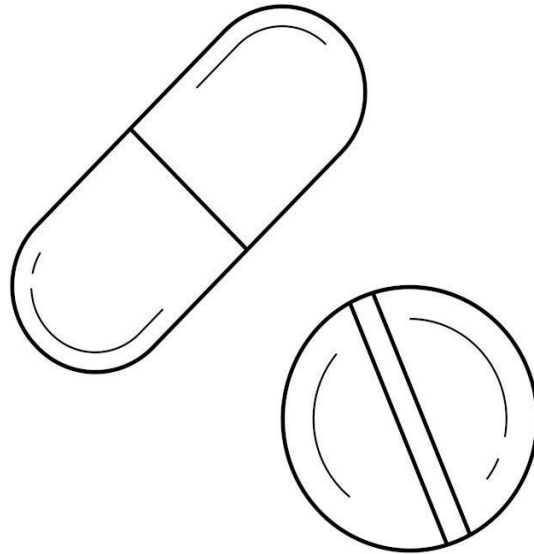


## Hard Pill to Swallow



When I was an eleven-year-old boy, I went to a neighbor farmer and asked for a job helping to cut tobacco. The farmer was a nice man, who never married, and he let me help in the tobacco patch. I was not much of a worker at eleven, but the farmer kept me on anyway. I worked for him for years and came to admire him. When I was a young man, the farmer rented out his farm and then started to struggle with depression. I remember visiting him in the hospital where he admitted himself to get help. A few years later, he ended his life. That was a hard pill to swallow. I still find it hard to accept his suicide almost 30 years later. I have a lot of questions with no answers. Why? Was there no other option? Is there forgiveness after suicide? How do you get to the point of no hope for the future?

I am not judging; I am still mourning a man that I looked up to who took his own life. Like I said, it is a hard pill to swallow. I have dealt with death with many to whom I was closer from cancer, car accidents, and old age. I am at peace with those. I had closure, even for the young ones. But for suicide it is hard to have closure.

I recently heard on a conservative news report that America has reached a record for highest rate of suicides in 2022. We had over 49,000 suicides. Of those suicides, 80% were men. And most of those men were what we call blue collar workers. This is sad news. More hard pills to swallow. Why are we having a dramatic increase in suicide? Especially among working class men?

I have never been this low to understand how hopeless someone must be to take their own life. What is causing this hopelessness? Poor economy? Hook-up culture? Addiction? Pornography? Broken relationships? Lack of purpose?

How are we to respond as Christians?

**1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.**

Our society needs to know Jesus as their Lord and savior! We need to share what Jesus means to us personally with those that don't know him

We have been concerned with missions since our inception. I think we need to change our thinking. Missions are not just overseas; they are right outside our doors. We all live in the mission field. Let's not hide our light under a basket inside our churches. We need to open our doors and share the hope that we have with a dark and hopeless society.

**Jim Nolt – Executive Board Member**

#### **Weekly Prayer Request**

Psalm 133:1-3 – “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity! It is like the precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion.”

Precious Heavenly Father, surprise us with the joy of unity! As we gaze into Your heart and seek with all of ours to obey You, to follow You, let us open our eyes to see that we are marching together, keeping time to Your celestial drum. Let that joy so overwhelm us that we never want to seek our own wills again...ever! Oh, the pure joy of serving You beside our brothers and sisters as we allow You to create in us a new single heart for You!

**Please pray for the following congregations and pastors.**

West Goshen congregation in Goshen, IN and Interim Pastor Joel DeSelm  
White Branch Congregation in Hagerstown, IN and Pastor Brian Mackie