



# The Plumbline

Newsletter of the Wilmore Free Methodist Church

October / November 2020

INTRODUCTION: This issue of the *Plumbline* has been dedicated to reflection on how God has worked in a variety of ways among His people during the first months of the Covid-19 pandemic. I am hoping to bring Him honor and draw hearts in worship and praise to Him as we see and recognize together that in all of our days, He does not change, but walks with us to bring Life and peace as we learn to trust Him on deeper and deeper levels.

## God's Faithful Love

Colleen Weaver

Contrary to what we may like to believe are the certain implications of God's faithful love - such as protection from all stress producing circumstances, families free of suffering and difficulties, immediate provision when we are in need, and so on. What has been reaffirmed to me during this pandemic is that God's faithful love means that God is with us. Repeatedly throughout the Scriptures, God promises to be with his people. Jesus, like his Father, assures his disciples, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20 ESV). Our circumstances do not change the terms of this promise of presence; His faithful love is steadfast. **We are the ones who must hold onto that truth and abide in Christ.**



The pandemic and border closures separated me from my husband for over five months. One of my daughters was evacuated from the work and country she loves simultaneously resulting in the termination of her employment. Our family has faced many painful trials during this time. AND we have also celebrated the birth of a new baby boy. Lament is not a denial of the faithful love of God, it is the honest sorrow of broken hearts expressed in His presence in a moment when God is particularly close to us (Psalm 34:18).

Just before our lives were turned upside down by the pandemic, I had begun to read Revelation. Inductive Bible Study has taught me to notice recurring words and phrases. The phrase that caught my attention in chapters 1-3 was "patient endurance" (1:9; 2:2,19; 3:10). I had no idea how my patient endurance would be put to the test over the coming months. There were many sad days characterized more by discouraged and wobbly endurance. YET, there wasn't a day or moment that Jesus failed to be present with us. Not one! So that's what I have learned through this time. We can patiently endure all trials, even counting them as joy (James 1:2) when we are certain of the faithful loving presence of God. And the world will take notice that something is different in the way we live as people with courage, hope, and peace, patiently enduring all because we are abiding in Christ in all and through all circumstances.

Let's encourage one another to remember, give thanks for and live in the presence of our faithful loving Father, his Son, Jesus Christ and the Spirit. Amen.

*Isaiah 43:2*

*"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."*

## The Heart of the Gospel in Africa

My wife and I have been living here in Africa for the last nine years. At first it was so exciting to be called by our Lord to serve as ministers of the gospel in the area of Christian education to the people of Africa. But it didn't take long for us to recognize a sad truth. Instead of listening to Jesus, most people here feel forced by the community to listen to their traditions, even though about 80% profess to be Christians. It became hard to see a people trapped in a worldly system based on human traditions rather than captivated by the person of Christ.

We spent years teaching, sometimes confronting, sometimes rebuking. We prayed for wisdom on a daily basis asking God what we should do... what we should say. With the help of some godly advice we kept moving backwards into more foundational truths. For instance, we began to focus more on the question of, "What IS truth?" That seemed to resonate... but it wasn't enough. Then about four years ago we began to focus more on the "heart." This opened doors we had not seen before. Most here struggled with the idea of having a heart from which we express ourselves. For a couple years we ran with that message. We could feel we were getting closer to exposing a barrier to freedom for the people here. Then we combined teachings of the heart with personal relationship. You know, these foundational truths are often taken for granted and assumed everyone understands what they mean. But we discovered, that simply was not true. The African culture where we live and work does not view "personal relationships" the same way the Bible speaks of them.

Finally, we came across Peter, a pastor and director of a children's home. Ezekiel 36:26-27 says, "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." Peter's eyes and heart lit up. "This is what happened to me several years ago, but I never understood it. **Nobody ever taught us about the heart before.**" Peter came alive with joy and we saw an African man being set free from human traditions and entering into the "rest" of a personal relationship with Jesus.

When the pandemic began our educational ministry changed. Schools closed and we were quarantined, though we still sought to work with teachers through Zoom. At that time we heard teachers begin to interact with the truth of the heart and the need to become honest with one another in response to the Scripture.

Following that Peter and I began leading a group of men into the same truths and we are watching men who had never opened up on matters of sin and pain and confusion and emptiness, begin to share from their hearts... slowly by slowly, as people here would say.

God used the limitations of the pandemic to create opportunities to talk with each other in ways that are both beyond the previous norm and life-giving. We are seeing the beginning of what we have worked so many years to see and are grateful for His leadership and involvement in the ministry here during this unusual and unexpected time.



### *Ezekiel 36:26-27*

*And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

## Relief From Fears

Nancy Ellwood

About a week into the Covid-19 shut down, I read Psalm 57:1 – “Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.”

Ah, how that ministered to me and gave me direction of what to do during a pandemic I had never experienced! My job was to stay close enough to God during the shutdown to be in His shadow until the disaster passed. The author of the verse had known disasters and other disasters have come and gone throughout history. This pandemic, though worldwide, was not too big for God.

I was reminded of similar passages such as, “He will cover you with his feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.” Ps. 91:4.

The visual of a mother hen covering her chicks with her wings came to mind. One of my favorite stories my Mother used in children’s ministry is called, “Little Red Hen”. It tells of a mother hen and her chicks during a barn fire. While the mother hen could have flown out and gotten to safety, she knew her little chicks were too young to fly. She chose to stay in the barn and call her chicks to her take shelter under her wings. After the fire was out, as the farmer was walking through the ashes, he came upon what looked like an old hat and pushed it over with his foot. Out ran the little chicks that had taken refuge under their mother’s wings. The mother had given her life for her chicks.

How like the Father, who cares for us when we are helpless in the circumstances that surround us! God used this Scripture and image to bring relief from my fears of what is happening in our world.



## No Fear in Death

David Brabon, MD

The onslaught of the pandemic changed the world ...and altered my world. At work I had many patients scheduled for elective surgery. Some of these were patients with cancer which I fully intended to care for to the best of my ability in God’s grace. Among these was an elderly lady with a cancer at the corner of her mouth on the lower lip. She was scheduled in the OR, but I received a call canceling her surgery. I was told in the hospital that elective surgeries would not be permitted by order of the Governor. I was able to follow this lady’s progress by the mediation of the house doctor for the nursing home in which she resided. Her tumor became inoperable for a woman her age.

I received a lesson in patience, prayer and partnership through this experience. I was driven to prayer, and to the fellowship of the saints through the church. In this fellowship God provided Dr. Valentino, a specialist in Head and Neck Oncology Service at UK medical center. He kindly evaluated and set up radiation therapy for this precious woman. I am so grateful.

Moving to a more personal level, due to my age and medications, I fell into the high risk group during this pandemic. I observed people consumed with fear. But I recalled the Bible’s multiple recommendations to “fear not.” In all honesty I had no fear. If I would die, it would mean I would be with the One I love above all others, Jesus Christ. I do, however, hold in my mind the sadness I would feel if leaving family and friends I love so much. Death holds no fear for me like Saint Paul wrote in Philippians 1:19-25, “I believe that to depart would be far better, while remaining with you is necessary for now!”



My gratitude to you all in the church, for your wonderful love and support has sustained me through the challenges and losses in this pandemic.

I thank Jesus for you daily!

*Lamentations 3:57*

*“You came near when I called you, and you said, “Do not fear.”*

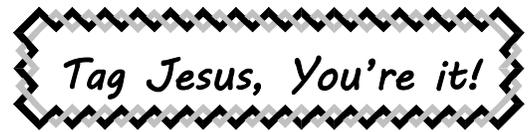
## Let Jesus Be “It”

Carole Prochina

It is hard to find words to express the feelings that arise when watching someone fight to take a breath, not to mention what the person struggling must be going through. You feel helpless, you want to DO something, fix the problem.

I work as a float pool nurse at the University of Kentucky Hospital. On this particular shift I had been assigned to the COVID-19 unit. My patient had taken a turn for the worse. Her breathing was worsening in spite of the interventions we were doing. She was on as much oxygen as we could give without using a ventilator. The respiratory therapist was trying different breathing treatments to see if this would help open up the airway. Meanwhile, preparations were being made as fast as possible to bring her to the ICU to place a breathing tube.

As I was doing what I could I said a prayer and this thought came to my mind, “Tag Jesus, You’re it!” What? Where did that come from, I thought. Then I remembered something that I had read the day before in the book *Life Without Lack*, by Dallas Willard. The analogy about playing tag had confused me at the time, but it had stuck in my mind apparently. He was writing about practicing the presence of Jesus in our lives. He wrote, “An emergency is like getting tagged ‘You’re it!’ You are instantly on the spot. Emergencies in your life are an opportunity to bring God into the realities of your life.” I needed to let Jesus be in control. Let Him be “it.” A peace filled my heart.



A few minutes later I was wheeling my patient into the ICU room. All was ready to place her on a ventilator. The doctor was ready with the tube, the nurse with all the medications drawn up. I left her in their hands and went back to my other patients. As I was leaving that evening, I walked over to the ICU to see how she was doing. She was not on the ventilator and was sleeping and breathing easy! Thank you, Jesus! I wanted to ask questions, but all the staff was busy, and I needed to get home. Did I really need to ask questions? I knew the answer.

I later looked up that section in the book. These words jumped out at me: *The time you spend off the spot, practicing God’s presence, will allow you to discern whether to refuse to be “it” and then act with trust in God.* Jesus, even in the daily step by step walk with you, in the mundane things of life may I always let you be it.

In an emergency or non-emergency, God is utterly dependable. Let Jesus be it!

## A New Open Door

Ted Moon



At the time we were told we could no longer hold services for the inmates at the Nicholasville jail due to Covid-19, the Free Methodist Church received two requests from inmates at the Kentucky State Reformatory asking for a pen pal. Pastor Dwight asked if I would be willing to correspond with them. It was God’s perfect timing for new ministry.

It has been my privilege over the past three months to be in correspondence with Don and Alan. Both are older and have many health issues. However, both are reading their Bibles regularly and are vocal in their praise of Jesus. They have asked if they can pray for our church and if we could send them a copy of the *Plumblines* to see the activities that the church is involved with.

Each week I send them a variety of items to encourage and help them in their faith. Many thanks for those who have contributed Daily Bread devotionals in the past. Would you please rejoice with me that these two are seeking to follow the Lord in the midst of these difficult days?

2 Corinthians 4:7

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”

## Grace When It's Needed

Vivien Reeves

Our summer during this pandemic has been marked by the challenges of cancer treatment for my husband. The expected hardship of this season has been made harder by unforeseen complications. Nonetheless, through the weariness and longing for the finish line one thing remains unchanged: the goodness of God, which has permeated every step, every twist, every turn. He has brought to life in myriad ways the depth of the verse I'm focusing on this year: "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in you." (Isaiah 26:3)

People who know me well and love me have hinted or asked outright if I'm actually as upbeat and positive as our updates suggest. Because the questions come from ones whom I know love me, I've taken that question to God. "So, Lord, how about it? Am I projecting how I 'should' feel rather than truth? Am I a phony baloney? Am I down-playing the hard to somehow make You and me both sound better than we are?"

His answer was to remind me of our roof. Nearly 20 years ago a hailstorm did enough damage to our roof that the insurance company totaled it. In researching replacement options Duane suggested we replace the asphalt with wooden shakes. He figured we could swing it if we did the labor ourselves (with some expert coaching from our contractor neighbor). We've always enjoyed doing projects together and have shingled before – but that didn't eliminate my fear of heights. Our house is a single-story ranch with a low-pitched roof but that didn't matter. My knees are equal opportunity shakers, one story or five.

We began our roof replacement project on Memorial Day. Duane was trucking through the week and just had short periods of time to work on the roof. It became obvious that unless I worked on the roof alone during the week that we couldn't be done before the snow laughed at us. So he would make sure I had enough supplies up there, hit the road and I would put on as many rows, one shingle at a time, as I could while he was gone. He would trim out the ends at the hip joints when he got home and we'd do more rows together. Week after week that's how we spent that summer. I remember thinking that I must have "gotten over" my fear of heights. I even chided myself for how easy it had been – I just need to step up and step into the thing I feared. What I didn't understand at that point was that it wasn't my own courage that enabled me to start, stick with and finish an undertaking so contrary to my own ability. It was God's grace.



We started our roof project on Memorial Day. The very last nail was driven on Labor Day. As soon as that final nail was driven my knees began shaking and quaking as badly as they ever had. That task was completed. That season was over. The specific help I needed from God to function through a hard assignment was no longer required.

I learned a life lesson on that Labor Day that I've not forgotten in other places where demands far over reached my capacity: God willingly applies His abundant grace in whatever form it is needed exactly when it is needed. I can't unlearn that. I've experienced it too many times to face difficulty now and think, "This is IT - this is the challenge that is greater than God's grace."

So today, in this season, I am not anxious. I don't know what the next twist may look like. We've had a couple just since I began writing this yesterday. But this I know: God's grace has an app for that. And He can be trusted.

*Isaiah 41:13*

*"For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."*

## Miracle Man

Debby Marchal



God has shown Himself faithful recently in the life of our family during a very difficult time. He has been present and active through His children, and He has been the Great Physician to the father-in-law of our son, Ben.

Gary Abbott was diagnosed with COVID-19 on March 18 and hospitalized. He was put on a ventilator and was in a coma for 27 days. He was in the hospital for 115 days—70 of those in the ICU. That time of separation from his family was difficult, but Gary had an army of prayer warriors lifting him up—several of them were from our church.

The doctors did not expect him to survive, but ended up calling him “Miracle Man.” He was on dialysis, had a trach, and all of his fingers and toes had to be amputated. He was told that he would always be on dialysis, but he came out of the hospital with no signs of diabetes.

Gary says that “God has worked many miracles in my life.” His family organized an outdoor time of praise and testimony upon his discharge from the hospital, where Gary told us that he was willing to go anywhere to tell his story. He knew that that's what God wanted him to do now.

In one of his daily updates, Governor Andy Beshear showed a video of Gary leaving the main part of the hospital to go to the rehab section. And he actually quotes Gary: “I am here because God wants me to do something to give other people encouragement. When it looks like it's over, heavy-duty prayer is what helps.” So, I want to say to my WPMC family: “Thank you, friends, for joining us on this journey. I appreciate each one of you for the prayers you offered up for Gary during those four months. He and his family felt your encouragement.

## What Do You NEED?

Vickie Reynen

Pastor Assah Prosper—in addition to being the ICCM National Coordinator for Togo, pastors a FM church in a small village, Gatiglokope-Madjikpeto, about an hour from the capital city of Lomé. During the Covid time, (which is still true right now)...the congregation wasn't meeting in the church, but some would come to where he and his family were living and meet there for worship every Sunday. In addition to ministering to those who came, he would also send out on WhatsApp a sermon or teaching every Sunday to several people. One of these people was an aunt, a relative of his mother's.

One Sunday after receiving the pastor's message, this aunt called Pastor Assah. She had a message for him. God had told her to ask him, “What do you need?” This took Pastor Assah by surprise, and he hedged a bit—humbly replying that whatever she may have or want to give him would be appreciated. She responded strongly saying, “No, God told me to ask you...what do you NEED.” Assah, who was renting the home where he had been living for the past five years, summoned the courage to state, “I need a house. I need a piece of property where I can build a home of my own.” She said okay. Then some time later, she called him back and told him that she had a piece of property that they had farmed, but it was about to be harvested and when the harvest was done, she would give the property to him...and give him money to build a home.

The work is now in progress.

The piece of property was in the same village where Pastor Assah and his wife have been living and pastoring the church. (His aunt/relative, does not live in that village). This gift to their family has been an incredible testimony to the church and the community!

Even in a time w/o the impact of Covid...Assah would not have been able to afford to purchase property—or build a home. To get a gift like this when things have been so difficult, has been an incredible encouragement to him and his family. We thank God, with Pastor Assah, for such a gift.



*James 1:17*

*“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”*

## God at Work

### Psalm 139: 13-16

Peggy Welch

One of the favorite classes I taught during my career as a high school biology teacher was human anatomy and physiology. In this class my students learned that just as every part of their body was created for a specific function so they also were created for a purpose. I had thought about writing about this connection, but did not feel confident. Early in the pandemic I was participating in a ZOOM Bible study on the Apostle Paul. The leader mentioned that The “Prison Epistles” generally refer to four letters written by the Apostle Paul while he was under house arrest in Rome. Although I was not under house arrest, “sheltering at home” sure felt like it.



Thus, my blog on WordPress was born. Each month I write a short devotional combining words from Psalm 139, and another scripture passage that relates to a part of the human body. I describe how the structure of that body part exactly matches its function.

My blog, “Fearfully and Wonderfully Made,” has turned into an amazing discipleship opportunity. Among the people who subscribe to it, are seven native speakers who translate it into Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish. I am thankful for friends I have made through mission trips and Friendship International. Two translators are from WFMC, Patricia Brabon and Cindi Angelo! It’s not important how many followers my blog has, but how many people will choose to follow Jesus through its words.

## Finding the Way Forward

Patricia Brabon

Although we are not able to go to the world, the world has come to Lexington through Friendship International, a ministry that many members of this church help with, and that our church has supported for many years.



I miss being with my family, friends, and students, but I am grateful for the opportunity to reconnect with them virtually through the different platforms. The challenge of teaching through Zoom was difficult at the beginning, but the Lord and some friends have helped me to overcome. In this way the Lord has opened the opportunity to reach international students that I had been teaching Spanish to for many years through Friendship International.

As a result my colleagues and I were able to keep the group together, not only so I can teach Spanish but also to share different challenges during this pandemic, talk about Christianity, and pray. Some of these ladies have not known about the Christian faith. They are from Turkey, China and Japan. It has been a blessing to know them, learn about their challenges, and share about our faith.

## A Lesson in Humility

A family that is normally quite independent but considered to be in the vulnerable group, learned in the early days of the pandemic to accept help from other members of the Christian community through having groceries delivered to their door. This was a gracious lesson from God in humility and community.

*Isaiah 43:19a*

*“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up;  
do you not perceive it?”*

## In God’s Time

Dan and Ann Dotterweich

For a year, we had been making nearly monthly trips to Georgia to care for Ann's dad who was living in an assisted living facility. We felt this was not sustainable as his condition was continuing to decline. Thanksgiving weekend 2019, we met Ann's brother and his wife at dad's facility to broach the subject of him considering moving closer to us.

Our expectation was that he would not want to and we might be able to convince him to come by April 2020 (obviously not expecting Covid). To our surprise, he was on board with the idea from the start. In less than 2 weeks, we got him lined up to move to an assisted living facility in Lexington that we had been working with. We were able to make reservations to fly to Atlanta, rent a car, drive him to the airport and fly back with him in one day. We also had his belongings moved to the new facility.



The day after we made the plane reservations, he fell and broke his hip. Even with this, we were able to get him on the plane and settled at Richmond Place in Lexington on January 9th, 2020.

At the end of January, he had another short hospitalization from which he returned in early February, 2020.

Our main praise is for the timing of all of this. By the time the pandemic hit, he was settled and we had been able to take care of many little things related to a move.

Currently, he has a primary care physician that can enter the facility during the pandemic. We have been able to take him out to a few medical appointments and even out to eat a few times.

Had he not moved, Ann & I would have had to continue traveling monthly to Georgia, staying in hotels during Covid and still likely not have been able to enter the facility to see him. God is good!



## Compassion Outpoured

God has extended great grace to the vulnerable throughout the world through Christian organizations like Samaritan’s Purse, World Vision, Food for the Hungry, etc.

One such organization, Horizons International, working in Beirut created a fund now called the Lebanese Crisis Fund for the people of Beirut after the explosion that was so destructive to them, hoping to raise \$20,000 through the fund.

Within three days \$220,000 had been raised (and growing). God shows His own compassion for those in need through His people.

*I Timothy 6:15*

*“...hich God will bring about in his own time—  
God, the blessed and only Ruler,  
the King of kings and Lord of lords...”*

## Pastor Lim Clears Hurdles to Fly Home

Darin Land

We had been praying fervently for over a month that the Lord would open the door for Chhenglim Chorn (aka Pastor Lim) to be able to return home to Cambodia to be with his family. Pastor Lim had come to the Philippines to study for his M.Div. at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. His wife and two “tweenage” sons had had to remain in Phnom Penh.

Pastor Lim was scheduled to go home at the end of the semester, but now with air travel suspended due to coronavirus lockdowns, there seemed to be no way for that to happen.

For weeks we tried to get him home, but we always seemed to be a half-step behind. We scheduled flights—only to have them canceled. We heard of other flights... after they had already taken off. We looked for multi-stop itineraries, but airports were closed to transit.

Things finally began to change when the Cambodian embassy arranged a direct flight. All Lim had to do was take a COVID test. At a specific lab. An hour’s drive away.

All that fell apart, though, when—to our great surprise—his results came back with a partial positive. Now Lim had to go into isolation, the school had to go into lockdown, the authorities had to be notified, and a confirmatory swab test had to be conducted. Needless to say, he missed the flight the embassy had arranged.

Matters took a turn for the better when the swab test came back negative and we learned of a second embassy-arranged flight. Now all he needed was a health certificate. And a travel pass. And “barangay” (town or neighborhood) clearance.

Helped by officials exemplifying the famed Filipino hospitality, we accomplished all these things with just hours to spare. After a middle of the night airport drop-off, Lim enjoyed an uneventful flight back to Phnom Penh where his wife was waiting for him with home-cooked food! She had to drop it off for him at the government quarantine isolation center. But after waiting about 24 hours for negative COVID test results, Pastor Lim was reunited with his family.



We give thanks to the Lord for making this mini-miracle possible. God is faithful and His timing is perfect.

## A Good Gift

Ruth Cook



Our grand-daughter is an elementary school speech therapist and loves her job and the children. However, being hired right out of college, in Florida she is required to complete five summers of study to get her Masters in order to keep her job. For three summers (from before the end of school in May until it began again in August) she had to drive to Orlando for her classes, an hour each way, five nights a week. This summer because of Covid-19, she was able to complete it all online at home without all the stress of commuting. Our whole family felt this was a gift from God.

*2 Thessalonians 5:17*

*“Give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

## A Few Personal Observations

Bonnie Lashbrook

Generally speaking, one blessing that has been birthed from the virus shut-down has been the advent of using technology more creatively. We have shut-ins who can now "attend" our own church services as opposed to having had to watch big TV church services. These same people are able to join small group meetings on Zoom fellowshiping with friends whom they would not get to see otherwise.

People who don't normally come to our church have asked me for the link. Neighbors who are bored or lonely, have accepted my invitation to join a virtual Bible study. Families who have led busy individual lives going in many directions have learned that family time is something new that they are actually enjoying. In some cases, families are actually getting to know one another rather than just sharing the same house.

Today, I had the opportunity to watch the memorial service of a friend who died in Florida last week. Under normal circumstances, I would not have flown to Florida to be there and would have missed it altogether.

Many of the Prime Timers have shared with me their appreciation for the calling committee members who telephone them regularly. New friendships have formed from this outreach. The recipients feel cared about and connected.

In addition to technological creativity, I have been very pleased with the social distancing efforts to keep celebrations alive as we participate in drive-by parades to celebrate babies, graduations, weddings, birthdays and anniversaries. I love how the Wilmore Fire and Police Departments have been willing to join our convoys adding importance to the occasions for the recipients.



If you are lonely and feel isolated, let me encourage you to give technology a try so that you can connect with others. If you are older and technology is a *foreign language* to you, ask a young person to help you. They will be pleased to know how to do something that you don't. Write down the steps as they show you. You CAN learn! If you know how to use technology and just haven't gotten connected, please make the effort. You'll be glad that you did.

## Consider It All Joy

Anna Dickie

A few weeks ago I was driving and a worship song I know came on the radio. I started singing along and worshiping while I drove. I made it just a few lines into the song before I broke down crying, I could feel it throughout my whole body. In that moment I realized how much I have missed worshiping with others these past months. As I reflected on it I found myself thinking of our brothers and sisters in faraway countries who must worship in silence or in secret for fear of death or punishment. While I do not feel what we are experiencing is equal to them, maybe through all this we can start to better understand the sacrifices they make for the name of Jesus.



Let's remember this:

"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." James 1: 2-4 NASB

*Acts 14:27*

*"On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them..."*

## Are You Ready?

Joanna Crabtree

I remember it clearly. I was in my side yard thinking about where I was going to start planting my spring herbs when I got a message saying school was going to be out of session two days before spring break because of Covid-19. I had vaguely heard about this virus, but had no idea what it would mean. Then it seemed like within a week our whole family life had changed. School was now at home until further notice. My part time job with a research grant that was in the schools was suspended until further notice. My husband was now having to work from home.

I remember the first week feeling so out of sorts. I was exhausted, frustrated, concerned, and overwhelmed at the amount of change that had happened so quickly. I remember starting to feel depressed. I was laying in my bed when the Lord asked me - "Joanna are you ready? Will you walk through this season with me so I can bring some deep healing", and that's when I knew.

Emotional eating. I have been an emotional eater for over twenty years of my life. But it goes deeper than that. The last five years or so I knew that somehow my mind had associated this extra 20 lbs. of "baby weight" to my daughter Lydia Ann. For those of you who don't know my family's story, our daughter Lydia Ann was diagnosed at 5 months in utero to have brain damage - the damage was so severe that they did not think that she would stay alive for gestation let alone birth. Our sweet girl did indeed survive, and we were blessed with the opportunity to bring her home and live life with her for 27 days.

Burying a child is one of the most traumatic things a person can experience. It is a loss that rips to the depth of your soul - your core - and knocks you off your feet. But going through that - surviving and thriving in the aftermath - is a testimony of God's goodness, faithfulness, and grace. Almost four months ago, when the Lord beckoned me to let Him heal deep places in my heart - I said yes because I trust what He can do and I know that He can heal.

If I am honest, eating to numb feelings is a whole lot easier than facing them, but it doesn't cause growth. When people ask me what I did during COVID-19, I say I got busy with God. As I no longer went to the pantry to soothe emotional pain, I had a lot of feelings surface. I remember running one morning and in the middle of my run the Lord and I were talking about Lydia Ann and I just started sobbing. Not the quiet kind of crying, but the ugly-sounding snot-dripping kind. There was a beauty and freedom in running lap after lap opening my heart and soul to allow Him to heal places in my heart that I hadn't even known were broken.



I have had my fair share of setbacks; at times I have slipped into old habits, but the difference is I learn from it and move forward not allowing shame to enter into my mind. As I write this, I am dealing with a knee injury, but I hold fast knowing that He who has started a good work in me will see it to completion.

I am grateful for this season. It is one that has tested me and brought me to my knees time and time again, but the Lord has breathed new life into me that wouldn't have been possible without it. So, I ask you, what will you do with this season? I challenge you to see it as an opportunity for new life within your own heart and wait expectantly on Him to lead you.

*Jeremiah 2:1*

*"The word of the Lord came to me..."*

*Psalms 62:8a*

*"Trust in him at all times, you people;  
pour out your hearts to him..."*

## Seeing 2020 More Clearly

Jerry Coleman

2020 started as an exciting year with clear vision and wonderful possibilities ahead! But soon my 2020 vision became cloudy and unclear. In February as we were returning from three weeks of leading pastors' conferences and preaching in local churches in India, we began to hear about a novel virus. I didn't imagine it would interrupt my 2020 plans too much. I was so wrong!

In 2019 I was on the road or in the air 50% of the year – most of it overseas. I grieve the fact that five international trips that were scheduled for 2020 have been postponed indefinitely:

- Kenya
- Australia
- Rwanda
- Egypt (we were to be in Egypt as I write this)
- Chile

Our usual ministry methods to denominations, local churches, pastors, and church leaders have been drastically changed.

In March I dusted off the pile of video-making equipment my children had given me 18 months earlier. For years they had been urging me to record my messages. Me...video? I knew nothing about it except for taking the occasional selfie.

What else was I to do stuck at home? How would I communicate my heart and God's message to those we love and honor around the world? Maybe my children were right.

I set up the tripod, hooked up the axillary lights, and attached my camera to it. Now what? Call the kids for instruction. I started this journey like a Freshman starts high school. A crash course in learning a more sophisticated version of selfies began. My head was dizzy with all the new information and instruction. I took down notes on paper like my father-in-law would do when I coached him about his computer. I tried to follow the directions and failed more than I succeeded.



It took me forever. But I had time. What else was I to do?

I kept working down my list from my young coaches: find a good background, adjust the lighting, raise the camera slightly above eye level, iron your shirt.... "Try not to read your message, Dad." So, I tried to memorize it and tape my outline onto my tripod.

Then editing the raw footage! A whole new field of study and technique. I began to figure out the basics with more coaching.

Actually, I can thank Pastor Daryl for kick-starting this new thing. He invited me to produce a video on a Biblical response to the coronavirus for our church's YouTube channel. After a lot of work and prayer, I sent my "homemade" video project to Pastor Daryl's computer in March.

Then I just kept going at it with kind but constructive encouragement from my children. They continue to coach me. I continue to listen to them and try to improve on what I'm now doing.

*(continued on page 13)*

*I Corinthians 9:22-23*

*"To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings."*

## Seeing 2020 More Clearly *(continued)*

We are thrilled to see that people are actually watching these videos! I have a praise party when I get 500 views of a video – some with more and some with less. I am getting messages from people I know from many countries around the world. Others I don't even know are joining in.

Just yesterday I sent out my weekly video. It's just under four minutes in length but the Holy Spirit is taking it beyond where I can physically go.

I'm seeing through the cloudiness of this crazy year. God is making a way for me to reach many people even though I'm not traveling in person. More people are hearing my messages through a different means. Hmmmm. I'm seeing 2020 more clearly these days!

### The Open Door

Brent and Colleen Weaver

The impact of Covid-19 has dramatically changed our world. As people of faith, James' exhortation to let endurance strengthen us is indeed a challenging word for us in this time.

Here are a few of the great joys that God is bringing into our lives:

- More people in Kyiv are involved in weekly online worship, Discovery Bible studies and in the Super Saturday seminars.
- Brent's new Thursday evening Discovery Bible Study group is mostly atheist or agnostic young adults. But all members indicated that they want to continue to meet for more Bible discussions after the group completed the introductory 4 meetings. By the way, the Tuesday group that you prayed for through the fall is still meeting.
- All five of us from Kyiv who attended the discipleship training in January have begun new discipleship groups with Ukrainians. We are praying that these believers will be equipped and ready to disciple others perhaps by the end of the year. Colleen wondered whom she could disciple, and God put the names of two Ukrainian women on her heart. When she contacted them, they immediately responded "yes" and asked to meet weekly.
- Yesterday we had a reunion meeting with everyone who is participating in the year-long disciple-making cohort. (Photo) We shared about the disciples we are making as well as our own growth as disciples of Jesus. Joy and love characterized our online time together.
- Internet connections that enable us to talk to one another every day and to meet with people around the globe or on the other side of the city due to the lockdown restrictions.
- The European Leadership Forum will be held over the next 6 days. Because of Covid-19, the conference is being offered for free online. Christians from across Europe will be gathering in online seminars, workshops, and plenary sessions to encourage and kindle our vision to see Jesus Christ glorified in our continent. Please pray for a great harvest through this opportunity to learn, to be encouraged, and to network with other believers in Europe.
- Brent is encouraged by the renewed and bold vision of the Estonian couple that he is coaching in church planting.



What could have been a lockdown of ministry, has instead been an opening to new people and opportunities. Pray for a rich harvest from these difficult days.

(May 22, 2020)

*1 Corinthians 16:9a*

*"...because a great door for effective work has opened to me..."*

## Covid Connections

Thad and Nikki Roller

We're keeping our eyes on Jesus, who is steadfast no matter the circumstance!  
 "And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. <sup>2</sup> We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith." Hebrews 12:1-2

### Praises

- It's hard to meet new people during quarantine, but Thad was glad to connect with three new birding friends for a quick local outing. They showed interest in our English classes and we hope to have deeper spiritual conversations soon.
- We're excited that Pastor Nelson from Chile is sharing what he's learning from the church planting training with others, including the mayor of his city!
- At least 5 people came to know the Lord this past week through the people we're training in church planting.
- In addition to the girls' Spanish tutoring session each week, they'll be connecting with another teacher from their school for further educational support. We're grateful for these opportunities the girls look forward to.



### Prayer Requests

- Pray for those in whom we are investing—that they will grow in their faith and that they will share their faith.
- Pray as we help establish and develop Free Methodist church ministry and organizational structure in Colombia that will, in the long-term, train and equip pastors more systematically.
- Pray for those who are close to Jesus but are not yet followers.

## Covid Together

Daryl Diddle

The virus situation has brought several blessings to our family. First was the initial rest I was able to get in the shutdown. Since I've been trying to be both pastor and Superintendent these past months, my schedule was very tight, including quite a bit of travel. With the shutdown came opportunity to relax the schedule a bit - since no one wanted to see me on their doorstep - and actually do the work I was able to do better.



With that somewhat relaxed schedule came the largest blessing, which was for our family to spend more time together during Ben's last semester at home before beginning college. Since Paul needed driving hours toward his license, we took day trips in the car, usually winding up at a disc golf course (which David and Ben especially loved.) The loosening of all our schedules gave us time we would have not taken otherwise, and I'm very grateful for that.

There have been disappointments, certainly; - the biggest was that we were not able to watch all three of our boys play together on their Ultimate club team this past spring. But the time has brought us closer as a family simply by giving us more opportunity to be together and enjoy one another. For that I'm very grateful.

*Hebrews 12:1*

*"And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us."*

*Psalms 133:1*

*"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"*

## Give God No Rest!      Howard A. Snyder

**WILMORE**  
FREE METHODIST CHURCH

It sounds almost blasphemous. “Give God no rest!” Yet this is what Isaiah says. Isaiah “will not rest” until God fulfills his promise fully to restore Israel. Jerusalem’s sentinels should “take no rest” and “give [God] no rest until He establishes Jerusalem and makes it renowned throughout the earth” (Isa 62:6-7).

God has firmly promised. Persist in prayer therefore. Give God no rest until He does what He said He’d do.

This theme runs all through the Bible. God does not want us simply to submit passively, become Christian fatalists. He wants us to pray, persist, ask questions, even argue with God until God does everything He promised.

Jesus talks of *persistence* in intercession. His disciples are “to pray always and not to lose heart,” like the needy widow who kept pestering an unjust judge until he finally answered her plea. “Listen to what the unjust judge says,” Jesus explains. “Will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to Him day and night? . . . I tell you, He will quickly grant them justice” (Luke 18:1-8).

Paul prayed constantly for the churches. He spoke of “struggling” in prayer (Col 2:1).

In the Old Testament, Jacob wrestled with God. Moses struggled mightily that God would forgive and still lead his people. David in Psalms complained that God had not yet done what He promised, and insisted God act.



God does not want us to cower before Him. He wants us to stand up, argue, remind God of his word—*persist* until God does everything He pledged.

As we do so humbly, trustingly, we ourselves become agents of God’s action. A big part of that action is, in fact, intercession. Persistent prayer is anointed action.

As we persist, God honors our faith, hope, insistence in His own way. God both changes us and changes our world. God promises in Isaiah, “You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her [*Hephzibah*], and your land Married [*Beulah*]; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married” (Isa 62:3-4). Marriage covenant—God, people, land—foreshadowing the great marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9).

In this big-picture context, Jesus wants us to pray persistently that God’s kingdom may come—God’s will be done on earth as in heaven.

Our key role in the affairs of peoples and nations, of politics and pandemics, is *intercession*. We may have other roles too, but God calls his church to intercede for big as well as little things.

What may seem to be God’s “no” or delay is really God’s call to intercede. Sometimes when God says *no*, He is asking for an argument! This we see in Abraham, Jacob, Hannah, Moses, and in John in the Revelation.

The way to solve a problem or paradox or pandemic is to intercede persistently, insistently, boldly. “Give God no rest” until He fulfills his kingdom promises. Such persistence pleases God and (mysteriously to us) prompts divine action.

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*Isaiah 62:6-7a*

*“You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest until He...”*

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## Wilmore Free Methodist Church

### Vision Statement

A Community that Reflects  
Jesus's Vision and Values

### Mission Statement

Wilmore Free Methodist Church  
will faithfully offer  
members and neighbors  
the Word of God,  
the love of the Father,  
the grace of Jesus,  
and the power of the Holy Spirit.  
We will be Christ's presence  
in our world.



# The Plumbline

Newsletter of the Wilmore Free Methodist Church

October / November 2020



## Down the Road

Katie Winkles

I've been reflecting and praying. Quite honestly I can say that I've experienced God's presence, guidance and provision in new ways over the course of the last 6 months, but I can't yet summarize that concisely in words. I think that down the road a bit more I will be able to look back and do that, but right now I'm simply learning to trust God's timing and purposes day by day, asking him to help me do the one thing I can do and trust him for how things will work out.



*Isaiah 41:20*

*so that people may see and know, may consider and understand,  
that the hand of the LORD has done this,  
that the Holy One of Israel has created it.*