fact that it won't be easy? Many of us have come to realize that with determination, openness, and the ability to roll with punches, both life and golf can be very good, if not even a deep blessing. In both golf and life there are moments of sheer joy- a shot well planned and executed is much like the joy of a special event or celebration. There are, of course, moments that are not pleasant: illness, loss, and unexpected events that come to visit us all. This naturally leads us to one other fact that links both spirituality and golf- we are not alone. We have a community of fellow travelers, other members of our parish who help nourish us along the way, as well as the pleasant opportunity to enjoy a round of golf with a foursome. In both cases, we have the company and encouragement of others. They support us when we need it, share in the struggles, and we just get to enjoy the presence of one another. Playing with regular golf partners one develops a bond with others that can only be described as priceless, just like the bonds that are formed with other members of our parish.

During our good weather months there is nothing comparable to being outdoors on a course surrounded by God's gift of nature. It is really a mini sabbath time of refreshment and renewal. It is my hope that our time together on Sunday morning is also a time of refreshment and renewal for us all. In both the spiritual life and the game of golf you simply shouldn't use your cell phone or any other device that would be distracting to others or take your mind off what is at hand. Golf, like no other game, requires complete concentration. Just like our worship, we need to focus on our prayers and readings.

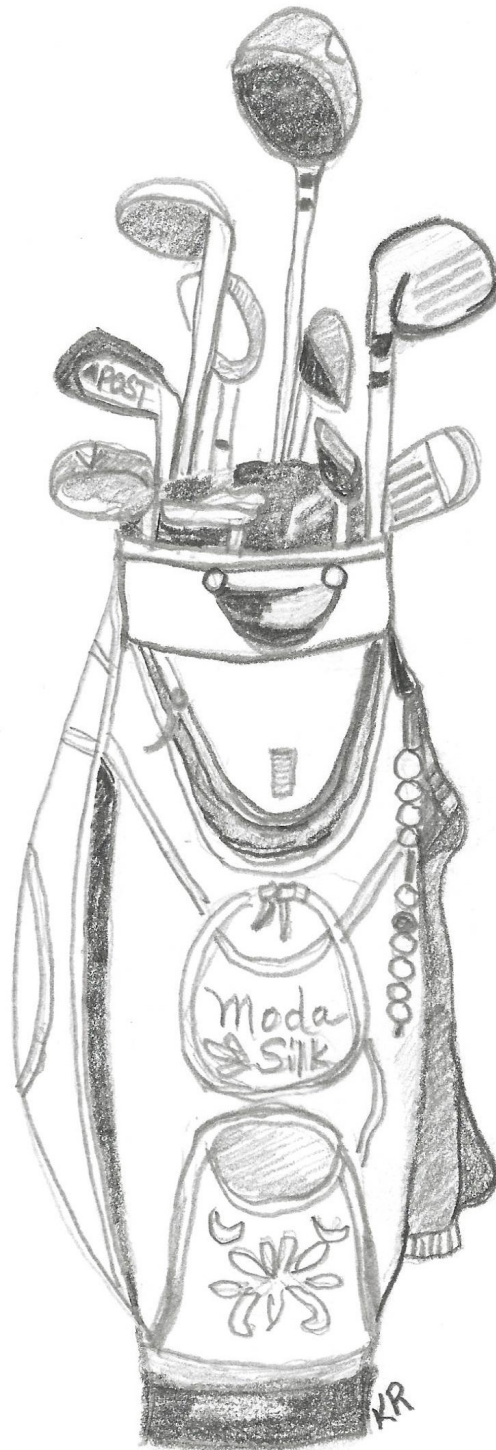
The best advice I can offer to a beginner at golf is to keep your head down and let the club do the work. Swinging harder is not always going to create more distance or accuracy. It's letting the game come to you and playing with a rhythm in a natural fashion. Swinging harder while on our spiritual journey, as it were, is not advised either. During our meditation, prayer and quiet time, we need to keep our head down (as in prayer), trust that we are being guided by the Spirit, and take the journey as it comes.

So, friends, next spring when the weather allows, get out there and hit a golf ball!

# ART

## SHADOW LAKE, HERE I COME

by Karyn Robbins



## ESSAY

## GOLF

by Greg Hartline

When I was young, miniature golf was a staple among the activities I enjoyed with my family in the summers and on vacation. Virtually every town in the continental United States that had a miniature golf course had my family sample one of them before we left. We all grew up with pretty strong putting skills and my dad usually won. But he never actually played golf on a regular full-size golf course, and he did not have his own clubs. I asked him why.

"Golf is a sport for men of leisure," he used to say. "You have to play two or three days a week to get good at it, and by the time I have that much time on my hands, I will be too old to play." I found that he was right. As I grew up, got married and had kids, spending a day on the golf course was a luxury I could rarely afford. I had way too much responsibility. Golf was a game for those with more free-time on their hands and less responsibility, like top surgeons, US senators, CEOs of Fortune 100 companies, and the President of the United States.

After ending up in a sales career, I rediscovered golf. The companies I worked for encouraged me to play, and generously gave me promotional items related to the game with the company logo proudly emblazoned on them, such as polo shirts, golf towels, baseball caps, and golf balls. I couldn't be seen without them if we expected our clients to wear them. So I was something like a male model. The company sponsored tournaments at famous golf courses like Sleepy Hollow and Canoebrook, and I got to go, all on the company dime, hobnobbing with influential and powerful corporate muckety-mucks, and dining sumptuously on prime rib and lobster with clients at the club.

I discovered the real reason why wealthy people play golf, and it has nothing to do with the game itself. Important people use it as an excuse to go someplace where they cannot be reached on the phone by people making demands and raising their blood pressure. You get to enjoy the sunshine and the fresh air outside of the confines of your vocational prison.

Salesmen play golf because the decision-maker who is always too busy to spend five minutes with you on the phone will give you four hours of his undivided attention if you invite him to play golf with you on a famous course.

I played golf at Pebble Beach, Tarrytown, Orlando, Fl, and in Puerto Rico, but it's nothing to brag about. I was something of a hacker, because I never really played unless the company paid for it. My level of play was consistently embarrassing (except for the putting game taught to me by my father). But like so many powerful people, I did find it was a nice way to get out of the office, and a bad day of golf is always better than a good day at work.

Most of these tournaments were a game called, "best ball," which meant that you would pick the ball with the best position among your foursome on their first shot for all of you to take your next shot. Hence, a score of four on hole one meant that the four of you collectively could produce at least one decent shot on each stroke that could contribute to achieving par on that hole. This was ideal for me, because it didn't matter if I sliced it into the woods, or lost the ball in the lake, or missed the ball completely, one of the better golfers always produced something worth playing up the fairway, on the next shot, and onto the green. Based on the scores at the end of the day, you could almost make yourself believe that you were pretty decent golfers after all.

It didn't take me long to figure out that my primary job was to stay out of the way and facilitate the better golfers in my foursome, to encourage them, and not to complain about my own misfortune or slow them down. I got pretty good at doing this, having no pretense that what I did with my golf club mattered at all, and I got to enjoy some pretty beautiful venues and avoid phone calls and harassment from sales managers for extended periods of time. I also got to play with some pretty decent golfers, go on some fancy trips, and have some pretty interesting conversations having nothing to do with business or golf.



After one such event, I was surprised when the other three said to me, "We enjoyed playing with you today, Greg. You can play golf with us anytime."

I still have a lot of this golf paraphernalia, not because I have any expectation of using them for golf, but mostly because of their nostalgia, or usefulness for other things.

The most important thing I learned from my time on the golf course was that nobody wants to play with someone who whines and complains about every shot that didn't go his way. Temper tantrums won't get you far. But if you take responsibility for your own shortcomings, politely encourage the golfers who really have skill, listen to their stories, and help them find their ball, you can build something like a friendship with people you would otherwise never have the privilege of meeting.

## ODE TO GOLF

In my hand I hold a ball  
White and dimpled, rather small  
Oh, how bland it does appear,  
This harmless looking little sphere.  
By his size I could not guess;  
The awesome strength it does possess;  
My life has not been quite the same  
Since I chose to play this game.  
It rules my mind for hours on end.  
A fortune it has made me spend.  
It has made me curse and cry  
I hate myself and want to die  
I am promised a thing called 'par'  
If I can hit it straight and far.  
To master such a tiny ball  
Should not be very hard at all.  
But my desires the ball refuses  
And does exactly as it chooses  
It hooks and slices, dribbles, dies  
and disappears before my eyes.  
Often it will have a whim  
To hit a tree or take a swim.  
With miles of grass on which to land  
It finds a tiny patch of sand.  
Then has me offering up my soul  
If it will just drop in the hole.  
Its made me whimper like a pup,  
and swear that I will give it up  
And take to drink to ease my sorrow.  
But "The Ball" knows...  
I'll be back...tomorrow.

(Anonymous)



## GOLF STORY

### *TWO GOLF STORIES FROM ANNIE BISHOP*

Sally Robb and I have been playing golf for ten years and every time we go out it is an adventure. One time at Lakeshore Golf Course we were on the third hole getting ready to hit the ball on the green when I noticed a fox by the third hole. I figured that it had rabies because it was out in the day light. It kept watching us so I told Sally we should get in the golf cart leave our balls and get out of there. So, she gunned the gas pedal and I took out a club just in case it came after us. All the while we were trying to get away it kept watching us. We decided we should let someone know about the fox. As we were about to go by the fox, we noticed that there was a stick holding him up. We found out that it was a decoy for ducks and wasn't real after all.

Another adventure we had again at Lakeshore we were riding in the golf cart and noticed a urinal hanging from the side of the cart. We had never noticed it there before and was wondering why they had it there for men when there were outhouses on the course. It seemed as though they were favoring the men golfers. It bothered us the whole game. So, when we finished, we noticed that all the carts had them. We asked one of the woman golfers we saw about it and she didn't know either. Sally went inside to the office and asked the gentleman. He said this was one for the books: they aren't urinals – they're on there to fix your divots. Sally said, my husband is a doctor and I know a urinal when I see one. He just laughed. So glad we were there to solve the urinal question. We now see them on most golf course carts but they still look like urinals.

“Many a golfer prefers a golf cart to a caddy because it cannot count, criticize or laugh.”

--- Anonymous

## GOLF ANECDOTE

### **THE UNEXPECTED BONUS IN GOLF**

By Art & Robin Mason

Every year, Good Shepherd organizes a friendly golf tournament for the congregation. All levels of golf are welcome, and depending on the numbers of players, golfers are grouped into foursomes. Sometimes you have played a round with the people on your team and sometimes it is just someone you recognize from church but don't *really* know.

I have been attempting to play golf for over 50 years and have played for half of that time with my wife Robin. During one church tournament, we had the pleasure of being teamed with Bob and Carol Markham. We knew the Markhams casually but did not know their level of play nor their competitiveness. What we found out was one of the most delightful and fun experiences in my half century of playing the game!

It did not take very long to realize that our concerns were unfounded as we sliced, hacked and otherwise chased the golf balls around the course. Hearing stories about their son Paul, their participation in almost every aspect of our church and just laughing and relaxing was a pleasure I hope all members of our congregation can experience! The final score did not matter. In fact, we were the last group to finish but time flew by and we realized that God had had a hand in bringing us together.

Since then, we have played with Bob and Carol on numerous occasions and the outcome always seems the same. No (serious) score card is ever kept and we realize the Good Shepherd church is a unique and loving congregation.

## GOLF STORY

### A GOLF STORY BY CHRIS NUCCITELLI

For the past 25 years my two brothers, our dad and me would play in the Aquinas Founders Day Tournament at Brooklea Country Club. For many reasons, I eagerly looked forward to this event every year. The opportunity to play golf with my siblings and father was precious. Many golf tournaments are scrambles, where everyone drives and then you all hit the best shot going forward. The Founders was a two man best ball, so you get to play your own round and take the two best scores on each hole. Finally, I grew up alongside the 7<sup>th</sup> hole at Brooklea and playing that course always brought back fond childhood memories. But this story is not about a round of golf.

The tournament had an unbelievable run of good weather for as many years as one could remember. However, on this August day many years ago the temperature was cool, the skies darkened. Thunderstorms were threatening. We teed off around Noon with a 'Shotgun Start', where each foursome starts at the same time on different holes. Everyone felt God was on our side and the threatening weather would soon blow over. Everyone except for my father. For two holes he kept looking at the sky and shaking his head. We had started at the farthest hole from the clubhouse and had a good ten-minute cart ride if we needed to retreat. Not being one for chance, my Dad ordered us back to the clubhouse. It started raining about halfway back. First a drizzle, then nothing, then a little steadier rain. We saw many people on the way back continuing to play or waiting things out under the trees.

We got back to the clubhouse just as the rain began to pick up. Peeling off our raingear, we settled into the club chairs as my father got a deck of cards from the bartender. The room was warm and cozy and our laughter and joking around filled the mostly empty room. When my Dad first started his manufacturing company back in the early 60's, he would play gin rummy with the building's landlord. He was so good at it, they didn't pay rent for the first year they were there. It's interesting that it took a year for their landlord to wise up. It's far more interesting that, knowing this story well, my brothers and I still participated in what turned out to be a blood bath. I'm pretty sure my father won all the money back he had paid toward our educations! As the rain turned into a downpour, and thunder and lightning increased, the other golfers came running back to fill up the room. They were cold, wet, and miserable. We were warm, dry, and in great spirits. Since my father's passing, I often think about that afternoon and what a gift it was. The best round of golf I never had!



**"If you're caught on a golf course during a storm and are afraid of lightning, hold up a 1-iron. Not even God can hit a 1-iron."**

**---- Lee Trevino**

## GOLF STORY

## GOLFING WITH THE BIG GUY

By John Norris

*Note: Adapted from a classic old golf joke, once told at an old friend's bachelor party at the local VFW hall in Duluth MN, back in the early Eighties. Times were simpler then.*

It was a sunny September day in the hilly region of Israel. A nice day: not too hot, not too cold, but just right. Peter invited Jesus to play a round of golf at Caesarea, the popular Pete Dye course located in a hilly region of Israel south of Jerusalem. Jesus graciously accepted, and the game was on.

Excited beyond belief, Peter went all out to prepare for this momentous occasion. New Callaway Clubs with Wilson wedges, an Odessey mallet putter. Throw in some Titleist Pro-V 1s, a new pair of Nikes for the feet and a classic cotton golf cap on top. Peter patiently waited at the tee of the par-four first hole.

Jesus then appeared. He was wearing a tattered hand-me-down tunic held together with a frayed loop of rope around the waist. His hair was the usual wild unkempt mess, his golf bag was a shoulder sack, and his clubs were bent every which way but loose. The usual leather sandals adorned his dusty feet. Peter smirked.

They flipped for it, and Peter won the honor to hit off first. His powerful drive off the tee blasted low and away, straight down the middle of the fairway, and rolled to about 275 yards – leaving just a nine iron to reach the green in 2. A chance for a birdie, thought Peter, right out of the blocks!

Then Jesus stepped up to the tee box, sporting a dirty old ball with nasty cut on its cover, and a wooden – *wooden!* – driver, complete with a bull's eye painted on the face of the club. He took an awkward baseball swing at the ball, and watched it dribble just a few yards in front of him.

Out of nowhere, a squirrel jumped on Jesus' ball, stuck it into its mouth like a big old acorn, and started zig-zagging down the fairway. As it picked up speed, an eagle swooped down from the sky, grabbed the squirrel in its mighty talons, and flew off toward the green with his furry quarry struggling to get free. As the regal eagle flew over the apron, the squirrel squirmed just enough so that Jesus' ball popped out of his mouth – and went bouncing onto the green and directly into the cup. Hole in One.

Peter turned, took one look at him, and said, "Oh SURE, Jesus. So, are you going to just mess around, or are we going to play golf?"

**"Making a hole in one isn't so wonderful – look at all the exercise you miss."**

**---- Anonymous**

**"Golf: A plague invented by the Calvinistic Scots as a punishment for man's sins."**

**--- James Barrett Reston**

## GOLF STORY

### HOW I LEARNED TO PLAY GOLF

by Bob Markham

My Dad wanted me to learn to play.

I was 10 or 11 years old at the time. My dad insisted that I do something constructive during the summer school break. I wanted to play baseball, at the playground, with the kids in the neighborhood. However, dad persuaded me to learn to play golf. He could be very persuasive, but that is another story.

Anyway, to help me learn to do it right, dad took me to Genesee Valley Park and introduced me to Mr. George Collins, the club pro. Unbeknown to me, he had already talked with Mr. Collins and arranged for me to work for him. My job was to clean out the locker room, showers, and toilets starting after all the early birds had finished their early morning round of golf.

Since I was underage, I could not be paid as an employee, but instead, I was paid by receiving a half hour lesson from Mr. Collins. AND...after the lesson, he gave me a set of clubs, golf balls and tees, and sent me out the back nine to play nine holes and practice the day's lessons. If things were not too busy, he let me play the front nine too.

Every now and then, my lesson would be given on the course while playing with the pro. These lessons were the most interesting, fun, and even exciting.

I continued to do this every summer into my teens and before long Mr. Collins' lessons proved fruitful and I was playing golf at a fairly decent level, scoring in the low 80's. Occasionally I even broke 80 and had a few rounds in the upper 70's.

I continued to play the rest of my life and spent most of it trying to reproduce the lower scores I got as a youth. Suffice it to say that as my age advanced in number, so did my golf scores. Where are you, Mr. Collins, when I need your correction to my swing or some other part of my game?

**"I'm getting better at golf now because I'm hitting fewer spectators."**

**--- President Gerald R. Ford**

**"I'm going to pass a law that no one can ask me my golf score."**

**--- President Dwight D. Eisenhower**

# GOLF STORY

## TWO GOLF STORIES

by Larry Therkildsen

A Classic, Good Shepherd Golf story – The year was 2003? My friend, or fiancé, Sharon Del Vecchio accompanied me to Shadow Lake (I think) for the 2003 Good Shepherd Bruce Mason Tournament. We had 11 foursomes, 44 golfers. Sharon had never seen me play golf. I was in the first foursome to go out, and as I approached the first tee box, a Rector we all know and love went to the DARK side. He was clutching an imaginary microphone, and began heckling ME! He said, Here comes Bam-Bam Therkildsen, winner of the 1990 Cleveland Open. He can really crush the ball, a Big Hitter. He said more stuff, but the damage was already done. As one of the lead-off golfers, in front of EVERYBODY, all I could think of was to just make a smooth swing, make good contact, and get off the tee box. Unfortunately, after the Rector's heckling, all I could think of was to MURDER the ball. Anyone who golfs knows the KILL swing thought NEVER works, and it did not here either. As I got to the top of the backswing, all thoughts of smooth were replaced by KILL. The direct result was my ferocious swing barely ticked the ball off the heel of my driver, bouncing immediately left down an embankment and bouncing off a garbage can at an adjacent tee. Humiliating enough, yes, but then my beautiful, soon to be my wife, said in the awkward hush of the other golfers – "Honey, did you mean to do that?" The floodgates opened and 43 adult golfers were on the ground, laughing until they cried. To this day, whenever I golf with Rick Lape and he sees a trash can knocked over, he'll say "Larry, was this you?"

Second funny story. The aforementioned Rick Lape and I were playing nine holes at the Ontario Country Club where my wife, Sharon, and I were members. Rick and I had tee'd off on one and were walking up to our balls. After Rick hit his second shot, I turned around and saw Sharon walking up the first hole after us. She had come to tell me she'd gotten a call from my dad that his second wife, Barb, had passed away. There were no plans for funeral at the time. We didn't have Deacon yet, but we did have our Border Collie Teela so Sharon would have to go home.... But we said to her to walk with us and finish the first and second holes and that would be back close to the parking lot. Well, my second shot went into the dry gully 120 yards short of the green. We all saw the ball go in, but 5 minutes of searching yielded no ball. The hole was finished, and we tee'd off on two. I pushed my shot to the right side, carrying the right side rough just past the last home on the right side of the fairway. I was through the yard, about three feet past their property line and I set up for my second shot. Sharon and Rick were yelling at me that I was over the line. I would yell back that my feet were outside their property line, but they came back that my butt looked like it was over the property line. Yes, I was perturbed, and hit my shot diagonally across the fairway hitting a pine tree and flushing out a bird. We finished the hole, and Sharon left for the parking lot. By the time I got home, she said we had a call from "Elwin Bird," that he didn't appreciate my trespassing on his property. I said, who is "Elwin Bird"? She said, balk, balk, balk, balk imitating the bird flushed out of the tree, flapping her arms like wings!

**"The only time my prayers are never answered is on the golf course."**

**---- Billy Graham**

**"A good golf partner is always slightly worse than you are – and that's why I get so many calls to play with friends."**

**---- Anonymous**



## GOLF STORY

## WHY DO I GOLF?

by Sharon White

I started golf when my boys left home and John and I needed to have something more in our lives than going to the boy's games and activities. Although they continued to play softball and run marathons, John Jr. liked to golf with his father at times. Golf is a blessing to me. It gives me a reason to be active and to compete. I have been known to win with a group of men from Good Shepherd years ago: Jack Phillips, Chuck Mann and Doug Tobin, all of whom have since passed away. Two of them were the oldest from our congregation. Boy, could they chip and putt. I had a very good time and it was probably the round with the most lovable memories. The accompanying photo captures a different church golf tournament in Webster, also from years ago. I'm second from left. Who are the three golfers with me? I'll leave it for you to play, "Guess who?"

Golfing with my husband has had its fair share of good memories also. It gave us a chance to go on vacation and be together doing what we both love. We would go to Myrtle Beach for a week and have tee times set up for around seven and play eighteen. Then we would have lunch and play another round of golf for cart fees. We would go out to dinner and then back to the hotel room and crash, then get up and do it all over again the next day.

When we both had retired, we decided to get out of the winter snow here and went to Myrtle Beach for three months starting in January. We would join a golf club and became snow birds! We would get paired with other couples and we would ask them to go out to dinner and this started a great new friendship. We met many new people from many places like Virginia, Tennessee, Iowa, and Nova Scotia. They became our southern family and we met every year for thirteen years. We have enjoyed visiting them at their homes over the years and they us. The covid pandemic kept us from returning for our fourteenth year. We have been so blessed to have had these relationships.

Also, golfing here has given us such great memories. What ever course we joined we would meet some amazing people. We might leave the course but not the relationships. I have competed with such nice women over the years and they also have become my friends. So, over a lifetime we end up with many families. Our related family, our church family, and our families all that have the same talent as us. I think this is so true of all of us. We have many families. God brings us all together in such a way that we are happy, healthy, and with many friendships.



**“What other people may find in poetry or in art museums, I find in the flight of a good drive.”**

**---- Arnold Palmer**

## ESSAY

### HOW MY PASSION FOR GOLF TURNED INTO SOMETHING MUCH MORE

by Mike Rosato

I LOVE Golf! It has been a passion of mine since my Dad first took me out to play when I was 12. A golf course is my “happy place”, whether it’s playing with friends, family, customers, total strangers or all by myself. I am especially fond of playing alone late in the season, when I can often have a golf course all to myself. In fact, it was in this Zen-like peace on a cool fall afternoon of an empty golf course, framed in brilliant fall colors, that the idea for this article came to me. I loved the content editor’s idea of doing an issue of the *FQ* with a section dedicated to golf. I could easily fill up the whole issue with why I love golf and all the related stories.

However, as I walked to one of the five balls I had in play, after a magnificent shot that nobody saw, I reflected on the fact that a big part of the impact I have made on this world, my footprint if you will, was rooted in golf. I suppose you can say that my passion had effectively turned into a calling that has positively impacted a lot of people, as well as enabled me to make an immediate and lasting contribution in a small way at our new Church home, Good Shepherd.

It was 1997, and I was thinking about calling a few fraternity friends from my alma mater, The University of Rochester, that I hadn’t seen in a while to play golf. It had also occurred to me that less and less people I knew were coming back here to Rochester for Homecoming. The last ingredient in this brainstorm stew was the upcoming Ryder Cup, my favorite tournament. All this combined in a flash of brilliance (or insanity) to come up with the idea for a Ryder Cup-like golf tournament between the alumni from my fraternity, Delta Kappa Epsilon and our rival fraternity, Theta Delta Chi to be held on the Friday of Reunion weekend at the U of R. I affectionately named it the Tahou Cup after the home of the Garbage Plate, a late-night staple of ours in college. That first year, we pulled together a few foursomes from each frat and had a fun little event. The idea stuck, and the event quickly grew. We now average 60+ golfers each year, turned it into a fundraiser for Honor Flight Rochester and just held the 27<sup>th</sup> edition. Most importantly it has rekindled long lost friendships and held them together when time and distance would have normally faded them to memory. It has energized this group of alumni and given them a compelling reason to return to Rochester each year, with many traveling from far away. The gratitude that the guys share for this can be overwhelming, but it is surpassed by the joy I get from seeing these guys laughing together every year.

Now, back to Good Shepherd...as new members of Good Shepherd back in 2000, we were eager to find where we could share our time and talents. Hearing that Good Shepherd had its own golf tournament, I raised my hand to help out, given my newfound experience with running a golf tournament. Norm Crawford happily handed me the baton, and for 23 years I have proudly run the Bruce Mason Memorial Golf Tournament which continues to be a wonderful fellowship event, bringing our Church community together (and we’ve raised some money for good causes along the way).

As my Mom used to say, the Lord works in mysterious ways. Certainly, I never thought way back when my Dad and I were bonding on the Bethpage fairways that my love for golf would someday be a foundation for me being able to make a positive impact in the lives of others. 50+ tournaments later, I think I’m doing what I was supposed to be doing.

