

Elvis Gospel Fan Club Quarterly Newsletter 2020-1

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These photos from the film *Frankie and Johnny* have been chosen as they have a relevance with one of the articles in this newsletter. Also they are lovely photos of Elvis – great uniform!

Editorial

Dear Gospel Fan,

I was delighted to discover, albeit eighteen months later, that Gladys Presley's foot stone grave marker has been found and placed in the Mediation Garden. You can "read all about it" in these pages.

It is always encouraging to hear of all the Elvis Gospel Services that take place around the world. In this issue we have report of the one in January in Parkes, Australia. Taking place, of course, in their summer and surrounded by the fires, through thankfully not effected by them. Parkes is the home of the "Dish", the radio telescope which famously tracked and brought pictures to earth of the moon landing on July 20th 1969 I wonder if Elvis watched that landing on TV, though may be not as he was in Las Vegas rehearsing for his "Comeback to Concert Tours" 1st August opening night at the International Hotel showroom. We also feature information about Gospel services in Holland and Germany.

We are pleased to report that as far as we know, the tornado which hit Nashville on March 2/3, although doing much damage and killing at least 23 people has not harmed any of our friends there, including Terry Blackwood and Ed Hill.

I would ask for your prayers as I am earnestly getting down to finishing writing my second book on Elvis. I have 20 years of research and photos to sort out and present in an interesting, encouraging and challenging way!

I have included a "non-Elvis" item as I hope it will encourage at least someone who needs its message.

Finally we at Elvis Gospel do hope and pray that you will have a peaceful, refreshing time at Easter as you mourn the death of, then celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God bless you, *Madeleine*

Message from Marian Cocke, Elvis' Nurse and Friend on his Birthday 8th January

Good evening everybody! Today is Elvis Birthday and he is 85 years old! To all of us, he will always be forever young, handsome and the best voice to ever hit the planet!

I met Elvis the day after he was 40 when he came to Baptist Memorial Hospital as a patient, on my nursing unit and under my nursing care as the supervisor of the unit.

I found this young man to be thoughtful, considerate and caring about others. I found him to be funny, his laugh very contagious and fun to be with both as a patient and fast becoming a great friend. I came to love this young man because of himself, the man; not Elvis the most popular and loved man on the planet, the best of the best both then and now; He was just a truly outstanding man in many ways. He was a friend that we laughed together, cried together and prayed together. Do I still miss him? Every day.

Elvis loved and appreciated his fans! He sang for you, he loved you and he had a great respect for all of you; he knew that God gave him his voice and the ability to sing and yes, capture the world and the knew that you, his fans, supported him and continue to keep him alive today and now, in years to come. Would he be surprised yet humble to know what is still happening in his memory? I think he would be both surprised yet humbled so thank you, all of you, for what you have done by continuing to love and support this legend, keeping his name and his music out for the world to enjoy for years and years to come!

GOD BLESS and TLC

Elvis in Paris in June 1959 with Lamar Fike



Elvis' daughter Lisa Marie was 52 years old on February 1st this year. Seen here with her Mom

A Story of Encouragement

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming. Exhausted he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements and to store his few possessions. He was also able to build a fire to keep him warm at night and hopefully scare off any wild animal there might be.

But one day, after scavenging for food he arrived back to find his little hut up in flames, the smoke rolling up into the sky. Everything was destroyed. He was stunned with grief and anger. "God how could you let this happen!" he cried.

Early next day, he was wakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him. "How did you know I was here?" asked the weary man of his rescuers. "We saw your smoke signal", they replied.

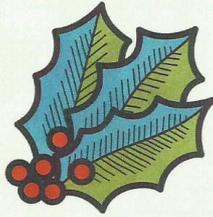
It is easy to get discouraged when things go drastically wrong, but the Lord works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform! Remember, next time your little hut is burning, it may just be a smoke signal that summons the grace of God.

ELVIS™ sings

The Wonderful World of Christmas



If I Get Home on Christmas Day



Holly Leaves and Christmas Trees



The Wonderful World of Christmas

Dear Friends,

Here we are once again in the midst of the most wonderful time of the year. As everyone knows, Elvis absolutely loved the holidays — the enchanted transformation of Graceland was a reflection of his own heart. He never truly lost his sense of wonder when it came to the decorations, the food, giving presents, providing for the less fortunate, being among family and loved ones, or the outpouring of well wishes from fans around the globe.

Of course, the holidays are not only a season of looking back and reminiscing, it is a time to look forward to what the new year has in store. And, as we take the leap into a new decade, we prepare to celebrate a milestone — Elvis' 85th birthday.

Like the man himself, the 85th Birthday Celebration at Graceland will be amazing. Over the course of four incredible days, fans from around the globe will come together to commemorate the life and legacy of the King of Rock 'n' Roll.

As always, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you for all that you do to keep the memory alive. The perpetual love shown by his fans means more than we can ever truly express in words.

We wish you a magical and peaceful holiday and hope the new year brings unmatched joy to you and your loved ones.

With all our love,
The Presley Family

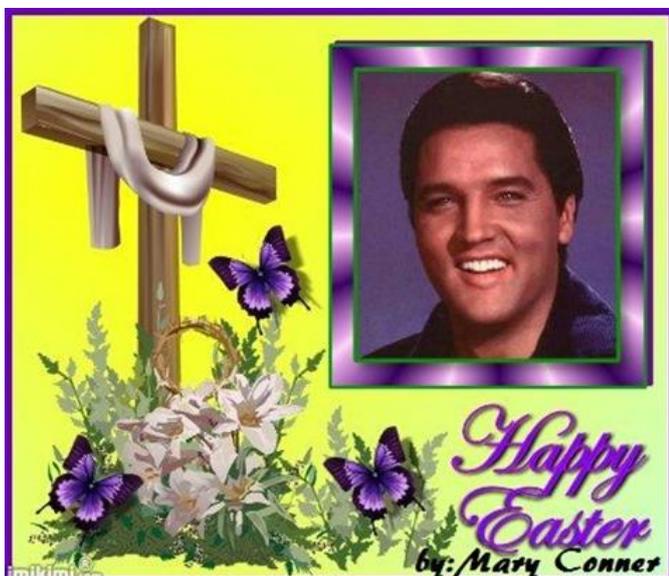
Every year Fan Club Presidents receive a Christmas special CD from the family. This above was for 2019 Christmas

Easter Weekend April 1957 with Yvonne Lime



Yvonne Lime spent The Easter weekend with Elvis and his parents at their Audubon Drive home. Yvonne reports that on the Monday: *Elvis hadn't slept too well. When I got up, his mother said, "I just looked in on Elvis, and he's fast asleep. I don't think I'll wake him yet." Over a cup of coffee, Elvis' mother said slowly, "You know, Yvonne, I have noticed for a long time that Elvis often looks lonely and sad. Even though people fall over themselves and crowd around him, he seems to be alone. I think", she said wistfully, "it may be because he misses his twin brother". Somehow, there was a sadness about today. We drove to the new house, (Graceland), and this time Elvis wandered through the empty rooms and said, almost to himself, "I have this beautiful home, but I wonder how much time I'll spend in it". He wanted to go to his retreat once more before I left. We held hands as we walked along the soft, green hills and over the rocks and bushes, plucking at the leaves. It was very still and we felt very much together. Suddenly a group of girls dashed out from behind a clump of bushes and ran toward him, screaming "There's Elvis!". As we drove away, Elvis said slowly, "Well, I'll never be able to be alone there anymore". We didn't say much the rest of the drive home. I packed after dinner, and then we drove to a drive-in place in town where the young crowd gathers for hamburgers and malts, and inside there's a lot of fun and dancing to juke box music. We pulled up to the place, but Elvis parked in the rear — as usual. Elvis looked in the direction of the little restaurant and saw kids his own age laughing and clowning around. He looked with such longing I felt that he would have given anything to go in and join them. But we ate in the car. We drove around town and got to the airport a little after midnight. Where Elvis waited with me till the plane flew.*

On the day before this, Easter Sunday, Elvis and Yvonne had attended the service at the Assemblies of God Church and Elvis had told the Pastor Rev. Hamill, "I am the most miserable young man you have ever seen. I have got more money than I can ever spend, I have thousands of fans out there, and I have a lot of people who call themselves my friends, but I am miserable. (I do not have a record of what, if anything, Rev. Hamill replied. MN)



Parkes Ministers' Association
Presents an
Elvis Gospel Service
"Frankie & Johnny"

Sunday 12 January 2020

Guest Artists: Dean Z, Mark Andrew,
Francine Bell, Terence Koo, Royden Donohue,
Gavin Chatelier, Anthony Petrucci,
Barber Shop Quartet, Gospel Choir and
Fourcasters Band

Guest Speaker: Rev Craig Bland

*Below is a report of the service written for us by
The Rev Craig Bland:*



Numbers were down slightly due to Bushfires and drought (still 4-5,000), but in the end the collection was only down by about \$200 with \$6800 raised towards ministries in the local Parkes High School and overseas in East Timor where last year's donations helped ship hospital equipment (mostly beds and linen) that benefited around eight different hospitals and clinics around Dili.

The theme was Frankie and Johnny which is basically about a compulsive gambler who tries to turn his luck around by seeing a fortune teller who tells him that a 'red head' will be his good luck charm. Not themes one would normally build a church service around. We had three mini talks throughout the service. The first looked at how we'd all love to know the future and the Bible tells us what the ultimate future holds, not so much for this life but rather for eternity. This also tied into the movie as it has two gospel songs in it, *O When the Saints* and *Down by the Riverside*, both of which are about the hope of heaven. The second talk tackled lucky charms and how too many of us are 'hoping' to get into heaven when we can actually have a sure bet - Jesus. We followed that talk with *Without Him*, which has the Lyrics "Jesus, O Jesus, do you know him today? Please don't turn him away". The final talk, focussed in on 'Gambling' and talked about Elvis' time in Vegas while leaving people with the challenge "Don't gamble with your eternity" and how Judgement is not something to fear if you have God's forgiveness, we followed that talk with *Amazing Grace*.

The service was well received and concluded with all performers back on stage and the crowd joining us in singing *Put Your Hand in the Hand* and we had a wonderful reprieve in the weather for the service. It was lovely and cool with no wind. (*Thank you very much Rev. Craig!. MW*)

NASHVILLE ELVIS FESTIVAL

Jamison Theater
IN THE FACTORY
FRANKLIN TENNESSEE

MARCH 19-22, 2020

★ On Sale MONDAY, JANUARY 6 at Noon! ★

www.NashvilleElvisFestival.com

During this Festival, there will be a Pat Boone concert on March 22nd

Here is Pat's memory of a conversation with Elvis:

Elvis told Pat, "I wish I could go to church like you." After Pat told him he could, Elvis replied, "No, they wouldn't leave me alone. I would distract the minister."

Pat assured Elvis that "if they see that you are coming for the same reason that they are, all of that would ease away and you could actually worship freely like everybody else. And it would do you a world of good, Elvis" According to Pat, Elvis "felt like he couldn't go anywhere in public. So he was sort-of imprisoned. I felt like he lived like Public Enemy #1 instead of the King of Rock 'n' Roll. It stunted his social and spiritual growth."

Gladys Presley's Elvis-designed Tombstone Returns to Graceland.



In recognition of the 60th anniversary of Gladys Presley's death, the tombstone Elvis designed for his beloved mother - complete with a Star of David, to acknowledge her Jewish heritage – was exhumed from storage and placed permanently at the Graceland Meditation Garden. Fans and mourners participating in the 2018 Candlelight Vigil were among the first in decades to encounter the grave marker, which has been unseen since 1977, when Vernon Presley moved the bodies of his son and wife from nearby Forest Hill Cemetery to the south side of Graceland mansion. The marble tombstone, which identifies Gladys Presley as the 'Sunshine of Our Home', was removed from the Graceland storage archive and placed in the Meditation Garden on the morning of August 14th 2018, on the 60th anniversary of Gladys Presley's death. The stone is more or less reunited with the large marble cross, angels and statue of Jesus that originally were at Forest Hill and are now just east of the garden's burial plots for Elvis, Gladys, Vernon and grandmother Minnie Mae Presley. The unearthing of Gladys Presley's tombstone was not publicized. Instead, Graceland officials mentioned it that week during a meeting of Fan Club Presidents, on the theory that the news then would get out via word of mouth. 'We decided we didn't want to make a lot of fanfare about it', said Angie Marchese, Vice President of archives and exhibits at Graceland. 'It was just done to honor Elvis' mom and to fulfil what we think would have been his wish. In any case, that night was the night of the Candlelight Vigil, everyone's going to see it', she said. Marchese - a Graceland archivist for 27 years - said she has been interested in restoring the grave marker to public view since she first discovered it inside a crate in the Elvis archives, now housed inside a 20,000-square-foot warehouse that contains an estimated 1.5 million items.

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Gladys Presley was only 46 when she died, after being hospitalized with hepatitis in 1958, when Elvis was undergoing basic training at Fort Hood, Texas, after being drafted into the Army. Elvis returned to Memphis on emergency leave, but Gladys died at the hospital of heart failure. Elvis had his mother buried in Forest Hill Cemetery, with a gravestone marked with a cross that identified her as Gladys Smith Presley.

Six years later, after Elvis was deep into study of his family history and what Angie Marchese called 'his personal spiritual journey', he designed the tombstone to be placed at the foot of his Mother's grave. In addition to a cross, the new marker included a Star of David, in recognition of Gladys' Jewish heritage on her mother's side. The new stone identifies Elvis' mother as Gladys Love Presley, replacing her maiden name with her middle name, presumably because 'love' was the emotion Elvis most associated with his mother.



Our friend Rev. Fred Omvlee who is a huge Elvis fan, has been organizing Elvis church services all over the Netherlands for seventeen years, will be hosting these Elvis Gospel Services on the poster above, in Hoog Soeren in Holland on 26th July and shown on the poster right, in Amstelkerk on 8th March. Also Sunday, July 21st he will be holding an Elvis church service in front of the Dutch Church in Berlin, at 11:30 am in the Hugenottenkirche, Joachim-Friedrich-Strasse 4, Berlin.

Advance Notice - The Annual **Welcome to Elvis** event at the **Bridlington Spa** will be on **Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th July**. More details in the next newsletter.