

Phoenix Rising

This grief newsletter is sent to members and friends of Paradise Valley United Methodist Church following the loss of a loved one. PVUMC pastors are available to you if you need one-on-one support. Contact the church office for more information at 602-840-8360. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, contact the church office or e-mail ddoran@pvumc.org.

Debbie Doran, Editor

Outer Fringes

These are but the outer fringe of God's works; how faint the whisper we hear of him!

Job 26:14 (NIV)

Recently I was amazed at a photo of the Pillars of Creation, a star-forming region in deep space, taken by NASA's James Webb Space Telescope. It captures a breathtaking image of archlike columns of dust and gas where newly formed stars are taking shape.

Job spoke about the many unimaginable and incredible works of God.

He proclaimed God's power in suspending the earth over nothing, in churning up the seas, in wrapping up the waters in the clouds, and in turning the skies fair by a simple breath. Then Job followed this with an amazing declaration: "These are but the fringes of his ways; how faint a whisper we hear of him!" What a thought! My mind can't fathom that the wonders of nature are just the outer fringes of God's works.

If the colors of autumn, the beauty of a first snow, and the Pillars of Creation are but a faint whisper of who God is, we are indeed loved and held securely by an incomprehensible God.

Let Us Pray

Creator God, the concerns of this life limit our perception of who you are. Help us begin to grasp your glory that is beyond our imagining. Amen¹

Hope Transforms Fear

Jesus said, “Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:20 (NRSV)

Do you ever feel you have lost your way? Do you have decisions to make and no clear understanding of the “right” answers? Are you stuck in one spot with no motivation to move in any direction?

Through the labyrinth of life’s journey,
the deluge of life’s losses,
the flames of life’s hardships
and the wilderness of life’s isolation,
Our feelings overwhelm us and bring us fear.

In the midst of the journey in life’s labyrinth,
we talk through the losses,
we climb through the hardships
and lean on a friend through isolation.
Call on God to **transform** your fear
And to bring you Hope.
God whispers your name.
Your soul waits in silence.²



Lullaby for the Soul

The hardest day of grief isn't the funeral. And it isn't the birthday of the one who's no longer here. It's not the anniversary, not the marked date, not the sharp, expected sting. The hardest day is the one that looks like any other day.



It's the ordinary moment when something beautiful happens in your life... and you suddenly realize you can't share it with that person anymore. It's joy that hurts, because inside it is the shadow of absence.

Or it's the day when you're in pain, and you crave those familiar arms, that voice that always knew how to calm the storm inside you.

The hardest day is a plain Sunday. Silence that screams. Time that drags, leaving only emptiness behind. It's a day with no event at all – yet full of unbearable longing.

And even within that pain, there's a fragile kind of light. Because if we grieve, it means we loved. And everything we lost was real. And the memory – it's proof that love doesn't disappear. It simply changes shape.³

Grief

Comes back in strange ways.

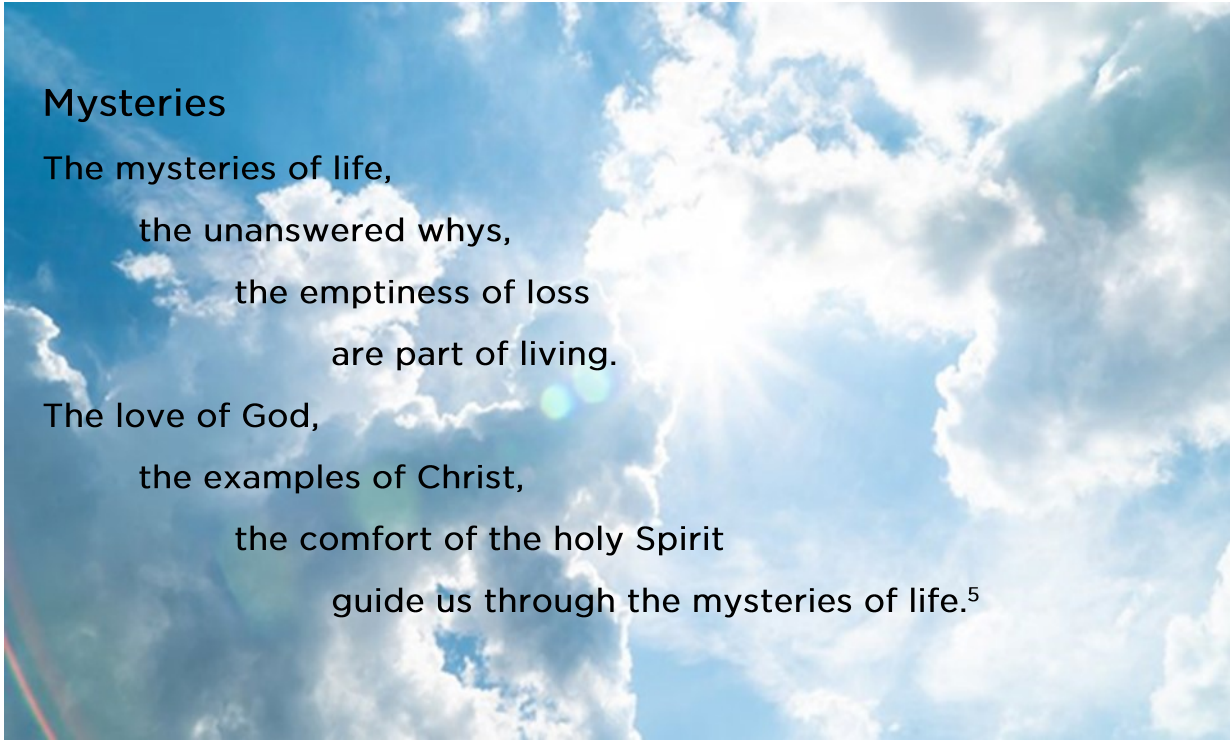
A song, a smell, a forgotten phrase

Someone used to say.

You think you're done mourning.

Until your chest opens like a door

You forgot you left unlocked.⁴



Mysteries

The mysteries of life,

the unanswered whys,

the emptiness of loss

are part of living.

The love of God,

the examples of Christ,

the comfort of the holy Spirit

guide us through the mysteries of life.⁵

Footnote:

1. Valerie Bryant Bennett, Tennessee, Upper Room, June 29, 2025
2. Paula Rugen
3. Posted on Facebook
4. [r.m. drake/tinybuddha.com](https://www.tinybuddha.com)
5. Paula Rugen