

...from the Heart



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Fall 2021

Preparing for Winter

Luke 21:29-31 (NLT) - Then he gave them this illustration: “Notice the fig tree, or any other tree. When the leaves come out, you know without being told that summer is near. In the same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can know that the Kingdom of God is near.

Matt. 16:2-3 (NIV) – He (Jesus) replied, “When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

Each season has tell-tale signs of its arrival ahead of time. We learn to recognize the coming of Summer as Jesus explained in the verses above. We also know when Winter is coming. The Fall season gives us all the indicators that the weather is changing toward Winter. Are we recognizing these signs and preparing?

I don't much like squirrels, except maybe marinated in Teriyaki sauce and put on the BBQ – LOL. They are Corinne's nemesis. They dig in her gardens and eat all the fresh produce. Our neighbors feed them peanuts (arch), but they take them and bring them into our yard to bury until next Spring. Then, in the spring, they start digging all over our lawn and gardens looking for their long lost nuts. I can't really do anything about them, so I just watch them.

They are here to stay as is most of nature and the resident creatures. So why are they so diligent in their efforts to bury food and then dig it up next season? Think about it. It is not just squirrels, but many of God's creatures are all doing the same thing. The others just may not be as obvious.

You see, they have an internal clock put in place by God when He created them all. They know the signs of the times. When the daylight starts getting shorter and the temperatures start getting cooler, they know winter is coming. Their survival instincts kick in and they start storing food for the cold months and into the times when things start to change to Spring, but there are no food sources available yet (except my neighbors and their peanuts – LOL).

Our little furry friends know better than us about times and seasons. If they didn't act on their instincts and observations, they would not survive the Winter. So what about us? Aren't there signs of the times and seasons of our lives? Shouldn't we also prepare for Winter in our spiritual lives? Jesus taught us that we should recognize the times and seasons and prepare for whatever that brings. It may be critical for us to be prepared for what Jesus said was going to happen in its time. Only those who are prepared will be ready when He returns. He has given us several examples of what that means.

We all have many things on our agendas and many things vying for our time. But, what is more important than our eternal destiny? We know that Jesus wants everyone to come to Him and be saved. We think about this for others outside the church mostly and rightfully so, but what about us – the inside group? Shouldn't we give the same diligence in cultivating our spiritual relationship with God as we expect and pray those outside will have? We can all become complacent. It doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. Casting Crowns has a song called Slow Fade that nails this concept. It's a slow fade when black and white turns to gray. We were all zealous when we first believed in Jesus for our salvation. So how does that cool down over time and should it? If we examine our lives, we can all see where we have cooled down to some degree. It's only natural. Time has a way of doing that to us. We get used to church and church things and spiritual things. We've been to Bible studies and small group fellowships and we know it all – or so we think. So, how do we get our vibrancy back in our relationship with God. PRAYER – Personal Time with God (daily) – a renewed love for the Bible (personally and corporately).

Recognize the signs of the times we are in. There is no better time to renew our faith and need for God than now. There are so many things happening in our world and in our Country that we need to recognize and do something about. We don't have to stand up and shout protests on the street corners. It starts with each of us as individuals cultivating our own spiritual lives first. Pray for our country and its leaders (they really need it). Don't focus so much on the things outside our lives as much as we focus on our own individual lives. Get that right and the other stuff will fall into place behind that.

Are you ready for Winter? I pray you are or if not, you will get there now. We are entering the Fall season. It is a time given to us to prepare and be ready for the next season, which may be much colder, darker, and harsher than now.

I pray God's Blessings on you all,
Pastor Nick



Fear Not



What are you afraid of? What is it that keeps you awake at night or worse awakens you in the wee hours of the morning? Consider these lines from the poem, *Things that Go Bump in the Night*.

I've never been one for being afraid,
Or running away from a fight,
But I shiver with fear, whenever I hear
Things that go bump in the night.
I know they're not real, it's just how I feel
We all have our crosses to bear,
At the first chilly breeze, I'm down on my knees
Reciting the words of a prayer. *Graffiti Poet*

Your reply to my earlier question: What frightens you, might be laced with a bit of sarcasm. What am I afraid of you reply? How about the new Covid variant, or the barrage of mindless ideologies, or government overreach, or discrimination, new lockdowns, the erosion of personal freedom? Throw in: damage caused by isolation, apprehension, emotional depression, suicides, riots, lawlessness, and you get a better picture of what many people are afraid of.

Perhaps the question needs to be examined from a different perspective. How is it that some people handle fear so much better than others? Is it because some people are built differently - tougher than others, or is there something more? The word *fear*, is mentioned over 500 x in the Bible. Isaiah 41:13 (NIV) states: 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.* The word fear in Hebrew is the word *yare*, meaning a heightened sense of dread. God is telling us not to give into dread but rather to trust Him.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, our 32nd president, who served our nation during the Great Depression, quoted poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Was this false bravado or was there something more? Tim Gustafson, Daily Bread contributing author, wrote about a military coup that forced young Sam and his family to abandon home and job. With no income, Sam's brother couldn't get the life sustaining medicine he needed. Sam became bitter, asking God the question we so often ask; Why God? Where are you God? When fear strikes, we sometimes jump to the conclusion that God isn't concerned with our troubles. If we continue in this line of reasoning, fear is certain to erode faith. In Sam's case we have the advantage of history to prove Sam's conclusion wrong. God prompted a total stranger to use his meager resources to purchase the necessary medicine that Sam's brother needed to survive, saving the family both physically and spiritually. Sam eventually became a minister of the Gospel. Perspective is an amazing thing. God is in possession of an advantage we will never have, the ability to see through time and space. He knows the beginning from the end, and knowing that we do not possess such ability, He asks us to fill in the gap with faith, a willingness to trust Him as our relationship with Him grows.

I read this on the front of a woman's sweat shirt: Sweet Old Lady? - More Like- Battle Tested - Warrior Queen

When we shift focus off of self, looking through eyes of faith, we move from self-centered to God-centered or others centered. Our personal fears are realigned, I'm not the center of the universe, God's plan to use my life, especially in challenging times, to help others is. How different things look from God's perspective. And if God thoroughly knows my life and times, I can put fear and dread in its proper place.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3: 5, 6 (NKJ)*

Serving Him Together,
Pastor John



Technology Upgrades

If the pandemic has proven anything is that people want to stay connected. Over the last year a lot of connection took place over social media. It served as a bridge with our community and provided a way to meet together for Bible study, meetings and our services.

Now as we are meeting back in the church sanctuary we realized the need to upgrade lighting and sound to improve both in person and online experience. We also purchased a

new computer & router, new flat screens TV monitors for the back of the sanctuary and downstairs in the fellowship hall.

Moving forward we estimate the costs to be in the range of \$9000. Our strategy is to make such improvements over the next several years or as funds become available. Joe Herrmann is working as our project coordinator extraordinaire to get this accomplished.

Our budget this year for technology upgrades was \$3000. We have already surpassed that by \$950. We have been offered an opportunity for matching funds to our technology budget up to the first \$4000. If you wish, **mark your donations BF: tech.** Any monies collected over and above what is needed will go directly into the **Building Fund** for other building improvements over and above our budgeted plans.

Corinne Franco, treasurer



WOMEN'S MINISTRY



It is always a little bit difficult to write about the fall season when we are still in the midst of near-100 degree days!! But before we know it, the leaves will be changing colors as we are ushered into the beautiful autumn weather.

Our Thursday lady's group has continued to gather even among vacation schedules and church work projects. We have experienced some amazing answers to prayer as we have lifted family members (both personal and family) before the Lord each week. We have also been praying for some serious situations of neighbors of some of the ladies. Just a few days ago, we heard the news of the arrival of baby Lacey. When her parents heard the news that this little girl would be born with severe malformities, they were advised to get an abortion. They chose not to do that and we started praying for a miracle in her little body. She was born healthy and whole and our lady's group is praising the Lord along with Lacey and her family.

In September we will be starting a new study entitled, "Mary-Seeing God Through the Eyes of a Mother". As always, all women are invited to be a part of our prayer and study time each Thursday morning at 10 A.M. in the church sanctuary.

With COVID spiking once again, it doesn't look like the ideal time to start having our Saturday brunches. I am disappointed but know it is best to be cautious and safe for our times together.

It seems each day brings new reasons to "draw close to God". Instead of letting fear overtake us, let us seek the only One who knows exactly everything thing that is going on around us. When we feel overwhelmed, let us lift our voices in praise, prayer and song and feel the peace of our Lord surround our hearts, minds and spirits. Open up the Bible and fill yourself on the promises of God and let His wonderful peace fill your soul!!

Joyfully serving,
Mary Ann

Welcome to the World: Ryan James Lochren 6/3/2021
Elizabeth Audrey Rymer 6/24/2021

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FOOD PANTRY - MON, WED, FRI, 10am - 2pm

Senior Pastor Vincent Linguiti

Sunday Service at 10am

For our weekly schedule of meetings, check out our website at www.patchnaz.net

Sermons live stream on Facebook. Find us on You Tube.

Corporate Greed

A friend related a story about a child who lost a tooth. She put the tooth under her pillow, and, in the morning, she found two one-dollar bills in exchange for her tooth.

Sometime later she lost another tooth, but the Tooth Fairy was unprepared and didn't have any single dollar bills on hand. When the child woke up the next morning, there was one twenty-dollar bill under her pillow. Her reaction? She was indignant! She angrily brought it to her mother and announced, "I only got *one money!* Last time, I got TWO monies!!"

Having no concept of the greater value of the one, she rejected it as worthless in comparison to the two. Why? Partly because of a fallen-nature heart condition called Greed, and partly because of a lack of understanding of value.

We are living in a dangerously greedy culture and it is making the most outrageous demands. Any meeting of those demands only brings on a bigger, more selfish, demand than before. If you tell Greed "No", it has a temper tantrum. Greed is never satisfied, and it is entirely controlled by the heart condition inherent in every person on earth. Jeremiah 17:9-11

We have become more self-centered and selfish than ever before, and we've brought those attitudes straight into God's house. Don't think so? The Bible says we have! Mark 7:14-20; 2 Peter 2:1-3.

I asked myself a few questions; a self-check. "The last time I came to church to worship, fellowship, and glorify my Lord, did I complain about something regarding my church while I was there? What was I expecting to receive versus what did I give? Who or what annoyed me while I was in my church? Did I make my complaint known to someone else? Did I feel justified (righteous) in doing so?"

Our fallen nature certainly places a high earthly value on eternally worthless things. Luke 12:33 Can anyone relate? Paul can. He talks about it in Romans 7:15-25.

Brothers and Sisters, the One that we received is worth more than any number of wants we will ever have. He is worth more, so much more, than anything we grouse about. Most of what we think we need, we don't. Luke 12:1-33; Philippians 4:11-13

If we would stop complaining, we would understand that every desire is *already* fulfilled, every craving is *already* satisfied, and every need is *already* met in the One given for us. Isaiah 55:1-13; Romans 12; Phil. 2:1-16a

Look long and hard at the Cross, where Jesus hangs in our place.

If you dare, put your hand on those bloody feet.

Who do you truly value? Who do you truly need?

"Oh, God! Be merciful to *me*, a sinner."

We deserved judgment; He gave us pardon.

We deserved eternal hell; He gave us eternal life.

We deserved absolutely nothing; He gave us everything.

He gave the only possession He had that could save us.

A life for a life. He gave Himself. How about us?

Sue Cerruto, Hospitality.

Hebrews 12





VBS 2021 – Trust Jesus!

Jesus' Power Pulls Us Through: TRUST JESUS – what a message to share with our children this year! Our Vacation Bible School (VBS) program this year, Rocky Railway, was an absolute blast! Each night, kids learned a special lesson about Jesus' Power in our everyday lives: that Jesus' Power helps us do hard things, have hope, be bold, live forever, and be good friends. It was an honor to coordinate this event for our kids. We had 20 happy, energetic students that attended faithfully all week, and came back on Sunday for our big performance!

If you were unable to attend, I would highly recommend looking up that service on your YouTube channel; watching the kids worship God is a joy!

Our VBS week ran from July 5-9, with a special performance for our church on Sunday, July 11th. Directly after service, we enjoyed a time of fellowship during our annual Church Picnic (thank you, Sue Cerruto for putting together such a wonderful event!). Every day was filled with inspiring messages, music, crafts, Bible stories, fun games, and a unique mission to help students in Haiti by donating school supplies. Our kids and volunteers attended each night with smiles on their faces and God's Love in their hearts. Each child was excited to see what fun activities were planned for each night, which would not have been possible without the devotion of our incredible station leaders: Mary Kate La Spisa, our Bible Teacher; Desiree Boutsikos, our Craft Leader; and Frank Donato and Justin Inniss, our Missions and Recreation Leaders. Every leader was integral throughout the week. Many of our teens stepped into the role of Team Leader, which let them engage directly with the younger kids and help them navigate each station. The kids loved being with our teens, and you could see how much the kids looked up to them as role models. It touched my heart to watch their interactions all week. I can't thank all of our volunteers enough for the time, love, prayer, and energy they brought leading up to the week, and throughout the event itself. This would never work without them!

This year's mission, the school supply drive for the To Haiti with Love organization, was an incredible success! The kids fully engaged in this mission and joyfully gave to the cause. The response from our kids and families was truly overwhelming and beautiful! The kids collected \$184.48 in monetary donations, which we used to purchase: 24 Brand New Backpacks, 10 bags of pens, 3 calculators, 10 compass/protractor sets, 5 boxes of colored pencils, 5 boxes of crayons, 8 packs of erasers, and 20 pencil sharpeners. In addition, kids brought in school supplies every night. We were able to donate: 18 Marble Notebooks, 17 Spiral Notebooks, 23 Boxes of Crayons, 18 Boxes of Colored Pencils, 37 Glue Sticks, 3 Bottles of Glue, 16 Sketch Books, 10 Binders, 19 Rulers, 2 Compass/Protractor Sets, 2 Calculators, 11 Pencil Cases, 23 Folders, 5 Bags of Pens, 6 Reams of Lined Paper, 27 Pencil Sharpeners, 23 Boxes of Pencils, 7 Backpacks, 6 Boxes of Markers, 10 Pairs of Scissors, and 5 Five-Subject Notebooks. What a joy to be able to give freely, joyfully, and in abundance!!



Continue to pray for the kids that attended, and for everyone who was a part of the experience. God-willing, lives were changed for the better, and seeds were planted that will lead to strong roots of faith. I know it is early to think about next year, but whenever the kids, or VBS itself, come to mind, please pray for continued excitement, growth, and success in our program.

In Christ, Sue Herrmann ☺

Let Us Pray

“Lord, teach us to pray . . . “ says one of Jesus’ disciples in Luke chapter 11. If ever we needed to learn how to pray, this would be the time. Crisis after crisis continues to pound our existence, like waves on the sand. It’s easy to feel discouraged, helpless, like a bee in a spider’s web. But prayer is our means of support; it is God’s way of correcting our vision from despair to hope. When we pray, we’re not simply listing off the stresses and troubles of our lives to God in a laundry-like fashion. Prayer is making a conscious choice to live within the presence of God; in prayer, we are reminded of who we belong to and how we are to live, and when that happens, we find ourselves not in a hopeless series of tragedies and catastrophes, but as a key player in God’s own story.

That is not to say that prayer comes easily or naturally all the time. It is difficult not to be sucked in by the competing narratives that we are bombarded with day in and day out. And sometimes the difficulties seem too widespread and too challenging for us to even comprehend. As I write this, the wildfires across the Western U.S. are devouring forests and land at a rate not seen in American history; similarly, two record heat waves have baked the West and Europe, killing hundreds. Another earthquake event has devastated the nation of Haiti, leaving over a thousand dead and tens of thousands without a place to live. The government of Afghanistan has collapsed following U.S. troop withdrawal, and we watched as Afghan citizens stormed the airports, desperate to flee the country. And these catastrophes are just a selection. In crises like this, the apostle Paul gives us a key understanding of what prayer looks like.

“We do not know what to pray for, as we should,” Paul writes in Romans chapter 8. This comes right on the heels of his observation of how the whole creation is groaning in pain, and Christians along with it, waiting for the new world to be born. But in the meantime, left to our own devices, we don’t even know how to start praying, let alone what to pray for. The problems are too big, and we feel powerless to meet them, let alone conquer them. “The Spirit helps our weakness,” Paul writes, “interceding for us with groanings too deep for words.” Paul flips the script, so to speak. We tend to think of prayer as interceding on behalf of others, either for healing, or salvation, or peace of mind. But in circumstances like these, Paul says, God intercedes on *our* behalf. Prayer becomes the means whereby God, through His Spirit, ministers and gives hope to *us*. In this way, prayer is both our speaking with God, and also letting God speak directly to us. From this point, Paul goes into one of the most inspiring passages in all of Scripture. “If God is for us, who can be against us?” If God Himself intercedes for us, what could stand in His way? There is nothing too difficult for Him.

No war, no wildfire, no earthquake can stop the purposes of God from being realized. Nothing can stop the New Creation of God from being revealed. There is nothing, no height, or depth, or things present, or things to come that can separate us from the Love of God revealed in Christ Jesus (Romans 8: 38-39). This is what gives us hope, Paul writes. The Resurrection of Christ is the first fruits of the New World about to be born. Therefore, let us to continue to pray, indeed, like Paul, let us pray without ceasing.

JON OLLETT



Pray for families who have lost loved ones:

The Cenotti family on the passing of Jay’s grandfather, **Steve**.

Marilyn Brownie on the loss of her husband, **Tim**.

Corinne Franco and family on the loss of her Mom,

Florence Calvagna.