

NEWS in a NUTSHELL

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF MARYVILLE



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March 2022

How a Conversation in a Car Changed Everything

It has been said that the car is the perfect place for a great talk with your kid. According to Anne Parris, a mother of four, and blogger (NotASupermom.com), the child you are talking to responds well because they don't have to look you in the eyes, they can't get away, and you have their undivided attention. Apparently, the Holy Spirit is aware of this strategy for having important conversations with someone you care about too. Just ask Thomas Vananda, (Engineering and Public Works). One of the most important conversations he's ever been a part of happened in his Police car in the parking lot at UT Hospital back in 1998.

Thomas, a UT Police Officer at the time, parked his cruiser and decided to say a quick prayer asking that his son, Chance, might have meaningful work to do in the future. As he ended his prayer, although his car radio was off, he could hear a faint humming sound coming from the speakers. He remembers thinking it was a little odd, and then suddenly the atmosphere in his car changed dramatically, enough to be quite noticeable. That's when he heard clearly, these words, "I have something for your son to do, but I want you." Thomas knew immediately what was happening and he was afraid. Trying to escape, he put his car in drive. After just a short drive through the parking lot, he stopped again and sat quietly for a bit. Again, the voice said, "I have something for your son to do, but I want you to preach." Thomas couldn't believe this was happening, but he knew he would do as he was asked. Resigning himself to this enormous task, he answered with a short, but sweet, "OK".

For two weeks, Thomas didn't tell a soul about the parking lot encounter with the Holy Spirit. Finally, he could no longer keep the secret to himself, so he shared the story with his wife, Lisa. She thought that this was something they should pray about, so they did. This time, there was no audible voice, only a quiet convicted feeling in their hearts. From there, Thomas talked to the Pastor at Edgewood Primitive Baptist Church here in Maryville. He also shared his story with a Deacon. The Pastor confirmed that it was surely the Holy Spirit's wish for Thomas to preach, and he asked Thomas to let him know when he was ready.



Thomas and Chance the day he left for his deployment

The following Sunday, Thomas was seated a few rows from the back of the church, fighting to control the tears that streamed down his face. Noticing that, the Pastor told the congregation that he thought Thomas had something he wanted to share with the crowd. Right there at that pulpit, with about eight minutes of preaching, Thomas began doing what the Holy Spirit had asked him to do in that car in the

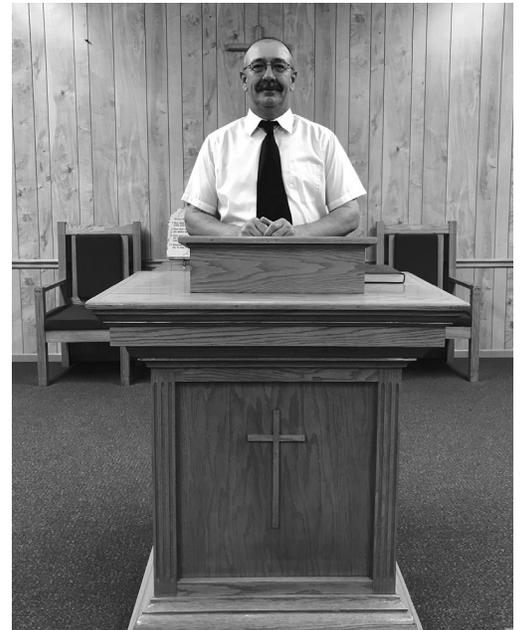
parking lot at UT Hospital, and he's never looked back.

When Thomas was ordained in 2003, he joined an association of eight churches in East Tennessee and began preaching periodically in those churches.

One of those churches was, Cove Road Primitive Baptist Church in Oliver Springs. In 2007 it was time for their Pastor to move on, so the secretary at the church called Thomas and asked if he would

become their full-time Pastor. He agreed, and he's been their Pastor for 15 years now. He still relies heavily on communicating with the Holy Spirit when it comes to leading his church. Often during the day, when his hands are busy, he's in a quiet conversation asking for guidance on what the congregation needs to hear on Sunday. When he prepares his sermon, he makes notes to prompt himself, so he is sure to make all the important points. Sometimes as he stands at the pulpit he is suddenly re-directed, and his notes become useless as he speaks. When this happens, he knows the Holy Spirit is communicating through him, and the message is useful in some way to every single person listening, be it five or 500 people.

Thomas is a high-energy guy. He needs to be. He makes two trips a week to Oliver Springs, prepares for his sermon each week, leads Bible School in the



Thomas in his happy place, the pulpit.



Preaching at Bible School

Continued - see Conversations on page 2

Applause Please

CORRECTION



Promotion
Dusty Finger
Electric
Lead Line Technician



Promotion
Ernie Herin
EPW
Heavy Equipment Operator



Promotion
Doug Short
Electric
Electric Crew Supervisor

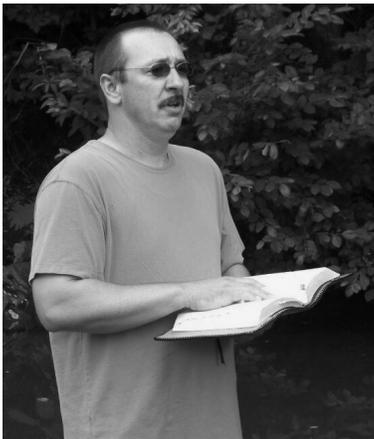


New Employee
James Fox
MPD
Police Officer



Promotion
Cody Herron
W&S
Utility Construction Inspector
(Last month Cody's new title was not correct)

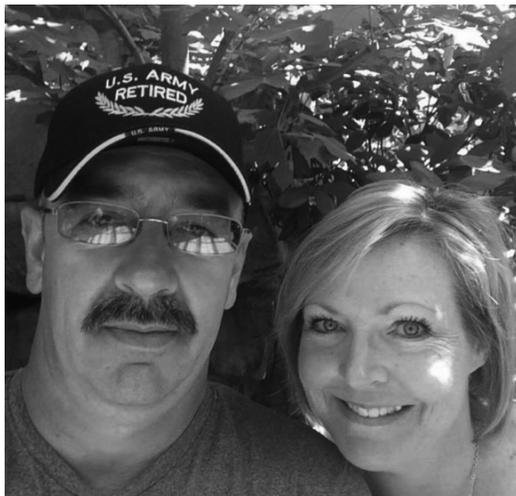
Conversations - continued from page 1



Preaching at a Baptism

summer and visits the sick and grieving parishioners. He's also a husband, father, and a grandfather, and in his "spare time", he works full-time for the City as a Crew Leader on the Grounds Maintenance team. He's always on the go, but he makes time to help anyone who needs it. It makes his day when a co-worker asks him to pray for them or asks for advice about life in general. He genuinely loves to help.

One of Thomas' favorite stories from his church is about a little boy who came from a broken home. He would come to the Wednesday night services to get away from his situation at home. He was around ten years old, a troublemaker, disruptive, loud, and absolutely not interested in the Bible or Christ. One Wednesday night, Thomas was sharing the meaning of Psalms 139:14 (KJV) "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works..." As Thomas was speaking, he noticed the boy was paying attention for once. When he finished reading the verse there was a visible change in the boy. He suddenly calmed down

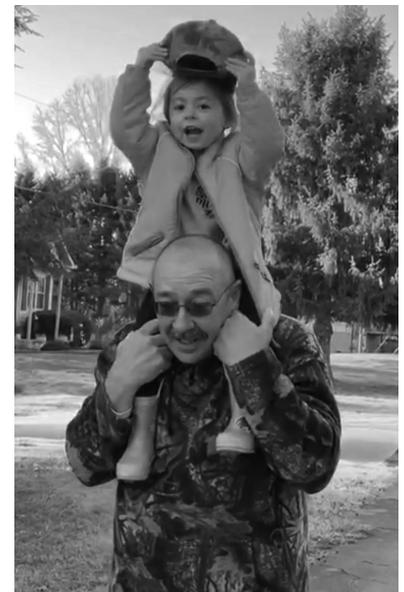


Thomas and his wife, Lisa.

and began to consider that maybe he was made for great things. Thomas could tell that the verse had touched his young heart. The following week, the boy came back. Before the service began though, Thomas found him outside the church writing the verse on the sidewalk with chalk. From then on, the boy was different. He was calm, quiet, and focused. A model student, he was like a sponge, soaking up all that he could in every service he attended. And it wasn't long before he brought his momma to a Sunday service so she could hear the same good news.

There's something about being in a car that encourages people to open up and maybe listen differently than they normally do. Maybe it's a lack of distractions. Whatever it is, often some of life's most memorable conversations happen there. In Thomas' case, the visit he had with the Holy Spirit changed everything. "The greatest place to be is in the center of God's will. That day in the parking lot at the hospital, He called me to be a preacher. I will never regret saying yes to His plans for me. I truly love to share His gospel. Giving people hope is, in a way, what the Holy Spirit asked me to do all those years ago and, in the end, doing the will of God has in turn, given me tremendous hope," Thomas said.

Thomas and his sister Jamie grew up in the Bungalow community in Maryville. At 17 he joined the National Guard and headed to Oklahoma for basic training. He served as an Artillery Cannon Crewman and then became a Section Chief in the Guard. He was also an unofficial unit Chaplain in the Guard. He was deployed to Iraq from 2004 - 2005. Thomas began his career with the City 24 years ago. He and his wife Lisa were married 33 years ago, they have one son, Chance, and one Granddaughter, Laurel.



Thomas and his granddaughter, Laurel

People are the Key

You Won't Want to Miss This!

Braves WORLD CHAMPIONS TROPHY TOUR

PRESENTED BY
TRUIST 

Friday, March 4, 3 - 6 p.m.

Jack Greene Park - Theater in the Park Pavilion

Fans are invited to come see the World Champion Trophy up close and have their picture made with it!

City trucks, equipment, and vehicles of all shapes and sizes will be in the park so children of all ages, with parent supervision, can touch and explore these impressive pieces of equipment. Music and dancing led by DJ Porter, K-9 Officers and more will also be available at this free family event. Food trucks will also be available.

Pistol Creek Wetlands Boardwalk Work



Engineering and Public Works crews began replacing the aging boards along the Pistol Creek Wetlands trail with TREX Composite decking on February 7. Pictured above, Austin Ray, Matthew Stewart, and Evan Melhorn put the decking in place while Thomas Vananda (pictured above) cuts them to size. Not pictured: Andrew Dove, an EPW temporary worker who is usually on the leaf pickup crew, was also on hand to help. The trail will be closed from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily for approximately six weeks or until the work is complete.



Self-Care Tips

Self-care: it's one of those things that we all know is important but may struggle to make a priority. Putting a few simple habits into place, though, can improve your health and happiness.

WHAT EXACTLY IS SELF-CARE?

The practice of taking steps to preserve or improve one's own health, wellbeing, and happiness, especially during periods of stress.

- Self-care can help you to be physically fit and as healthy as possible.
- Self-care can help you feel a deeper level of happiness and joy.
- Self-care can help you get rid of the things (and sometimes people) in your life that bring you down.
- Self-care can help control anxiety.

Here are some other suggestions to help you get started:

GET ACTIVE

It's as simple as moving your body doing something you enjoy. That could be a walk around the block, or just about anything that gets you up and about for just half an hour a day.

EAT WELL

Food is fuel – but it is also delicious and pleasurable, so yes, occasionally enjoying desserts and treats as part of your balanced diet is another form of self-care.

DO THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY

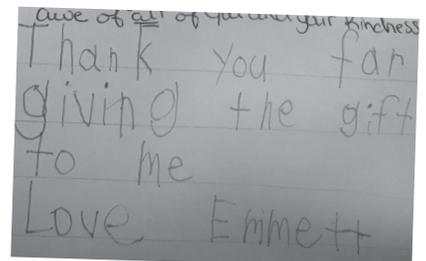
Listen to music that you love. Dance and sing. Pick up those hobbies and passions you may have put to the side. You will feel better when you do.

Just as we make the time to take care of our kids, our partners, our homes and our pets, we need to make time to take care of ourselves.

Mom and Son Thank EPW Crew

The following is a thank you note from a homeowner on Rampart Dr. Her 6-year-old son loved watching Chad Wilson, Jeremiah Morton, Jacob Kagley, and Jarod Shudan working in his yard. The crew bought the boy a hard hat and a tractor to match their equipment. Mom sent this thank you note and a box of donuts for the guys.

To the Awesome Men of Maryville City EPW Department: You are such special men. I don't have enough words to describe what this has meant to me. Not just the physical work you've done, but how you've all shown up as such a strong example of what good men can be. You've shown Emmett so much attention and care. This little boy doesn't have his father nearby and he misses that connection terribly. He has lit up in the past two weeks having all of you around. Thank you for showing up as a beautiful example of what men should be. I am in awe of all of you and your kindness! You all are welcome as friends in our life and we hope this isn't the last time we see you!



People are the Key

March Birthdays

2	Jason Ayers, MPD
4	Jason Barham, MPD Edmond Greene, EPW
5	Mike Davis, W&S
7	Jason Chai, EPW
8	Jason Cable, W&S David England, W&S Ron Nugent, EPW
10	Perla Garrett, Finance
11	Doug Chapman, EPW Mike Davis, MFD
12	Jewell White, MPD
14	Caleb Smith, MFD Jeremy Snyder, EPW Konner Webb, EPW
15	Jake Curtis, MPD
18	Stephen Jordan, EPW Danny Wilson, W&S
19	Ernie Herin, EPW Cody Herron, W&S
20	Adam Cook, MPD Mike Hicks, MPD
21	Jane Ellis, Finance Bobby Queen, MFD
23	Ronnie Irwin, EPW
24	Bobby McKeel, MPD Robert Woods, MFD
27	Tyler Buckingham, MPD Heath Hampton, W&S Ross Jamerson, MPD Andrew Payne, MPD
28	Kim Walker, Finance
29	Todd Hall, W&S
31	Ray Boswell, Admin. David Graves, MPD



March Anniversaries

Doug Strickland, EPW	39 years
Danny Kimsey, W&S	38 years
Scott Poland, Dev. Services	37 years
Mike Seagle, Electric	35 years
Eric Holder, W&S	32 years
James Bond, Electric	28 years
Brad Poplin, Electric	26 years
Marcus Walker, MPD	24 years
Kevin Whitehead, EPW	23 years
Wendy Phillips, Finance	22 years
Keith Anderson, W&S	21 years
Sam Newport, Electric	20 years
Shawn Ridings, EPW	18 years
Robert Anderson, Electric	8 years
Jordan Marshall, EPW	7 years
Michael Wilson, Electric	6 years
Matthew Watson, MPD	5 years
Bradlee Myers, EPW	4 years
Jason Russell, W&S	4 years
Thorn Cooper, Electric	3 years
Aaron Inman, Electric	3 years
Cody Teffeteller, Electric	3 years
Mike Brusseau, Dev. Services	2 years
Nick Galloway, W&S	2 years
Taylor Harrison, W&S	2 years
Blake Henegar, Dev. Services	2 years
Mike McClurg, W&S	2 years
Chris Meyers, MPD	2 years
Noah Pounds, MFD	1 year
Jaron Shudan, EPW	1 year
Luke Thompson, MFD	1 year



The City of Maryville is hosting a MEDIC Blood Drive on Thursday March 3, 2022 in the MEDIC Mobile Unit.

Operations Center from 7:30 – 11 a.m.
Municipal Building from 12:30 – 4:30 p.m.

If you would like to participate please call (865) 524-3074 or visit their website at www.tndonor.org to schedule an appointment. Donors receive a FREE MEDIC gift and Texas Roadhouse appetizer coupon!

Daylight Savings Time Reminder



Don't forget to spring forward and move your clocks one hour ahead on Sunday, March 13. It's also a great time to check the battery in your smoke detectors while you're at it.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, in the last four years, 19 states (Tennessee being one of them) have enacted legislation or passed resolutions to provide for year-round daylight saving time, if Congress were to allow such a change. Because federal law does not currently allow full-time DST, Congress would have to act before states could adopt these changes. (ncsl.org)