



The Circuit Rider



2020

SALMON CREEK CHURCH

THE ONLY WAY TO LEARN
STRONG FAITH
IS TO ENDURE
GREAT TRIALS.

Benjamin Franklin



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a note from Pastor John

When my two boys were young, we often made the long drive from Colorado to visit Vivian's parents on the coast of Washington. If you push it, you can make it in two days, but usually after a few hours, when we were barely into Wyoming, the familiar refrain would start: Are we there yet? No matter how many times one parent or the other tried to explain the realities of car travel, inevitably, boredom won.

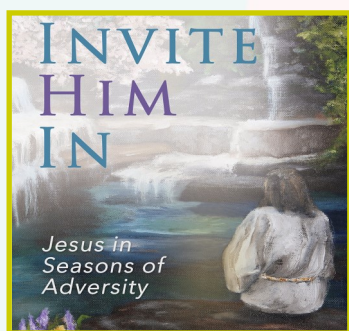
In our current stay-at-home situation, I find myself thinking: are we there yet? We've been good citizens, did what the governor asked, learned how to social distance. But really: are we there yet? The answer is, of course, no, not yet. We've still got a ways to go before we can go back to our favorite Italian restaurant or, for that matter, have church together.

This of course begs the question: when the Israelites spent forty years in the desert, did they say, (in Hebrew, of course) "Are we there yet?" Actually, they did, and it got them into some trouble. God wasn't too thrilled when they whined about wanting to go back into slavery in Egypt, and even less so when they refused to enter Canaan after only two years in the desert. God pretty much had it worked out for them, but they couldn't see it, thought they knew better, and consequently spent those forty years wandering around the Sinai crying, "Are we there yet?"

The lesson is, of course, not only to trust God, but to stop complaining when we don't understand God's plans. Maybe I shouldn't poke fun at the Israelites, who, after all, were in a dire situation too. A common theme in the Old Testament is how they often were "thick-necked" and stubborn and insisted that they knew better than God. It never turned out well, but God always restored them anyway because, well, you know, God is merciful.

I think I'll try to stop saying, "Are we there yet?", and instead just be glad that I'm here, wherever that may be. Not everyone is as fortunate as I am: everyone in my family, including those boys who are now grown up, have kept their jobs and stayed healthy. No one is suggesting that we go back to Egypt: I'm certainly glad I have better choices than starving in the desert or going into slavery. But that's the point, isn't it? God provided the Israelites with sustenance; God didn't leave the Israelites with false choices.

As I've said a few times already, we may be physically separated but we are spiritually bound as the Body of Christ. We don't have to wait to be physically reunited to be "there"; we are here, now, with God.



Blessings,
Pastor John Hiestand



ALL SERVICES AND EVENTS ARE ON HOLD UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE FROM OUR BISHOP AND STATE GOVERNOR DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

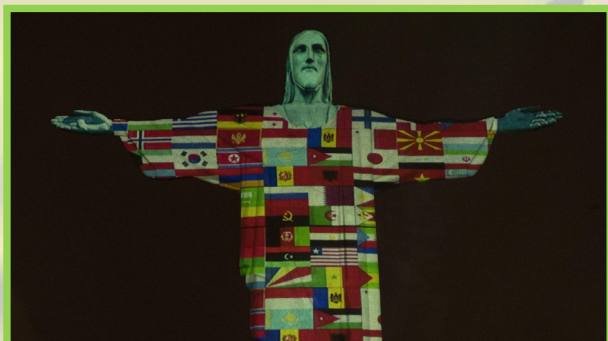
DENOMINATIONAL NEWS

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church has been postponed until late August of 2021. This means that all of the decisions and legislation regarding denominational restructuring have been postponed for about a year and a half. The Annual Conference for the Pacific Northwest has also been postponed until October of this year. It is not certain at this time if individual Annual Conferences will take any kind of unilateral action, but our Bishop, Elaine Stanovsky, has said the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference will meet only to work on essential conference business, such as budgets.

In the midst of our restoration, as we emerge from stay-at-home isolation, I have asked leaders at Salmon Creek Church to put their energy, time and talent towards the work necessary for Salmon Creek Church to remain a vital Christian Community. We will take up the discussion, discernment and decision making process regarding denominational issues again in the spring of 2021 unless circumstances change. Although there have been many negatives about the pandemic, one positive is that we again have received better focus on what is truly important to our church: the people we serve in the name of Jesus Christ.

Blessings,
Pastor John

*BIRTHING NEW METHODIST
DENOMINATIONS:*



EXTENSION OF WORSHIP SUSPENSION AND BUILDING CLOSURES

As bishop of the Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church, I am extending the suspension of in-person worship in United Methodist Churches and other ministries and the closure of church facilities to all but essential services throughout the Alaska, Oregon-Idaho and Pacific Northwest Conferences through May 30, 2020, until and unless state government and health officials lift restrictions based upon their published criteria for re-opening. This date may be reconsidered as circumstances change.



How did I come to this decision, and what does it mean?

MARCH 24: Suspension of In-Person Worship and Closure of Buildings.

On March 24 I directed that in-person worship and other gatherings be postponed in United Methodist Churches and other ministries through April 30, 2020. At the same time, I directed that all Church facilities were to be closed except for essential services. These actions were taken to protect the health of vulnerable people, to slow the spread of the disease, and to prevent health care systems from becoming overwhelmed by a sudden surge of cases needing hospital beds and equipment.

You helped keep people HEALTHY!

You did it! You made adjustments and found ways to be church without gathering for worship. Your actions, and the general populations' compliance with the orders of the governors appear to have slowed the spread, flattened the curve of the crisis, and averted a crisis in our health care systems. I thank God for the incredible ways you have contributed to these outcomes. At the same time, we grieve over people who have contracted COVID-19, some of whom have been hospitalized and even died. And we continue to hold in our hearts and prayers all who are at risk for this disease because they render essential services, or have compromising health conditions, or who, because of systemic inequities in our society live with little or no social safety net.

EASTER: You celebrated Resurrection in the Shadow of Death. Alleluia!

You found ways to overcome all kinds of obstacles to celebrating Easter. Your clergy and lay leaders have demonstrated an adventuresome spirit, as you learned how to care for one another, conduct worship and support vulnerable people in your neighborhoods, while maintaining physical distancing and suspending all gatherings. Christ the Lord was Risen again this Easter, with shouts of Hosannah!, prayers for strength and healing, and acts of generosity. Well done, good and faithful servants.

MAY 1

We are now approaching the end of the directives I gave on March 24 and many of you are eager to know whether the restrictions will be lifted or extended. I am closely monitoring the guidance and criteria for loosening restrictions in each of our four Greater Northwest states, as well as the daily reports of new cases, deaths and health system capacity. As you know, the disease has unfolded at different rates across the area. And the cultural and political climates across our region are varied, leading to different assessments of the risks involved. I find myself leading in the midst of continued uncertainty and significant controversy about the best course of action. Three value-based priorities inform my leadership as your bishop.

Do No Harm: Protect the public health

Do Good: Share the financial burden with persons most vulnerable to economic impacts

Stay in Love with God: Promote the life-giving ministries of the Church

DO GOOD. Protect Public Health

Following the leadership of four very different governors, our four states are all weathering the pandemic better than expected. I am pre-disposed to trust the governors of each state to listen to their health care advisors, to know their region and its people and to give prudent guidance. While all four governors have laid out their criteria for incremental loosening restrictions within their states, at present none of these governors has taken specific action to lift restrictions that would affect our Churches. When they do, Churches will need to be especially cautious about re-opening and gathering, taking into account that among our members and friends are many participants who are at risk for severe illness from COVID-19, due to age or compromising health conditions.

DO GOOD. Share the Burdens of Most Vulnerable Persons

During this season of closed buildings and postponed in-person worship, I hope that every congregation will re-engage its neighbors, by partnering with community organizations that are directly involved with people who are most vulnerable to the economic impacts of the pandemic. How this neighborhood engagement looks will be specific to your congregation, its context, and the partnerships you are able to form to serve people most at risk during this crisis. I heard the other day of a church in a small town that set up a “tab” with the local grocer so that people who needed food could “shop” for what they needed and charge it to a tab that the Church paid. In this win-win-win arrangement, people get food, the church serves people in need, whom they may not even know, and the grocer’s business is supported in the process. There is no recipe for this kind of innovative response. It’s all based on local relationships that can become networks of care.

STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD. Promote the Life-Giving Ministries of the Church

While I know that the effectiveness of ministry and health of congregational life suffer when people are not able to gather for worship, this hardship does not justify taking the risk of spreading the disease through church gatherings, or exposing older and health-compromised people to infection and possible death by re-opening our church gatherings too soon. I trust and know that the leaders and people in each church are finding creative ways to continue to serve God’s promise of abundant life for all people and the whole of creation despite these extreme circumstances. When the time is right, we will gather again and re-build and renew our ministries.

MAY 31 – PENTECOST

As we enter another month of some level of physical separation, let’s hope that we will be able to gather in our churches on Pentecost, May 31. Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Church, when people from many nations gathered in Jerusalem to hear Peter preach. The book of Acts describes how the people understood what he said, even though they spoke many different languages. I hope that we will be able to gather in worship that day – maybe sooner. Let’s hold it as a date to hope for, to pray for, to work for. And if it can’t be May 31 – if it comes sooner, or later – then, we’ll adjust, just as we have been adjusting for these many weeks. I don’t need to remind you that God is with us and at work. I don’t need to remind you that miracles happen every day, even in the midst of disease and death, as people of generous hearts pour their life out in love and service where there is need. We are blessed to be a blessing. Thanks be to God, who opens the way of life before us.

May God bless you and keep you today and through the days ahead.

Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky



From Pastor John:

Fund

I am pleased to announce that the Congregation Care Fund (CCF) is now available for assistance during these uncertain times. This fund was established to provide short-term assistance to professing members and constituents (regular attenders) who might be suffering hardship at this time. We have had several donors to this fund from our generous congregation. Remember, if you can give at this time, that is helpful, and if you need assistance, ask for it! Assistance is in the form of a grant, not a loan.

Here are some guidelines and instructions on how to apply. All applications are confidential.

- The fund is for members and constituents of Salmon Creek Church only. Employees of Salmon Creek Church are not eligible to use this fund (we're not being mean; the staff are being cared for in other ways.)
- The pastor and an oversight committee of 2 people will review all applications. They will be the only ones who know the identity of the applicants, and they will keep identities confidential.

To apply:

Until we have developed a form, please send Pastor John an e-mail, or call him at 360-838-3161, with the following information:

Name

Address

Phone number

E-mail address

Amount requested

What the grant is needed for (e.g. rent, utilities, food)

A brief statement as to why you are unable to fulfill the need on your own (e.g., unemployed, ill, quarantined)

Please note that the amount requested may be adjusted depending on available funds and other requests. This would typically be a one time grant.

Not everyone in our congregation is online and may not see this information. If you know of anyone in our congregation in need of assistance, please encourage them to contact me.

Corona Virus Poem

We've all been exposed.
Not necessarily to the virus
(maybe...who even knows).
We've all been exposed **BY** the virus.

Corona is exposing us.
Exposing our weak sides.
Exposing our dark sides.
Exposing what normally lays far beneath the surface
of our souls,
hidden by the invisible masks we wear.
Now exposed by the paper masks we can't hide far
enough behind.

Corona is exposing our addiction to comfort.
Our obsession with control.
Our compulsion to hoard.
Our protection of self.

Corona is peeling back our layers.
Tearing down our walls.
Revealing our illusions.
Leveling our best-laid plans.

Corona is exposing the gods we worship:
Our health
Our hurry
Our sense of security.
Our favorite lies
Our secret lusts
Our misplaced trust.

Corona is calling everything into question:
What is the church without a building?
What is my worth without an income?
How do we plan without certainty?
How do we love despite risk?

Corona is exposing me.
My mindless numbing
My endless scrolling
My careless words
My fragile nerves.

We've all been exposed.
Our junk laid bare.
Our fears made known.
The band-aid torn.
The masquerade done.

So what now? What's left?
Clean hands
Clear eyes
Tender hearts.

What Corona reveals, God can heal.

Come Lord Jesus.
Have mercy on us.



*By Sarah Bourns, shared by
Nancy Volgamore*



- 1—HANDS Wash them often
- 2—ELBOW Cough into it
- 3—FACE Don't touch it
- 4—FEET Stay more than 6ft apart
- 5—FEEL sick? Stay home



TRUSTEES CONTINUE TO BE BUSY WORKING ON THE CHURCH WHILE WE ARE ALL AWAY

Trustees have been busy during the Corona Virus shutdown. In addition to replacing the lights and painting the fellowship kitchen, we now have completed replacement of the drop ceiling lights in the Daycare hallway and work is underway to Replace the lights and paint the St. Paul room. Who knows where we will stop.

Gay and I did the Daycare hallway. For those who haven't been thru there, it was dark place with lots of cubby holes and shelves, etc., for the Day School. The lights were the recessed fluorescent drop ceiling lights that you would see in an old office building hallway. We removed most of the ceiling tiles, painted them and replaced the lights with new LED ceiling lights. It seems brighter now and has more light in the edges. BTW, the Day school staff has been cleaning up the hallway and painting, so there will be a fresh look in the hallway for the kids and their parents.

Thanks,
Steve Enyeart, Trustees

Jim Roberts also commented, "It is noteworthy that these painting/light projects join the already completed office hallway, Narthex, and Day School hallway projects. A continued "shoutout" of appreciation to the Trustees and other participants!"

Thank you so much, Trustees and volunteers!! God bless you all for your hard work and dedication.





Update from Mutare—Newsletter from Jane and Larry Kies

March 2020

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders. Jesus came and stood among them. John 20:19

Dear Friends and Family:

During this Lenten season we are reminded of Jesus' disciples and the uncertainty they felt after Jesus was crucified.

I am sure that we are not the only ones who can sympathize with them. With the huge disruptions that Covid-19 has caused around the world, with no clear end in sight, many people who were living otherwise safe and predictable lives are now wondering... 'When will all of this end?'

Last week we received news of the confirmation of the first positive case of Covid-19 in Zimbabwe. However, the Zimbabwe government took pro-active steps to keep cases from entering Zimbabwe and from spreading when it did arrive. Since Tuesday 24 March, all schools (primary, secondary and tertiary) in Zimbabwe have been closed for an indefinite period. Beginning 30 March, there will be a 21-day total lockdown in the country.

At Africa University, a big issue concerns the 40% of our students who are from outside Zimbabwe. Many of them are on scholarship, and simply do not have the money to go home, then come back again at some indefinite time. Also, for some, the journey home means transit through another country, which might have restrictions on foreigners transiting through their land. Not to mention the risk involved in multiple hours on crowded buses with passengers who might be infected.

Of course, we can't just throw out our students, especially during times such as these, so those international students without other options are allowed to stay on campus.

Some on-line instruction is being done, but Larry still hasn't figured out how to have Practical Agriculture students apply nitrogen fertilizer to their tasseling corn using their smartphone when miles away.

AU FARM NEWS

As I write, the new silage chopper is busy converting the corn fields into food for the dairy cattle. Of course, the livestock understand nothing about lockdowns, so the Farm Manager has been busy organizing the staff so that all units are covered. With the lockdown that begins on Monday, only staff who live on campus are allowed to work.

Past investments in housing for AU Farm staff are proving their worth many times over. We had the dedication for the two newest houses funded by the Illinois Great Rivers conference. The next house, funded by the 1st UMC of Wichita, is finally getting started after many delays.

COMING TO A CHURCH NEAR YOU

Since 2000 we have been visiting supporting churches (itineration) every four years. This will be Larry's last official visit as a missionary since he will be retiring after itineration. Jane plans to continue teaching here at AU for a couple more years, and Larry will probably teach on a volunteer basis.

We hope to thank in person the many people who have faithfully supported us for many years in the projects with which we were associated. Some were able to visit us either in Botswana or Zimbabwe, so literally walked beside us. Others knew that we were representing them even though they never came to visit.



The rough outline for our travels is:

Late May—leave Zimbabwe

June 6—attend the Iowa Annual Conference

June 10—24—Illinois Great Rivers

June 28—begin speaking in Iowa churches *when not out-of-state*

July 3—29—Attend to family issues

Aug 1—14—Indiana, Michigan, E Ohio, Maryland, Delaware, E and W Pennsylvania

Sep 15—24—Northern Illinois

Sep 27 - 29—Wisconsin

Oct 11—12—Kansas, Nebraska

Oct 25—Vancouver, WA

Oct 27—1 Nov—California

Nov 21—Begin the return journey to Zimbabwe

In Iowa and Illinois, our schedules will be coordinated by conference mission/itineration secretaries. In all other states we will make arrangements directly with churches that we will visit. We have juggled many commitments, and apologize in advance if we don't see you! We hope that when we are both fully retired we can travel and visit churches and individuals that we will miss this time around.

Of course, the schedule above is still very tentative, pending what happens with the Covid-19 challenge. Most airlines are stopping flights into and out of Harare, so we might not be able to fly when we want to, and of course some churches might not yet have resumed meeting. We might need to have virtual meetings. We will keep you informed.

The best way to contact us is by email: LKies@africau.edu. When our travel plans are confirmed, we will give you a snail-mail address and a phone number in a later letter.

Despite all the challenges brought on by a fragile Zimbabwe economy and now the corona virus, the crosses still stand... on top of the hill above campus and on top the chapel.

FAMILY NEWS

Michael at Iowa State will have at least several weeks of on-line learning to end his second year there. He has a summer internship lined up in Ames.

Carly's campus ministry at University of Queensland at Brisbane is being creative in reaching out to the students during the ban on large gatherings and church services.

Pule and Christine in Boulder are working from home, as is **Ben** in New York.

Please pray

∅ prayers of thanks:

-that our Zimbabwe Residence Permit has been renewed for TWO years instead of the usual ONE

-that so far the confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Zimbabwe are very low (five)

∅ prayers of supplication:

-for all those severely affected by Covid-19, either from infection or from the lockdowns

-for Jane and me as we try to firm our plans for travel and speaking

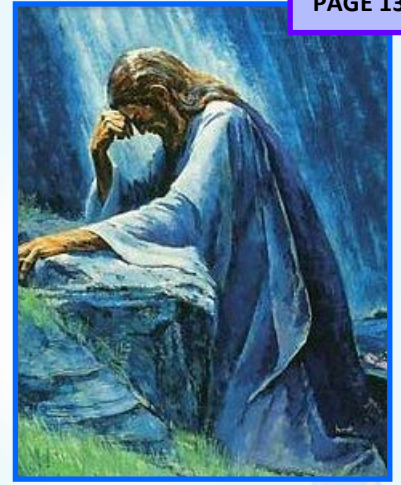
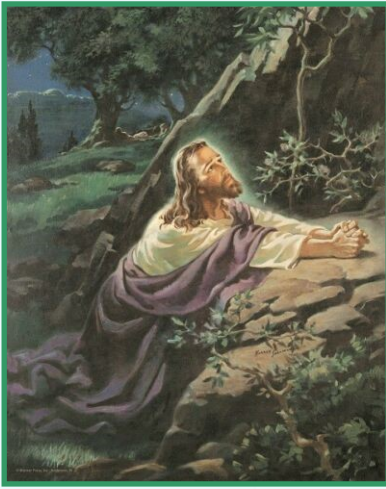
Thank you for your support, prayers, thoughts, emails, cards and letters. We pray that you are kept safe and find ways of reaching out to your loved ones and others.

Yours and His, Larry and Jane Kies

Africa University ▪ Box 1320 ▪ Mutare Zimbabwe

U.M.C. Advance Special numbers: Africa University Farm Development: 3021027

Africa University Scholarships: 3021028 ▪ Salary support: 09572Z (Larry) 10739Z (Jane)



We still have three church garden plots available, \$10 each for the entire growing season. The water is turned on and some gardeners are planting early crops now. You can reserve a garden plot by calling Jim Selby at 828-508-5094; he will show you the plots and the gardener can choose one or more. We will not be collecting the \$10 and the garden agreement until we return to church as a church family.

Thanks to the gardeners and Trustees. The garden area has never looked better and there are virtually no weeds at this time.

Jim Selby



A Moment in History

In 2006, Salmon Creek Church raised \$12,000 to send their youth group and advisors to Mississippi to rebuild homes that were destroyed by hurricane Katrina. That was so successful that they did it again in 2007. This was all accomplished under the leadership of our Adult Ministries Chairman, Leah Such, who recognized that, because our congregation was so supportive of our missions team, maybe God wanted us to keep going by taking on a more challenging project. Thus, the idea was born that we could help build a Habitat House.

So, in the spring of 2008, a proposal was made that the Salmon Creek congregation would not only build a Habitat House by ourselves, but we would also raise the \$60,000 to fund it. It was called the "2008 Faith Build Campaign." Habitat had a building foundation already completed near 98th Avenue and 70th Street in the Orchards area, and we started building on June 29th. With God's blessing, and a lot of hard work by our congregation, the house was finished and dedicated to its new owner, Christabel and her 9-year-old daughter Carissa, on December 3rd, 2008. If you look in the entryway to the FMC building, you will find a picture of the many volunteers in front of the house.

The reason for this article is to highlight the success of this wonderful project. It's been twelve years and Christabel just paid off her mortgage and the house is hers free and clear. She is so thankful for her little house and enjoys it every day, including her yard, fruit trees, and flowers. In 2011, Christabel got married to Andrew Behr and her now 20-year-old daughter is currently doing a school Writer's Internship. Guiding us through this build were the words from Hebrews 3:4: "Every house has a builder, but the builder behind them all is God."

By Larry Siewert



Habitat
for Humanity®

PHOTOS FROM THE 2008 HABITAT BUILD



CHURCH'S ANGELS!!

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CHURCH**

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VANCOUVER, WA**



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR FAMILY MEMBERS:

Due to the closure of the office, the list of family birthdays is unavailable this month. Our apologies for not being able to acknowledge your special day!

Thank you for reading the Circuit Rider! If you have questions or concerns please feel free to contact us.

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Submissions for the Circuit Rider can be sent to communications@salmoncreek.church. Articles and announcements are due by midnight on the second Sunday of each month.

Editor: Nancy Volgamore

