



Monthly Newsletter | July 2020

Community Church of Christ

Sloan, IA



We continue with worship services each Sunday morning and each Sunday we have had a few more come into the building. Services are available on line and are

streaming now on our Web page. Fortunately, the Web page is NOT muted or interrupted by FB computer monitors and you can view it in it's entirety. This has been a problem faced by all the churches and frustrating for each one. Again we are thankful for our tech "squad" and the avenues they have gained for our church. Zach Lux is doing a marvelous job organizing the Web page!

The parking lot is still able to receive the worship service and many are still taking advantage of this opportunity to worship...actually it becomes the "next step" for many before entering the building.

We miss not having our church family here with us and understand all the issues facing you; sometimes it is hard not to become discouraged but the notes on line have been wonderful as well as the notes in the mail. We are ever so grateful for each of you! We encourage you to stay safe, stay strong, and most of all stay faithful!

Many commented on the books of the Bible hidden in the quarantine exercise last month. The books are as follows: Mark, Luke, Acts, Revelation, Ruth, Numbers, Job, Judges, Lamentations, Hebrews, Titus, James, Kings, Peter, Esther, and Amos.

I have a new brainteaser for you...This is an unusual paragraph. How quickly can you find out what is so



unusual about it? It looks so plain, you would think nothing was odd about it.

In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is highly unusual though. Study it, and

think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out.

Thank God for America, the land of liberty, thank God for her people, the strong, the brave, the free! Dear God, save America, for her we intercede; dear God, make America, a Christian land indeed!



Two of our church families have been blessed with new babies!

Trent and Katie Boyle welcomed Rae Charlotte on June 9th at 8:45 p.m. weighing 8 lbs. 11oz. And 19 inches long.

Corey and Lindsey Hilts joined their family with the birth of William Brian June 11th at 2:40 p.m. weighing 6 lbs. 14 oz. and 19 1/2 inches long.

Each are doing well and enjoying the special moments together! God bless!! We rejoice with you!



Looking back at last year's newsletter, we were planning a pie Sunday! This won't be happening this year but sometime in the future we will enjoy our coffee hours again with one another!



The Youth group met for the first time in months...it was a small gathering but Jill expressed her feelings about it in a very special way. She wasn't discouraged with the number...."A beautiful evening with 10 amazing youth group members...we had shade and a breeze and great conversations. Prayed for them all by name and missed the ones who weren't there. Exactly what I needed tonight."



More gatherings will take place and the youth are encouraged to watch their facebook page for days and times!

Swimming is one of the best ways to grow taller quickly. Hmmm, it didn't work for me!

Thank you for all those who attended my graduation party and for the cards and gifts. We had a super evening with friends and family! Thank you for remembering me in such a special way. Kade Killian and family



I could see the excitement on my 7-year-old's face in the rearview mirror. We were driving home from church, and our pastor had talked about the town's Fourth of July celebration, next week at the ball field. The church would be sponsoring a hot dog stand, a moon bounce and face painting. There'd also be a baseball game. "It'll be awesome, Dad," Angus said. "Will you go with us this year? We can watch the fireworks!" I had to suppress a shudder. My wife, April, shot me a worried look. "Angus," she said, "remember, Daddy needs to leave before the fireworks." Angus's face fell. "Oh yeah." It might seem strange that a thing that brings so much joy to a 7-year-old would strike fear into the heart of a grown man—especially an ex-soldier. But I hadn't attended a Fourth of July celebration in six years. Not after what happened my first Independence Day back from active duty in Iraq. We were living in El Paso at the time, in army housing at Ft. Bliss. April and I brought baby Angus with us to a friend's barbecue. We stood in the backyard chatting while Angus napped in the house. Then I heard it. *Pop! Pop! Pop! Pop!* Small ammunition—machine-gun fire. "Incoming!" I yelled, and dove to the ground. I lay on my stomach, my hands covering my head, my heart pounding as I waited for the all clear. "Patrick, man, you all right?" I looked up to see my friend and April crouched beside me. What were they doing there? Then I started to get my bearings back. I wasn't with my battalion in Iraq. I was home. Across the street I could see the neighbors, lighting strings of firecrackers. Not gunfire. Just firecrackers. I stood up, as embarrassed as I'd ever been. "Sorry," I muttered. I knew I wasn't in a combat zone, but my pulse raced like I was. My stomach was in knots, every hair on the back of my neck stood on end. Everyone was sympathetic, but I couldn't enjoy the rest of the party. I kept feeling that something or someone was waiting to attack from out of nowhere. When the city fireworks started, I retreated inside the house and April followed, missing the show on my account. No more fireworks for me. Never again. I pulled the car into our driveway, my son's request hanging in the air. All these years later I still couldn't face the Fourth. I had my own tradition—shutting myself in my bedroom, turning down the lights, cranking up the volume on the TV and playing College Football on PlayStation till the booming and crackling was over. We went inside. Angus's disappointment really got to me. I revered my father—he was an Army veteran, the main reason I enlisted. My son looked up to me the same way, and now he was old enough to draw his own conclusions about why I hid out every Fourth. Would he learn that the best way to deal with fear is to shrink from it? *Lord, is that what I'm teaching him?* I'd been through a lot of changes in the past year. Last summer, I'd lost my job at an oil company. Our family's finances got stretched to the limit. It took me a few months to find another job, driving a truck for a soft drink company—at a third of my former salary. I was grateful, but for a while we weren't sure how we could afford to buy Angus new shoes for the upcoming school year. Then we heard about a community [outreach](#) sponsored by a church. They were buying shoes for kids. We went to the shoe store, and Angus picked out a pair he liked. I felt a little ashamed accepting charity, but the minister was friendly. "I can't thank you enough," I said when he paid at the register. The next morning was a Sunday and I was planning to sleep in, as usual. But at 7 a.m. Angus marched into our room. "We need to go to church," he said, "to thank them for the shoes." "We already thanked the minister," I said. "Remember?" Angus wouldn't budge. "The people at the church gave their money to pay for the shoes. They're the ones I want to thank." That Sunday service was the first I'd been to in a long while. Everyone was welcoming. What the pastor said really moved me. "We often feel alone with the challenges we face," he said, "but God is always with you." My eyes filled with tears. Yes, my family faced challenges, but we weren't alone. I stood up, walked forward and accepted God into my life. April, Angus and I became regulars. The youth pastor talked me into helping with the youth group. April volunteered for community outreach projects, like the shoe drive. Getting to know God had enriched my life. Could he help me overcome something that felt so deep and so impossible to conquer? All day I couldn't forget that disappointed look on Angus's face. I wanted to see him excited! After we put him to bed that night, I told April what was on my mind. "I want to do this," I said, "for Angus. I just don't know if I can." "I believe you can this year," April said. "You're different now. I've seen it." At our church's parenting class that week, I told everyone about the fireworks, about Iraq, about my terror. About how sometimes, wars are never over. They gathered close to me. April put me on the prayer chain and posted about my struggle on the church's Face-book page. I was stunned by the messages I received. "We're all praying for you." "You are loved and being looked after." "May God bless you and your family." It was like having a whole new band of brothers I could count on. With their encouragement, I signed up to take a shift at the hot dog stand. I called my dad, knowing he'd have good advice. "Position yourself so you can see the fireworks being lit," he told me. "That way, you won't be caught off guard. And, son, most important..." "Yes, Dad?" "Surround yourself with people you know and trust."

Finally it was the Fourth of July. On the drive to the baseball field, Angus couldn't sit still in the backseat, pressing his face against the window. The field came into view, and then the parking lot, jammed with tents and booths. We pulled in. Some families were already spreading blankets out on the grass, saving the best spots for the fireworks. Angus made a beeline for the moon bounce. I headed to the hot dog stand to hand out franks. Then April, Angus and I sat in the stands and watched the ball game—our boys from Liberal versus archrival Dodge City. Liberal beat them by two runs! I cheered as wildly as Angus. At dusk, I got antsy. Band music blared. Last year I would have hurried home to that dark room and those video games. April took my hand and held it tight. We watched the sunset. I remembered what my dad said. Where were the fireworks being lit? Would I be able to get a view? "We've got your back, Patrick," I heard someone say, and turned to see two of our friends from church. Another couple we knew was next to them. "We're praying for you," they said. I noticed a lot of our church friends gathering around. I thought about the prayer chains, the Face-book messages. So many people asking God to watch over me. Of all those I could surround myself with, was there anyone more powerful than God? Or anything weaker than my fear? The pyrotechnics team took their place in the outfield. I hoisted Angus onto the dugout and stood beside him. The team lit the fuses. *Lord, I know you're here and you'll be with me.* The first firework whistled into the air and popped. I took a deep breath, and kept watching. Then came another explosion and splash of color. Silver streaked the sky, pompoms of red, white and blue. "Look, Dad!" Angus shouted, pointing skyward, his eyes lighting up. I wrapped my arms around him. "I'm looking," I whispered, gazing high into the Technicolor sky, celebrating, for the first time in years, my Independence Day. It was beautiful.