

THE ENCOURAGER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF HUDSON CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Italians praise God from their windows... “How Great is Our God!”

Hello family! I miss you all and cannot wait for us to return to gathering in person! However, I also am thankful for this season. It really is a great time to step back and re-evaluate daily life. There are great opportunities to grow in patience in life and gentleness with those in our household, as well as the daily discipline of time with the Lord. I hope you are each pursuing that in the strength God provides. I thought this article shared by a couple pastors in Italy on the Gospel Coalition website was great advice for this season. Enjoy and implement!

In Christian Love, Brandon

10 Ways to Thrive in Quarantine

In Italy, we’re in the midst of a fascinating social experiment: millions of people in lockdown for an indefinite number of days or weeks, maybe months.

For some, it’ll be a chance to take stock. For others, anxiety will dominate. For others, tension will rise as they share limited space.

Here people are finding various ways to survive, but wouldn’t it be good to not only survive, but to redeem it as a gift from a generous heavenly Father? We didn’t ask for this, and perhaps lockdown is your worst nightmare, but here are a few thoughts on how to thrive during these odd and frightening days.

1. Delight in God's grace and in being gracious.

We are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8), and we grow in godliness by grace (Eph. 2:10)—amazing news for fallen, fragile creatures. Keep returning to these truths as you sin during lockdown. As you lose patience with your children, spouse, elderly relative, or housemates, flee to the cross. Enjoy the forgiveness and mercy Jesus alone can give.

Be quick to say sorry and quick to forgive. People are scared and irrational. They'll say and do things they don't necessarily mean, so bless them with grace. Be "kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Eph. 4:32). "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8).

Take a moment to think through the last 24 hours. Who do you need to say sorry to? Go, do it now.

2. Take one day at a time.

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matt. 6:34)

Focus on the present. Don't get caught up in negative thought cycles and what ifs. Give thanks for the many blessings that you have received today.

Keep a note of thanksgiving and share with others in church. We've been doing that as a church here with videos, and it has been a huge encouragement.

3. Speak to yourself.

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Ps. 43:5)

As Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote, "Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?" Take unhelpful thoughts captive. This can be particularly difficult during a sleepless night, when our fears and concerns take on pandemic proportions.

Get up, read God's Word and repeat it to yourself until your Good Shepherd's voice drowns out fear.

4. Stop what you're doing and read the Bible.

Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. (Ps. 46:10)

I'm not good at being still, even worse at stopping. As the Lord forces us to do both during lockdown, why not rejoice at this opportunity to know him better? In the clamor of 24-hour news alerts and social media, treasure his Word.

Set aside time to read and meditate on Scripture. Build it into your daily routine.

5. Stay calm and pray.

These days of lockdown represent a keen opportunity to pour out our hearts to our heavenly Father. Usually, there are many distractions, but not now. Let's use every moment, as individuals, as couples, as families to intercede for the sick and dying, for the medical services, for the government, for fellow Christians, and for those who don't yet know Christ.

Plan the next seven days of prayer. When will you pray? With whom? For whom?

6. Stay in touch.

Whether we're together under one roof on a Sunday or separated in homes, we remain one body, one family, one holy temple. Keep in touch with each other using the myriad social-media platforms, interactive virtual meetings, and livestreams available today.

One pastor remarked recently that for the first time since the invention of the internet, it feels we're redeeming it for God's glory. Ring each other and let each other know you're praying and thinking of each other. Be mindful of those feeling lonely and isolated.

Write a list of people you want to contact over the next week. Think through ways to include those with less access to technology.

7. Regulate news intake.

We can easily become obsessed with the latest coronavirus stats. How many cases, which countries and cities, how many deaths, where are we on the bell curve? Be careful how much time you spend monitoring the news: it can quickly dominate your waking hours in an unhealthy way.

Stay informed, but beware of obsessive tendencies. Regulate screen time. As you watch the news, pray for each point.

8. Delineate work from family and rest time.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens. (Eccles. 3:1).

In lockdown, every day seems the same. Weekdays and weekends seem the same. It's easy to lose track of time. As much as possible, then, build structure into your days and weeks.

Many of us will be working from home. Our children will have virtual school classes. Build sustainable routines around these moments: work times, family or social times, rest times. Try to stick to them. Have designated work space and leave your phone there. Try to make the weekend feel like a weekend.

What are your usual rest patterns, and how could they translate to life in lockdown? Draw up the first draft of a daily routine. Put it into practice and test. Adjust as you go.

9. Establish personal space.

Regardless of whether you are an extrovert or an introvert, we all need time and space to ourselves. This can be difficult in small living spaces with young families. How can you create a space to recharge on your own? Be creative with space: one of our daughters has found that she studies well in our cupboard (we've noticed our biscuit supply has taken a hit during lockdown!).

Look around your home and garden: how can you allocate space? Look at your daily routine: is there some down time for each of you?

10. Exercise.

For physical training is of some value. . . . (1 Tim. 4:8)

Exercise strengthens the body, helps keep the mind healthy, and boosts energy levels. While complying with quarantine restrictions, exercise regularly.

Dig out your old gym kit and go for it.

Cling to Christ

To thrive in lockdown is to set up a spiritually, mentally, and physically sustainable life. The farther into this we go, the more distant and intangible the end feels.

I don't want to sound alarmist, but we may not return to life as usual. Perhaps the real battles will begin post-lockdown. In that case, we need to find a way to thrive in this time so that we can face whatever comes our way, trusting we can do nothing without the Lord's sustaining hand.

(<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/10-ways-thrive-quarantine/>)

-Mark Oden, Stefano Mariotti

Prayer Requests

Tina Vaughn
HCC Prayer Coordinator

If you have a prayer request to share or an update, please contact Tina at the following number or email.

Tina Vaughn
(309) 530-4588
vaughns777@yahoo.com





Photo courtesy clipart-library.com

Summary of the Leadership Meeting March 17, 2020

Meeting called to order at: 5:33 p.m.

Members present: Brandon Current, Dale Hussemann, Dave McGraw, John Walsh & Larry Dowden

Opened in prayer

Meeting minutes: The February 20, 2020 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

Budget/Financial Reports: The financial report for February 2020 was reviewed and approved.

Building:

1. Baptistry - The plumbing/electrical repairs are completed and working. The resurfacing requires a second coat that should be completed this week.
2. Dimmer switches in the sanctuary have been replaced.
3. Phone/internet – The cable to the building is done & needs to be hooked up inside.
4. Elevator – The paper work has been mailed into the state and we are awaiting its return to mail in payment for the certificate of operation.
5. We will plan to upgrade the speakers in the library, nursery and kitchen now that there has been more use of the library during worship service.
6. Memorial fund – We have just over \$10,000 in the memorial fund. There was discussion regarding potential projects.

Food Pantry: There was discussion on how to operate the food pantry with the coronavirus restrictions. We will plan on changing how the food is distributed limiting person to person contacts, new clients and updating the call list.

New Item for Consideration: Coronavirus – With the new CDC recommendations limiting gatherings to groups no larger than 10, we agreed after discussion to cancelling worship services and arranging for the HCC web page to offer a worship experience/sermon until we can resume regular worship services again.

Prayer: There was a time of prayer focused on congregation physical and spiritual needs.

Meeting adjourned at: 7:09 p.m.



living|alternatives

pregnancy resource center

Mission of the Month

Living Alternatives Pregnancy Resource Center

Mission Statement: Living Alternatives Pregnancy Resource Center is committed to saving the lives of unborn children by promoting life-affirming options and providing practical assistance, while sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed, and to minister restoration to those who have been wounded by the trauma of abortion.

Living Alternatives advertises as the Pregnancy Resource Center with free testing and confidential counseling. Most women come into the center because they are in crisis. Help is offered in all types of situations – abortion-minded and not abortion-minded. Other services including parenting classes, providing baby clothing and other needs, abstinence education and post abortion counseling.

The Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC) is located at 303 Landmark Dr. in Normal and in the next few months the Mobile Medical Unit will be arriving. This will give the PRC opportunity to reach into the community with pregnancy related medical services.

The PRC accepts donations of a variety of baby items that are new or like new. Volunteering for even an hour or two each week is also a great way to support this ministry. For more information on the ministry at the PRC, go to www.hopeforafuture.com.

Current prayer requests include the following:

- * Pray that we will continue to reach clients in need
- * Pray as we proceed with our Mobile Medical Ministry that we will find the right staff and volunteers to work on the Unit
- * * Pray for God's protection for the ministry

Our HCC Missions Coordinator for the Pregnancy Resource Center is Jan Wills.

April 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all on-site church activities for April have been suspended. Please visit the church website for online services!

HudsonChristianChurch.com

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
			1 No church activities COVID-19	2 No Food Pantry Preparation Day	3	4 No Food pantry
5 No on-site church activities COVID-19 Listen Online at HCC website!	6	7	8 No church activities COVID-19	9 No Leadership Meeting	10 Good Friday Listen online at HCC website!	11
12 EASTER SUNDAY Listen Online at HCC website! No on-site church activities COVID-19	13	14 No Ladies Aid Meeting	15 No church activities COVID-19	16	17	18
19 No on-site church activities COVID-19 Listen Online at HCC website!	20	21	22 No church activities COVID-19	23	24	25
26 No church activities COVID-19 Listen Online at HCC website!	27	28	29 No church activities COVID-19	30	April Birthdays Brandon Current April 2 Kim Taylor April 3 Stephanie Wolf April 4 Cricket Miller April 7 Ashley Richard April 9 Skylar Shepherd April 16 Mary Lobdell April 20 Steve Baird April 23 Joe Wilkinson April 27 Terry Dowden April 27	