

# *County-Wide Chaplaincy*

## *Thanks you!*

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**September 2023**

### **Surprise**

I would venture to say there are many people in this world who love a great big surprise. I do not happen to be one of them, and have been told it is because I am a first born and we tend not to enjoy the unexpected quite as much. I would guess however that a majority do enjoy an unexpected and unplanned delight to show up in their lives. And who among us does not also delight in providing those to friends and family who genuinely celebrate a good surprise?

However, all surprises are not seemingly good or delightful or celebrated. Our chaplains, Sam and Janet Lapore had one of those surprises just this past month. Janet's Mom unexpectedly finished her time here on earth. This was a surprise, but not the kind we look forward to. Janet's Mom's life will be celebrated, but not in the way a good surprise is. It is kind of ironic that Sam and Janet have helped many people through this type of devastating loss, but now they are navigating their own loss. As Believers, we often try to ease our pain by reminding ourselves that our loved one is now in heaven and with the Lord. This may bring hope and assurance in a difficult time, but it does not take the place of a warm hug, a gentle kiss or some wonderful words of wisdom shared. It is just plain hard. Tears come, sometimes by the bucketfuls and sweet smiles appear as a cherished memory comes to mind, but this is a journey with no shortcuts to healing.

For those of us looking on, we are reminded that we have no guarantees in this life. All the planning and preparation does not ever fully prepare us for these very unexpected and truthfully unwanted surprises. It is also a reminder to live today to the fullest and not to waste the precious time we have in foolish controversy. The Lord tells us in Matthew 6:34; "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." He is telling us to rest in Him and let Him handle it all as we trust Him. I have no doubt that Sam and Janet and their family are walking through these days leaning heavily on the Lord, but it still hurts really bad. The "whys" still come and the "what ifs" and then we painfully open our clenched hand and give all these questions to the Lord who loves us beyond belief and never leaves our side.

Please remember this family in your prayers as they come to your mind. They are such faithful servants in this ministry and have loved on so many along the way. Now it is their turn to sit back a bit and let us love on them.

Thank you for your support of County-wide Chaplaincy.  
Jan Richards

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