

The logo for "Cross Currents" features a stylized orange and brown graphic on the left that resembles a cross or a current. To the right of this graphic, the word "Cross" is written in a bold, brown, sans-serif font, and the word "Currents" is written below it in a similar font.

Reconnecting

That was a crazy Friday morning. I felt something weird going on in my chest, but at first I ignored it.

As I parked my car downtown to attend a noon meeting, though, a flurry of erratic heartbeats forced me to pay attention. “I’d better skip this meeting and go find out what in the world is going on,” I told myself.

Turns out I was having a cardiac attack called afib for short. My atrial valve had begun to fibrillate (beat) irregularly. Which got me a night in the hospital and way more family attention than usual.

Our cell phones began to buzz with texts and calls from relatives literally on every coast and scattered in between, all of them taking precious time out of their busy routines to check up on the old man.

But that wasn’t all. Thankfully, my heart slipped back into normal rhythm, and I went home a day later feeling solid again. By Monday I was back at work. But in this modern world of social media, the news of my medical woes spread like a West Texas wildfire.

Not only did a host of folks in our congregation email or text me to make sure I was okay, but a batch of folks I never expected to hear from checked up on me.

From Indianapolis came a rare call from my special friend Kent Ellett. For years he’s let me mentor him as a preacher and writer. Over two decades ago I tied the nuptial knot for him and his sweet wife. Both Kent and I stay so busy that we seldom talk to each other, but news of my hospital stay prompted him to dial my office number. What a treat!

From the DFW area came a series of texts from my former newspaper editor and good friend Danny Andrews. Last year he retired and migrated east to play grandpa, but he’s still an important part of my world. News of my ER visit caused him to check up on me.

What a blessing that afib episode turned out to be! I started off considering it an unwelcome disruption of my over-committed calendar. It turned out to be a good reason to reaffirm precious relationships that matter far more than most of the daily duties that obsess me.

Could this be one reason the Scriptures advise us to be grateful—to “count it all joy”—when troubles come our way? Both James and Peter tell us to accept trials not with moaning or whining but with rejoicing. Okay. But I never thought I’d say, “Thank You, Lord, for afib.”

By Gene Shelburne