

# PEARCE CHURCH

## PASTOR'S POST | November 26, 2021

Close To Home: A Reflective Moment Under a Tree

Dear Pearce Family,

Family trees are interesting. I am grateful for my parents and grandparents who had a godly influence on my life. But all has not been well in my family history. My Grandpa Daningburg told me that his father was an alcoholic. When he got drunk, my great-grandfather could be abusive toward his wife. When my grandpa was a teenager, sometimes he had to use a poker from the fire to keep his father at bay when he was in one of his fits of rage.

I also learned that my great-great grandfather immigrated from Germany and that he and his brother were orphaned early on. The family did not even know for sure if our last name was really Daningburg. The orphanage had burned to the ground and all the records were lost. Some speculated that the orphans' surname was really the name of the town they came from: Dannenberg, Germany. With a lineage like that, it's a wonder I ever even made it into this world.



Dannenberg Town Hall



99<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade monument



Devil's Den

This past Spring, Jeanne and I visited Gettysburg. A few months prior, Pastor Dave Carden, my step-father, had been researching my family tree. It turns out that my great-great grandfather, Jacob Daningburg, had not come directly from Germany but was born in Philadelphia. He grew up in the mid-1800's and entered the Union Army. He fought in many significant battles, including Gettysburg. He is listed on the rolls as part of the 99th Pennsylvania Infantry that fought in one of the bloodiest areas of the battlefield, the Devil's Den, just below Little Round Top. Jeanne and I walked that space and I tried to picture what that must have been like for my nineteen-year-old ancestor, Jacob. It's amazing that he survived, and a wonder I ever made it into this world. And yet here I am and here you are at Pearce, part of God's divine salvation plan.

God has a plan and a purpose for each of us. We are shaped by both genetic and sociological factors in our family trees. Yet God works out His purpose in and through us as we submit to Him, even with the difficult and

painful places in our lives and family histories. The Gospel of Matthew includes Jesus' family tree right in the beginning of chapter one. Interesting family stories reside behind the names listed there, including many flawed and broken people. They help us understand how God used all of that to accomplish His perfect plan to bring our Savior into the world as a babe in Bethlehem. And He uses us to carry out His salvation plan today, no matter our family background or brokenness. It's called GRACE!

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

With Faith,

*Pastor Todd*