



# *The Monthly Heartbeat*

**The Hope in Christ Church Newsletter**

**December 2019 Issue**

## **Overcoming Worry and Fear in the Christian Life**

**By Pastor Scott Roberts**

Who hasn't struggled with worry and fear in life? It seems to be a common human experience. Sometimes our minds get carried about by the "what ifs" of the future. Unfortunately, this tendency is both pervasive and acceptable in our world, but worry and fear betray a deeper problem in our life. That problem is a lack of trust in God.

Mark Twain once said (or wrote), *"My life has been filled with terrible misfortunes, most of which never happened."* Isn't that an accurate way of describing and defining what fear is and does to us? Another unidentified writer penned these words, "Worry is a trickle of fear running through the mind, ever cutting a deeper gorge into which all thoughts are drained."

But the Scriptures repeatedly forbid us to worry (Mt 6:25, 31, 34; Phil 4:6). And the Fear of God is the only fear that is commended and approved of by the Word (Gen 26:24, Ex 1:17, Lev 19:32, Dt 10:12, 1Pt 2:17). All other fear and worry is to be shunned by the Christian, taken captive, and made obedient to Christ. Fear and worry about things, people, and circumstances are an indication that our hearts, eyes and mind are fixed upon something other than the good and gracious God who loves and cares for us and is working out all things for our good. Unfortunately, fear and worry sneak their way in and rob us of this precious scriptural truth.

So when we find ourselves or others stuck in the life-sucking quicksand of fear and worry, what can we do?

**First, we must understand what is happening.** When we fear and worry, we are orienting our life around something that we don't want to happen or encounter. Admitting this is the first step.

**The second step is recognizing and choosing to fear God more than the potential future.** When one fears God, he or she is orienting life about God and his ways.

**Third, we must remind ourselves and others that the God of Scripture, our father, brother and counselor, cares about us when we struggle.** He invites us to rest with him, not worry without him (2Ki 1:15, Lk 1:30).

**Fourth, we can reflect on the incarnation.** Hebrews 2:14-15 tells us that one of the results of the incarnation is to free us from the power of death, which is incidentally the ultimate object of future fear and worry. If Christ's incarnation frees us from the ultimate fear and worry, then his strength and life can free us from the lesser worries and fears that can carry us away.

**Fifth, we need to examine and correct our faulty view of God and align it with the truth proclaimed in Scripture.** These diagnostic questions can help to pinpoint why one is fearful or worried:

- ◆ Do I really believe God can be trusted?
- ◆ Do I really believe God loves me?
- ◆ Do I really believe God has a specific plan for me?

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- ◆ Do I really believe God is powerful?
- ◆ Do I really believe God is sovereign?
- ◆ Do I really believe God is a good king?
- ◆ Do I really believe that nothing can separate me from His love?
- ◆ Am I willing to endure trials if that is the means God wishes to use to conform me to the image of Christ?

**Sixth, based on the answers to these questions, one must repent of believing lies and embrace the truth** that God is good, trustworthy, loving, powerful, sovereign and is working all things for my good even if they are painful. As one confesses and fills their mind with the truth of God's character and goodness, then they will grow in their ability to successfully combat fear and worry.

**Seventh and finally, one must focus on the tasks for the day or the moment,** instead of the fears and worries of the future. Matthew 6:33-34 reminds us that each day has enough trouble of its own without us taking the liberty to import tomorrow's trouble into the present.

May these steps help you to recognize your worry and fear and turn back again to the Savior who wants to set us free.

## **Christmas Eve**

Candlelight Service  
Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

## **Children's Program**

Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.

## **Friendship Program**

Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.



# **Northwest Hispanic Ministry Report**

## **By Joe Strong**

One day while I was working out in the gym, Mike, one of the guys with whom I work out, asked me if I would give him my telephone number. He had told his neighbor about me and this neighbor wanted to meet me. So soon afterwards I met this neighbor. Since then I have been meeting every week with Riley on Fridays going through a discipleship process with him. Mike, my friend from the gym, is not a follower of Jesus but some day he might be.

Our church in Lynden, Amor Viviente, has been going up and down with the immigration process from those coming from Venezuela. Several members have family who are locked up in federal prisons waiting for their time to come before an immigration judge. Recently, Gerardo's wife, after being locked up for about 4 months, was processed and given a security bond of \$30,000. That means that she will be released if she comes up with that money. The people are guaranteed to be returned to me, if the person shows up to all their court hearings. For Gerardo's wife, a college professor, we have come up with the \$30,000. We have several other members in our church, who are saddened by the high bond. I have worked with families for years on this and I have always received the bond back from Homeland Security. In years past, the bond was \$4,000 to \$8,000. This high bond eliminates thousands of people from gaining asylum. If there is anybody reading this newsletter who would even consider helping, call me please. I have always gotten my money back. We can work together on this. It takes about 6-10 months for the entire process to be complete. Then the refugees get a work visa.

"Hey Joe, remember me?" What a question! It had been 6 years since I last saw the Native American with the tattoo of a bear claw on his cheek. The tattoo meant that he belonged to the Cripps, a gang. Yes, Samuel was back in jail. He had been in prison for most of the 6 years and now had been out for a few months. After speaking with Samuel about addictions, the circle of recidivism, I asked him if he had ever asked Jesus to come into his heart. What a privilege to lead this man in prayer. Many native people shy away from the white man's Jesus. Continue to pray for Samuel. Thank you for supporting this ministry.

# The Yes (to Technology) in Our No (to Social Media)

## Part Two

By Kutter Callaway

In his book [*Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now*], Jaron Lanier offers 10 compelling arguments ...that underscore not only why he has made this choice [no social media platform whatsoever], but also why we should all pause and consider doing the same.

**Three arguments stand out as particularly helpful ways to think theologically about the relationship people of faith have with their technology:**

- (1) social media is destroying your capacity for empathy;
- (2) social media is undermining truth;
- (3) social media doesn't want you to have economic dignity.

Because Lanier's arguments are focused exclusively on social media and not on technology more broadly understood, I want to consider his critiques of social media as the "no in our yes" to technology's theological possibilities.

**1. Empathy:** To say yes to technological virtue is to say no to formation by "impressions."

*So then, let us pursue what makes for peace  
and for building up one another.*

(Romans 14:19)

Based mostly upon gut instinct and anecdotal evidence gathered from informal conversations with other parents, I would imagine that many if not most parents feel a twinge of guilt when it comes to their family's technological habits. Some may be resigned to the fact that digital technology is a necessary part of contemporary life, even if they feel badly about how much time they and their children spend in front of screens. Others might see it in somewhat more positive terms, but still think of digital technologies as, at best, ethically neutral tools not unlike a refrigerator or car.

I would also imagine that practically no parent is of the mindset that digital technologies might actually cultivate virtue, especially not with their kids. But that's exactly what a team of researchers in Fuller's School of Psychology are testing in their studies involving app-based virtue interventions with teenagers. In this particular instance, the virtues in question are patience, self-control, and emotional awareness.<sup>3</sup> They are examining whether routine practices prompted by an intentionally designed smartphone app can and do cultivate these virtues. They are also

assessing if end-users whose identities are shaped by a community of faith are more likely to become more patient, self-controlled, and emotionally aware as a result of this technologically mediated practice.

Without hesitation, we can offer a resounding yes to technology that helps us cultivate virtues like patience, long-suffering, and empathy. What is more, people of faith should be actively (and perhaps fiercely) committed to developing new technologies that enhance rather than inhibit these virtues, especially as it concerns the ways in which virtue development of any kind is intimately bound up with one's identity as a member of a larger community of persons-in-relation.

But this affirmation of technology necessarily implies a no to a digital landscape that makes virtue development impossible. As Lanier points out, the world we see when we log in to our social media platform of choice is one that has been completely customized by algorithms that privilege "impressions" over everything else. Unsurprisingly, that which generates the most "impressions" are bits of data that either align with our hyperindividualized preferences, or are radically opposed to our preconceptions. Making matters worse, advertising dollars artificially amplify this polarization, which means that Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, et al., have sold our eyeballs millions of times over to corporations more than willing to show us only posts that either reinforce everything we already believe or represent the polar opposite. In the end, what emerges is our own fully customized (and hyperpartisan) view of the world to which no other individual has access. Neither can we see what anyone else's feed looks like.

If the cultivation of empathy begins and ends with our ability to see the world through someone else's eyes—even if just for a moment—then people of faith need to radically rethink our participation in social networking sites that make this empathetic gesture literally impossible.

In other words, it's a hearty yes to digital technologies that cultivate Christian virtue and help us see with the eyes of the other. And it's a hard no to platforms that profit by destroying our capacity for empathy.

**2. Truth:** To say yes to technological incarnation is to say no to technological excarnation.

*Now the Word became flesh  
and took up residence among us.*

(John 1:14)

Matt Lumpkin is an alum of Fuller Seminary who served for nearly a decade as Fuller's director of IT for web and mobile and as a user experience strate-

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gist. To put it in lay terms, Matt spent most days designing the user interfaces that all students, staff, and faculty use while navigating Fuller's intranet. He also designed and helped build the CharacterMe mobile app, the brain-training app used in the psychological studies I mentioned above.

Matt now works as a product designer at Tidepool, where he develops technological solutions for families living with disease. Matt's professional move from higher education to applied technology was in part driven by a personal frustration: after his youngest daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, he discovered a glaring lack of thought for the experience of the patient in the available technologies he used while caring for her. He is currently working on building a device called bgAWARE, which is a new way of using the sense of touch for ambient blood glucose awareness.

At first blush, it might be surprising that this is Matt's work, as a person who holds graduate degrees in theology. But it shouldn't be. In fact, if I were to put my speculator's hat on, I would say that, in the not-too-distant future, what he is doing will be the norm and not the exception for people pursuing a seminary education. Matt is not simply developing new or more sophisticated technologies; he is quite literally generating a new kind of intimacy between the technologies that support human flourishing on the one hand and our living, breathing, bleeding bodies on the other. Put differently, drawing upon his theological acumen and his expertise in user experience, he is designing incarnational technology.

This is no small matter, at least not for people of Christian faith. In fact, as the opening of John's Gospel suggests, reality itself is constituted by God's project of taking on flesh and dwelling with humans. The *missio Dei* is and always has been an incarnational mission—one that will be fully realized when God takes up residence with human beings (Rev 21:3). We collaborate with God in that incarnational mission anytime we make something of God's creation that leads us into a more fully embodied way of life. As Matt's work demonstrates, technological innovations are part and parcel of this collaborative, incarnational project.

The problem, as Lanier and theologians like Craig M. Gay have pointed out, is that no technology is neutral.<sup>4</sup> Every technology has a direction, a purpose—a *telos*. Many transhumanists, for example, are enamored with technology's promise of a wholly disembodied life. As the story goes, technology will one

day provide the digital substrate upon which humans will upload our consciousness. Along with philosopher Charles Taylor, we might call this an "excarinate" vision of humanity's techno-future.

But we don't need to look to the future to see this vision playing itself out. Social media is already inclined toward excarnation and disembodiment. Actually, it's far worse than that. It's not simply that social media allows people to inhabit a world entirely detached from their own physical bodies or the bodies of others. It's that, in many instances, we're not even interacting with other human bodies at all. We're interacting with armies of digital bots masquerading as flesh-and-blood human beings. And it is undermining the truth of our incarnate lives. Lanier writes:

*Leaving aside explicitly fake people like Alexa, Cortana, and Siri, you might think that you've never interacted with a fake person online, but you have, and with loads of them. You decided to buy something because it had a lot of good reviews, but many of those reviews were from artificial people. You found a doctor by using a search engine, but the reason that doctor showed up high in the search results was that a load of fake people linked to her office. You looked at a video or read a story because so many other people had, but most of them were fake. You became aware of tweets because they were retweeted first by armies of bots. . . . This is a difficult truth to accept, but because of the importance of social perception, it is true to at least a small degree that you have been living a fake life yourself. [This system] is making you partially fake.<sup>5</sup>*

It is a resounding yes to technology that is fundamentally incarnational and thus leads us toward rather than away from the truth of embodied life. But it's a no to technological excarnation and its undermining of truth.

**3. Economic Dignity:** To say yes to technological liberation is to say no to oppressive systems of power.

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,  
but against the rulers, against the powers,  
against the world rulers of this darkness,  
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.*  
(Ephesians 6:12)

It's probably fairly obvious by now, but I am quite proud of Fuller's students, staff, faculty, and alumni, especially when it comes to matters of technological innovation. A perfect example is Phil Chen, an alum who has taken his theology degree from Fuller and

used it to frame his work as a technologist and venture capitalist. After designing a mobile device that could deliver entire digital libraries to students in developing countries (what eventually became the first Barnes & Noble e-reader), and then developing one of the first attempts at a mass-market virtual reality headset (what eventually became the HTC Vive), Phil now works as HTC's decentralized chief officer. In this role Phil is spearheading the development of HTC's first blockchain phone, which, not insignificantly, is called "the Exodus."

In a recent op-ed about the Exodus phone, Phil makes the theological implications of his work explicit.

Much like the Israelites under the tyranny of Pharaoh, the users of the internet are being oppressed—slaves to large masters. . . .

Internet users are being worked to generate and build modern treasure houses for their overlords, using their own data as bricks. Within the walls of these modern pyramids is all of our personal data, which empowers and wealthifies the modern-day Pharaohs: Facebook, Apple, Amazon, and Google (known, with the addition of Netflix, as the FAANGs), coupled with their Asian counterparts Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent.

The father of the world wide web himself, Tim Berners-Lee, has called for a new architecture that places security, privacy, and ownership of data back where it belongs: with the people. We are currently in a crisis of giving away our data and digital identity for cheap endorphins, and surrendering all of our attention and power to the Big Data monolithic cloud companies, which mine that data for artificial intelligent agents and advertising revenue. In some cases, our data has been used by bad actors to steal money or confidential information, but in the worst cases, it has gone as far as impacting and influencing democratic processes. . . .

We are at the internet's burning-bush moment. We have been given a generational opportunity to utilize a new technology for good, and the ability to lead people away from being controlled to being in control.

The promise of the internet was a world without borders, but corporate sovereigns have built multiple walls that now divide humanity. As in the Book of Exodus, we need to lead users to the promised land.<sup>6</sup>

Phil is hoping to do nothing less than initiate a grassroots exodus with the Exodus phone. He is providing people with a tool that will enable them to escape not a geophysical place, but an entire digital architecture.

In this way, he is echoing the Apostle Paul's words regarding the ways in which we struggle not against flesh and blood but against non-human systems and structures that are ruled by an ever-smaller number of centralized, global powers.

It might be tempting at this point to say that these systems and structures are broken and that the Christian calling is to work at fixing what's broken so that the poor, marginalized, and oppressed might regain some semblance of economic dignity. The only problem with this kind of vision is that the system isn't actually broken at all. It's working perfectly. It's doing exactly what it was designed to do. The current architecture is designed to profit off our free labor, while also convincing us that there's no use pursuing liberation because there is nothing to be freed from. This is simply "the way things are."

Which is why we say yes to technological innovations that set the captives free from these finely tuned digital worlds. It is also why we say no to the oppressive technological systems (and their architects) that rob people of their economic—and human—dignity.

## ENDNOTES

1. K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., trans. E. C. Hoskyns (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).
2. J. Lanier, *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2018).
3. S. A. Schnitker, B. Houlberg, W. Dyrness, and N. Redmond, "The Virtue of Patience, Spirituality, and Suffering: Integrating Lessons from Positive Psychology, Psychology of Religion, and Christian Theology," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 9 (2017): 264–275.
4. G. M. Gay, *Modern Technology and the Human Future: A Christian Appraisal* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018).
5. Lanier, *Ten Arguments*.
6. Phil Chen, "The Journey to a New Internet: A Reading from the Book of Exodus," Quartz.com, March 29, 2019. <https://qz.com/1582078/the-bible-holds-lessons-on-data-ownership-and-internet-privacy/>

*Part One of "The Yes (to Technology) in Our No (to Social Media)" may be found in the November 2019 Heartbeat. Part Three will be in the January 2020's Heartbeat.*

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# Getting to Know Our Church Family

By Elaine Snapper

This month I am featuring Chuck Dean, who was born in Bellingham in July of 1947. Chuck was the youngest of four children. He had two older sisters and one brother. The family all lived in Seattle and then moved back and forth to Bellingham and finally settled in Bellingham. Chuck is the only one left in his family.

Chuck attended Redwood Park School in Bellingham. In addition to academics, the teacher also taught them to build things like dressers. Chuck graduated from grade school in the spring of 1962, and did not attend high school.

As far as employment, Chuck started working in a cannery, Pacific American Fisheries, in Bellingham, in 1968. He was the clean-up guy, and he would sweep, and also make coffee for the workers. The cannery would handle the labeling of salmon. Chuck said they would go through 495,000 cases of salmon every day. After about 11 years they went on strike and he didn't work after that. He said he does get a nice pension check the first day of every month.

For hobbies, Chuck enjoys bowling every Tuesday. He enjoys bowling with some guys from our church—Lanny Speyer, Don Recker, and Doug Konn. His highest game was a score of 175. He also enjoys bowling in tournaments. Another hobby of his is putting together jigsaw puzzles. He had one spread out on his table which was a 3,000 piece puzzle. He enjoys putting together puzzles of that size.

As far as church goes, he said he has been attending church almost as long as Pastor Scott has been here, which he estimates has been 11 or 12 years. A proud moment for him was when Pastor Scott called him on the platform at church and he was baptized and made his profession of faith on June 21, 2009. He really believes that Jesus is his Savior, and he really enjoys coming to our church. He finds our church to be very friendly, and he said it is easy to get along with everyone. He said he gives everyone a smile and he shakes everyone's hand. He also is on the list to go in the prayer room, and he likes to do that. He really appreciates Pastor Scott and his family.

He also really enjoys going to the Men's Thursday night Bible study and also attending his group at Friendship. Every Saturday night he watches three pastors on TV: Robert Shuler, Billy Graham, and

Charles Stanley. When they preach he opens his Bible and follows along.

Chuck resides in Washington Square, where he has been for about 23 years, close to his friends Debra and Don. Chuck is a cheerful, gentle soul, who enjoys life. We're glad he is a part of our church family!

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You are invited

to the

**Friendship  
Class**

**Christmas  
Program**

**December 9th**

**at 7:00 p.m.**

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# Family Promise

By Ali Laninga

Our upcoming Family Promise Week is December 8-15. We would covet your prayers during that week as we come alongside the families who are dealing with homelessness. It's a time for us to love on these folks and show hospitality in providing a warm meal, engaging in conversation, or playing with the children. It's an amazing way for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus as we interact with these families.

If you would be interested in some way to support Family Promise during this Christmas season, they would appreciate gift cards to Fred Meyer or Target. These gift cards will be given to families as needed. You can give them to Ali or Lorraine and we will deliver them.

Looking ahead to 2020, we will again be supporting First Christian Church, along with Congregation Beth Israel for the following dates:

**March 15-22**

**May 24-31**

**July 12-19**

**October 25-November 1**

If you have any questions or are interested in getting involved in Family Promise, feel free to contact Ali Laninga, Lorraine Brouwer or Herm Laninga.

# Adult Sunday School Round-Table Discussion Date

On Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, the elders, along with representatives of the deacons and Vitality Team, met to pray, pursue, and prepare more precise concepts for the vision of education and outreach goals that our church seeks to implement to fulfill our mission statement.

We are asking you, our church body, to join us in this endeavor. On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, during the children's Sunday school hour, we will host a round-table discussion time. The elders will share the doctrinal principles, purposes, expectations, parameters, and plans we have to this point discussed for these two positions:

**Education Director**

**Outreach Coordinator**

We are asking you to come with your concerns and questions, along with your knowledge, insight, and ideas to help us work together in following God's leading for our church body in Christ.

Thank you,

Your Council

## Giving in October 2019

	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Designated Fund Offerings:	\$ 2,073	\$ 41,444
General Fund Offerings	\$20,184	\$225,628
Rent / Utilities Income	985	26,456
Interest Income - Undesignated	51	481
Total Undesignated Income	21,220	252,565
General Fund Expenses	(17,046)	(223,572)
Income Over(Under) Expenses	<u>\$ 4,174</u>	<u>\$ 28,993</u>
Total 2019 budget, including ministry quotas		\$ 234,133
Year-to-Date Budget for 11 months		\$ 214,622
Total Undesignated Income		252,565
Income Over (Under) Budget		<u>\$ 37,943</u>

### Loan Balances:

Classis: \$ 12,500

## Items of Interest from Council

Nov. 13 Council Meeting

Nov. 17 Congregational Meeting

Nov. 19 Elders' Mini-retreat

### By Herman Laninga, Secretary

1. A potluck, which would include our neighbors at Legacy Church, is being planned for Sunday, March 29, 2020. This will be a great opportunity for us to meet the people sharing our campus! Prior to that, on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, there will be a pulpit exchange between Pastor Scott and Pastor Brian McSwan of Legacy Church.
2. The 2020 budget was approved with a total of 54 yes votes with 3 opposed at our November 17<sup>th</sup> congregational meeting. The new budget included funds for a part-time staff position and Council is in the process of finalizing job descriptions for education and outreach.
3. The elders held another visioning mini-retreat on Tuesday morning, November 19<sup>th</sup>. We also invited the Vitality Team and the deacons to send a representative to join us. The main focus was the part-time staff position and defining the job and how to measure their effectiveness in filling the position. Whether this is filled by one person or two depends on who responds to our ads. We plan to involve the congregation in a review of the descriptions on Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> during the Sunday school hour.
4. The October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of Classis Pacific NW and Classis North Cascades held at our church was deemed a great success. Thank-you to all who served!
5. New material for the adult Sunday school class is on display in the foyer. Please sign up so the order can be placed in a timely manner. The books will be distributed in December and the study will start January 5, 2020! The focus will be on prayer.

## Deacons Digest

### By Elaine Snapper

A report was made on the coat drive. The recipients were very thankful for the coats they received.

It was agreed to do a Christmas giving tree again this year. We are checking into which programs we want to support. Tags will be placed on the tree and people can pick a tag off of the tree and buy a gift for the recipient.

Alice Brakke's title will be changed from "parish nurse" to "health minister." Her duties haven't changed however.

A discussion took place with Pastor Scott joining us about the possibility of volunteering to help our members by visiting the lonely and some of the widows and single people. The deacons were encouraged to think and brainstorm during the month on how to involve congregation members in the visitation of our members.

We made the decision to have baskets available on the table at the Thanksgiving service and the offering would go to the Benevolence Fund.



# SING!

(Part 2)

## By Jerry Hop

Last month, I submitted an article that summarized material from a Getty workshop recently attended by members of the worship team. This month I want to continue with some excerpts from their book, *Sing!*

### *Created ... to sing*

We are a singing people because it is how God has created us. It's what we do. And when we do, we're simply joining in with what the rest of creation is doing. We are all singers. We may not all be very good singers, but we are all created to be singers nonetheless.

The psalmist sings,

*For you created my most inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.*

*I praise you because I am fearfully  
and wonderfully made.*

Psalm 139:13-14

We may sound different, but each of us has the same apparatus as Bono, Pavarotti, or Sinatra – breath flowing up from our lungs, vibrating through vocal cords in our throat, pushing sound out through the articulators of our mouths, tongues, and lips.

Sometimes we meet people who say, “I can't sing” – as in, “The sound that comes out of my mouth when I try to sing is not what I was hoping for.” But, if you can speak, you can physically sing. God is far less concerned with your tunefulness than your integrity. Christian singing begins with the heart, not on the lips (Eph. 6:19). Your voice may not be of professional standard, but it is of confessional standard.

Since God is a creator who enjoys beauty, it follows that we, as those creatures uniquely made in His image, will do so too. We have been created to enjoy beauty and enjoy creativity. We can tell the difference between an orchestra tuning up and then playing a

coherent piece of music—suddenly there is a “rightness” in how the notes fit together!

We are designed to benefit from beauty in creativity. God made us to be powerfully engaged in our senses and memories by music. Songs have the power to prompt a memory or transport us back to some other time and place.

Our sense of imagination is another aspect of the dignity we have been given as human beings by God. We have been made to like making things ourselves. We show our God-inspired creative spirit when we make music—not just the songs themselves, but in the many different ways we arrange and express the songs together.

As we create, we communicate—just as God does through his creation.

*The heavens declare the glory of God...  
...day after day they pour forth speech ...*

Psalm 9:1-2

We have been created to use language, to reflect and meditate on His words, to remember over and over again His voice. It's an incredible thing that we, the created ones, have been given a way to communicate with the One who made us!

As we sing to God and about God together with the people of God, we reflect the truth that we were designed for community, both with God and with each other. We are created to sing because it leads us joyfully to the great Singer, Creator of the heavens and the earth. Our singing should sound like Him, look like Him and lead our hearts to Him.

Don't sing primarily because you love singing, or keep quiet because you do not. Sing because you love who made you, and formed you, and enables you to sing!

**Next month: *Compelled....to Sing***

# State of the Church

## 2019 Address

### By Pastor Scott

#### I. PRAYER

A. Our pre-service prayer has had a consistent 4-5 people and we invite you to commit 1 Sunday a month to joining us as we pray for HiCC, personal needs and the growth of the worldwide body of Christ.

B. We believe this time of praying for the service, the Church local and global, and for the pastor, is essential to the advancement and growth of God's kingdom through HiCC.

#### II. PREACHING

Preached through *Believe* and a series on Psalms-Jude in summer.

**III CONGREGATIONAL LIFE:** Nov 1, 2018 - Oct 31, 2019 was a big year of changes for us.

A. Transferred/lapsed a number of members to other churches (3)–

1. The Bysons moved to a Church plant in the county
2. Denise Dozema moved to MI

B. Removed from rolls (2) – Tricia and Mairi Bravener

C. Baptisms (0)

D. New Members/Attendees (7)–

1. Nicolaas' joined us
2. Nancy and Dan started attending
3. Rebekah Roberts became adult member on 18th birthday
4. Officially received the Abees

E. Deaths (1)– Jessie Figenbaum

F. Professions (3) – Caleb Roberts, Amber Obbink, Dan Nockleby

G. Small Groups - Continue to have strong participation in our 6 small groups.

H. Friendship and Gems also continue to grow with volunteers and students. We learned that a DDA case-worker is speaking well of and recommending our Friendship program.

I. Started a High School Group which Abees are giving oversight to

#### IV. MISSIONS

A. Sent 6 to Ethiopia (Koning, Ruiters, Obbink), 1 to Haiti (Speyer), 1 to Honduras (E. Roberts), 1 to Jordan/Egypt (M. Roberts) and 4 couples to work with DRS in Texas & NC.

B. Continue to support Project 92 Indigenous Missionary in India: Susma asks us to pray for a husband to join her in the work.

C. Continue a partnership with Family Promise, Envision Mission, The Cunninghams, Seafarers, Lighthouse Mission Ministries.

**V. CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY** helped to start a little library, coffee cards handouts, fund an intern for summer, tried painted rocks for planting seeds of hope in our community.

#### VI. BUILDING ISSUES

A. Putting a roof on the fellowship hall in 2019.

B. Also re-sided and put new windows into most of the ministry house

#### VII. OVERALL SENSE

A. This has been a great year with some wonderful things happening. God is using us and growing our faith and our ministry footprint.

B. We are growing in our ability to talk about God with each other and those outside the church. We are seeking to find ways to serve our community and our world. We are giving generously to many kingdom initiatives. We are laughing and encouraging each other more than at any point in the past 10 years.

C. Let's keep building on this as we enter into 2020.

#### VIII. LOOKING TOWARDS 2020

A. In 2020, the pastor will start preaching with a 4-week series on *Foundations of Government* from Romans 13 & Psalm 146, then move to a series on Prayer correlated to *Moving Mountains*, as well as a few topical sermons on issues for the 2020 election.

B. During Lent we will be having a footwashing service on Maundy Thursday, followed by a quiet and personal time of reflection on Good Friday contemplating the last hours of Christ's life.

C. We are hoping to hire and begin a new phase of ministry to our community as we start with intentional outreach.

D. Additionally, we hope to capitalize on the next few years on youth ministry and grow our youth program.

## December Sermons

- 12/1 Jesus Came to Give Us a New Covenant  
Jeremiah 31:31-40
- 12/8 Children's Christmas Program
- 12/15 Jesus Came to Give Us Hearts that Truly  
Worship John 4:3-24
- 12/22 Jesus Came so We Can Know God  
Galatians 4:4-9
- 12/24 Jesus Came to Bring Light to the World  
John 8, 12
- 12/29 Guest Pastor: *Mitch Senti*

## Greeters Schedule

- 12/1 Jerry & Faye H.
- 12/8 David & Ida R., Junior J.
- 12/15 Del & Pat B.
- 12/22 Lanny & Christine S.
- 12/29 Don & Tena Vanderpol

## Cookie Schedule

- 12/1 Lorraine B., Lisa D.
- 12/8 Pat B., Alice B.
- 12/15 Faye H., Avis K.
- 12/22 Marilyn K., Melissa K.
- 12/29 Evelyn K., Ali L.

## Prayer Room

- 12/1 Jay K.
- 12/8 Lou K.
- 12/15 Len V.
- 12/22 Herm L.
- 12/29 Lanny S.

## Serving Assistants

- 12/1 Micah, Mattea, Maggie
- 12/8 Chantel, Kylie, Caleb
- 12/15 Clara, Zeke, Amber
- 12/22 Michal, Grace, Brenna
- 12/29 Faith, Amariah, Abee

## Offering Schedule

- 12/1 Kingdom Advancement Fund
- 12/8 Kingdom Advancement Fund
- 12/15 Outreach Fund
- 12/22 Kingdom Advancement Fund
- 12/29 Benevolence Fund

## Ushering Schedule/\*Foyer

- 12/1 Barb & \*Joe Z.
- 12/8 Helen B., \*Don K.
- 12/15 Hildred & \*Clair A.
- 12/22 Elaine S, \*Len V.
- 12/29 Lou K, \*Joe P.

## Children & Worship / Observer

- 12/1 *Children's Christmas Program Practice*
- 12/8 Children's Christmas Program
- 12/15 Kylie, Ali / Herm L.
- 12/22 Jen R., Abee / Ida R.
- 12/29 No Sunday School

## Sunday School Schedule

- 12/1 Children's Christmas Program Practice
- 12/8 Children's Christmas Program
- 12/15 Diane, (teacher needed)
- 12/22 Diane, (teacher needed)
- 12/29 No Sunday School



# December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 9:30 a.m. Worship, Communion 11:00 Program Practice	<b>2</b> 6:00 p.m. GEMS	<b>3</b> 9:00 a.m. Elders  6:00 p.m. Richards Bible Study	<b>4</b> 9:45 a.m. Women's Bible Study  7:00 p.m. Deacons	<b>5</b> 6:30 am Men's Support Group 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study 7:00 pm Praise Team Practice	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9:30 a.m. Children's Christmas Program Practice
<b>8</b> 9:30 a.m. Christmas Program	<b>9</b> 7:00 p.m. Friendship Christmas Program	<b>10</b> <b>FAMILY PROMISE WEEK</b> 6:30 p.m. Boer Bible Study	<b>11</b> 9:45 a.m. Women's Study at Ruth's 7:00 p.m. Council	<b>12</b> 6:30 am Men's Support Group 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study 7:00 pm Praise Team Practice	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School  7:00 p.m. Legacy Church	<b>16</b> 6:00 p.m. GEMS	<b>17</b> 6:00 p.m. Richards Bible Study	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 6:30 am Men's Group 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study 7:00 pm Praise Team Practice	<b>20</b> 6:00 p.m. Envision	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 Sunday School 4:30 pm Roberts' Small Group 7:00 pm Laninga Group	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service	<b>25</b> <b>Merry Christmas!</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 9:30 a.m. Worship	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

## Happy Birthday!

06 Melissa Koning  
08 Eliana Ruiters  
09 Maggie Skovron  
14 Yvonne Braun  
15 Sissy Davis

16 Darryl Groothuis  
23 Ali Laninga  
24 Don Recker  
27 Brenna Koning  
28 Morgan Roberts

29 Doug Scholten  
30 Helen Bowman  
30 Abigail McConaughy