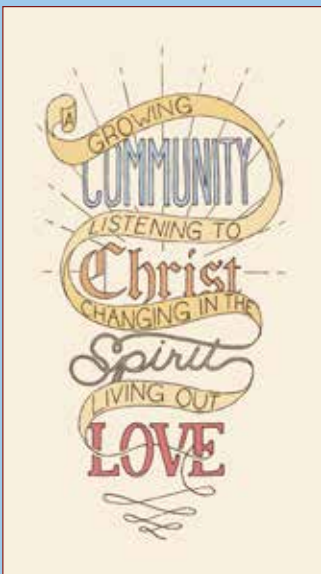


# Your NFC

a weekly newsletter for the  
people of the  
Newberg Friends Church  
community

May 5, 2017



## From Me to You

by Michelle Akins  
*children and family ministries*



This is my last “From Me to You.” Just typing that makes my heart hurt. Just a few weeks ago I wrote my resignation letter...my love letter to you all. Today I feel short on fresh words, so I’m sharing with you a post from my blog dated April 2013. As I look ahead to July 1, 2017, the first day of what I’ll start calling my sabbath, here are a few thoughts on defining strength that I believed four years ago and still hold true today.

### Defining Strength

When God wants you to think about something, he allows multiple opportunities and perspectives to fill your head. I’m beginning to get a headache. It’s heavy in there.

On our recent mini-vacation, I woke up, made breakfast, and sat down with a warm mug of coffee. I want a life defined by the health of my closest relationships. My strength lies not in what I can or cannot achieve, but in my dependence on God to order my days and embrace sabbath.

Except for engaging in a few conversations with my family and friends, a walk on the beach, and packing up to head home, I was about as unproductive as



this mama can get. Strength? Maybe this is stretching it a bit, but I honestly believe the days set aside to relax, renew, and just enjoy life build strength. In our culture, being successful (strong) often means working hard, being irreplaceable, and multi-tasking. I’ve bought into those lies more times than I’d like to admit. The truth is, giving time and attention to my family and friends matters. This year I’ve struggled to create space in my life to be with and actually have friends.

After the Boston Marathon bombing and the terrible explosion in West, Texas, the good ole USA was in shock. Our sense of safety was rocked as the unspoken vow we have with one another was literally blow apart—again. For all the fear we have in this country, we’re also a nation that tries to trust one another. We value life. When the bombs go off or the factory erupts, where’s the strength? As Di Murphy pointed out to us at Women’s Bible Fellowship, strength was found in the actions of the first responders on the scene, running

toward the explosion. We continue to build those muscles when we help our neighbor. Our cities are full of people who feel vulnerable, afraid, and angry. Prayer matters. We are strong when we decide to accept our brokenness but won't be overcome by evil. We are strong when we love. We are strong when we choose trust again.

During the week I met individually with four women who epitomize what it means to be physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually strong, even if they don't always see it that way. These women face a vast array of daily challenges. They are living proof of how reliance on God turns ashes into beauty.

Friday morning, April 19, I sat glued to the TV. SWAT teams, police cars, and a frenzy of media activity displayed another kind of strength: money, technology, information, and deadly force. We live in a country where if you want to "call in the big dogs," our dogs are *huge*. By Friday night the manhunt was over, thanks to the work of hundreds of people in dozens of law enforcement agencies and the general public working together. This kind of strength makes some of us cheer and some of us cry. I feel stuck in the middle, grateful that we have the power to capture "bad guys" and sometimes conflicted by the priorities and processes in which we do so.

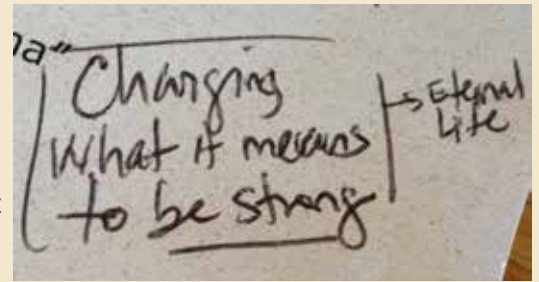
At the end of the week our family joined thousands of believers at the Chris Tomlin concert. The Rose Garden Arena was transformed into a sanctuary, and we worshiped together for three hours. I



stood, hands held high and dancing with as much enthusiasm as possible in the twelve inches of space in front of my chair. The strength of the Holy Spirit filled me with gratitude. Tears streamed down my face as I joined the congregation singing about God's faithfulness. Yes, God is so completely and totally faithful! (You can't be "kinda faithful.") The tears continued as I stood behind my two daughters and my loving husband and I was reminded of my own failings. God's conviction and mercy overwhelmed me. My voice became a mere whisper as I stood in the embrace of Christ. Wrapped in love, secure in forgiveness. We celebrated. I lifted my arms above my head, they felt weightless.

No amount of writing and editing will capture completely what I noticed last week. But I'm going to give it one last try and fumble through my definition of *strength*.

Church inspires me. Sitting in the pew, listening to the sermon, scribbling down my thoughts, asking questions, taking notes, making to-do lists. This is how I worship; this is how I work. Last Sunday I came home with this on my worship sheet:



"Changing what it means to be strong" with a little arrow pointing to "Eternal Life." I came home with a desire to use many of the examples Gregg gave about "power coming through sacrifice and surrender" to redefine strength. The world tells me that being strong means being stoic in the midst of pain, using muscle and power to get my way and to strive for independence and self-sufficiency. If a woman holds back her tears, she is strong. If a teenager uses his karate skills to cut down a bully, he is strong. If a family doesn't need to borrow or beg from the community, they are strong. Perhaps these examples hold a measure of truth, but I believe Jesus turns these definitions upside-down in the kingdom.

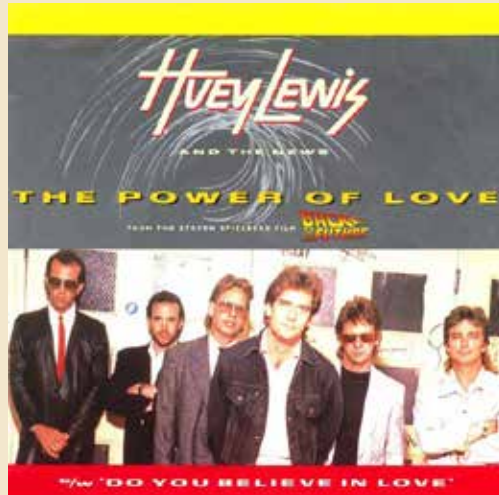
When we come undone, let it all hang out,

bawl like a baby, and expose our most tender self to others—to God, we are strong. It takes strength to be vulnerable, open to attack, comparison, or ridicule. It also opens the doors to healing, help, and the power of the Holy Spirit. So I say let the cleansing, messy tears flow. Allow pain to be present, knowing it is temporary. Eternal life starts now and there is nothing stronger than resurrection power.

If we use physical strength to solve problems, have we really solved them? As I read the Old Testament I'm confronted with issues that are ongoing today. Fights for territory, power, control. People want to be right, to stand up for what they believe, and to subdue "the other." For thousands of years humans have used muscles and might to dominate. Jesus shows us another way. A stronger way, submission, sacrifice. With Christ we suffer, in Christ we live.

If I don't need you and you don't need me, how do

we love? Created to live in community, we deny the core of who we are when we choose separation and independence. (cheesy metaphor alert) If we compare humanity to a machine, that machine runs best when all of its parts are properly maintained and filled with fuel. God is the master mechanic, and love is the fuel. You know...the power of love. Cue Huey Lewis. In perhaps the greatest mystery of all, love brings life. Jesus conquered the grave through love. To truly love is to serve and be served. I remember seeing this popular license plate in the 90s: *He who dies with the most toys wins.* How different life is in the kingdom! If we dare to enter into eternity now, we choose life in community in which what is mine is yours, because it's not really mine in the first place. In the body of Christ we'll let each other know when we need help. We'll share our "toys." We will see love at work in one other and we'll use that power to define strength.



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# QUAKER COVE



Thursday, May 18th, 6:30 -8:00pm

Sherwood Community Friends Church, 23264 SW Main St, Sherwood, OR



Join us for great music, delicious appetizers & dessert made by Quaker Cove staff. Come and hear what God is doing at our camp! This event is free and there's no pressure to give, but we will be sharing opportunities to support the camp.

**RSVP**  
 RSVP by e-mail to [quakercove@gmail.com](mailto:quakercove@gmail.com), or call or text to (360) 899-8269. You can also find a link to register at [www.quakercove.com](http://www.quakercove.com). There is no cost for the event, but you need to pre-register.



# READ AHEAD FOR SUNDAY

## Jeremiah 31:25

### What's Ahead

#### SUNDAY

**9am** | Sunday school for children and adults — for times and classroom information, find "Educational Opportunities" at each entrance, each "Info Center," at the welcome center, or ask a greeter to help you.

**9am** | worship gathering

**10-10:45am** | Community Time | in the social hall and library

**10:15-10:45am** | library staffed

**10:30am** | Agape Sunday school class

**10:45am** | worship gathering

**5pm** | Taizé gathering | (*note earlier time*) | NFC sanctuary

**6:30pm** | business meeting with a minute of recommendation

#### Pastoral Team

Michelle Akins

*children and family ministries*

Steve Fawver

*spiritual health and care*

Gregg Koskela

*lead pastor*

Elizabeth Sherwood

*administration*

Nolan Staples

*worship ministries*

#### Support Staff

Corbin Gronvold

*youth ministries coordinator*

Denise Lyman

*bookkeeper/receptionist*

Sherry Macy

*admin assist / communications*

Arnie Mitchell

*buildings manager*

Dan Ritter

*buildings manager*

Mark Thompson

*cemetery sexton*



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503-538-8381

[www.newbergfriends.org](http://www.newbergfriends.org)

Please direct

all publications items

to Sherry Macy.

#### Monday, May 8

Intercessory prayer | 9am | Barclay C

Strong For Life | 10:30am | Barclay B

Call to Prayer | 6:30pm | Room 236

#### Wednesday, May 10

Strong For Life | 10:30am | Barclay B

Middle school youth group | 6:00pm | Friends Center

WBFpm | 7pm | Barclay C

High school youth group | 7:30pm | Friends Center

#### Thursday, May 11

Women's Bible Fellowship | 8:45am | social hall

#### Friday, May 12

Strong For Life | 10:30am | Barclay B

#### Saturday, May 13

Wood ministry work session | 9-11:30am | Friends Cemetery on Everest Rd | contact Larry Hampton, 503-538-6508

#### Sunday, May 14

Read ahead: James 3:13-18

#### Plan Ahead

May 18 | K-2 Fun Night | 6-7:30pm | FC gym | dinner, games, and stories for children K through 2nd grade

May 20 | cemetery work day | 9am-noon | Friends Cemetery

May 21 | Senior Salute | 6pm | celebrating high school seniors

May 22 | Margaret Fell WMF | 7pm | Spaulding Oaks Community Center

May 25 | 3:4-5 Fun Night | 6-8pm | FC gym | dinner, games, and a mission presentation for children in 3rd-5th grade

May 29 | NFC office closed for Memorial Day holiday

June 4 | Taizé gathering | 6pm | NFC sanctuary

June 5 | JOY breakfast | 8am | Friendsview Hess Creek dining room | \$4 | for seniors 55 and older

June 10 | wood ministry work session | 9-11:30am | Friends Cemetery on Everest Rd | contact Larry Hampton, 503-538-6508

June 11 | business meeting | 6pm | NFC sanctuary

[Click here to see the calendar online.](#)

April 28, 2017

Dear NFC,

It is with a great deal of sadness I have submitted my resignation to the elders effective June 30, 2017. I feel released from serving in my position in the current context. I have dearly loved this church, and I hope and pray for the Holy Spirit's mercy and hope to be poured out on each member of this community as we continue to look to God for what the future holds.

—Elizabeth Sherwood


Dear Newberg Friends,

With deep regret, the elders have received a resignation from Elizabeth Sherwood. Elizabeth has served Jesus at Newberg Friends Church in many ways that quietly hold together everything from furnaces to insurance policies to caring for refugees and preaching with power. She has done her work under increasing stress, yet she continues to love and care for all of us. The elders and congregation have a great deal to learn from Elizabeth about what she does as we prepare for her resignation, effective June 30, 2017.

We, as a congregation, have a huge job ahead of us in the next months to figure out how the work presently and previously by Elizabeth, Michelle, Eric, Cindy, and Gregg gets done. We will need to unite in a single effort of prayer and service as the Newberg Friends Church community to continue God's work in Newberg. Many of you have recently discussed the years of personal or family participation in the body of Newberg Friends; now seems to be an important time for all of us, new and old timers, to step up and to pitch in. It is difficult in a time of perceived conflict not to step back and wait until things settle down, but the entire community, from the youngest among us to the most senior, still needs to worship and serve the Lord in community. Stepping back seems to only hurt us and the church we all profess to love and care for. Please pray for the pastoral team members who have resigned as they finish their time as released to minister to us, but especially pray for Steve Fawver and Nolan Staples as they continue to be willing to serve within our community or communities.

There will be a formal, church-wide reception on June 25 to celebrate the ministries of Elizabeth Sherwood, Michelle Akins, and Gregg Koskela.

—Beth LaForce, for the elders



**Taizé Gathering**  
**Sunday, May 7**  
**5 p.m.**

**(note earlier time)**

**NFC Discernment Process  
regarding NWYM Restructure**

*Gatherings are intended for regular attenders  
and members only.*

**May 7**

6:30 p.m.

*Business Meeting with a minute of  
recommendation from the  
leadership team*