180. KEEPING MEMORIES ALIVE - FRIDAY - NOVEMBER 6, 2026

Good morning, Grace Harbor – it's Dan. Happy Friday!

So, there's a bit more to the story I shared with you on Monday about Brie and her grandmother, and I think it's a great way to wrap up this week and our reflection on All Saints Day and the people we love who have died.

Remember that I had complimented the chrysanthemums she had on her table at the Farmer's Market. She told me that they were in honor of her grandmother, who was French, and chrysanthemums are the traditional flower the French use around All Saints Day to honor their loved ones.

Well, I told her that I'd be happy to include her grandmother in my church's All Saints remembrance at our service the next day. But that's when she shared something equally surprising and touching.

"That would be very kind," she said. "Her name was Marguerite, and what you may not know is that she's a part of your service *every* Sunday."

"Is that because she taught you how to bake, and now you make our communion bread every week?" I asked.

"Yes, but it's more than that," she replied. "Just about everything I bake uses what's called a starter. That's a mixture of flour, water, and natural yeast. The yeast is actually a living thing, and so you keep it alive by feeding

it some fresh flour and water at regular intervals. And then, when you want to bake, instead of using store-bought yeast, you can use a bit of the starter. Well, the starter I use is over 30 years old! It was my grandmother's, and so there's a little bit of her in every loaf I bake."

"My goodness," I said. "What a beautiful way to honor her memory and literally keep it alive."

"Thank you," she said. And it looked like she was about to say something else, but she hesitated for a moment.

"Are you ok?" I asked.

"Yeah," she said with a small laugh. "I haven't really told anyone this, but some bakers like to name their starters, and she called this one Gabrielle – which is actually my full name. I was her first granddaughter, and she said she made the starter the week I was born, hoping that one day she'd get to teach me this thing she loved so much."

"It looks like she got her wish," I said.

"Well," she started with what looked like the beginning of tears in her eyes, "she *did* teach me, and especially after she moved in with us, we spent a lot of time in the kitchen together. But when I hit high school, my interests shifted, and I got busy with other things. I didn't really bake much after that."

She paused, and took a deep breath before continuing, “Toward the end of college, she got pneumonia, which can be really serious for older people, and she ended up dying. I inherited the starter since it literally had my name on it, and after a couple months of just keeping it alive, I slowly got back into baking. I found I had really missed it, and after a couple years of baking for fun, I took a leap of faith and left my old job to start the Fruit of the Earth Bakery, and I’ve been doing that for almost 10 years now.”

I don’t know about you, but I find that to be such a beautiful and meaningful story, and we did say her name and ring a bell for Marguerite on Sunday at church during our All Saints service. I should say that Brie gave me permission to share this story with you all. In fact, when I asked, she replied with what I think is the perfect topic for our discussion question to end this week.

She said, “Sure, you can share it. I’ll bet lots of families have stories like that. Things their loved ones passed on to them that they want to keep going.”

So, why don’t you take a few moments and answer this: Are there any family traditions or stories or interests you want to keep going? Maybe it’s a treasured family recipe, a game you always play on vacation, or a tradition related to holidays like Thanksgiving or Christmas. Perhaps it’s a skill like baking or painting or playing a sport. If you need more time, feel free to pause the podcast, and I’ll be right here when you get back.

[PAUSE]

One tradition I'm looking forward to that's coming up is playing the Christmas album by the singer Nat "King" Cole. My mom says it never felt like Christmas in their house until her dad, my grandfather, put that record on. I not only inherited a love for it, but I also now make a big deal of it with my own kids too.

Ok, let's close in prayer. If you want to, you can close your eyes and fold your hands.

Dear God, we thank you for the time we have spent this week remembering the people we love, especially those who have died. We thank you that there are lots of ways to keep their memory alive – by naming them, telling their stories, praying, and by continuing traditions. Most of all, we thank you that you know them, love them, and are caring for them even more than we ever could. Amen.

Ok, Grace Harbor, have a great weekend, and I'll see you on Monday.

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