

SPECIAL ALL CHURCH EDITION: 'The Prayer 20/20 Impact' May 17th, 2020

Dear Praying Friends, and Partners In Prayer Team, and
whole Church Family,

*"For we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good
courage, and we would rather be away from the body and
at home with the Lord!"*

2 Corinthians 5:7-8 (ESV)

"We live by what we believe will happen, not by what we can see."

2 Corinthians 5:7 (ERV)

"Our life is lived by faith. We do not live by what we see in front of us."

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NLV)

"The path we walk is charted by faith, not by what we see with our eyes."

2 Corinthians 5:7 (Voice Translation)



Have you ever asked the question, "What is next?" I'm sure as we all continue through the Covid-19 pandemic, we are eager to move on to normal or find out what is next. It has been my passion and all-consuming desire that we as a church understand the power of prayer. I've taken time these last four weeks to show you from the book of Acts that we are an "upper-room" church. I want us to not underestimate the power of our prayers. Even though this time tends to make us feel useless and helpless, our prayers are a mighty and powerful working of God. We should never feel our prayers are ineffective, but they are mighty! Because our God is mighty! Andrew Murray wrote in his wonderful exposition, *With Christ In the School of Prayer*, "Who can say what power a church could develop and exercise, if it gave itself to the work of prayer day and night for the coming of the kingdom, for God's power on His servants and His Word, for the glorifying of God in the salvation of souls?"

I pray that you are convinced that prayer not just works, but is working. Are we ready for a new level of earnest, passionate, God-size prayers? Don't let another week go by without praying and seeking the face of God, because the answers are happening and yet to happen. As I cultivate my garden and plant my seeds into the ground, I have this growing anticipation for the wonderful fruit from my garden which will mostly not benefit me until June or July. Right now if you look at my fenced garden, you don't notice anything, but everything is working and growing to soon sprout by God's power. Brothers and sisters that is going to happen for us as a church as a result of our prayers! Let's have the courage to trust God! I can never say it enough; we must keep laboring in prayer!

And I want us as a church to think about that statement of our church verse:

"We walk by faith, and not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7) I even put several newer translations of the verse above to get us to think about it in an active and different way. Our lives are filled with walking here and there mindlessly. I want us to walk intentionally and grow in our faith. In weeks coming, I want to begin to prep our thinking for reopening the church. It will not be a sudden switch of a light! Suddenly it's on! "Open the doors and we all come back home." It will be more like a slow dimmer switch that slowly gets brighter. So, I

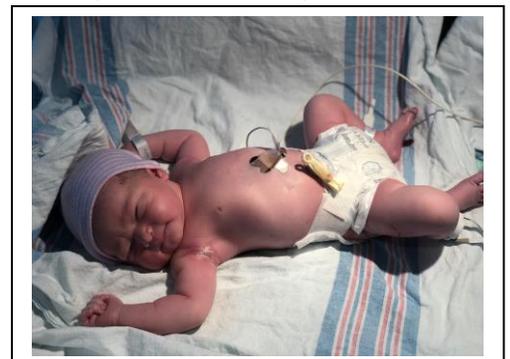
want to focus and encourage us to "walk by faith" in a more diligent and definite way. Each of the next four weeks, I will take the idea of walking by faith and help us to answer the question "What is it for Palisades Community Bible Church to walk by faith?"

I've been slowly reading bit-by-bit a book called *The Picture of a Godly Man* by Puritan writer Thomas Watson. In it he reminds us believers that we should be like Enoch and Noah. *"Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9)*. So I've been just been thinking about the age in which Noah lived how very corrupt it was: *"The wickedness of man was great in the earth" (Gen. 6:5)*. But the iniquity and the fears of the time could not put Noah off his walk. So I've decided that as we walk through Covid-19 times, we need to prepare to reopen, and I want our lives to preach that we are living a life that is godly. So it is from Thomas Watson's spark-of-an-idea that I starting thinking of ways for us to "walk by faith" as a whole church in order to get ready to reopen. I want to convince us to pray and prepare slowly; putting anticipation into our hearts and legs into our faith so that the evidences of our spiritual walk are evident in us as a whole church.

How do we become a "walk-by-faith" church ready to reopen?

1. We walk, as always, under God's Seeing Eye even when the world doesn't understand what is happening. Noah was building a boat for a flood in a world that never knew what rain was. I know it seems incredible, but it is true because God's Word tells us. We are in essence doing the same thing; we are getting ready an Ark of safety in Christ for a world that doesn't know Jesus is coming! We want to be like David, *"I have set the Lord always before me" (Psalm 16:8)*.

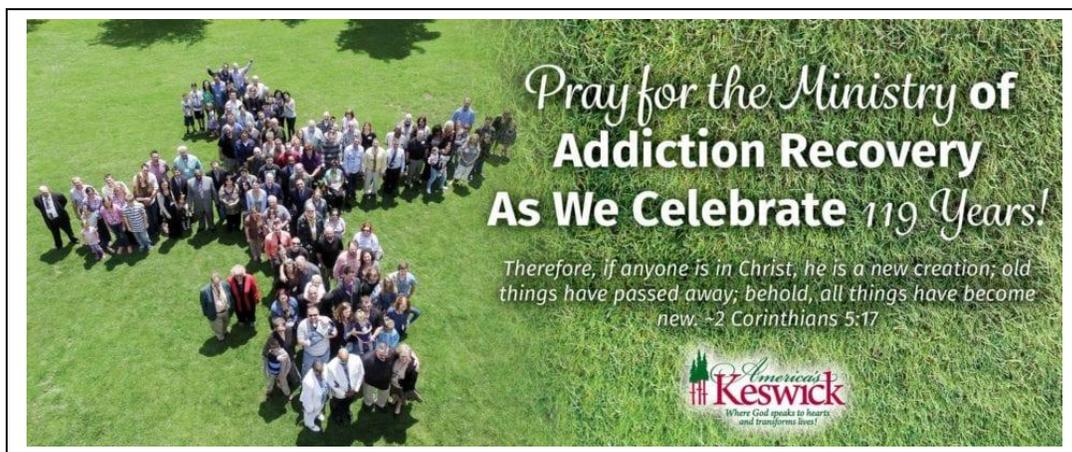
One way we can praise the Lord is for the birth of Giovanna Rose (meaning, "The Lord is Gracious!") to parents Kenny and Colleen Lisi. This is Bev Kramer's daughter and we congratulate her as a grandmother! We've been praying for the baby coming for several weeks now, but we are rejoicing in the new life of this little one. (Picture of baby included.)*



We need to keep praying for spiritual births for our church. We never know what great workings God is doing in hearts! Will you keep praying?

How do we become a “walk-by-faith” church ready to reopen?

2. We walk with the familiarity and intimacy that our souls have with God when the world is fearing. Friends walk and console themselves one with another. When you walk the canal trail, as Lori and I have been trying to do regularly, we don't walk with masks and 30 feet apart. We walk together hand-in-hand because we know we are safe from the coronavirus. We walk closely, we talk in whispers and delights, and we keep near enjoying each other's presence. We occasionally walk the path talking and praying intimately with God. When people do come by us, we do put up our masks, and wave a hello. Most people are kind and greet us, but many won't. They fear the consequences of the virus. All this to say that we should be showing the unsaved world that we have a “soul” intimacy with our Father in heaven. Do you take advantage of that in every way possible?



This week I received a call on our prayer line and it was someone from Keswick Bible Conference. He was calling to ask us for what we as a church would like prayer. I said, “You may not know it, but you called our church prayer line.” He replied, “Great, let's take time and connect the power of both our prayer lines right now and pray!” I was so blessed. That is why I am putting the Keswick May prayer calendar as an attachment with our sermon send outs this week. Take a moment and place it somewhere where you can also pray for them more. For those who receive the sermon through mail, I will have a printed copy.

How do we become a “walk-by-faith” church ready to reopen?

3. We walk knowing we are above the “things of this earth” and God is in control. Colossians says, “We want to set our eyes on things above!” (Colossians 3:1). It was said of Enoch, “Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him” (Genesis 5:24). Hebrews 11:5 says, “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he

should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.” We don’t know how that looked, but I think it was like how Paul describes the rapture: “*And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord*” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). It was what Lori describes as, “Honey, you just kept talking about something but didn’t noticed that I had left the room. You act like I never left and you expect an answer.” That is the intimacy of walking with our eyes set on things above! I believe that means we actively keep walking and talking and doing everything as if in a blink of an eye, Christ takes us away! We can do that now during Covid-19. Does this world notice what God is doing here? Do we pray?

I’ve been praying hard for Dave Stiansen over at Haycock Camp these last few months. As they realize the early May activities set a pace for the ministry, Dave is actually concerned about how the summer will go. Most camping ministries are making cancelations and trying to make changes to their programs. Dave sent this message to us this week:



“In light of the ongoing situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, Haycock has made the difficult decision to cancel all of our May and early June programs through June 20th. This includes the following cancellations:

- *Dad & Lad Overnight - May 29 - 30th*
- *Six's Showdown Paintball Tournament - May 30th*
- *Father & Daughter Canoe Adventure - June 5 - 7th*
- *Mother & Daughter Overnight Camps - June 5 - 6th*
- *Mother & Son Overnight Camps - June 12 - 13th*
- *Haycock Open House - June 20th*

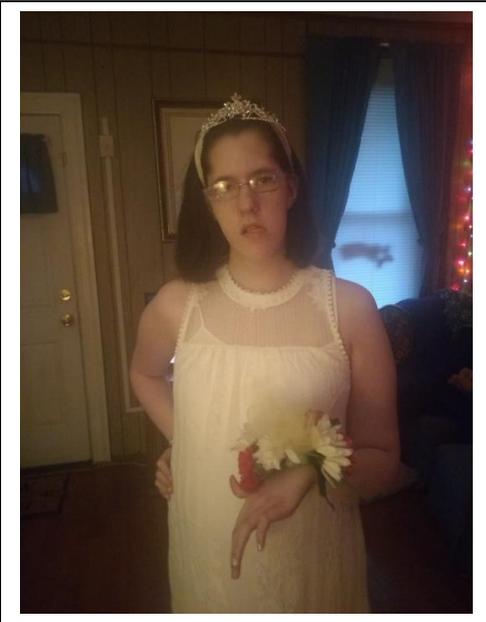
If you have already registered and paid for any of these programs, the camp office will be connecting with you directly about refund options. You can check out our website at www.haycock.org for more information on updated program cancellations. We are waiting until we have more information and recommendations before we make any decisions about our summer camp programs. Thank you for your patience as we pray over this important decision - we hope to have a plan in place for summer in early June.”

Please keep them in prayer as they work on trusting that God is in control.

What more can we also do?

How do we become a “walk-by-faith” church ready to reopen?

4. We walk with a visible posture that our unseen God is right here with us. Walking is a visible posture. Grace must be conspicuous to the onlookers. He who reveals something of God in his behavior walks with God. He or she shines forth in Biblical conduct much like the song “This Little Light of Mine.”



I want to share how God is working in people’s lives. We’ve been praying for Lizzy and Crystal Stimmell through this time of Covid-19 “shut-down”. This last week there was an “online” prom night for Lizzy. This picture was taken last Friday evening as she was preparing to go to her special needs online prom night with her sister Crystal as her dance partner. All is well- they're still holding their own. (Include picture of Lizzy here.)**

Can you imagine the smile on Jesus’ face

when his daughter has such a wonderful experience? That has to be the greatest answer to prayer- Lizzy dancing with Jesus as if He was really there. That is the idea of “visible” posture of our unseen God.



How do we become a “walk-by-faith” church ready to reopen?

5. We walk always knowing we continue to progress in grace each day, and we can’t let down our guard for one instant. It is not only a step but a walk. We are headed in a certain direction, toward perfection in Christ. A godly man or woman doesn’t sit down in the middle of the path, but goes until one reaches the “end of his faith.” (1 Peter 1:9). How many times the Psalmist says, “*Show me Your ways, Lord, teach me Your paths. Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long*” (Psalm 25:4-5). We are praying for God to give us a plan and path to reopen our church. We want it to be seen as a visible loving action to the 611 corridor. We can’t rush back looking like defiant law-breakers. We need to make sure our community doesn’t see our return as a bad testimony for Christ. We must stay on the path, and not get distracted.

Billy Graham tells a wonderful story in his book, *Hope For a Troubled World*. A missionary and his family were forced to camp outside on a hill. They had

money with them and were afraid of an attack by roving thieves. After praying, they went to sleep.

Months later, an injured man was brought into the mission hospital. He asked the missionary if he had soldiers guarding him on that night. "We intended to rob you," he said, "but we were afraid of the 27 soldiers."

When the missionary returned to his homeland, he related this story to a member of his church, who told him, "We had a prayer meeting that night, and I took the roll. There were 27 of us present."

Never underestimate the power of prayer! Keep praying for the Vosters, Marks, Mahers, Oostdyks, and Joel Stewart. Our prayers are sending protectors around the world!

I want to close with a wonderful short encouragement article from the *Fishwrapper*, May 12, 2020: *"Don't look! Focus. Gaze. See! Don't look at the trials that languish you, focus on the God who loves you! Don't look at the world that assaults you, gaze at the Christ who accepts you. Don't look at the pressures that consume you, see the Savior who chooses you!"*

I say, amen!

Pray with me,

"Oh God our Savior, We come before You today as foolish sheep who find it our natural inclination to wander far from You. You have set Your love upon us, chosen us, and saved us, but we find it hard to trust You and prefer to turn to our own wisdom and understanding. Yes, You are our good Shepherd. Yes, You lead us. Yes, you call us to straight paths of righteousness for Your own reputation's sake. But help us not to stray from the path of obedience. As Jesus was and is our Great Shepherd, who laid down His life for us silly sheep, make us be gathered together in Your arms soon. As a people of faith, remind us that church is the "body of believers" not the building. Holy Spirit, help us to see where the path of blessing lies and give us hearts that are eager to travel that path. While we live in a fallen, plagued world with sinful hearts, help us not to be prone to wander. And if we happen to be wandering, call us home! Even so, Lord Jesus come soon. In Jesus Name we pray, amen."

***Walking by faith,
Pastor Corvin <><***

