

3/20 Watersports Ministry

Dear 320 family,

Life jackets are a necessary part of our ministry. They are designed to **keep you afloat in water**. They will automatically turn you into a face-up position, keeping your mouth and nostrils clear of the water to prevent the risk of drowning.

In March I read an email from our church about a 38-year-old man who had unexpectedly passed away. These words caught my attention, "Chris (Peck) had a lifelong love of sailing, and recently bought a sailboat to create unforgettable memories with his family." My heart broke. He was so young . . . The Holy Spirit immediately urged me to reach out to his family.

Have you ever thought that God could use you as a life jacket in the life of someone?

The Peck Family

A story from Lianne Peck, wife of Chris Peck

On March 19, 2022, I lost my husband Chris, and our Five children lost their father. Even though I can only recall small fragments of the week spent planning my husband's



funeral and celebration of life service, I still clearly remember that in choosing which photo of him to be used for the service, that it HAD to be one of him on the water. He loved the water. He loved sailing, water sports, swimming,

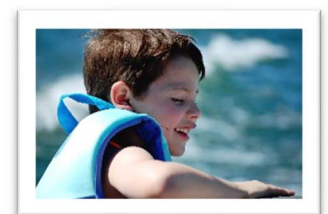
always fearlessly out in the waves of the ocean, or doing backflips off a boat into a lake- if there was water, he was there. I on the other hand, grew up timid and afraid of the unknown elements, depths, and dangers that water seemed to offer. So naturally I had no problem in letting him take the lead on any water adventures with our kids, and thankfully they took after him in their love of all it had to offer.

When Kathy and Chris Medlin reached out in the months following Chris's death, with the invitation to join them for a day, and partake of the gift that 320 Watersports provides, it was an easy decision to gladly accept.

Even still, the water is a place we can still feel close to Chris. To keep love alive in a very tangible way, to remember him, to even find peace, and continued healing. I had desperately been wanting to get on the water with the kids, but the thought of how to do that with a 5:1 ratio, let alone my own apprehensions of the water was very overwhelming, so having better experts leading the way was even an answer to prayer.

Last Summer, our 3 oldest boys went to sailing camp, and my husband volunteered as a leader for a whole week. He came home from the experience so excited, and a few days later we bought our first sailboat. Nothing extravagant, but she was ours! We were going to get her ready in the spring of this year and spend as many days as possible in summer on the boat and learn more about sailing together as a family. So as this summer came around, we found ourselves grieving what seemed like yet another tremendous loss. My life and identity have naturally and drastically changed since March. I have gone from being the first mate, to becoming the captain of boat that I know nothing about steering, and all of the sailing analogies have not been lost on me one bit. In our day spent on the water with Kathy and Chris M., it came as no surprise to see my kids excited and all too eager to try the new and different activities that Chris M. passionately shared with them. No fear- just like their dad.

My youngest son, being just 5 years old, however seemed to take after me in being scared to just jump in the water. Tenderly and graciously Kathy and Chris M., both reassured him and even sat with him as he became more comfortable and in no time, he was eager to jump in, splash around, and was squealing with joy and endless giggles as he would say "Mommy! Watch me!"



What I hadn't anticipated however, was when it came to my turn to try this new thing of kneeboarding, I decided not to sit this one out. Chris M. was happy to go over the instructions again for me, because in my nervousness I pretty much forgot everything he had previously said, and before I could change my mind, I was out on the water! I can say without a doubt, God uses all things to preach a small but personal sermon, even being out on a

kneeboard. Going out, I kept reminding myself to “just breathe”, as I was being pulled behind the boat. When it came time to get up, I was shaky, and even thought I wasn’t going to have success. But then there I was, upright and still holding on, and hearing the cheers from the boat, celebrating even the tiniest of accomplishments, it made me brave. In a few more tries, I found myself getting up



with ease, riding with, and over the wakes, and hearing even bigger cheers, and definitely earning some “cool mom” points with my kids. Sure, eventually you get tired, or something catches the

board just right and you topple into the water. But you come back up to the surface, and there’s the boat, bringing the line back to you to try again, or to pull you in and allow you to rest from all the hard work if that’s what you need. Being out there on the water, I totally got it.

My husband’s love for the water grounded him. It had the ability to make your heart race, but also bring peace.

In the water you feel so much lighter. The burdens you carry aren’t as heavy. It renews, refreshes, it baptizes and washes things away, and it’s probably why it is so often used to describe who Jesus is, and what he offers as Living Water.

Early on in my 18 years with Chris, he coined his nickname for me of “Captain Chaos.” I always hated it, because it seemed to be implicating to those who didn’t have the context, that I was chaotic, when it was more of a nautical “murphy’s law” reference to how no matter what we seemed to do, or go, somehow chaos would find us. The circumstances made for great stories, but a horrible nickname, until I learned something about chaos from Genesis 1. Often times in the Bible, water was an illustration for something dangerous, untamed, and chaotic- Think Noah and the flood (Gen. 6), Moses and the Red Sea (Ex. 14) or Jesus calming the storm on the water (Matt. 8, Mark 4, Luke 8). But the first time we see this illustration being used, it is as “The face of the waters” in Genesis 1:2. **“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”** So, chaos is somehow there in the beginnings of things, but so is the Spirit of God- and He hovers OVER it. From the very beginning God has been in the face of chaos, to remind it **“I am here.”**

Since March, our lives have seemed at times to be taken over by the chaos and the uncertainty that comes along with the loss and the grief we are living in. Even though we have the promise and hope of seeing and being with Chris again, in the presence of the Lord in heaven, we have still felt storm tossed and even shipwrecked by the reality of life here without him. God is teaching my children and I new ways to do things every day. He has promised to make all things new still!

For now, He uses His people through their giftings, to be life jackets, and to be lines thrown out to pull us in to safety and to rest and refresh.



There is no doubt more storms ahead, but He is over them. Not only do we not walk this journey alone, but the One walking every step of it with us, also walks on the water. For that we are eternally grateful.

God can do ANYTHING!

About a year ago God gave me an idea for sharing “God Can Do Anything” stories which has grown into a website and t-shirt. Stories from women of forgiveness and restoration. Personal testimonies of God’s faithfulness as they have walked through the fire of abortion, adoption, adultery or infertility.

Do you know someone that needs a life jacket thrown their way?

I invite you to share an intentional gift of a tee and testimony that will point them to Jesus and how He can save them.

Learn more at Godcando.com

Remember, “For nothing will be impossible with God!” (Luke 1:37)

Merry Christmas!

Chris and Kathy Medlin