

HEARTBEAT

Hope in Christ Church Monthly Newsletter

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Church Change

By Pastor Scott

Life is full. While most of the rest of the world has slowed down, church life has not. That is not to say that a change of pace hasn't been experienced. Many of the programs of the church have stopped. As a church, we have found new rhythms, but I would not call the time since *Stay Home, Stay Healthy* began in March as a time of slow down. Church life in some ways became more complex - how to network with people in their homes without being able to visit in person; how to deliver a church service digitally; how to facilitate prayer and bible study - but even more complex is the question of what the church should look like when we return to 'normal,' whatever that means.

In every area of society things are changing. Businesses are adapting to new ways of doing their work, restaurants are moving to take-out only, and the church is not exempt from the need to change and adapt. These are strange times. As a result of the need to change and adapt, all of our programs may not come back as they were before this virus reared its head. Some of our programs may need to be significantly revised. New things may need to be implemented and old things updated, but in the midst of all these changes, a few things will remain the same.

The church is called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, to pray for the world, to fellowship and gather together and to participate in a common sacramental life. These things will never change, but the means by which these happen can change. Our desire as the elders is to prayerfully, thoughtfully and scripturally reflect upon each area of church life and to make any necessary changes before we give the go-ahead to begin those official church functions again. Please pray for the elders as they wrestle with how to restart our common life, what changes to make, what to keep the same, and what to tweak. Only God knows the future and only God can give us the wisdom we desperately need in order to be ready for what He wants to do in, through and with us.



Surprising Details from II Samuel

By Don Recker

While I Samuel details the life and death of King Saul and the young David, II Samuel details David's accession to the throne and reign. I've found II Samuel to be a source of many surprising details, easily overlooked...

Many of the names of David's officials are familiar to us, but their family connection to David isn't always so obvious. As one "ferrets out" the relationships, they provide deeper insight into many of the events. We know Uriah the Hittite, Bathsheba's husband, is a soldier in David's army, but not merely one-among-many infantry men. II Sam. 23:39 identifies him a member of David's "30 Mighty Men," the army's "Ranger" unit. Abishai, the commander of this elite unit (23:18), is David's nephew, (a son of David's sister, Zuriyah). All three of Zuriyah's sons hold high office. In addition to Abishai, there's Joab, David's army General, the most prominent of the three brothers, and Asahel, also a member of the Mighty Men unit commanded by his brother. Asahel, noted for his foot speed, was killed by Abner who is King Saul's cousin, son of his uncle Ner, and army General (I Sam. 14:50). Abner had clout and used it to set up Saul's son Ish-bosheth as a rival to David after Saul's death. The Abner/Ish-bosheth connection is so linked that David places the head of Ish-bosheth's murdered body with Abner in his tomb! Amasa, whom David appoints General in place of Joab upon his return after running from his son, Absalom, is also David's nephew, by his sister Abigail. So, when Joab treacherously murders Amasa, his cousin, the horror of that act is doubled. Got all that? The point is: many of David's officials are extended family members in which rivalries and grudges explain many of the events.

We recognize the name Uzzah as the man slain by the Lord for putting his hand to the Ark of the Covenant to steady it on its ox-drawn cart over a bumpy spot on the road. When first reading the account, we easily jump to the conclusion that Uzzah's death at the hand of God (a coronary?) is disproportionate to Uzzah's well-intended, helpful act. However, God's death sentence identifies the sinful attitude of Uzzah's heart...

Who is Uzzah? II Samuel 6:3 tells us that he and his

brother Ahio (who is leading the ox drawing the cart) are two of the sons of Abinadab, an important detail, easily considered extraneous. Who then is father Abinadab? 6:3 tells us his is the house in which the Ark was being stored after it had been returned to Judean territory after seven months captivity in Philistia. Another telling detail about Abinadab's possession of the Ark is revealed in I Samuel 7:1-2: how long the Ark was in that private residence...20 years! Originally it was under the care of another of Abinadab's sons, Eleazar, who's not mentioned in the II Samuel 7 account, so likely had died or was not involved in the transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem.



Thus, for those 20 years, Uzzah and Ahio had grown up and lived with the Ark in their house. After 20 years, it seems natural that Uzzah had grown possessive/protective of his family's Ark and so would be quick to step in to guard and shelter it from mishap. It seems it no longer was the most sacred representation of their faith; something the high priest alone would see, and that was to be transported only once a year by the appointed Levites in a meticulously prescribed manner. So strict were God's laws governing procedural details related to the Ark of the Covenant, I'm amazed at His patience with the mishandling of, the profaning of, the Ark prior to the point where Uzzah reaches out to steady it. It is amazing!

In "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe," C.S. Lewis reminds that Aslan is no *tame* lion! It is Uzzah's *taming*, profaning, patronizing, possessive, attitude toward

the Ark of the Covenant that kindles “the anger of the Lord against Uzzah,” and the death penalty he brings on himself.

Shimei is a lone individual who curses David and pelts him with clods of dirt (16:7-8) as he’s fleeing Jerusalem from rebel son Absalom and his army of followers. Shimei’s background exposes his festering motivation. 16: 5 & 11 identify him as a Benjaminite – the late king Saul’s home tribe. Tribal connections run deep and long for the Israelites, trumping just about every other connection and loyalty. The ongoing rivalry between tribes is palpable at several points in the narrative. Shimei still carries resentment over David (from Judah) being on the throne that was first occupied by King Saul (a Benjaminite). Shimei’s labeling David as “a man of blood” seems to blame David for Saul’s death. After David’s return to the throne following Absalom’s death, one Sheba mounts a rebellion in Israel – “We have no portion in David, O Israel” (II Sam. 20:1). What motivates Sheba? Tribal rivalry. He, like Shimei, is a Benjaminite. Benjamin and Judah are never happy to be yoked under David’s rule, a union which is dissolved after King Solomon’s death.

Two individuals compare David’s wisdom as being

“like that of an/the angel of God,” which indicates that it was a popular comparison among the people. It’s used by the wise woman (14:17,20) from whose mouth Joab concocts a parable to get David to forgive and restore communication with his exiled son, Absalom, who had murdered his brother, Amon (another of David’s sons) in revenge for Amon’s violation of Absalom’s sister Tamar. (David’s eventual restoration of Absalom can readily be favorably compared with Jesus’ parable of the Prodigal Son, especially at II Sam. 14:33.) So strong is Absalom’s love and respect for his sister Tamar that we’re told Absalom names his only daughter Tamar (14:27). Later, Jonathan’s crippled son, Mephibosheth, uses almost the same “like the angel of God” phrase speaking to David in denial of the lie that he was hoping for David’s overthrow by Absalom (II Sam. 19:27).

Ittai the Gittite’s pledge to David as he flees Absalom (II Sam. 15:21) closely echoes that of Ruth to Naomi (Ruth 1:15-16).

That’s enough to digest for now. It must be apparent to you how I’ve been utilizing some of my Covid-19 time at home! Scripture study always seems to expose the observant heart to new facets of the diamond.

Deacons Digest

By Elaine Snapper

At the July meeting, the deacons discussed their goals for the years 2020-2021. Also discussed was the Payroll Protection Program and the contacts the deacons were making with people in their district. The deacons provided feedback on the first in-church meetings occurring on June 14 and 21.

The surprise car parade was also discussed. This was to thank Diane Button for all of the work she had done leading the children in Sunday School. This was to occur on July 2.

An offering will be taken for GEMS International in September to correspond with the start of The GEMS year.



AUGUST

6 Thaddeus Speyer	15 Zachariah Koning
7 Don Knutson	17 Dan Grover
13 Joe Zylstra	22 Heidi Koepp
15 Micah Obbink	24 Abee Koning
15 Scott Emory	31 Don Nokleby

Giving in June 2020

	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Designated Fund Offerings:	\$ 5,606	\$ 18,604
General Fund Offerings	\$21,088	\$132,742
Rent / Utilities Income	2,493	18,154
Interest Income - Undesignated	<u>12</u>	<u>176</u>
Total Undesignated Income	23,593	151,072
General Fund Expenses	<u>(19,526)</u>	<u>(123,313)</u>
Income Over(Under) Expenses	<u>\$ 4,067</u>	<u>\$ 27,759</u>
Total 2020 budget, including ministry quotas	\$ 273,588	
Year-to-Date Budget for 7 months	\$ 159,593	
Total Undesignated Income	<u>151,072</u>	
Income Over (Under) Budget	<u>\$ (8,521)</u>	

Loan Balances:

Classis: \$ 12,500

Payroll Protection Program: \$ 26,700

Northwest Hispanic Ministry Report, July 2020

By Joe Strong

We just started meeting together again 2 weeks ago. We have been having the Amor Viviente and Vida Nueva Churches meeting together on Zoom a couple of times a week, but this was the first time in person. We decided to have our meeting outside. I was very impressed that nearly all the people wore their masks and practiced social distancing. Of course, a few people didn't and wouldn't. Our junta directiva is working on this. We will probably go back to Zoom if it rains.

We have Zoom meetings on Monday evenings for prayer, for young people on Wednesdays and our discipleship course on Thursdays. Each has been going very well. In fact, I am sure that when this pandemic is over, we will continue to use Zoom for some of our meetings. But what a joy to be together physically. This last Sunday in Lynden, we met just outside of our church on the lawn. In Mt. Vernon, we went to a park and had a service then a meal. All was done in good order. How good it was to sing together. We thank God for His goodness and protection.

I have 2 registered nurses in my family and we take the Corona Virus seriously. We look for vectors; people who are wild cards, people who don't practice precautions. My youngest son is one of those people. We are very aware of who is who. It is not hard to spot the vectors. The Hispanic Community has a higher rate of infection and we all know several people who have had it or who have it. This is not going away soon. We pray for mercy.

But our churches continue to grow spiritually. It has been so good to allow some of the younger members to lead the discipleship course. We receive a lot of excitement and practicality from them. We have 16 to 19 sites tuned in. We have some members who do not know how to use the computer, so they do miss out. We continue to see God at work among our Venezuelan brothers. They come with nothing, so we get to see Jehovah Jireh, my provider, at work. Recently, a couple from Anacortes CRC donated their 2 stimulus checks to help pay for legal expenses for some of the immigrants from Venezuela. It costs about \$6,000 a person.

Please continue to support this ministry through finances and prayer.

Getting to Know Our Church Family

By Elaine Snapper

This month, I am featuring Doug and Jan Scholten. Doug was born in Sumas and has lived in Whatcom County most of his life. He graduated from Lynden Christian High School. He attended First CRC in Lynden during his youth. After graduation, he earned a two-year degree in Land Surveying from Skagit Valley College. He spent his entire working career as a land surveyor, including 23 years as the co-owner of a land surveying business. He loves being outdoors, so the land surveying career fit him perfectly. Doug served two years in the Navy aboard a destroyer, with one 7-month tour to Viet Nam. Doug and Jan lived in San Diego one year during his service (which is still their favorite place to visit). After moving back to Bellingham, he transferred over to the Navy Seabee Reserves and served for 28 years.

Jan was born in Orange City, Iowa. Her family moved to Whatcom County when she was 15 months old. She grew up in Nooksack and graduated from Nooksack Valley High School. Her family lived one block from Nooksack Valley Reformed Church, so she spent a lot of time at the church learning to play the organ. She began playing organ at NVRC when she was fifteen and has played the piano or organ at each of the four churches she has attended. After graduation, she began working at Bellingham National Bank and over the next several years she worked at various banks. She was a stay-at-home mom until their kids were both in school; then she began working as a bookkeeper. She worked as a bookkeeper until her retirement 4 years ago. Her favorite job was with Kidstown International. She liked the small office setting and it was very rewarding knowing she was helping orphanages.

Doug and Jan met at a state high school basketball tournament in Tacoma where LCHS and NVHS teams were both playing. To use a fishing analogy, Doug threw out the bait, Jan bit, and they've been together ever since. They have been married 54 years and have two sons. Mark is a radio broadcaster and Mike is a mail carrier and also has a hobby business being a DJ at social functions. They are both bachelors.

Doug and Jan began attending Bellingham CRC in 1970. Doug served nine years as elder and deacon. He taught Sunday School and was a Cadet Counselor. Currently he is on the Building and Maintenance Team and spends lots of time working around the campus which fits right in with his love of the outdoors. Jan's service involves the music ministry which includes playing organ and piano for worship services and choir. She was General Fund Treasurer for 20+ years and uses her organizational skills to put the music binders together for the worship teams. She also attends the Wednesday Morning Ladies Bible Study. Doug and Jan are both involved in the Friendship Ministry. Doug volunteers at the Lion's Club Wheelchair Warehouse and serves on the North Coast Credit Union Supervisory Committee. Prior to Covid-19, Jan was playing the piano for chapel services monthly at Cordata Court Assisted Living. They also have a heart for Kidstown International. They support two orphans; one in Romania and one in India. Doug has made many trips to Romania and developed deep friendships with orphanage directors. Jan has been there twice and was deeply moved by a visit to a hospital ward for unwanted babies and by visiting extremely poor villages where the orphans lived before they moved to Kidstown-sponsored orphanages.

Doug's hobbies are gardening, hiking, fishing and going for walks with Jan. Jan's hobbies are working crossword puzzles, reading and going for walks with Doug. While many retired couples go to Arizona for the winter, Doug and Jan spend the winter at WWU gym watching the men's and women's teams play basketball.



Update from the Roberts

By Pastor Scott



On Friday, July 10 we made an offer on a two-acre place near Wisner Lake. On Monday, we were informed that multiple offers had been received and that all offers were being given a chance to sweeten the deal. By Monday night, we had been informed that our offer had been accepted.

We kicked into high gear and got our house ready to list and four days later, on Thursday, July 16 at 5 p.m., our home hit the MLS. There were two showings on Friday, with two offers above listing price received. No showings on Saturday, two showings on Sunday and one Monday morning. In short, we received three full price or above full price offers. Our bidders were informed of the situation and all given a chance to sweeten their deals which resulted in a very healthy, above listing price contract for our home on Lahti Drive. The contract was agreed to by all parties Monday night – a younger family from Sudden Valley will be moving into the sunny lot that we have (I giggle at that, but com-

pared to Sudden Valley, I guess our home is sunny). Earlier that day we were conducting an inspection on our new home, applying for a new mortgage, getting insurance quotes, etc.

As of today, Tuesday, July 22, it has been twelve days since the craziness began and I am in awe of what God has done. We have been looking for a different home for eight years off and on, but actively for the past three years and God has finally provided. My prayer was that if we were to move, God would sell our home in the first weekend for a good price. He has. Praise God! The property is flat, sunny and the home is big enough for our family, along with a great garage and a separate shop. The kids even get an above-ground pool out of the deal, which they are excited about.

The home is a single-level ranch with a full basement (two bedrooms up and two down) which means that it is easier for our church family to navigate, and it is conducive to caring for aging parents if that is ever needed. There are plenty of opportunities for me to fix this home up and improve its value, but it is solid and comfortable to begin with. It even has a real wood fireplace, a wish of mine. We anticipate closing both deals on August 27 and we have until September 18 to vacate our existing property.

We are so thankful to all of you who have prayed into this request of ours over the years. Thanks for being faithful to intercede for us. Thanks for understanding and for helping us to feel secure enough to venture into a real estate change. We look forward to inviting each of you out to our new home in the country.

