

The Parkdale Messenger
Weekly news and musings from
the little church moved by a Great Spirit

Toronto, ON

Dec. 18th, 2019

No. 424

Worship this week:

EPIPHANY

**“More Than You Can Ever Want
Or Need”**

Rev. Doug McLeod

Scripture:

Psalm 36

Luke 6: 38

John 2: 1-11

❖ **Calendar**

Wednesdays – (1:00 pm) Prayer’s Group.

Sundays – (12:00 pm) Bible Study Group.

Wednesdays – (5:00 pm) Homework Club.

Saturday, Jan. 26th - (10:00 am) Knifty Knitters.

Sunday, February – (12:00 pm) Lunch and Movie.

❖ **Reflections**

Your Plan B Is Still God’s Plan A

By Sandra Peoples

(Post and pic, Jan 16, 2019, www.christianitytoday.com)

In 2015, my husband and I moved from rural Pennsylvania and left a church we loved to do something risky—plant a new church in suburban Texas. Our vision for the church was to welcome people with disabilities. We see special-needs families as an unreached people group, since so many don’t attend church on a regular basis.

Before Lee and I even started our ministry, we partnered with a nearby congregation, got involved in the community, and did outreach events to meet special-needs families. But when it came time to start our church with a weekly Bible study, only a few families had committed to coming with us.

Most weeks we had nine adults, four kids under ten years old (three with special needs), and nine older

kids (four with special needs). We loved being together, but we weren’t a self-sustaining church body. My husband worked two jobs in addition to church planting, and I worked three part-time jobs from home. After two years of funding from our supporting church, the local association of churches, and our state denomination, we had to close Journey Church and relinquish our dream.

Very few of us are living our Plan A scenario, whether in our professional or personal lives. Years before our failed church plant, my husband and I heard a psychologist utter words we never wanted to hear: “We believe your son has autism.” In 1977, my parents’ future was upended, too, when they were told that my newborn sister had Down syndrome. All of us sooner or later experience hardships that irrevocably shape our lives.

Although each story is different, Scripture offers us the same enduring truth: Every detour involves God’s presence, purpose, and redeeming power. In other words, our Plan B is still his Plan A.

We see this in the lives of Job, Ruth, Jonah, and Peter.

In the midst of his struggles, Job held on to the peace that surpasses all understanding: “I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth” (Job 19:25). In the end, God restored his family and his wealth. But it was the peace of seeing God’s faithfulness that he carried with him until his death: “After this, Job lived a hundred and forty



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years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so, Job died, an old man and full of years” (42:16–17).

God’s provision for Ruth and Naomi was clear every step of their journey. Although they started out desperate and poor, when they arrived back in Bethlehem, God led Ruth to glean in Boaz’s field. After following the advice of Naomi, Boaz became Ruth’s kinsman redeemer, a provision God had ordained generations before to protect vulnerable widows. Each time Ruth had a decision to make, God’s provision was apparent.

In the story of Jonah, God was with him on the ship and in the belly of the great fish. His presence was clear when he provided a vine to shade Jonah as he sat alone on the hill, and then when he led him to Nineveh to preach a message of repentance. He was omnipresent from ocean depths to hillsides.

Peter, too, had to embrace Plan B when he became a disciple. But the disruption brought great blessing: He had a front-row seat to see God’s power on display through the life of his son. He saw Jesus’ power over nature when he walked on water, over demons as he cast them out, over disease as he healed the sick, over death as he raised Lazarus, and over sin with his death and resurrection.

The great 19th-century preacher Charles Spurgeon once said, “What if others suffer shipwreck, yet none that sail with Jesus have ever been stranded yet.” This was true for Job, Ruth, Jonah, and Peter—they were never stranded—and it’s true for us, as well. When we accept that Plan B is the new Plan A, we can be assured of God’s never-ending presence, provision, and power, even in the midst of storms.

Sandra Peoples, MDiv, is the executive editor for both Key Ministry and Not Alone (Patheos), and her writing has been featured with Christianity Today, Parenting Teens (LifeWay), FamilyLife Today, DaySpring, and (in)courage. Sandra and her husband and their two boys live outside of Houston.

❖ In the News

THE PRAYER BOX

Please take the time to pray for: Vera, Ouida, Alex, Jeanette, Scott, Paris and Marijke.

To add a name to our prayer list, please put a note with the name in the prayer box located in the narthex.

MISS PENNYNICKEL... THE STORY

Please help Miss Penny and the Knifty Knitters, to send our kids to Camp next summer. For info.:

misspenny2006@gmail.com



❖ Thank you to

- Ernie Wilmot for the flowers of the altar table.
- **All those who support our small food bank!**

For information or if you want to post something in The Parkdale Messenger, please contact us:

parkdale.messenger@rogers.com