

MAY 8, 2020

THE COS NEWSLETTER

CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR



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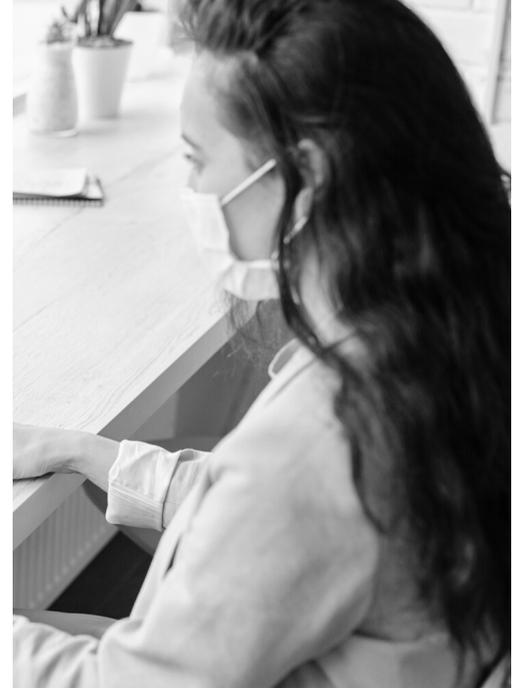
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Meeting Together During COVID

WRITTEN BY DREW ANGUS

Blooming flowers fill the air with fragrance, and the heightened sound of birdsong greets our ears when we step outside. A quick glance in the rearview mirror and all the signs of spring tell us that Easter Sunday has recently come and gone. We now have a shared experience that would have been hard to imagine a short while ago. We celebrated the resurrection of Jesus virtually, and for many, Easter was celebrated without loved ones gathered around the table. Despite an unprecedented Easter, we can all still shout Hallelujah, perhaps even a little louder this year. We can do this because nothing can stop God's kingdom plan to defeat sorrow and death forever. Jesus rose from death, to defeat death. As the author of Hebrews tells us in chapter 10: "We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain that is, his body..." As we were reminded on Easter Sunday; we are a grateful people, known by our living hope in Christ. We are always welcome in God's presence, and never alone from His Spirit even when separated temporarily from loved ones.



Meeting Together During COVID

When it became clear that we needed to shut down physical gatherings, I wondered what would happen to the crucial aspect of spiritual formation that occurs whenever we are gathered together. The letter of the Hebrews exhorts followers of Christ: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching." 10:25. We know that meeting together is a crucial way that we disciple each other to live out the hope of the gospel. Gathering together is not optional for the flock, in fact, we know that when we become isolated, we are much more vulnerable to temptation and unbelief. Meeting together fortifies us to be strong during days of suffering.

One of the greatest joys for me in this COVID season, has been seeing firsthand how our church has continued to meet. As a pastor, my heart is reassured when I know that those at COS are well connected with one another. During the second week of the pandemic several of us on staff contacted all our community group leaders, and to my delight out of all our community groups, all but two are still meeting. Additionally, the community groups that normally meet twice a

month have decided to meet every week during this season of isolation. All our women's studies, five of our Sunday classes, as well as several new groups, are available to meet the need to 'meet together' during this stressful season. We are so grateful that our community group structure has prepared us to have community during this time when it would be easy to, "give up meeting together".

I am delighted to see so many adapting and learning new and challenging strategies to stay connected for the sake of one another. As a church we are strong in our weakness when we point one another to the work of Christ by linking arms, virtually of course! Church of the Saviour, you are loving and caring for one another the best way that you can. Thank you!

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:23 & 24). If you are not a part of a community group that is virtually meeting, please visit our [website](#), or contact us and we will help you find a group that you can meet with at this time.



GLOBAL OUTREACH SPOTLIGHT

BY DEB G.

When life's problems are as big as a global pandemic, it is hard to see the forest through the trees. In times of crisis, it is normal to go into survival mode. We start thinking about our own needs, the needs of our family and friends, the needs of our community. Be encouraged my friends, that despite all that is going on, all that the news reports, and all that fills your social media feeds; God is at work and is in control. The Great Commission is not cancelled. Our Global Partners are still serving around the world to bring Jesus' light and hope to a world that is more aware of their need right now than they were a few months ago. While our Global Partners are also experiencing lock downs in the countries where they live, often more strict than ours, they are helping with basic needs, and using technology to encourage, teach,

disciple and proclaim God's truth to those that are asking questions in these hard times. As you remember our Global Partners in prayer, also remember the ones that they love both near and far, the communities that they serve, the many needs that they see every day that are exacerbated due to the pandemic and the global financial crisis. Remember, the Great Commission is not cancelled, in fact, it ends with this statement from Jesus "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Let's remember this as we pray for our Global Partners.



The Good Old Days

Deneen McDonald

The “good old days” is a cliché often used to describe our memories of the past. It’s a form of nostalgia –reminiscing about pleasant or more familiar times. If you’ve lived long enough, you may have your own version of the good old days. If you haven’t lived very long, chances are good you’ve heard stories from other folks who long to return to former days when life seemed better.

When the remnants of Israel returned to Jerusalem after seventy years in Babylonian captivity, they found themselves longing for the good old days. God had fulfilled His promise, and they were home again; but life there was not what the younger generation expected nor what the aged remembered. The wall to the city was destroyed, and the temple lay in ruins. The people faced enormous challenges and opposition as they began to rebuild. Their frustration lead to discouragement that, in turn, slowed down their work on the new temple. Eventually, they abandoned that work altogether and instead focused their efforts on the task of building their own homes.

Through the words of the prophet Haggai, the Lord stirred the hearts of the people to return to the work of utmost importance – rebuilding His temple. The new temple, however, could never compare to the splendor or size of Solomon’s temple. Those old enough to remember the original temple, were again discouraged. Haggai reassured them of God’s presence and repeatedly reminded them to be strong, unafraid, and do the work. Then God proclaimed a mystery: the glory of the present



The Good Old Days

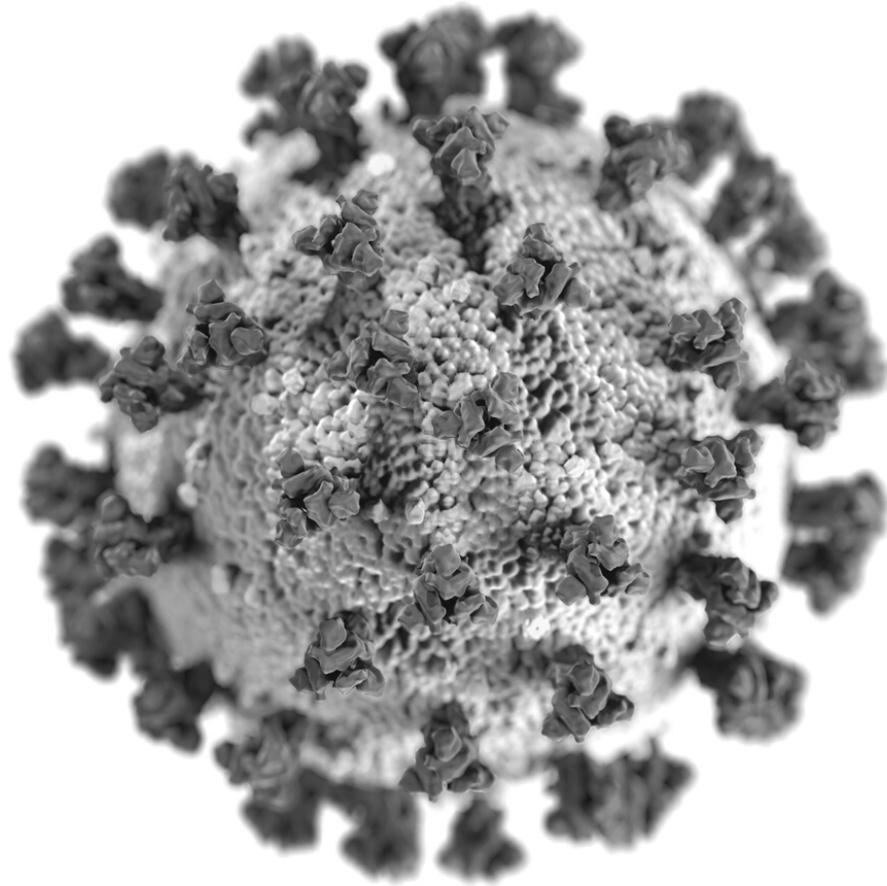


house would be greater than the former. In this place, He would give peace. In other words, this temple would be far more glorious than the famous temple built by Solomon (Hag 2:1-9). These prophecies would ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus Christ as Messiah, King and Priest.

The words of Haggai to the returning Jews jumped off the page as I read them. A greater glory, surely God is working towards a greater glory for His church through this global pandemic. COVID-19 is changing how we live, with many people around the world longing for life as we once knew it. We long for normalcy. Instead we are faced with a new, perhaps harsh, reality. However, as the church faces these trying times together, we can take heart knowing our Sovereign God is still at work doing something new – personally, corporately, and globally. He is awakening our spirits not to what was, but what is to come. He is calling us to be strong, unafraid, and to do the work. He calls us to courageously join with Him to build a greater glory, so that the name of Jesus is made famous throughout all the earth.

Like the Israelites returning to Jerusalem, we find ourselves in unexpected circumstances we have not prepared for. My tendency is to long for the good old days; but as I attempt to resist that impulse, I would rather be changed. Let us find a greater peace and greater glory for God as we follow Jesus to wherever this path leads.





A Message from Don Dawes

This Coronavirus season has been a time of reflection and a time to ask myself: How can I be most effective in this situation? As an educator in leadership I find myself becoming more of a coach these days, encouraging new ways to accomplish the same goals. Since I do not have all the answers, I look to Zoom groups and professional friends to gather ideas and new solutions.

One of my main steadfast practices is to seek our Heavenly Father each day through my devotional time. Recently reading Psalm 33, I have been blessed by many things mentioned in these verses and remembering that these Psalms were meant to be “sung joyfully”. I am reminded by God’s promises in His word that He is faithful, true and filled with unfailing love. Our existence can be held together in difficult times by remembering the promises of God. In this Psalm, His power is reflected in the references to creation, “He spoke and it came to be, His plans stand firm forever.” He reminds along with His power, to fear the Lord and respect him. “His ears hear our cries, His eyes on us continually, those eyes of the Lord will protect us as we take refuge in Him.” Let us all hold on to God’s promises in His word which give a hope and a future. Read for yourself Psalm 33: 1-22.

Blessings,
Donald Dawes

Unity in A New and Challenging Season

BY ANDY LENKO

A global crisis has an ironic way of uniting people. This shared experience of the COVID-19 pandemic is giving us all something we can relate to, understand, and empathize with. In times like these, we can more easily look past differing opinions and preferences and be reminded what and who matter most in life. As we have adjusted to our social distancing reality, and have taken our worship services online, we've been given an opportunity to set aside the things that all too often divide.

For years, we have been given the commodity of choosing a worship service that fits the mold of our preferences; everything ranging from music to attire. We desire experiences that we feel comfortable with, that fit our idea of what a proper worship service should look like. When we are stripped of these things, we are forced to focus on an entirely different issue altogether.

With one live-streamed service, we are forced into a virtually connected experience that both meets some of our preferences, and challenges others. However, I'd like to think of this new, albeit challenging, reality as an opportunity to rise to the call of grace and unity. Each of us faces a critical choice when we engage with something contrary to our preferences. We can choose to respond in love and grace, which fosters worship, or we can choose to respond in a negative way that hinders worship. While the first choice takes the focus off ourselves, the second reinforces our intrinsic focus on self.

I know that this is easier said than done, there have been many an occasion where I have responded in animosity, grumbling in my heart about this or that, and affecting those around me. My prayer for all of us is that we would grow in our ability to choose the course of love and grace in such moments, whether they be during corporate worship services or any other moment and place in our lives. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in these times, ever spurring us towards love and unity.

Pray & Connect

CORPORATE PRAYER:

Join us for a weekly time of corporate prayer over zoom. We'll be meeting Wednesday nights from 7:30-8:15pm:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83506150310>

Prayer Line:

Call our prayer line at 610-379-2255. Members of our prayer team are standing by. This is available Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 4:30-6:30pm, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12-2pm, and immediately following our 10:30 a.m. live stream worship service on Sundays.

GIVE HELP, GET HELP:

If you need help or would like to volunteer, please go to the home page of our website and check out our "Give Help", "Get Help" pages. These serve as a central hub for all the ways you can get involved in helping out, as well as a place for those who need a helping hand during this challenging time