

Address: 6840 Nimitz Parkway, South Bend, IN 46628
Phone: 574.272.2200 **Fax:** 574.968.0345
Website: rlasouthbend.com

RLA NEWS AND NOTES

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"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9

God Is Always Working in Your Behind-the-Scenes

By Sharon Jaynes of Proverbs31 Ministries on December 30th, 2020

<https://proverbs31.org/read/devotions/full-post/2020/12/30/god-is-always-working-in-your-behind-the-scenes>

"Jesus replied, 'You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will.'" John 13:7 (NLT)

My husband, Steve, and I met at a Bible study while we were in college. There he sat with a Bible in his lap, Jesus in his heart and me wrapped around his little finger. Three months later, we were engaged. Six months after that, I became his wife. The following year, we began to pray where we would live and work after graduation. We prayed. We fasted. We toured various towns and looked at many opportunities. After several months, we felt certain God was calling us to a little town called Pineville, just outside of Charlotte, North Carolina, where my husband had secured a job. After graduation, we moved to Charlotte and set up house in a tiny apartment near the office where Steve would be working. The rent was half-price for the first three months, which was a huge bonus for a young couple with nothing but school debt on their balance sheet. Smiles all around. However, when Steve went to the office to finalize his work schedule and management particulars, a trapdoor opened beneath his feet. "Steve, I've been thinking about it," the potential partner began. "I don't think this is such a good idea after all. I've changed my mind." He extended his hand to my stunned 25-year-old husband and said, "Good luck to you, son." When Steve came home and told me the news, we were both shell-shocked. "What do you mean he changed his mind?" I cried. "He can't do that! We've just moved here. He made a commitment!" A host of raw emotions collided with real questions for God. *How could we have been so wrong? Didn't we hear You correctly? We prayed. We fasted. We wanted nothing more than to do what You wanted us to do where You wanted us to do it. Now, here we sit in a new city, with debt, no jobs and seemingly no future. What are we supposed to do?* I did not like this story! I felt like God had left us high and dry. But He hadn't. He was simply moving the puzzle pieces into place for His perfect plan.

I think young Joseph, whose story begins in Genesis 37, must have felt the same way. God had given him two dreams about how his whole family would one day bow down to him. He was going to be a man of power. However, over the next several years, he was sold into slavery by his brothers, worked as a servant in the government official Potiphar's household, falsely accused of attempted rape and thrown into prison. I don't know what Joseph was thinking or feeling, but my reaction would have been, *This is not how the story is supposed to go! God, where are You? Get me out of here!* But at just the right time, the Pharaoh had a dream only Joseph could interpret — seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. The Pharaoh was so impressed, he made Joseph second-in-command of the entire kingdom, and he saved the entire nation from starvation. Yes, Joseph's life had taken some seemingly wrong turns, but they weren't wrong turns at all. They were necessary turns to get him to just the right place at just the right time.

Our limited vision doesn't allow us to see *how* God is working behind the questionable scenes in our lives, but we can trust He is. In fact, it may be precisely in the moments we understand Him the least that He is working the most. Jesus told His disciples, *"You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will"* (John 13:7). Sometimes, it is only after the fact that what we thought were setbacks were God's setups all along. Three months after the devastating news that Steve's job fell through, a position opened up that had not been available when we were first looking. If we had written out our best-case scenario, this situation would have exceeded it by far. We were living out Ephesians 3:20, *"[God] is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us"* (NIV). And remember the rent that was half-price for the first three months? It was three months to the day when Steve started in his new position. Who knew? God did. We often experience God's provision and protection through the twists and turns of uncertainty. Sometimes, God doesn't meet our expectations because He wants to exceed them. I don't know what you're going through right now. This past year has certainly been a difficult year for all of us. But rest assured, God is working for your greater good. When we give up our need to know all the details, we can have a holy confidence independent of our circumstances.

God, I'll be honest: I'm glad 2020 has come to a close. And even though I don't know what's coming in 2021, I trust that You have a perfect plan. In a world of uncertainties, I am thankful Your steadfast love never changes.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Calendar Updates & Reminders

Jan. 8 (Friday): End of 2nd Quarter, Nacho Lunch, & 1:30pm Dismissal

Jan. 15: Picture Retakes (9:00-11:00am)

Jan. 18: No In-School Classes, eLearning Make-Up

Jan. 22: eLearning Assignments Due

Feb. 12: 1:30pm Dismissal – Teacher Development

Feb. 15: No School, Presidents' Day (Possible Make-Up Day)

Feb. 22-26: National Lutheran Schools' Week Celebrations (moved from Jan.)

Feb. 25: Learning Fair (moved from Jan., time/format TBD)

Notes: Our scheduled make-up day from November is MLK Day, Jan. 22nd (eLearning) with all assignments due on the following Friday (further info attached). The Learning Fair (and NLSW) were pushed back until Feb. to allow teachers and students to better prepare for their projects. We are still determining the format of the fair.

Gingerbread Challenge

Thank you to everyone who participated in Hunter's Gingerbread Challenge. Our winners were Olivia L. (PS-2nd), Eva (3rd-5th), and Emma (6th-8th)! Thank you to Hunter for organizing this fun challenge!

Staying Home for Illness

We appreciate that many of you seem to be erring on the side of caution when our kids are ill and keeping them (and sometimes siblings) home. With the prep-work required to shift to a digital format (especially in the younger grades), our teachers may not be able to post everything in Google Classroom. If your child 3rd-8th grade student is feeling well enough to do some work, some of their assignments will be posted online, often after the class period. Everything else will be available when they return to school. We will work with your child for extended deadlines to get caught up with the work they missed. If your child will be out more than 3 days, let your teacher or the office know and we will work with your family to make more comprehensive arrangements based on your situation.

Yard Signs for Sale

If you or someone you know would like a double-sided RLA yard sign, they can be purchased in the office for \$12. If you let Miss Lisa know, she can bring it out to your car if you don't want to come into the building.

Home-Based Learning Survey

While it is our hope and prayer that we will not have to use it again, we are looking for ways that we can improve our home-based learning strategies. We will be sending an online survey through FastDirect today and ask that you complete it by Friday, January 15th.

Giving Trees

Help keep our community warm! The National Junior Honor Society is collecting items for local homeless shelters and community programs. The trees in our front entry way have boxes to collect scarves, blankets, hats, socks, gloves, and coats. Both adult and children's sizes are needed.

Festive Food Fun Extended

This challenge is just for fun and completely optional. Find your inspiration from the Christmas season! You can use the Christmas story, holiday decorations, winter weather, or family traditions when you create a delicious treat. Use your creativity! The sky's the limit: sweet or savory, baked or assembled, realistic or abstract. Feel free to create new memories by asking members from your family to participate. Upload your creation to Google Classroom by **Monday, February 1st!** Please include your inspiration (a photo, drawing, or caption), your team (a photo, drawing, or caption), a photo of your finished creation, and a photo of someone enjoying it!