

The Westbrook Chatterbox

It's May Day!!! Beautiful weather and flowers everywhere! As we approach Mother's Day, we are excited about our slideshow of all the beautiful women we are celebrating! It has been difficult to not have a Mother's Day Tea again this year, but Janelle is working so hard to make certain all of our wonderful women are celebrated in a special way! I look forward to watching it in its entirety. I have just returned from vacation which was such a blessing! I didn't realize how important vacations truly are until this one. We were asked to come down and take care of our granddaughter, Serenity, for a few days while my son and his wife went to a conference. Serenity is 4 ½ years old and has bright red (orange as she calls it) hair! She is a little sassy, in a good way, and so much fun. We went to the beach two times-two *different* beaches, a nature center where we learned about turtles, alligators, butterflies and birds, and a place called Pelican's Snoballs that takes a snow cone to a completely different level of yummy-ness! We played in the sand, on the swings, planted flowers and did all kinds of crafts (she LOVES crafts)! It was so relaxing. I would like to thank all of my coworkers for holding down the fort while I was gone, with a special thanks to Hanna for making life easy to come back to!

It was definitely different being in Florida than being here in Missouri. Travel is so different-you must wear a mask from the time you walk into the airport until you walk out at your destination. But, in Florida, most places do not require masks anymore. I personally struggled with this daily. It was hard for me to not wear a mask, so most of the time, I wore one when we went inside places. Very few people are wearing masks there, the Governor has lifted the order, I am certain people looked at us like we were crazy, but we didn't care, we wore them anyway!

As I write this, we are looking forward to the possible expiration of the Emergency Health Order for Clay County-as long as we don't have any spikes in the virus, or anything else changes. That has been over a year coming! We are currently in Phase 3, so a few changes will be coming throughout the month of May as we move forward, anticipating Phase 4. We will keep everyone updated on the progress of the phases. I hope and pray that we get the word that we can take off our masks and open our doors!

Get out and enjoy the sunshine!

Have a great month ~ April

Featured Resident –Marilyn Westlake

Marilyn Westlake was born to Hugh and Maude Scott in Ridgeway, MO. She was the sixth of seven children (four girls and three boys). They lived on a dairy farm. Growing up their house was the gathering place for all their friends and family. The kids were active in the Methodist church and Marilyn joined the church when she was fifteen.

Growing up, she loved riding their horse, Dixie, and her bike. She enjoyed school especially English and music though she wasn't a fan of math. In high school, Marilyn played volleyball and sang in a quartet. At home, she helped with milking the cows, feeding the calves and tending the family's big garden. Marilyn graduated from Ridgeway High in 1949.

Marilyn attended Northwest Missouri State for one year. However, her pregnant sister's husband was deployed overseas. So Marilyn moved to Kansas City to help her sister, who already had one child. Marilyn even accompanied her sister to the hospital. She interviewed for a job over a weekend and ended up starting that Monday at Elko Photo Processing as a receptionist.

Marilyn went to a square dance in Bethany with one of her sisters. There she met a man named Gerald Westlake. He asked her to dance and she said yes. However, her sister and her date were ready to leave. Marilyn told Gerald she had to leave. He offered to drive her home and the rest is history. They dated a year and he proposed. They married in August 1951. Gerald was drafted into the Army. The young couple moved to Texas. They were stationed at Fort Hood in Killeen, TX, but lived in Temple, TX. Gerald guarded the atom bomb and was gone three days at a time. Marilyn got a job Sears and Roebuck. A year later, she went to work for a dentist as his receptionist and assistant.

In 1953, they had their first child, Dianne. One month later, Gerald was discharged and the family drove 800 miles to Hatfield, MO. Yes, 800 miles with a one month old. They lived on Gerald's family's 810 acre farm with his parents. His parents moved to Eagleville and Gerald and Marilyn took over the farm. They raised beef cattle and hogs as well as some corn and beans and of course, hay for feeding the cattle.

In 1956, Rick was born and Lori rounded out the family in 1961. Marilyn kept busy with taking care of the kids and their big garden. Everyday she would fix a huge noon meal including meat and potatoes with all the fixings plus dessert for all of their workers. As the kids started school, they were involved in lots of activities. The girls were cheerleaders and the family went to all the games. Marilyn was involved in a craft club and substitute taught any subject they needed at the high school. She loved when it was home ec but dreaded math. The family was active in the Methodist church. Gerald and Marilyn were involved in a square dance club.

As the kids grew up and moved away, the couple bought a fifth wheel and started traveling. They had neighbors look after the cattle when they were gone. They eventually sold the fifth wheel and bought a motor home. They traveled all over the country: Niagara Falls, down the east coast, Alabama, Florida, the Redwood Forest in California, Oregon, Washington and Washington DC.

They sold their farm to the Nature Conservancy who put 100 head of buffalo and prairie chickens on it. The Conservancy gave tours taking patrons out to see the buffalo on hay wagons. The Westlakes entire family including grandchildren took the tour once and they all loved it.

The couple bought a house in Bethany. They continued traveling and wintered in Texas for several years. They wintered a few times in Arizona where Marilyn's brother lived.

The family suffered a tragedy when their daughter, Dianne, passed away in 2011 from cancer. This was a very hard time. She had battled the cancer for five years.

Gerald had several health issues. Because of this, the couple sold their motor home. He was transported by ambulance to NKC Hospital six different times. He was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in Oct. 2019.

Marilyn had no family left in the Bethany area so she moved in November of 2019 to Westbrook in Kearney. She loves that she is close to her family. She also likes the staff and all the friends she's made here. She enjoys walking daily with Judy and Wilma. She loves the activities and attends just about everyone. She also enjoys playing pitch and dominoes. She enjoys reading. She's always been an avid reader. In high school, she was accused of having read every book in the library.

Marilyn encourages everyone to love their family because you don't know how long you will have them around. She enjoys spending time with her kids, their spouses, her five grandchildren and one great grandchild.

5 Mothers in the Bible to Learn From

The Bible has so much to teach us about mothers and parenthood. Here are 5 mothers in the Bible that we can learn from.

Cain, Abel and Seth's Mom – Eve

Genesis 4:1-2; 25 *“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground ... And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.”*

Of course Eve was the very first mother and the Bible tells us that this is why Adam named her such (Gen 3:16). She is the one that God created when Adam could not find an help meet suitable to him (Gen 2:18-25). Adam was given only one rule (law) in the Garden, that he could not eat from the tree in the middle of the Garden which was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:15-17). It is very possible that Adam did not inform Eve of this rule and so she was beguiled by the serpent in the Garden and even went so far as to talk her husband into eating of that tree that he knew he should not. So [Eve and Adam](#) have gone down into history as not only the first humans, but also as the first humans to commit sin. Not long after their transgression we read of how their son Cain killed his brother Abel (Gen 4:8). Though the Bible does not tell us Eve's reaction when she learned that Cain killed Abel, I imagine just like any other mother that learns of such a tragedy she wept for her dead son as well as the son that was exiled from her and her husband (Gen 4:14-16).

[What can we learn from Eve?](#)

We can look at the account of Adam and Eve and learn about how important it is for communication to take place in a relationship. Adam was given specific instruction from the Lord and it is very possible that he did not share this instruction with his wife. Adam failed in his role as Eve's protector by allowing the serpent to tempt her with his lies. We can also see that even though Eve ate of the tree God still loved her. God gave her and her husband instructions of how things were going to be from then on out and He even blessed them with another son when Abel was killed.

Isaac's Mom – Sarah

Genesis 17:19 *“And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.”*

God promised Sarah a son and she did not believe Him. In fact when she learned of the Lord's promise she laughed because she was “old and well stricken in age” (Gen 18:11-12). Even so, God did what He said He would do and Sarah conceived a baby in her old age (Gen 21:1-8). Earlier in the Book of Genesis we see that Sarah was so desperate to give Abraham a child that she had her handmaid sleep with him. They had a son named Ishmael (Gen 16). As could be imagined by any household that has a “blended family” there was some contention after Isaac was born. So much so that Sarah decided that Ishmael and his mother had to leave. They were sent into the wilderness.

[What can we learn from Sarah?](#)

When God says He is going to do something, He will do it. Sarah took matters into her own hands and because of it there was strife in her house. Trusting the Lord and patiently waiting for Him to deliver on His promises can make for a happy home, even when our timing is not the same as the Lord's.

Samuel's Mom – Hannah

1 Samuel 1:20 *“Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord.”*

Hannah was one of two wives of a man named Elkanah. His other wife was named Peninnah and she had sons and daughters but Hannah was not able to conceive. Elkanah tried to console her by giving her more food than he did to Peninnah and her children but Hannah could not be consoled. To make matters worse, Peninnah provoked Hannah to fret even more. Hannah went regularly to the house of the Lord to pray and many times she wept beyond control. One day when she was there she was praying to the Lord, begging Him to give her a son, but as she prayed in her heart her lips moved but the words were not heard. The priest Eli witnessed her and thought that she was drunk. He confronted her and she confessed to him that she was not drunk but rather was so deep into prayer with the Lord that it appeared that she had been drinking. Eli promised Hannah that she would be granted her petition of the Lord and told her to go in peace.

Not long after this Hannah conceived and Samuel was born. After he was born she purposed in her heart to dedicate him to the Lord because she was so thankful for the blessing of motherhood. Samuel was placed in the care of Eli the priest at a very young age. The Lord called Samuel to become a prophet and after Eli's death we see that he was a great prophet and judge of Israel. (1 Sam. 4:15–18; 7:3–17)

[What can we learn from Hannah?](#)

The prayers of a mother are powerful and God blesses the faithful. Hannah cried out to the Lord in her time of need and when the Lord gave her a son, she dedicated him to the Lord as promised when he was born. Hannah cried out to God and He had mercy on her.

Mahlon and Chilon's Mom – Naomi

Ruth 1:1-3 "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons."

Naomi was left to be a widow in a foreign land. Not only that but when you read a little further in Ruth 1 you see that her two sons died as well leaving her with her two daughters-in-law in a foreign land. Naomi told her daughter's-in-law to return to the land of their mother. One, Orpah, left but the other, Ruth, decided to stay with Naomi. The two of them returned to Naomi's homeland, Bethlehem. Naomi's kinsman Boaz was a man of wealth who came to Bethlehem and Ruth asked Naomi if she could go glean Boaz's fields for corn. Naomi agreed and eventually Boaz noticed how [Ruth](#) cared for her mother-in-law and because of this Boaz blessed her with food. After some time Boaz married Ruth and they had a son. Boaz and Ruth never neglected to care for Naomi all the days of her life.

[What can we learn from Naomi?](#)

Naomi dealt with much tragedy in her life yet she unselfishly offered to love and care for Ruth, her daughter-in-law. Indeed Ruth was as her own daughter in that she cared for Naomi in her old age. Naomi realized that Ruth was still a young woman and placed Ruth in a situation that allowed her to find a husband who was more than able to provide for her. Naomi never stopped being a mother, even though her two sons died. This is a great Biblical account of adoption and redemption.

Moses' Mom – Jochebed

Exodus 6:20 "And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years."

Jochebed lived during the time when the Hebrews were in bondage to Egypt. The Hebrews were growing strong and so the Pharaoh declared that all Hebrew boy children would be killed at birth because he feared that the Hebrews were becoming too large and might overtake the Egyptians. Jochebed had a son named Moses that she hid for 3 months. After that she decided to put him in a basket and float him in the river in hopes that someone would find him and care for him. His sister watched as the basket floated so that she could know where the baby ended up. Along about that time the daughter of Pharaoh came down to the riverside to wash her face and she found the baby. Then his sister offered to go find one of the Hebrew women who could be his wet nurse — of course Moses's sister fetched his true mother. So the Pharaoh's daughter decided to raise the baby as her own (but truly Jochebed was his nurse) and called him Moses because she drew him out of the water. Moses grew to be a prince in Egypt until the time that God called him to deliver the Hebrews out of Egypt.

[What can we learn from Jochebed?](#)

She loved her son and could not bring herself to murder him as was commanded by the ruler of Egypt. God had plans for Moses and worked it out so that Jochebed would save Moses and ultimately still get to have a role in his young life. God sometimes uses unpleasant circumstances for good.

Final thoughts

These are 5 amazing mothers that you can find in the Bible. God gave us his word so that we can learn from the examples that are recorded there.

The Beautiful Month of May

The Quilt My Mother Made

I spread it out for one more look before I went to bed,
 The quilt of heavy woolen blocks brings memories to my head.
 I recognize the navy blue once Mother's Sunday skirt.
 The soft gray plaid was salvaged from Father's favorite shirt.
 The tweed and plaids and pinstripes all cut and sewn with care,
 Old clothes in Mother's quilting box would find new purpose there.
 Her woolen quilts were warmest. They kept away the chill.
 There were no heated bedrooms in our house upon the hill.
 Those years she spent just making do and quite without a fuss,
 Helped prepare us for our lives, Her legacy to us.
 Now I look upon her work and memories seem to fade,
 But I'm so happy that I have the quilt my Mother made.

Listener Caring
 Inspiration Mom,
 Love Special
MOTHER
 Kind Amazing
 Loving Fun
 Mum Awesome
 Special Gentle
 Thoughtful

Grandma's
 my name
 spoiling's
 my game



Before we knew the years had flown,
 And all our kids were gone from home.
 The days seemed so long and lonely then.
 Until we had our grandchildren.
 And so it seems a special treat
 With children once more round our feet,
 For once again, the youngsters are
 Raiding Grandma's cookie jar.



"While we honor all our mothers
 with words of love and praise.
 While we tell about their goodness
 and their kind and loving ways.
 We should also think of Grandma,
 she's a mother too, you see....
 For she mothered my dear mother
 as my mother mothers me."

Who needs a
 Fairy *
 Godmother
 when there are
 Grandmothers *

In Memory of
 Our Fallen Heroes
 For all who gave their
 yesterdays,
 A thank you today-
 On this
 Memorial Day!

DON'T
 FORGET
 YOU



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

Spring into the New

I've been camped out in the book of Ecclesiastes lately, lamenting life's futility. What a dry season I've had, for some time. Although there are some verses in there that have always been an encouragement to me, mostly, I lamented.

Life hasn't been a whole lot of fun. Personally, I can confirm, or reaffirm, the notion that widowhood sucks. And we all know, in varying ways, how isolating and discouraging the whole covid-thing has been. Don't you just want to lament a while?

That's okay. We don't have to always be okay. We don't always have to have all the answers or make everyone feel better. And we are not bound to someone else's timetable to when and how we should be showing "improvement." It's okay to not be okay. For a time. Like Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "There is a an occasion for everything, and a time for every activity under heaven."

So, lament, if that's where you are. Be sad. Be lost. Be stuck. Be unsure. Just don't stay there too long. Try not to feed it and fuel it; it doesn't really need to be nurtured. It just needs to be and be understood and sorted.

More than anything, do NOT take your eyes off Jesus!

Even in our dry, rough times, Jesus is there. Even when we lament, Jesus listens. Even when we struggle, Jesus gives us strength. And even in our uncertainty, Jesus knows.

I don't have the answers I'd like to have, but I have Jesus. I have a God I trust implicitly - no matter what. In every season of the year, and every season of life, I have to trust and believe; it is the only way I can really hold on to hope.

Spring is such a beautiful, living reminder of hope. Fresh spring rains. Even the lightning and thunder. Vibrant colors and cheerful chirping. New life. New growth. No matter how long or harsh the preceding winter has been, spring always follows. Always!

The sunshine and warmth not only help the grass and flowers to grow and be healthy, they help me to grow and be healthy, too. It's important to take in a little sunshine, even if it's just 10 minutes doing administrative work at my car between accounts, or standing on my back porch, gazing at the sky.

As a widow, there's a part of me that will always harbor a slice of winter. Some days it might be a full-blown season with a blizzard and winds and no sun to be found. And some days it'll be a little snow globe that shakes around in my pocket, found by my fingers each time I slip my hand inside; remind and comforting, and missing.

But spring arrives. Always. And with it new hopes and new life. We still need to pray for a lot of direction and wisdom, and keep hoping for more spring in our life. As the weather turns, I think that might aid in the lightheartedness.

This spring, I'm hoping to embark on my own little journey into flower gardening. Yes, I'm a middle-aged widow who has never really done the flower garden thing. Last year I plotted and planned. This year I'm hoping, really hoping to get a few things in the ground, even if they're annuals. I love flowers. Always have. Now, I think it might be my turn at a new thing.

What is something new you'd like to embark on as we enter this next month? Did you get my Spring Bucket List last month? (<http://sharondtweet.com/spring-2021-bucket-list-2/>) Have you started yours? There's still plenty of spring ahead, start now or keep going. Spring ushers in the new. Let something new come into your world, too.

Sharon D. Tweet
sharondtweet.com

Sharing a love of scripture through written fiction.

Spring 2021 Bucket List

- ✿ Read a Book
- ✿ Create a chalk mural
- ✿ Have a tea party (live or virtual)
- ✿ Leave a book review
- ✿ Create a scavenger hunt with friends or family
- ✿ Read a 2nd book
- ✿ Plant a flower/tree
- ✿ Swap books-to-read with a friend
- ✿ Walk in the rain
- ✿ Hang/make a bird feeder
- ✿ Leave water and a snack for your postal carrier
- ✿ Spring Cleaning
- ✿ Paint and hide rocks
- ✿ Post a book selfie and tag the author
- ✿ Enjoy a picnic
- ✿ Plan a special dinner, just because
- ✿ Read a 3rd book
- ✿ Stroll thru the garden or garden center
- ✿ Leave water & a snack for the lawn crew
- ✿ Shop at a thrift store
- ✿ Buy yourself flowers
- ✿ Leave goodies for a neighbor
- ✿ Participate in a book club - live or virtual
- ✿ Send a widow a note of encouragement
- ✿ Walk barefoot in the grass

7 Things You Can Do to Prevent a Stroke

Stroke prevention can start today. Protect yourself and avoid stroke, regardless of your age or family history. Getting medical treatment within **THREE HOURS** of the first symptoms of stroke can make the difference between recovery and lifelong disability. Signs of a stroke include: weakness on one side of the body; numbness of the face; unusual and severe headache; vision loss; numbness and tingling; unsteady walk.

What can you do to prevent stroke? Age makes us more susceptible to having a stroke, as does having a mother, father, or other close relative who has had a stroke.

You can't reverse the years or change your family history, but there are many other stroke risk factors that you can control—provided that you're aware of them. Knowledge is power. If you know that a particular risk factor is sabotaging your health and predisposing you to a higher risk of stroke, you can take steps to alleviate the effects of that risk.

How to prevent stroke

Here are seven ways to start reining in your risks today to avoid stroke, before a stroke has the chance to strike.

1. Lower blood pressure

High blood pressure is a huge factor, doubling or even quadrupling your stroke risk if it is not controlled. High blood pressure is the biggest contributor to the risk of stroke in both men and women. Monitoring blood pressure and, if it is elevated, treating it, is probably the biggest difference people can make to their vascular health.

Your ideal goal: Maintain a blood pressure of less than 120/80 if possible. For some older people, this might not be possible because of medication side effects or dizziness with standing.

2. Lose weight

Obesity, as well as the complications linked to it (including high blood pressure and diabetes), raises your odds of having a stroke. If you're overweight, losing as little as 10 pounds can have a real impact on your stroke risk.

Your goal: While an ideal body mass index (BMI) is 25 or less, that may not be realistic for you. Work with your doctor to create a personal weight loss strategy.

3. Exercise more

Exercise contributes to losing weight and lowering blood pressure, but it also stands on its own as an independent stroke reducer.

Your goal: Exercise at a moderate intensity at least five days a week.

4. If you drink — do it in moderation

Drinking a little alcohol is okay, and it may decrease your risk of stroke. Studies show that if you have about one drink per day, your risk may be lower. Once you start drinking more than two drinks per day, your risk goes up very sharply.

Your goal: Don't drink alcohol or do it in moderation.

5. Treat atrial fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation is a form of irregular heartbeat that causes clots to form in the heart. Those clots can then travel to the brain, producing a stroke. Atrial fibrillation carries almost a fivefold risk of stroke.

Your goal: If you have atrial fibrillation, get it treated.

6. Treat diabetes

Having high blood sugar damages blood vessels over time, making clots more likely to form inside them.

Your goal: Keep your blood sugar under control.

7. Quit smoking

Smoking accelerates clot formation in a couple of different ways. It thickens your blood, and it increases the amount of plaque buildup in the arteries. Along with a healthy diet and regular exercise, smoking cessation is one of the most powerful lifestyle changes that will help you reduce your stroke risk significantly.

Your goal: Quit smoking.

