

This week we are sharing the contents of a temporary newsletter Bob and Norma sent to the Northwest Iowa churches where he speaks.

The Lord Remains in Control

“At the right time, I, the LORD, will make it happen” Isaiah 60:22 NLT. Quoted from Facebook: “I guess God got so mad about all of our fighting down here, he sent us to our rooms.” **“Easter is not cancelled! Christ is still risen!”** From various sources, Kathy Wankum sent this reassurance.

102 YEARS AGO, OUR PARENTS--GRANDPARENT FACED A PANDEMIC SIMILAR TO COVID-19

“In 1918, while the war in Europe still raged, we found ourselves fighting a killer flu for which there was no cure.”

Byline in January, 1989 **Smithsonian** article by Jack Fincher: **America’s deadly rendezvous with the ‘Spanish Lady.’**



We’re not the first to face a pandemic. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, reported a probable Athenian epidemic in 412 BC. I thought you might be interested to read a few excerpts from the above 1989 **Smithsonian** piece.

“The first . . . wave of the epidemic began in March 1918 when a mess cook with chills and fever reported for sick call at Fort Riley, KS.” His head and muscles ached and his throat felt sore. By week’s end, the fort hospital admitted 522 such patients. The fact that robust people in their 20s and 30s seemed hardest hit puzzled doctors.

Before this influenza epidemic ended 500,000 Americans died. The flu possibly spread as the US Army sent troops to Europe toward the end of World War One. Many became ill on crowded troopships as they crossed the Atlantic. France, where many of the troops landed, began feeling the effects. The virus then spread west to England and south to Spain, “where it killed eight million” and got its name, the **Spanish flu. Worldwide the death toll grew to 22 million; some estimate a 32 million total.**

A Milwaukee nurse described the 1918 catastrophe as “the year men cried.” Experts tried many vaccines to no avail. Surgeon General,



With 25 million infected during the epidemic, it was hard to provide care for everyone. The Red Cross often worked around the clock.



“As epidemic spread, I SU turned its gym into a hospital ward full of flu patients.”

Bob’s note: Was Iowa State a teacher’s college or a tech school in 1918?

Rupert O. Blue decided not to quarantine the population. He asked the states to ban large gatherings. Churches and bars closed. People wore masks. In 1918 as now, “other dangerous infections were in the air—fatuity, folly, finger pointing and wishful thinking.” After doing many autopsies, Dr. William Henry Welch, a renowned pathologist, reported that this was not an ordinary garden-variety influenza. Medical science was just then learning about viruses.

My dad, Frank Blair, entered the military in 1918, but soon developed pneumonia and underwent lung surgery in the Fort Sam Houston hospital. The photo shows him and Jessie Teghtmeyer about 1920. They married the next year. Dad went to electrical school, began working for a railroad and they sent him to Hoisington, KS, where they later bought a house. In 1929 they lost that house because of the depression. As is evident, many past generations have faced great challenges and endured them. Frank and Jessie never gained much net worth. They did, however, love my siblings and me and taught us about Jesus.

Norma and I are sure you agree that Jesus is our hope. Continue to pray for our leaders.