

# A VIEW FROM THE MOUNT



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## Looking ahead...

*Contributed by: Sharon Bailey*

*“His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches over me.”*

2020 is a year that will never be forgotten for various reasons. We’ve had some good times, not so good times, rough going times, don’t-know-if-I-can-make-it times, sick times, but there has also been some super wonderful times, great celebration times; anniversaries, goals achieved and the movements of God. Through it all, God was there with us because He promised that He would never leave us nor forsake us. He has allowed us to enjoy times of great joy such as graduations, weddings, engagements, birthdays anniversaries, birth of babies as well as answered prayers. COVID-19 and civil unrest enveloped our lives and took us to another level. During these times, we felt we wouldn’t make it mentally, emotionally and physically. Many of us felt as though we were pushed to our limits...but God! He has also been there with us even when we couldn’t feel Him. He’s been a Comforter in our hour of despair; He been a Provider when we didn’t know if we had enough resources; when chaos seemed to take over our lives and the world, He has been our Peace. The winds and the waves that seemed to want to engulf us had to obey His words: Peace, be still. We couldn’t have made it without Him, and He will continue to be our guide!

We in the Communications Department remember when we spoke about developing a newsletter for our church. It was just an idea and although we had great ideas, we had so much trouble putting it together. We prayed and asked God to help us to be able to develop this newsletter and we stretched out on faith and began the process with the Lord at the helm of this ship. Since June 2020, we have enjoyed the success of being able to bring to you our church newsletter every month filled with articles of inspiration from our Pastor, health nuggets and self-care concepts designed to help your mind, body and soul. We have presented articles on Love, Peace, Faith, Joy, and Protection and we pray that with God’s direction, we will continue to bring forth messages that feed your mind and nourish your soul as we have a closer walk with God. We all have come a long way and we have so much more to look forward to. If nothing else, 2020 has taught us to increase our faith and trust in God and to look forward to the blessings of 2021. We’ve come this far by faith but there is so much more God has in store for us. We hope you have been blessed by the newsletter and we thank you for your support. We pray that God continues to bless our efforts as He guides and directs our path as we continue to look forward and upward in 2021. Merry Christmas and God’s richest blessings to you for a prosperous New Year.

### SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH

Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43:18-19, ESV





HEALTH AND TEMPERANCE CORNER

CONTRIBUTED BY: SHARON BAILEY

Edmonton dietitian and nutrition consultant, Emily Mardell, said, “Food is not just macronutrients. It's not just calories. Food is community, food is love, food is heritage, food is connection. Food is how we count our blessings and court lovers and all those sorts of beautiful things. We need to make sure that we are infusing compassion into our eating right now. Because it is normal and OK to be embracing food, kind of as a part of your stress management routine.”

COVID-19 has elevated stress levels on many fronts, including around food. Preparing meals that are healthy and balanced because when we're stressed, we tend to reach for food that is not so healthy but very comforting. The following from the Minnesota Department of Health gives us tips on how we can eat better during the pandemic:

- Do your best to eat nourishing meals, like those rich in fruits and vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains. Those foods can help keep your body and mind healthy during stressful times.
- Cut down on foods that can ramp up anxiety, such as sugar, caffeine, and alcohol.
- It's important to enjoy small treats but avoid going overboard. Try to limit excessive consumption of sugar, caffeine, and alcohol. Overindulging can lead to increased anxiety or sluggishness.

- Feeling the urge to “stress snack”? Acknowledge your cravings, then take two or three deep breaths and ask yourself if you're really hungry or just passing the time.
- Having daily schedules and routines can ease anxieties and help you stay grounded. This applies to meals, too! Try to eat at regular mealtimes and avoid snacking in between. For more tips about managing stress, read [Managing Stress and the Threat of COVID-19 \(PDF\)](#).
- If you're staying at home with other people, try to eat at least one meal together each day. It can help dampen feelings of isolation, and help you practice mindful eating. Cooking together can also help you connect with others and ease the stress. If you're struggling to afford groceries, there are resources available to you such as food pantries.  
<https://www.foodbanknyc.org/covid-19/>

One of the most important principles of health we must remember is temperance. We want to feed our bodies, but we don't want to overdo it with the wrong kinds of foods. Remember Romans 12:1: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Be Blessed

Read full article at:

[https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthy\\_eating/covid19.html](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthy_eating/covid19.html)

HAPPY  
CORNER

CONTRIBUTED BY:

CASSANDRA THOMAS

1. **Practice Self-Care:** Engaging in activities that are relaxing, allows us to momentarily refocus our mind when experiencing moments of difficulty. By practicing self-care, we are able to gain perspective and re-center ourselves by prioritizing our own mental, emotional and physical health. “*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*” – Romans 15:13
2. **Practice Positive Reframing:** Remaining optimistic in the face of uncertainty may be difficult for any individual. Acknowledge the positive in the most challenging situations, by identifying the smallest areas of hope for which you are anticipating. “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*” – Jeremiah 29:11
3. **Identify Areas of Control:** Stressful situations are often beyond our control. We create anxiety and worry for ourselves when we try to control what we can't. By focusing on what we can control, we can decrease feelings of anxiety. “The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.” – Psalms 147:11
4. **Talk to Someone:** When circumstances look hopeless, talk with a friend or family member who will provide positivity and words of encouragement. While we all might be experiencing similar circumstances, it may impact us differently. Take the time to talk to someone about your emotions and where you might be experiencing mental and emotional difficulties. “You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word.” Psalms 119:114
5. **Acknowledge God:** By acknowledging God and reflecting on the blessings he has bestowed upon you, hope is cultivated. In reflecting on the experiences that God has brought you through, God aids in your resilience, perseverance and ability to overcome the most difficult obstacles. “Let us hold to fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” – Hebrews 10:23 (NKJV)



# We’ve Come This Far by Faith!

CONTRIBUTED BY: CORNELIA SYLVESTER

2020 began this way...

**January 6:** A 5.8 magnitude earthquake struck Puerto Rico.

**January 15:** multiple avalanches in Pakistan ruined and buried houses.

**January 20:** China announced it reached 139 cases of pneumonia caused by a new strain of coronavirus.

**January 21:** The United States announced its first case of the coronavirus that has swept China. On January 24, a second case was confirmed in the United States.

**January 24:** An earthquake struck Turkey, killing at least twenty-two people and wounding another one thousand people.

**February 4:** China experienced its deadliest day since the coronavirus was deemed a public health emergency.

**February 8:** The first American citizen died of the coronavirus in Wuhan.

**February 20:** A submarine carrying five tons of drugs was seized off the coast of Panama.

**March 4:** Japan announced it will quarantine visitors from China and South Korea due to coronavirus.

**March 5:** Italy announced it will shut down all schools for a few weeks to try to contain the coronavirus.

**March 6:** One hundred thousand people have died worldwide from coronavirus.

**March 10:** One hundred ten United States Universities completely shut down in an attempt to control the spread of coronavirus.

**March 12:** It was announced that various K-12 schools across the country will be closing for a few weeks or more.

**March 20:** Italy faced one of its deadliest days since the corona virus outbreak began, with six hundred twenty-seven deaths.

**March 24:** Prince Charles announced that he was tested positive for coronavirus; nearly a quarter of the world’s population is under quarantine due to coronavirus.

**April 2:** Spain announced it has surpassed 10,000 deaths as its coronavirus crisis worsened.

**April 3:** It was announced that the global number of coronavirus cases has surpassed one million.

**April 6:** India began turning its trains into hospitals, with each carriage acting as an isolated room.

**April 10:** China’s government released a draft of a law outlining which animals can be farmed and eaten.

**April 11:** Brazil reported over one thousand deaths due to corona virus and 20,000 cases. The virus is all over the world, at the same time!

**April 18:** Spain announced that more than 20,000 citizens have died from the coronavirus.

**May 16:** For the first time in its 115-year history, New York City shut down all subway systems.

**May 20:** Brazil became the country with the third highest number of coronavirus cases.

**May 26:** Hundreds of people in Minneapolis gathered at the intersection where George Floyd died.

**June 12:** CNN reported the crisis that continues to ravage Yemen; Louisville, Kentucky banned “no knock” warrants after Breonna Taylor died months earlier.

**June 24:** Disneyland announced that it will postpone its reopening date due to coronavirus.

**June 24:** New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey issued a travel advisory.

**June 27:** Colorado protesters shut down Highway 225 to protest the death of Elijah McClain, which occurred last August.

**July 5:** The University of Washington announced that 121 students in fraternity houses have tested positive for coronavirus.

**July 6:** As Arizona saw an increase in coronavirus cases, Mexican cities announced their intent to stop Americans from traveling South.

**July 22:** California officially surpassed New York in the most coronavirus cases.

**July 24:** It was reported that at least 19 people tested positive for coronavirus after attending a county fair in Ohio.

**August 10:** It was reported that there was a 40% increase in child cases of coronavirus.

**August 16:** The US surpassed 170,000 COVID deaths

**October 12:** Cases in Europe continued to soar, forcing more restrictions in Italy and England.

**October 14:** A Dutch woman died after catching Covid for the second time. Her death is the first reported death from reinfection.

**October 16:** The WHO warned that European coronavirus death tolls could be five times what we saw in April in just a few months.

**November 11:** Johns Hopkins University announced that Texas has become the first state to surpass one million coronavirus cases since the pandemic first began.

**November 13:** the state of California reached over 1 million coronavirus cases.

**November 15:** Johns Hopkins University announced that the US has surpassed 11 million coronavirus cases.

**November 20:** The United States surpassed 250,000 Covid deaths and nearly 12 million cases.

**November 23:** as the United States entered its 20th day in a row of 100,000 new coronavirus cases in a 24-hour period, the CDC urged against holiday travel.

**December 2:** The UK officially approved the Pfizer vaccine, announcing that the first shots will be given out starting next week. The vaccine is 95% effective.

**December 14:** The US officially topped 300,000 deaths due to COVID-19. The whole nation is plagued with this disease.

**So here we are at the end of 2020.** Still alive by God’s grace, we ask ourselves what saved us from this virus? Nothing but the grace of God. We’ve come this far by faith, trusting in the Lord. We know that we were not saved from the virus because of the mask or gloves that we wore. Month by month we received bad news, but we were a group of people who continued to trust and worship God. Thanks be to God that despite the obstacles, COVID-19, civil unrest, hurricanes, earthquakes, and losing our families and friends, the Lord is still good, and His mercies endure forever. We used our Zoom platform to faithfully attend worship services and rededicate our lives to God weekly. Thank God for that privilege. Faith brought us through. **What a mighty God we serve!**



Cherub Corner

Shepherds Color  
by Number

Color each section by the colors shown in the list at the bottom of the page. If you don't have all of the colors listed, or find an area that's not numbered, make your best color choice.



1. Skin 2. Orange 3. Brown 4. Pink 5. Tan 6. Red 7. Gray 8. Green 9. Light Green 10. Purple 11. Light Blue 12. Yellow

Answers to last month's activity: *God is the Creator and therefore Powerful, Person*

Wellness Corner

Reflections and Hope: Looking Back at 2020 and Forward at 2021

By: Cassandra Thomas

*“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

– *Philippians 3:13-14 (NKJV)*



2020 has been an unprecedented year. For billions of people across the world, 2020 has been one of the most challenging years of their lifetimes. From a global pandemic, to mass unemployment, to political and economic instability, to the fight for racial and social justice, 2020 has produced a collective trauma that will continue to resonate for future generations. However, amid the current crisis, we prepare to usher in a new year and there have been signs of hope for a better future.

Collectively, we are in desperate need of a reprieve from the Covid-19 saga, the political turmoil and the social and civil unrest of 2020. As a new year approaches, it is essential to regroup, recalibrate, reassess and remind ourselves of what is important in our lives such as faith, family and friendships. Although we have lost so much this year, the loss also reminds us of the abundant blessings that so many of us take for granted daily like food, clean water, shelter, good health and meaningful work.

As we reflect on the past year, the pain of 2020 has brought many of us to our knees, illustrating for us that the only place to look to is heaven. Although 2020 has upended many of our plans, God’s plans have not changed. We can trust that despite the numerous loss, tragedies and adversities, God has not stopped working on our behalf. Scripture remind us that in the midst of any circumstance, God is still present, right next to us during our most difficult moments. Isaiah 43:2 states, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.” As we look back at 2020 and look forward to 2021, let us remember that God has not forgotten about us. His ears are always open to the cry of His children. For God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in a time of trouble.



# PASTOR'S CORNER

DR. SEDNAK YANKSON

## THE CHRISTMAS QUESTION!

The Christmas story is a beautiful story; however, lurking behind it is a serious question for us. Behind the Christmas story of Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,” is a question for everyone.

Lurking behind the Christmas story of John 1:10, 11 “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” is a disturbing question for us today; would the world receive the savior this time around? Would God’s people receive their Messiah next time He comes? We celebrate Jesus’ first coming as if we would accept Him if we were there. But the first coming didn’t go so well with God’s people. The people Jesus came to save did not receive Him. Are we going to receive Him when he comes the second time?

The promise of the coming of the Messiah was everything to Israel. They talked about Him, preached about Him and sang about Him. Every Israelite woman desired to be the mother of the Messiah. For four thousand years Israel waited for her Messiah. And then the Bible says He came unto His own but His own received Him not. How? What happened? Why would Israel not receive her Messiah? What did Israel get wrong that we need to get right?

Like some of us, Israelites professed to be waiting for their Messiah but sadly there were no tokens of expectancy with them; they were not preparing for His coming and they were not ready for Him to come. They talked about His coming but they had no passion or longing for His coming.

Ellen white said before Jesus was born God sent an angel to see how Israel was preparing for His arrival. “An angel visits the earth to see who are prepared to welcome Jesus. But he can discern no tokens of expectancy. He hears no voice of praise and triumph that the period of Messiah's coming is at hand. The angel hovers for a time over the chosen city and the temple where the divine presence was manifested for ages; but even here is the same indifference. The priests, in their pomp and pride, are offering polluted sacrifices in the temple. The Pharisees are with loud voices addressing the people, or making boastful prayers at the corners of the streets. In the palaces of kings, in the assemblies of philosophers, in the schools of the rabbis, all are alike unmindful of the wondrous fact which has filled all Heaven with joy and praise, that the Redeemer of men is about to appear upon the earth” (GC 314).

“The Jewish nation had been preserved as a witness that Christ was to be born of the seed of Abraham and of David's line; yet they knew not that His coming was now at hand. In the temple the morning and the evening sacrifice daily pointed to the Lamb of God; yet even here was no preparation to receive Him. The priests and teachers of the nation knew not that the greatest event of the ages was about to take place. They rehearsed their meaningless prayers, and performed the rites of worship to be seen by men, but in their strife for riches and worldly honor they were not prepared for the revelation of the Messiah. The same

indifference pervaded the land of Israel. Hearts selfish and world-engrossed were untouched by the joy that thrilled all heaven. Only a few were longing to behold the Unseen. To these heaven's embassy was sent” (DA 43). So, the Bible says He came to His own but His own receive Him not.

What preparation are you making to receive Jesus when he comes the second time? Let’s learn from the few that welcome their Messiah: Shepherds: “There is no evidence that Christ is expected, and no preparation for the Prince of life. In amazement the celestial messenger is about to return to Heaven with the shameful tidings, when he discovers a group of shepherds who are watching their flocks by night, and, as they gaze into the starry heavens, are contemplating the prophecy of a Messiah to come to earth, and longing for the advent of the world's Redeemer. Here is a company that are prepared to receive the heavenly message. And suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared, declaring the good tidings of great joy. Oh, what a lesson is this wonderful story of Bethlehem! How it rebukes our unbelief, our pride, and self-sufficiency. How it warns us to beware, lest by our criminal indifference we also fail to discern the signs of the times, and therefore know not the day of our visitation” (GC 314).

Wise men: “It was not alone upon the hills of Judea, not among the lowly shepherds only, that angels found the watchers for Messiah's coming. In the land of the heathen also were those that looked for Him; they were wise men, rich and noble, the philosophers of the East. Students of nature, the magi had seen God in His handiwork. From the Hebrew Scriptures they had learned of the Star to arise out of Jacob, and with eager desire they waited His coming, who should be not only the “Consolation of Israel,” but a “Light to lighten the Gentiles,” and “for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” [Luke 2:25, 32; Acts 13:47.] While the priests and rabbis of Jerusalem, the appointed guardians and expounders of the truth, were shrouded in darkness, the Heaven-sent star guided these Gentile strangers to the birthplace of the new-born King” (GC 314).

But why would Israel refuse her Messiah when he was born? “Now pride and envy closed the door against the light. Why would God bypass us, to communicate with ignorant shepherds or uncircumcised Gentiles? They determined to show their contempt for the reports about the birth of Jesus. They would not even go to Bethlehem to see for themselves. And they led the people to regard the interest in Jesus as a fanatical excitement. Here began the rejection of Christ by the priests and rabbis. From this point their pride and stubbornness grew into a settled hatred of the Savior. While God was opening the door to the Gentiles, the Jewish leaders were closing the door to themselves” (DA 62).

The Jewish leaders ignored the news of His birth because it did not come from acceptable sources and then pride and envy closed their door to the light, and their contempt would not allow them even to go to Bethlehem to see the baby Jesus for themselves and so they rejected Christ from birth and their pride grew into hatred of Jesus. So, He came to His own but His own received Him not.



CLERK’S PAGE

THE BEAUTY OF SERVICE

*“Freely ye have received, freely give.” Matt. 10:8*

1. Serving develops our spiritual gifts. Some things naturally improve with use; our talents are one of them.
2. Serving recharges your soul. People are often emotionally and spiritually uplifted at the successful outcome of any ministry endeavor. Praises go up and blessings come down.
3. Serving increases our capacity to love. As we offer service to those in need, we are forced to look away from ourselves and focus on the essential task and those for whom it may be beneficial.
4. Serving builds faith and our relationship with God. Because we often cannot complete the task alone, we are urged to call on Him to provide the strength and direction.
5. Serving fosters relationship with others. Often as we work together, we get to know one another and recognize the good in each other. This helps us to grow in unity and in the bond of peace.
6. Serving increases our faith and others too. When we witness what God can accomplish through us, we are poised to accept the next challenge, believing He won’t fail us. In addition, when we perform acts for others with no compensation in mind, it inspires faith in a God they often desire to know.
7. Serving promotes obedience. Each positive response to the Spirit’s voice, encourages us to listen and obey. Increasingly, we delight to do His will.



PASTOR’S CORNER CONT.’D

Otherwise, why would the priest dedicate Jesus in the temple write His name in the scroll of the temple and not know He was the messiah? By their rejecting Christ, they also rejected the Holy Spirit who would have revealed the Messiah to them and so God bypassed them for the few longing for His coming.

Such was Simeon who was waiting for the consolation of Israel: “As Simeon enters the temple, he sees a family presenting their first-born son before the priest. Their appearance bespeaks poverty; but Simeon understands the warnings of the Spirit, and he is deeply impressed that the infant being presented to the Lord is the Consolation of Israel, the One he has longed to see. To the astonished priest, Simeon appears like a man enraptured. The child has been returned to Mary, and he takes it in His arms and presents it to God, while a joy that he has never before felt enters His soul. As he lifts the infant Savior toward heaven, he says, “Lord, now let Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel” (DA 55).

“Anna also, a prophetess, came in and confirmed Simeon's testimony concerning Christ. As Simeon spoke, her face lighted up with the glory of God, and she poured out her heartfelt thanks that she had been permitted to behold Christ the Lord. These humble worshipers had not studied the prophecies in vain. But those who held positions as rulers and priests in Israel, though they too had before them the precious utterances of prophecy, were not walking in the way of the Lord, and their eyes were not open to behold the Light of life” (DA 55).

Two groups are revealed to us; all searched the scriptures for the revelation of the messiah; one group searched in vain; they did not search to obey the truth and the Holy Spirit left them and they were left in darkness.

The other camp was diligent and humble, and longing for the revelation of the Messiah. They searched the scriptures for light of the savior’s coming, they walked in the light and prepared to receive Him with joy and the Holy Spirit rewarded their faithfulness. Which camp are you? Are you looking for Jesus to come? Are you longing for His appearing? What are the tokens of your expectancy? Where is your passion, enthusiasm or joy of His coming? Are you excited enough to tell somebody about His coming? Are you actively preparing yourself and others for His soon coming? Are you walking in the light under the unction of the Holy Spirit? What makes you believe you will receive Him when He comes?

Well, it is unto them that look for Him; long for Him, prepare for Him, that Christ is to “appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.” “So, Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).





