

In the *Book of Ecclesiastes*, the Wise Writer declares, *1. For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under Heaven: 2. a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; 3. a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; 4. a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; 5. a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; 6. a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; 7. a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; 8. a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.* (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 [RSV])

This past week our congregation has run the whole gamut of these emotions as we have experienced a time of great joy in seeing Morris Sparr and Colt Carter baptized into Christ, while also mourning with Glenna Henderson and her family over the loss of her dear and beloved grandmother, Eloise Lyons. When our new brothers in Christ, Morris and Colt, came to the Lord in obedient, saving faith, not only was the excitement felt palpably in our auditorium, the very halls of Heaven were moved. How do I know this? Because our Lord and Savior told us so Himself. *“Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the Angels of God over one sinner who repents”* (Luke 15:10 [RSV]). Did you ever stop and ponder the significance of these words of Jesus, as well as what the Apostle Paul penned in Ephesians 4:29-30 [RSV]? *29. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. 30. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* What our Lord, the very Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and His chosen Apostle to the Gentiles tell us is that our actions affect God and Heaven! The next time you start feeling down and beginning to believe yourself to be insignificant and unimportant, just remember that your actions affect what takes place in Heaven! We can either cause great joy, or we can grieve the Holy Spirit of God. And also please do not ever forget that you were so important that God sent His own Son for you! *16. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 17. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.* (John 3:16-17 [RSV])

Yes, *“for everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under Heaven”*: A *“time to be born,”* and *“a time to die,”* a *“time to laugh”* and *“a time to mourn.”* Sometimes, those occasions occur simultaneously. There is no more apropos verse for our time now than what Paul says in Romans 12:15 [RSV], *“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”* So do not fear to rejoice in the rebirth of our brothers Colt Carter and Morris Sparr, while simultaneously weeping with our dear sister in Christ, Glenna Henderson, and her family. We are there for all of you!