

AMISH COOK

Today those are happy memories

By Gloria Yoder

Morning dawns. March 19th stays etched in memory. Sixteen years ago I rose early, eager to meet the young man who would be called my husband by that afternoon. It was a day like no other. I was happy and I was young, only 20 years old at the time. Little had I thought what would transpire in my life, but God knew, and on that day He wanted to shower me with His blessings.

Today those are happy memories, even though Daniel is no longer on this side of eternity. Somehow the grace of God has made those memories to be good, and today to be good, on what would have been our 16th wedding anniversary.

Four years ago, when I first thought of the title of a widow, it tried to taunt me, but as time went on I realized that it was like any other calling God gives to those who seek to serve Him. He calls, and His children follow, no matter the sacrifice and tears. A year after Daniel passed I was convicted to not only accept this calling, but to also embrace it as well. It was a stretch at first to tell God that I take it, I receive this calling, like pulling it to myself. But oh, the joy of being where He has called me to be! It is a safe place that He custom designed for me. With that I am thankful that He understands the heartache that goes with it and the battle of parenting alone. Since He cares, He allows enough hard things to surface to keep reminding me that I cannot do it on my own, yet provides so deeply that we know we are covered.

Yes, today has been a good day, one with joys and tears. The forecast for today had looked more cloudy and cool. I told God that a nice day would mean so much to me. He granted it! The weather was perfect, much like it



This week, give a jello salad a try. [Amish365]

was 16 years ago. Bless His name.

This forenoon I tutored 3rd grade math for an hour and a half, then took the opportunity to do some extra cleaning and organizing in my bedroom. Many little things reminded me of what was. As I contemplated, I realized that the only fair option to myself is to look to God, living life for today — not tomorrow, not next year, or 10 years from now, but simply today. That is the only place I have found true joy to seep into my heart and peace flood my being. As God said to Moses thousands of years ago, “I AM that I AM.” Even back then God’s people found Him to be faithful when they would simply live in the moment! You know what I really like about that? Moments make up years, and eventually those moments on earth will live in exuberant joy in the very presence of the One who made us to worship Him eternally!

The afternoon passed swiftly with various meetings. Those turned out to be more opportunities of embracing life, to be the one representing our home instead of sitting back and listening to Daniel. It was good, but by supper time I was ready to sit down in the front

yard with the children and unwind with Miss Lehman’s delicious supper for us. The chicken bacon ranch casserole was tops, as were the blueberry muffins and tapioca with diced oranges.

Even after the chores were done, the sheep pen moved, and supper eaten, I felt like I needed to air out some more.

“Let’s go on a drive with Sapphire!” I posed.

No one needed convincing. Everyone chipped in with the dishes.

By 6:30 we were clipping down the blacktop road with our open wagon and our Standardbred mare. Several of my nephews followed with Grandpa’s golf cart that maxes out at 22 miles per hour. When they passed us, the children on board had their competitive spirits come to life — needless to say, from time to time there were choruses of young voices cheering, “Come on Sapphire, you can do it, good girl, Sapphire!”

On a flat stretch we took the chance. To the delight of all on the wagon, we inched our way up and passed. When we pulled in at Grandpa’s, I turned to the one who had been driving the golf cart and with an all-in-fun grin told him I wouldn’t say how much

fun that was for us! Why does everyone like to win, anyway?

The evening was topped off with s’mores around the fire at Grandpa’s and another ride home before dark. Again it was bedtime at the Yoders. Another day was through. Moments had filled up March 19th, and for 2026 it would be gone for good. What is done for Christ will last; what is sought for myself has vanished.

Take a moment to make this three-layer grape jello dessert we had on our wedding day. The clear stem bowls with jello were placed over the tables and passed with dessert. Separate ones were made in goblets for those of us at the bridal table.

GLORIA’S GRAPE JELLO SALAD

1st mixture:
 ¼ cup grape jello
 ⅔ cup boiling water
 ½ cup ice water
 Mix boiling water with jello, mix until dissolved, add ice water. Pour into a 5 cup serving bowl. (I like using a clear glass bowl that shows the three layers.) Chill.
 2nd mixture:
 3 ½ tablespoons grape jello
 ½ cup boiling water
 2 ½ tablespoons cold water
 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
 3 tablespoons powdered

DEVOTION

Psalm 16 & Resurrection Sunday

By Jordan Friesen

We live in a world filled with trials and suffering. Illness, loss, strained relationships, and quiet battles of the heart remind us daily that this life is fragile. Scripture is honest about this: “through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” Yet Psalm 16 shows us something remarkable. In the midst of real danger and hardship, David speaks with deep joy and unshakable confidence in the Lord.

He begins with a simple plea: “Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.” True security is not found in circumstances but in God himself. To take refuge in him is to say, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” When everything else feels uncertain, the believer rests in the unchanging goodness of God.

This hope is rooted in the gospel. Through faith in Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven and his righteousness is counted as ours. We are made new. Because of this, we do not fight sin to earn God’s favor, but from a place of already being loved and accepted.

David also reminds us that God gives us his people. “The saints in the land are the excellent ones.” In a lonely and painful world, Christian fellowship is a gift. We are strengthened as we encourage, pray for, and walk with one another.

Finally, our greatest comfort is that the Lord himself is our portion. Earthly blessings come and go, but God remains. He is our strength when we are weak and our joy when life feels empty.

Psalm 16 ultimately points beyond David to Jesus Christ. God did not abandon him to the grave but raised him to life. Because Christ lives, all who trust in him have a living hope. Even though our bodies will one day fail, death will not have the final word.

The psalm ends with a beautiful promise: “In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” True joy is not found in escaping trials but in knowing God through them.

If you are a believer, take heart. Whatever you face, your life is secure in Christ. But if you do not yet know him, turn to him today. He alone forgives sin, gives new life, and brings lasting joy. In him, your heart can rejoice, and even in a broken world, your soul can dwell secure.

This promise does not remove suffering, but it transforms it. Trials become places where God meets his people with grace. In weakness, his strength is displayed. In sorrow, his comfort is made known. And in uncertainty, his faithfulness shines all the more.

So, fix your eyes on Christ. Set the Lord before you each day. Fill your mind with his Word, seek him in prayer, and walk with his people. As you do, you will find that even in life’s hardest moments, he is near, he is enough, and he will never let you go.

sugar

Dissolve jello in hot water, add cold water, chill until it has a syrupy consistency. Beat cream cheese and powdered sugar, add whipped topping (already whipped), only a little at a time, to keep it from getting lumpy. When blended, add jello

mixture and pour on first layer that has chilled until set. Chill again until set then repeat first layer, and pour on top of second mixture.

— Gloria Yoder is an Amish wife and mother of six from Flat Rock, Illinois. More can be found at www.amish365.com.

HEALTH CHECKS

Continued from A1

another long-term health concern. Untreated hearing loss has been strongly linked to dementia, making hearing protection more important than many realize.

“Hearing protection isn’t just about your ears—it’s about your overall health,” Martinez said.

She noted that proper protective gear—not just earbuds—is essential, and that modern hearing aids have improved significantly in both performance and affordability.

Many producers also accept chronic aches and pains as simply part of getting older, but Martinez said that isn’t necessarily the case. Conditions like arthritis can often be managed with movement and physical therapy.

“I like to say ‘motion is lotion,’” she said. “Keeping joints active is one of the best ways to maintain mobility.”

Falls are another serious concern, particularly in agricultural settings where uneven terrain, slick surfaces and climbing equipment are part of daily life. Falls remain the leading cause of preventable

injury among older adults, and the risk is often higher for producers.

Martinez recommends discussing fall risk with a healthcare provider or using tools from organizations like the National Council on Aging.

“Understanding your risk is the first step in preventing a serious injury,” she said.

At a minimum, Martinez encourages all producers to visit a healthcare provider once a year. Routine checkups and bloodwork can help monitor cholesterol, blood sugar and early signs of conditions such as Type 2 diabetes.

“These numbers can tell us a lot,” she said. “If they start to trend in the wrong direction, we can make changes before it becomes a crisis.”

For those looking for guidance, Martinez recommends reaching out to local extension offices, which can connect individuals with trusted health resources and programs.

For farmers and ranchers, the work rarely slows down. But taking time for routine medical care, Martinez said, is essential to staying healthy enough to keep going.

“Your health is one of your most important assets,” she said. “And it’s worth protecting.”

PROPERTY TAX

Continued from A1

Senate Minority Leader Dinah Sykes, a Lenexa Democrat, said she is frustrated that such an important issue wasn’t dealt with earlier in the session instead of “scrambling” at the last minute.

“Republicans chose to push wedge issues, cultural issues, and not really address property tax,” she said. “Now we are in the last final hours of this session, and legislators are tired. Things are not thoroughly thought out. There’s not time for the public to comment, and they’re trying to rush and throw something together that will have unintended consequences.”

Sykes said local governments fund their budgets through property taxes. Pressing a lever to lower property taxes — such as artificial caps on property taxes that could impede growth — will have consequences, she said.

“It’s going to hurt these communities, and it’s not

going to provide that property tax relief that we are trying to sell to Kansans because the mill levy could change,” she said.

Local governments consider how much money they need to fund their budget, and then they set the mill levies to raise that amount of money, she said.

A mill equals \$1 for each \$1,000 of assessed value. For the house with a \$11,500 valuation, the property tax for 1 mill would be \$11.50.

Counties set their mill levies to raise the dollars needed to fund their budget. For example, Shawnee County’s mill levy for 2026 is 48.917. The homeowner in this example would pay \$562.55 in property taxes to fund the county budget. This bill doesn’t limit or change mill levies.

Sykes said that piece of the puzzle isn’t discussed at the Capitol and that local government services are important for her constituents.

“The cities that I represent, I pulled their constituent satisfaction surveys that they do,” she said. “They want that when they call 911, the fire or the police are going to respond. They like having good roads.”

Smith, who is a fan of caps for property tax relief, said real change will come at local government levels.

“We can put all those things in place, but the real relief would come at the local level more than anywhere else,” he said. “We can cap it. We can adjust evaluations. We can do all the things we’re talking about. But if you’re in a county where property taxes keep going up and there’s no end in sight, I would really defer to the fact that you probably need some new county commissioners.”

Smith said he encourages his constituents to look at local budgets if they really want to affect property taxes.

“Talk to your local officials, and if you’re not thrilled with some of the answers, perhaps you vote for someone else,” he said.

The new proposal is expected Friday to be voted on in the House and Senate, but Sykes was unsure what the result will be.

“I think tensions are high, and I think it’s just like throwing a whole bunch of darts at the dart board and seeing what sticks,” she said.

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