

# Heartbeat



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## Four things Covid-19 has taught me

By Pastor Scott Roberts

It is easy to write about all the negative things that Covid-19 has brought into our lives and the ways that it is changing us. In fact, my first draft of an article for this month was precisely about the negative things that coming as a result of the current health situation. But the longer I sat with the article, the more I was convinced that such an article while therapeutic for me to write in order to get it out onto paper, would not be beneficial to most of us. So I decided to contemplate on the beneficial things that Covid-19 has taught me.

First, Covid-19 and the various responses that local, civil and international bodies have taken has reminded me that this world is not my home. I am a stranger and alien (Heb. 11:13) upon this earth and my true citizenship belongs to a world where life, peace, health, righteousness, honesty, holiness and perfection thrive and triumph (Phil 3:20). Because of this my longing for Christ to return has been growing and my yearning to be with the Lord, instead of living in a world so controlled by fear, is increasing. Two years ago, I would have articulated all of these things but my heart and desire really weren't there. I loved the world and the things it offered. But now, I know that my love was misplaced. Having things stripped away is a marvelous way to be purified and focused upon the things that really matter.

Second, the current health situation taught me to take time to pursue some artistic outlets. At the beginning of the shutdown last March I decided to take up leather working, since our garage at the old house was too full to do much wood working. I have made a number of items including a messenger bag, a purse, a workmen's apron and some keychains. I would have never even attempted these new outlets had God now forced down time upon me.

Third, I am learning that faithfulness is not always measured in tangible output. The Sabbath is a multifaceted teaching tool in the Scripture. It is intended to teach us about the fact that God alone makes us holy, our works don't (Ex. 31:13). It is about resting from work (Ex. 20:8-10). It is about learning to trust God to provide for our need (Ex. 16:26). It is about trusting in Christ as the only one who is righteous (Heb.

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*Priorities*

*New  
opportunities*

*Growing in  
Christ*

*Relation-  
ships*

4:9). As an overachiever who likes to accomplish things and who revels in completing checklists, the slowed down pace of the present reality is forcing me to consider where my worth and value come from. It isn't in the tasks I accomplish, but in the relationship that I have with Christ.

Fourth and finally, I am realizing that I need people more than I ever admitted. The lack of interaction with my church family has been palpably felt over the past year. I long for and look forward to the day when I can once again give each of you a giant hug and see the smiles on your face and know that there isn't any fear of me getting you sick.

God has given me a number of great lessons over the past year which I am not sure I would have learned any other way. And so, in a roundabout kind of way, I can even say that Covid-19 has been a blessing to my spiritual life. What good things has the virus situation brought into your life?

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*Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection not in books alone, but in every leaf in spring time. - Martin Luther*

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## Day2Pray - Wed, March 3

Sustainable-Strategic-United Prayer for Whatcom County  
March / April 2021



1. Worship - let us give ourselves to praying for and being the conduit of the matchless love of Christ in the lives of all in our spheres of influence.

2. Pray for Yourself - To love others, we must first love Him. Pray God will fill you with such an abiding love for Him that it will spill over into every part of your life.

3. Strategic prayers for Whatcom County - Arts & Media, Business, Church, Social Services, Education, Family, Government, Health and International Missions.

4. Pray for Your Family & Friends - God is the Master Weaver of the tapestry of life. He pulls the string of your life and intertwines it with other's lives every day. Who is God asking you to pray for, to love, to reach out to today?

5. Pray for your Church - What does the love of Christ look like on a daily basis? Paul helps us to understand by describing love with these 9 characteristics in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Together let's pray for the Spirit to so fill our communities that this fruit is evident everywhere.

# How Interfaith's Family Promise Changes Lives

By Cheryl

The young mother who came to Family Promise was highly motivated to achieve a better life for herself and her middle-school child. She and her child had been homeless for many weeks, couch-surfing here and there, landing wherever they could.

She came seeking what her old support systems had not been able to provide: healthy community, positive connections, meals, shelter, mentorship. She was seeking a path out of poverty. Interfaith and Family Promise of Whatcom County volunteers and donors provided it.

Today Ashley\*, who was born and raised in Whatcom County, and her child are at home in their own apartment. They have options and a future because of the stepping-stones that were offered to her while she was in Interfaith's Family Promise program.

How does Interfaith and Family Promise transform lives? Fifteen hundred volunteers and more than 600 donors make it possible. "We have a unique, dedicated volunteer base," said Carolyn Roy, program director of Family Promise of Whatcom County and Family Housing. "We reach out and ask, or volunteers tell us what they have to offer, and we match that with someone in need."

When a family enters Family Promise, they work with Case Manager Marikka Matheny to draft a plan, identifying steps toward independent living and goal setting. Weekly, they meet with Marikka, addressing accomplishments, roadblocks, and strategies. "Most stay until they achieve secure housing," Carolyn said. "With Covid, it's harder to get into housing. There's not much available, and people aren't moving."

Carolyn and Marikka advocate for the families with landlords, employers, state

agencies, the schools' homeless liaisons, Opportunity Council, Brigid Collins Family Support Center, and legal advocates. When it became clear Ashley needed transportation, Marikka helped her get a driver's license, and Carolyn rustled up a car: a volunteer's neighbor, Lennie Hawley, had a car to donate, and longtime Interfaith volunteer Rick Congdon detailed it, no charge.

All Family Promise families take the Whatcom Dream's 8-week course on financial literacy, and access Unity Care NW for health needs and parenting classes through Brigid Collins.

"For Ashley, we were able to identify an apartment for her," Carolyn said. "We knew the landlord and learned an apartment would soon be available, so she got her application in quickly." Family Promise's wrap-around care includes vouchers for furniture at Habitat for Humanity in Whatcom County, move-in help, and household necessities via First Congregational Church of Bellingham's Fresh Start program.

"When people donate, when they provide time or a hot meal or groceries or a car, it all adds up," Carolyn said. "When volunteers put together groceries or craft supplies, or they read stories and do songs via Zoom for the little ones, that's creating community for people who are isolated or estranged from their own families.

"If our families lack relationships, our volunteers can provide that."



## Family Promise

By Lorraine B

Here is the story of how Family Promise has been able to help change the life of this mother and daughter. Hope In Christ helps by providing meals and meal kits for families four times a year. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered this past year, and thank you to all who will feel led to volunteer in 2021.



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## A New Season

By Aaron Walters

It is a new season for me (Aaron). After many years serving the southside of Bellingham at the Firehouse Café, I have moved on, accepting a larger role as chaplain at the Franklin Academy. It is bittersweet to leave the Firehouse, but I look forward to investing more and deeper as a “civilian” at the coffee shop. For example, a couple weeks after my last day at the Firehouse, I was on a prayer walk in the neighborhood and a neighbor/customer stopped to thank me for serving the community for all those years. I thanked her for her words, and shared how it was one way I was able to share God’s love in a practical way. This started a great conversation about where we are finding hope in the midst of these “crazy times.” I was surprised to hear that during the last year she has been reading various Christian authors. Over the years she has been someone that I pray for, but I have not known her to ever have an interest in Christian things. It was an answered prayer! She is making movements toward the cross, and I was able to encourage her to continue her pursuit. This is just one of many examples of outreach opportunities that continue to present themselves. It is

a new season in many ways, and in many ways not.



As COVID continues, The Table is still meeting on Wednesdays for worship online, and on Thursdays “in person” in smaller groups. In spite of the season, we have grown closer as a community, with increased prayer and support of one another. Our monthly service projects have been focused on serving the existing ministries/services in Bellingham that are blessing the community (Lydia Place, Rebound of Whatcom County, and the Lighthouse Mission). God is moving, we are active, and we continue to be grateful for the way folks support His work among us through prayers and gifts!

*“Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.” Psalm 127:1*

## Prayer requests for the Table



1. For opportunities to show and speak of His love during this unique season
2. For funds to continue our presence in the neighborhood and to maintain children’s worker in the year to come
3. For God’s provision as we serve the un-churched families in our neighborhood
4. That the kingdom of God would grow in Bellingham

## Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday, also known as "Passion Sunday," marks the week that leads to Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. It is called "Palm Sunday" because of what happened during this time in history. Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem signaled the start of the last week of His earthly ministry. In a few days' time He would be betrayed, scourged, mocked, and nailed to the cross to die -- only to rise again on the third day after His death.

This week is when we remember that our sinless Savior took the punishment that we should be receiving. We remember that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. We are reminded that we can't save ourselves, but Christ saved us.

Quoted from: [www.christiantoday.com/article/what-is-palm-sunday-and-why-is-it-important/127791.htm](http://www.christiantoday.com/article/what-is-palm-sunday-and-why-is-it-important/127791.htm)



*The week that changed the world continues to change our lives.*

## Good Friday

"It was not nails that held Jesus to that wretched cross; it was his unqualified resolution, out of love for his Father, to do his Father's will—and it was his love for sinners like me." - D.A. Carson



"No matter what the storm clouds bring, you can face your pain with courage and hope. For two thousand years ago-six hours, one Friday-Christ firmly planted in bedrock three solid anchor points that we can all cling to. For the heart scarred with futility, that Friday holds purpose. For the life blackened with failure, that Friday holds forgiveness. And for the soul looking into the tunnel of death, that Friday holds deliverance." - Max Lucado



## Deacons Digest

By Elaine S

The deacons met via Zoom on Feb. 3, 2021 for our February meeting.

We began our meeting talking about Hospitality and about welcoming strangers and understanding that everyone has something to give, and everyone is blessed by receiving to building community.

Jenn submitted the cancellation notice for the video license, which may be renewed later. It was noted that April 25 will be GEMS Sunday.

We discussed potential deacon candidates. It was noted that a wheelchair has been donated to our church, which is currently being used by Ali.

Time was spent sharing praises and concerns for people in our church who are having medical issues.

A letter was received by our church from Love, Inc. They have started a new program called the Jesus Taxi. They hope to begin this program the end of February or early March. To find out what it is about you can see the video at: <https://youtu.be/D-WdtFyAY10>. There is a volunteer form at: <https://www.whatcomloveinc.org/jesustaxi>. Basically, they would like people to volunteer for four-hour shifts to take people to appointments for doctors, etc. You would work with a team of two or three people.

If you would be willing to participate in this program, please contact Oscar Norlander at Love, Inc or contact the deacons.

### Deacons



reach out to those in need

*Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people - Galatians 6:10*

## Giving in January 2021

	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Designated Fund Offerings:	\$2,670	\$6,295
General Fund Offerings:	\$22,099	\$47,852
Rent/Utilities Income	\$1,488	\$4,097
Interest income - Undesignated	<u>\$18</u>	<u>\$40</u>
Total undesignated Income	\$23,605	\$51,989
General Fund Expenses	<u>(\$17,226)</u>	<u>(\$31,625)</u>
Income Over (Under) Expenses	<u>\$6,379</u>	<u>\$20,364</u>

Total 2021 budget, including ministry quotas	\$281,796
Year-to Date Budget for 12 months	\$46,966
Total Undesignated Income	<u>\$51,989</u>
Income Over (Under) budget	<u>\$5,023</u>

### Loan Balances:

Classis: \$10,000  
Payroll Protection Program: \$-0-, 100% forgiven effective Dec 8, 2020

## Reflect on Scripture

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!

**Luke 24: 1-6 24**



*Daylight Savings Time begins at 2AM on March 14. Don't be late for church!*



*May the love of God fill your life and warm your heart on your birthday.*





# March 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 11:30 am Elders Mtg 7pm Deacons Mtg	4	5	6
7 9:30 am Worship Service/ Communion	8	9	10 7pm Council Mtg	11	12	13
14 <b>Daylight Savings Begins</b>  9:30 am Worship Service	15	16	17 	18	19	20 First Day of Spring 
<b>Family Promise Week</b>						
21 9:30 am Worship Service 7pm Church Prayer Mtg on Zoom	22	23	24	25	26 	27
28 <b>Palm Sunday</b> 9:30 am Worship Service	29	30	31			