



The Christian life is a journey.

*TrailNotes* speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced, wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. **TrailNotes** is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

## ElderTalk: You Were Made For This

JADAÉ FOX

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

*Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)*

As I see summer approaching, I realize how quickly time flies the older I get. And the truth is I can’t wait to find some time to rest and relax. Scripture tells us that rest is important. (See Matthew 11:28-30 and Exodus 20:8-11) Even in times of rest, we want to have our eyes open to how God would use us. There are lots of examples in my life where I was not expecting a God Moment to show up where God used me in a significant and profound way to speak truth, to be an encouragement, or to simply be an expression of God’s love in a difficult situation.

I remember rushing to get somewhere when I got a flat tire. Frustrated, I told God I didn’t have time for this. But then an old friend I hadn’t seen in years pulled over to help. As we talked, he shared a deep desire to grow closer to God, but he didn’t own a Bible and couldn’t afford one. At that moment, I saw my own Bible sitting in the car, and I gave it to him. What felt like an inconvenience became a Kingdom Moment. God used that interruption to let me serve in a way only I could.

Where we are is not an accident. The people we encounter are not accidents. Scripture says you are God’s handiwork, His masterpiece. In Christ you are redeemed, shaped, equipped for good works not just someday, but right now. That means you were created to make a difference in your surroundings.

I want you to consider this... God has divinely planned this for you to be a part of. We don’t need to come up with it on our own. We simply need to be receptive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit ready to respond in the moment. Are you ready to be a blessing?

When God called Moses to lead Israel, Moses responded with fear and self-doubt. “Who am I that I should go?” (Exodus 3:11 and 4:10-11) But God didn’t choose Moses because he was ready, He chose him because he was going to be with Him.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## We Won’t Retire in Heaven... instead, we’ll experience work as it’s meant to be.

JEN WILKIN

*There’s an old saying regarding work: “Find something you love to do, and you’ll never work a day in your life.”*

It’s a nice idea, albeit a tall order to achieve. Some jobs are harder to love than others, and even the most meaningful work can frustrate us. Our relationships with work can be complicated; even the most diligent among us succumb to quitting fantasies from time to time.

And often, the demands of life mean we can’t devote ourselves to finding work we love to do. We simply have to do the work necessary. Stacks of bills don’t care about our job satisfaction or our inherent gifts. That weird pink mold growing in the shower doesn’t take vacations. A good few of us are doing jobs we don’t love to do, and we may very well be doing them until the Lord returns.

Most of us picture endless years of vacation in the new Jerusalem. In the ongoing debate whether the best vacations happen in the mountains or at the

*(Continued on page 2)*

## You Were Made for This *(Continued from page 1)*

Just like Moses you may not feel strong enough, smart enough, or spiritual enough—but God doesn't need your perfection. He needs your *yes*. He already knows your limitations and struggles, and He's still calling you to serve, to love and to shine His light.

Sometimes we treat salvation like it's the finish line—when it's really the starting point. You weren't just saved from sin and hell, you were saved for something. Christ redeemed you so that you could reflect His grace and truth in the world around you. That doesn't always mean doing something "big"—it often means doing something faithful.

A phone call to someone hurting. A listening ear. Serving behind the scenes at church. Mentoring someone younger in the faith. Encouraging your coworkers, being the one who chooses peace in a tense family moment and of course having our spiritual eyes open to the God Moments right in front of you. These are holy assignments. They are the "good works" God has prepared in advance.

As we enter this new season, take time to ask: God, what would You have me do this summer? The same God who called Moses, raised Jesus, and saved you by grace is working in you. You are not too young, too old, too broken, or too late. You were made for this.



### PRAYER

God, thank You for making me . . . on purpose and for a purpose. I don't always feel ready, but I trust that You are with me . . . and will give me what I need to walk in Your ways. Help me to see with Your eyes, hear with Your ears and respond with Your heart. Use me this summer and beyond to be a blessing in my home, church, and community.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Grace Fellowship has had two of its number enter their heavenly reward this past month: Dale Black and Nancy Byrom. Spatial constraints have precluded a full tribute to them here. This will come next month.

## We Won't Retire in Heaven *(Continued from page 1)*

beach, the oceanless description of the new heavens and new earth has threatened more than one saint's concept of eternal bliss. But no matter the landscape, few think of the hereafter as a place of work.

For many, heaven is the ultimate quitting fantasy. After all, it is the eternal Sabbath where we cease our labors. Right? Well, yes and no.

Revelation 14:13 does promise that the saints will "rest from their labor," but that word means "toil" as in the travail of persecution the saints will face in this life.

In Isaiah 65, God speaks of work occurring in the new creation: "My people will build houses and dwell in them and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. My chosen will long enjoy the work of their hands. They will not labor in vain." (vv. 21-23)

This is the poetry of productivity unhindered by sin. In Zion we will rest from sin, sorrow, temptation and persecution. But we will work with joy and gladness as we were created to do. We will fulfill our vocational calling.

For now we can and should still do our jobs with all our hearts, as working for the Lord. When we see our labor as serving the Lord, even menial tasks are transformed from work to worship.

I have cleaned a lot of showers as unto the Lord. May our joyful labor here and now serve as first fruits of our labor to come.

(Jen Wilkin is a Bible teacher and cohost of the Knowing Faith Podcast. *Christianity Today* April 2024. Used by permission.)

## A Date to remember: It's been 1700 years!

JOHN KURTZ

Did you know that the Nicene Creed which we know and occasionally recite is having its 1700th “birthday” next month? Did you know that “Santa,” that is the real Saint Nicholas, was there and played a role in its “birth?” It is and he was! The event: the First Ecumenical Council of the early Christian church. Its purpose: to clearly state the orthodox belief of Christ’s position in the Trinity as a response to an early heresy which had arisen within the church. The date: July 4, 325 AD. The place: the then important urban center of Nicaea (modern day İznik), located in the northwestern part of what is today the nation of Turkey.

A most disturbing heresy had arisen within the early church, claiming that Jesus Christ was not actually God, but rather a created being, and “the first born of creation.” The main person behind this heresy was Arius, a priest in Libya. There had developed a significant following of this belief, now known as Arianism, and it had led to significant disunity within the 4th century church. Out of a desire for unity in the church after his conversion to Christianity in 312 AD, the Roman Emperor Constantine directed the leaders of the early church to gather together for the purpose of discerning the truth in that matter, along with settling additional matters of major importance to a unified church, such as the exact date of Christ’s resurrection.



The Council of Nicaea in 325 as depicted in a fresco by Giovanni Guerra & Cesare Nebbia, 1590, in Salone Sistino at the Vatican.

What has become known as The First Ecumenical Council convened in the large church

building, The Hagia Sophia, in Nicaea on May 30, 325 AD, with the Emperor himself present. The 250 to 318 men present deliberated until finally, on July 4, 325 AD, coming to the establishment of the true doctrine and an “official” statement as to what that was. We now call that statement the Nicene Creed. Arius and his followers being excommunicated, the date of Resurrection Day/Easter/Pascha established, and the other work of the council thus completed, it concluded in August of 325 AD.

One of those present at that First Ecumenical Council and whose vote actually gave approval to the original Nicene Creed was Nicholas, Bishop of Myra (a city on the southwest coast of what is modern-day Turkey), whose legendary history of gift-giving led to the modern attributes of Saint Nicholas, and today’s “Sinterklaas” or “Santa Claus.”

So as we approach July 4, 2025, let us remember with gratitude those, including Saint Nicholas, who correctly discerned the relationship of Christ within the Trinity and produced the Nicene Creed, which declared once and for all that great truth of our faith. Now how’s that for a great gift for all time! Here are the fruits of their labors under the guidance of the Holy Spirit:

*We believe in one God, the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,  
the only-begotten,  
begotten of the Father before all ages.  
Light of Light, true God of true God,  
begotten not made,  
of one essence with the Father  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation,  
came down from heaven,  
and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit  
and the Virgin Mary  
and became man.  
And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate,  
and suffered, and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again, according to the  
Scriptures;  
and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right  
hand of the Father;*  
(Continued on page 4)

**A Date to remember:** *(Continued from p. 3)*  
*and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead;*  
*whose Kingdom shall have no end.*  
*And in the Holy Spirit.*

*But as for those who say, There was when He was not, and, before being born He was not, and that He came into existence out of nothing, or who assert that the Son of God is from a different hypostasis or substance, or is created, or is subject to alteration or change— these the catholic church anathematizes.*

At the Second Ecumenical Council, which was held in Constantinople in 381AD, the Creed was supplemented with the following:

*And [we believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.*

*In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.*

*I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.*

*Amen.*

...and so it remained until 589 AD at a Council in Toledo, Spain, when the western (Roman) church added one more word in Latin “filioque,” (three in English: “and the Son”) to the portion about the Holy Spirit in that 381 AD addition. That portion thus has read as follows in all Western churches to the present time:

*And [we believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life,*

*Who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.*

*In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.*

*I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.*

*Amen.*

Thus, what began as an effort to unite all Christian churches, after only some 260 years again

became indicative of one of the primary theological divisions between the Western and Eastern churches ever since.

## June 2025

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| 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
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| 29 | 30 |    |    |    |    |    |

- 1 Elder Jadaé Fox preaching on 2 Peter 1:3-11.
  - 4, 11, 18, 25 Summer Game Club, grades 3-12, 10 AM to 3 PM.
  - 5, 12, 19, 26 Ladies meet in Lion room to pray, 9-10 AM.
  - 8 Greg Frankenfield presching on 2 Peter 1:12-15. 
  - 15 Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on 2 Peter 1:16-21. Today we honor our graduates!
  - 17 Nancy Byrom funeral, 3:30 PM, after visitation at 2:30-3:30 PM.
  - 22 Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on 2 Peter 2:1-3. 
  - 29 Celebration Sunday!
- Other Events:**
- 1-29 “Change for Life” fundraiser for Richland Pregnancy Services.
  - 6-7 GFC Facility being used by American Heritage Girls.
  - 16 Auditorium in use for screenings all day by Life Line.
  - 22-29 Entire GFC campus being used by Youth for Christ.

### Grace Fellowship Church

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Eric Byrom Presiding Elder/ Pastor

(A complete list of church functionarie will return next month)