

**THE SEBRING CHRISTIAN
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DOC)
JUNE 2020**

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It is noted that the Chinese word for crisis "Weiji" contains two Chinese characters. One means danger while the other means opportunity. This rendition of that word, although not especially precise, has made its interpretation all over world, both Western and Eastern, accepted by business, politics, culture, religion, and a few other disciplines. It is interesting that in a crisis we have the creative friction of danger and opportunity. It is just a perplexing concept but true.



We have been in a crisis! It seems very difficult to deny that a pandemic is a crisis filled with danger. We have taken great steps in this crisis to avoid the danger or minimize the danger or be acutely aware of the danger but yet there is danger nevertheless.

As so many of you have heard and said "we will never be the same." We now can take note of opportunity in that Chinese word "crisis". It may shake us to our core, but we have opportunity just as the early church had.

Hindsight may be 20/20 but foresight is not so clear. The decisions we make today will impact upon tomorrow just as the decisions we made yesterday impacted us today, and we can go back ad infinitum and the same thing is true. My question to you as a congregation is "what are the opportunities in this crisis we wish to leverage, and how do we impact the future?" We can go back to the days of yesteryear, changing nothing and doing everything just like we did, reminiscing about the past and reflecting about the way life used to be. We can pretend the crisis had no impact on our congregation, community and country. Or, we can charge ahead attempting to get insight through our common faith to the opportunities available and then capitalize on those opportunities.

I had a vision the other day. Actually there were two visions. Both of them were 20 years in the future and two folks were reminiscing and one asked of the other "is that little Disciple church in Sebring still meeting?" The person replied "I think they were struggling and about to close their doors or have closed their doors. That is too bad. They were one of the few Disciple Churches in the area and just got left behind."

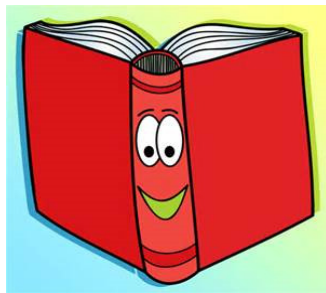
The other vision that I had, and I actually thought about this first, but for literary purposes I have mentioned it second. A group at the same time in 20 years future were talking and they said "remember the pandemic of 2020 and the role of the First Christian Church of Sebring." "Oh yeah" said the other one. "That was an amazing time for the congregation. I never did know how they sought the Spirit of God to where that little church now of 200 or 300 people did so much. How did a bunch of folks that were young by no means make such good decisions to make such an impact on the city and state and world? As we look back now we can see those disciples are scattered all over the planet?"

What is possible through Christ? Is it possible at all? This is Pentecost, and you see that is what happened at the very first Pentecost. That crisis; danger for those early Christians in that early church was real, but it was also an opportunity taken because of the dedication and devotion of just a small poor and mostly illiterate group of men and women sharing their faith.

What will it be?

Pastor Alan

We are reading "Treasured Grace" by Tracie Peterson. In untamed Oregon country one young woman fights to keep her family safe. Grace Martindale must care for her two younger sisters after their parents died. She marries the Right Reverend T. S. Martindale and they head out on a wagon train, however cholera hits their entire group and her husband dies leaving her alone with her sisters, Hope and Mercy. Dr. Whitman and his wife agree to let her and her sisters stay at the Whitman Mission in Oregon for the winter until they can hear from her Uncle in Oregon City to find out what to do next. The mission is located between warring Indian tribes of the hostile Cayuse, the Nez Perce and the Walla Wallas which the mission people minister to as well as the people inside the mission. Grace is a healer and tries to help the people. She meets a fur trapper Alex Armistead and together they use her remedies to try and heal the people in spite of Dr. Whitman's disapproval. The death toll from a measles outbreak arises and so do the tensions between the natives and the settlers. Grace finds herself and her loved ones in more danger than she could ever imagine. The Whitman Mission is part of our history and this story is based on true events.



Please read as follows: Read pg. 209 to 314 to finish the book when we are able to be together again.



Shoebox.

Because of all they do, the Outreach Committee decided to donate \$200.00 from our budget to the Samaritan's Purse. If anyone would like to donate to them directly, please let me know.

I hope you continue to keep an eye open for items to put in the shoeboxes. We would like to double what we did last year. We sent 36 boxes in 2019, so that means 72 in 2020.

Wanda Gordon



CHOIR NEWS

(June 2020)

None of us ever expected that this social distancing would last this long, but it looks like it's here to stay for a while. So we need to do our best and respect each other. I have a new CD made for the choir when we return with 7 new songs on it that I know you'll enjoy. However, singing creates more force than talking so what I'm hearing from choral resources is that choir will be one of the last things to return to the church. So keep singing at home and keep your voices active when you can. All we can do is take

life one day at a time.

Keep in Tune, Jaquae

A JOYFUL NOISE

The chime choir will be the last thing to return due to the fact we can't be socially distant, plus we can't sanitize the chimes. But we will return one day!!! I miss you all!!!

Abraham and Sarah welcomed three strangers who turned out to be the Lord. Jesus said, "If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple," the giver will be rewarded (Matthew 10:42, NIV). An ancient Jewish proverb asserts: "Hospitality is one form of worship." A Russian Orthodox monk is said to have told a younger one, "Sometimes I see a stranger coming up the road and I say, 'Oh, Jesus Christ, is it you again?'" And an old Gaelic poem declares, "Often, often, often, goes the Christ in the stranger's guise."

Sometimes we think we must do something big to serve God. Today, when you smile at someone on the street, take time to entertain a child's question, bring cookies to a new neighbor, thank a server or clerk ... know that you are serving Jesus, that you are worshiping God.

—Heidi Mann

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years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul."

—Samuel Ullman

* * *

"Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine."

—Lord Byron

* * *

"Solutions are not found by pointing fingers; they are reached by extending hands."

—Aysha Taryam

* * *

“No man stands taller than when he stoops to help a child.”
—Abraham Lincoln

Highly esteemed

After returning from a lengthy mission trip overseas, John Huffman and his fellow passengers were held up in customs for two hours. When he finally made it to the packed airport lobby, Huffman realized it might take a while to find his family. But suddenly his 3-year-old daughter ran toward him yelling, “Daddy! Daddy! That’s my daddy!” and launched into his arms.

“What a welcome,” he writes. “I have never felt so loved and acknowledged in my life.” Perhaps that’s how God feels when we call on his name in worship and prayer, acknowledging him as our heavenly Father — and honoring him above all else.

Women’s Disciples

We will not meet again until Sept. But if the Virus allows gatherings, perhaps we can go lunch together in the next month or so.

kindled fire

“I can worship outside among nature just as well as I can inside a church building.” That claim is especially common during the summer, when church attendance tends to decline.

Certainly it’s possible to worship and talk to God among his creation. In fact, George Washington Carver called nature “an unlimited broadcasting station, through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in.” And Martin Luther said, “God writes the Gospel not in the Bible alone, but also on trees, and in the flowers and clouds and stars.”

Yet corporate, or church, worship is still vital. Luther also noted: “At home, in my own house, there is no warmth or vigor in me, but in the church when the multitude is gathered together, a fire is kindled in my heart and it breaks its way through.” When we’re away from God’s house, we miss blessings and opportunities including communion, fellowship and support. So this summer, spend time in nature but don’t neglect “to meet together” (see Hebrews 10:25)!

The above is an article I copied from Newsletter Newsletter. As we attempt to open the doors of the church once again, let’s think about that. It was nice to be able to worship together from afar via Face Book and Zoom, but to have that added blessing of meeting together is a joy indeed. Sue



BIRTHDAYS

JUNE 7 Pat Rhodes
7 C.J.Wiggin
7 Shirley Lewis
7 Karen Lucas
11 Lain McWilliams
20 Jane Walkington
26 Bridglal Ramkissoon

ANNIVERSARIES

JUNE 2 Desmond & Barbara Walker
22 Ron & Sue Colwell
28 Lain & Joan McWilliams
30 Phil & Karen Lucas
30 Bob & Pat Rhodes

****We will have a “soft” opening of the church sanctuary on June 14, 2020. Pastor Alan will still be streaming the services live on FaceBook and Zoom. If you feel that you want to come and worship with us, we will have masks available and sealed communion cups for your convenience. Service will be at 10:30 a.m. as usual. No fellowship in the kitchen until further notice.



