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LIVING WITH PASSION

by Nancy McCormick

The wind is blowing something fierce with snow drifting over the roads, but I still have a smile on my face as well as in my heart. I am thinking about the passion displayed at our local



community gymnasium on this cold, brisk, wintry morning. My husband and I enjoyed a wonderful morning watching fifth and sixth graders play YMCA basketball.

We were there supporting one of our young people from our church. One of the opposing teammate's father leaned over to me saying, "We are thrilled to be making points, because that is a rare thing for us!" As he turned away, I thought to myself, "I'm glad to be here cheering on both teams as they are doing their best playing that good old sport of basketball."

The players were of various sizes – some short, some tall, some lean or stocky, both boys and girls. Some players were slow but very capable as they ran down the court. Some raced with the speed of wild hares as they darted in and out of their team mates and some sprawled all over the gymnasium floor in their maneuvers. Some could dribble with great efficiency while others were a bit clumsy. However, the one thing I noticed was that all of the players had passion! These kids were jumping right back up quicker than you could wink your eye, scrambling to score points for their team.

Of course, these teams had their flaws. Some kids hogged the ball and some threw their elbows too many times; but overall it was a wonderful reminder of how one should approach life – with hearts filled with determination, hearts filled with the love of life, and hearts filled with celebration.

I need moments like this morning, don't you? I need the times God brings me simple pleasures as a reminder of the Sacred that is all around me. Most people work too hard trying to juggle families, jobs, bills and burdens. Because life can be difficult, it is important that we pay special attention to moments that come our way; moments that can bring happiness,

contentment, or a reminder of possibly doing things in a different way.

A few months ago, I started inviting a group of women into my home to create. It is a time marked with a big gold star on our calendars and spent with the intention of creating while we encourage one another. I make the coffee, put some muffins in the oven and open my home. The women bring their wares and the joy of creating together begins.

Some knit scarves, sweaters, socks and wash cloths. A couple of them knit and crochet prayer shawls for a community organization that wants to make sure everyone who is sick, dying or



Blessing a shawl. Photo courtesy of Nancy McCormick



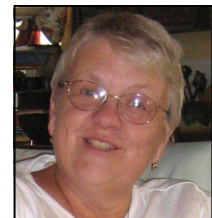
Kathryn and her gourds. Photo courtesy of Nancy McCormick

in despair feels wrapped in love when they receive one of these shawls. Every time a shawl is completed, we pause and pray for the recipient. One of the women brings her homegrown gourds on which she etches artistic designs with a wood burner and then paints them accordingly. And our youngest member enjoys the intricacies of scrapbooking.

These gatherings have become a time to build deep abiding friendships, where people feel safe as we experience a common bond with one another. I absolutely love these Friday mornings, and you can bet they are times filled with joy! Like that little band of basketball players, we too are determined to live with a heart filled with passion. We give support to one another in the things we create as well as in our daily lives. These mornings become a beautiful time of celebration as we build community with one another in my country cottage.

It is my prayer for you to find ways to fill your days with God's pleasures and to renew the determination, passion, and celebration in your life.

Nancy McCormick lives in Southeastern Ohio on a draft horse farm with her husband Mike. It is their desire that this farm bring Hope, Peace and Love to all who enter. Nancy is a Quaker Pastor who is released to do ministry as a GOOD NEWS *Associate*. Nancy loves to minister to the elderly through prayer, presence and song; she listens to their life stories and sings to them and with them. Nancy is the author of *God is All Around*, a collection of stories and songs from her ministry.



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