



THE BEACON

Newsletter of the Living Word Church
January 2021



A VISION OF HEALTH IN 2021 AND BEYOND

by Pastor Chris Fantuzzo

Thank you, first, for calling me and welcoming me as your Pastor. I am delighted to serve God with you. In my view, the health of the church involves healthy connections—as connective tissue runs through the human body and holds it together. Spiritual connections are vital to the health of the body of Christ and enable the church to be the church every day.

Christ gives officers to provide order and stability. I will support the consistory with adequate training and the congregation with effective communication. I will encourage visitation for pastoral and diaconal care, taking the gospel “from house to house” to encourage and pray for all the saints (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 20:20). And I will help the various ministry teams—Worship, Nurture, Outreach, and Mission—to function well. Office bearers and ministry teams are designed to assist all members in the loving exercise of their gifts inside and outside church ‘walls’. In this way, rather than doing all the work, the pastor, consistory, and ministry teams promote the movement and dynamism of the members as a living organism. This also means that the church is a community *on mission*.

My focus, then, is to help the congregation realize its identity as a discipling community with marching orders defined by the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20). In being shaped by the gospel to think and act biblically, disciples become “mission-fit”—knowing the Lord, becoming like the Lord, and doing the Lord’s will. Mission-fit disciples love and connect with one another and with their neighbors and coworkers through relationship building, service, cultural engagement, and evangelism towards making more disciples. By learning to be disciples who live missionally, I believe we will build communal health and grow numerically.

Healthy growth requires the willingness to assess everything in the light of the gospel: Who are we? Where are we? Who are we called to reach? How will we reach them? The Great Commission charges Christ’s followers with making relevant connections not only within the church but also beyond its circles. Yes, we must assess how worship connects people to God and how nurture connects people to one another.

But do we also connect to neighbors with mercy, hospitality, and compassion? Do we connect to widening spheres of influence by sharing our interests, talents, and skills (e.g., art, music, hobbies, work-related gifts, other means)? To grow, we must envision and implement a variety of gospel messaging and gospel neighboring practices to create ‘front doors’ for disciple-making.

Front doors mean open doors, visible to friends and neighbors. We will improve the website and communications, reach out to inactive members, form missional small groups, engage the community by participating in local events, discover needs via conversations with neighbors and organizations, offer/participate in outreach, educational, and justice efforts/awareness events. In all we do, we will practice radical hospitality and real evangelism to befriend ‘the other’ and share the gospel of Christ. All told, we must *be the church every day*.

Consistory Highlights

Nov 19, 2020

- *Communications*: A letter of thanks was received from the Christian Health Care Center for Living Word’s donation out of gratitude for the Fantuzzo family’s stay at the DeRoo House. -

- *Worship*: Christmas Day Service will be @ 10AM. There will be no New Year’s (Eve or Day) Service.

- *Nurture*: A new book study will begin January 10, 2021, using *Everyday Church: Gospel Communities on Mission*, by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis.

- *Finances*: While the balance is good, giving is below budget largely due to the church’s closing during the pandemic.

- *Building Repairs*: A new shed is in place. It was recommended that new radiator covers be installed in Fellowship Hall.

- *From Pastor’s Report*: A new website is being reconstructed, aiming for January 1, 2021 as the start date. Kayde and Joel are putting photos together for the site. Pastor Chris has sent a letter to connect with inactive members. The letter will be followed up by phone call.

Note: The December “supper meeting” of Consistory is cancelled due to the pandemic. Instead, a regular meeting will be held in Fellowship Hall on December 17th with new elders and deacons invited.

Respectfully submitted Marlo K. Kooistra.



Mission Notes

Al Verduin



As you would expect, all the missionaries and missionary efforts we support here and around the world are experiencing the financial crunch brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Some are experiencing a drop in support because their other supporters have had a drop in their receipts and are unable to meet their commitments to them.

The Mission Board thanks and praises God for you all at Living Word and your generosity in supporting our mission commitments. Because of you, we were able to meet **all** of our 2020 commitments to our missionaries, despite not taking collections the first month or so at the start of the pandemic, and then not having the regular method of “passing the plate” for collections ever since. Because you have been so faithful, we have a positive balance at this point that will enable us to send each of our missionaries a Christmas gift of \$150, and still have a good amount to start 2021. Thank you!

We did receive communications from both George King and Cathie and Amy Atkinson.

Dear Friends and Prayer Warriors,

First, I want to thank so many that have prayed for my wife. Her life's journey, on this earth, ended on the evening of October 24, 2020. On June 22, the Drs. said she had 2 or 3 months left.. On June 29, they changed the prognosis to 1 or 2 months. Because you prayed, we had just over 4 months of precious and spiritual times together. She knew what was going on, and was ready. In those last months, people whose lives she had blessed, came from all over Japan, and others called, or wrote her many letters. She was greatly loved, and her impact will be known in eternity. To the end, she was at peace. Her biggest concern was for me.

Among the blessings of those last days, was singing, reading God's Word, and praying together. The things of this earth no longer seemed of interest. The joy of meeting our beloved Saviour, became foremost. Ruth wonderfully bore the load of her care. John's wife, Dr. Sheryl supplied lots of important advice. Judy called almost every day on FaceTime to keep her, and us encouraged. On August 19th, we were able to celebrate our 65th Wedding Anniversary together. We had a cake, of which she gave me 2 bites, and managed to enjoy the rest by herself. At her last breath she gave my hand one last squeeze, and went to her eternal home. It was not a sad occasion, but one of awaited victory.

I had a couple days when I couldn't focus on anything. But, having to finish preparing a message, when I opened the Word of God I was able again to focus my thinking. The Word of God seems more alive and exciting every day. November 26, I turned 88 years old. A special blessing was waiting for me as I sat at the table. Ruth had a card set out for me, from and signed by Ellen! It

had a Bible verse, Revelation 3:7, "He that openeth, and no man shutteth, and no man openeth." Her message, "Even if it seems some doors are closing, you haven't missed a thing - - - asking God to open up just the right door for you at just the right time. Love, Ellen". Can you imagine the tears of gratitude that flowed.

Doors are still opening. Many still need to hear the message of our precious Lord Jesus Christ. As He gives strength, we will continue to do what we can. We need prayer more than ever.

Your servant in Japan, George

Dear Living Word Church.

It has been awhile since I wrote to you, so I thought I would send you an update as to how things are going in Greece.

We are in lockdown on the island. there are no cases of corona virus and they want to keep it that way. We are to wear masks at all times outside of the home and we have to let the "authorities" know when we leave the house and the reason why. We can only go to bakeries or grocery stores. The fishermen are not allowed to go fishing, which brings much hardship to many on the island, because that is what they live off. We cannot have more than 6 people in the house. Schools are closed and so is the church.

Personally, I think that there are very hard days ahead. But I am thankful that nothing can take God by surprise. He can set limits and say, "Thus far and no further".

Amy, my daughter, is in Italy at the moment for some medical treatments for her Down Syndrome son. He is coming back with her to Greece for a few months. We are not allowed to have guests, which is not too difficult for us at this time of the year in that there are no guests coming. It is windy and rainy and real winter weather.

We appreciate your continued support and prayers. Our prayer for you is that the Lord will be near you and that this virus will not upset your church services.

May we often meet at the throne of grace!

*Your missionaries,
Cathie and Amy*



THE CHRISTMAS STAR

*From Facebook, forwarded and posted by Roger Hartley on
December 13, 2020*

I know some of you saw the post about The Christmas Star appearing on December 21st. I couldn't help but really take a deeper look at how amazing that this occurrence would be happening in the year 2020.

In the year when Jesus was born, there was violence, chaos, political and social unrest. It was dark. The Magi found him by way of the star, which was the "meeting" of 3 stars: Jupiter, Saturn and Mars. They followed the star until it rested on where he was and they began to worship him. In a time where it was dark, Light was brought in to our world. Jesus stepped in to the chaos and brought peace.

Fast forward to the year, 2020. It's a time of violence, chaos, political and social unrest. It is dark. Winter Solstice, December 21st, being a time where the day is the shortest and night is the longest...it's literally the "darkest day" and is the beginning of what most would say the cold, dark winter season.

But on the darkest day this year, Jupiter and Saturn meet, giving us the Christmas Star!
How fitting...that in the moment of time during the Christmas season that we get to see this beautiful reminder...that even in the darkest of times...Light will, and has, stepped in. In our chaos He is there. In our darkest time, He is there. He brings Light, and makes all things new. So when you looked out on Dec 21st for the Christmas Star, I hope you were reminded of His power, and His Light that he brings for all mankind. He is perfect at stepping into chaos and bringing it into peace.
Copied and adapted from a friend...

BEAUTIFUL STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Beautiful Star of Bethlehem, shining afar thru shadows dim
Giving a light for those who long have gone
And guiding the wisemen on their way unto the place where Jesus lay
Beautiful Star of Bethlehem shine on.

Beautiful Star, the hope of light, guiding the pilgrim thru the night,
Over the mountain till the break of dawn
And into the light of perfect day it will give out a lovely ray
Beautiful Star of Bethlehem shine on.

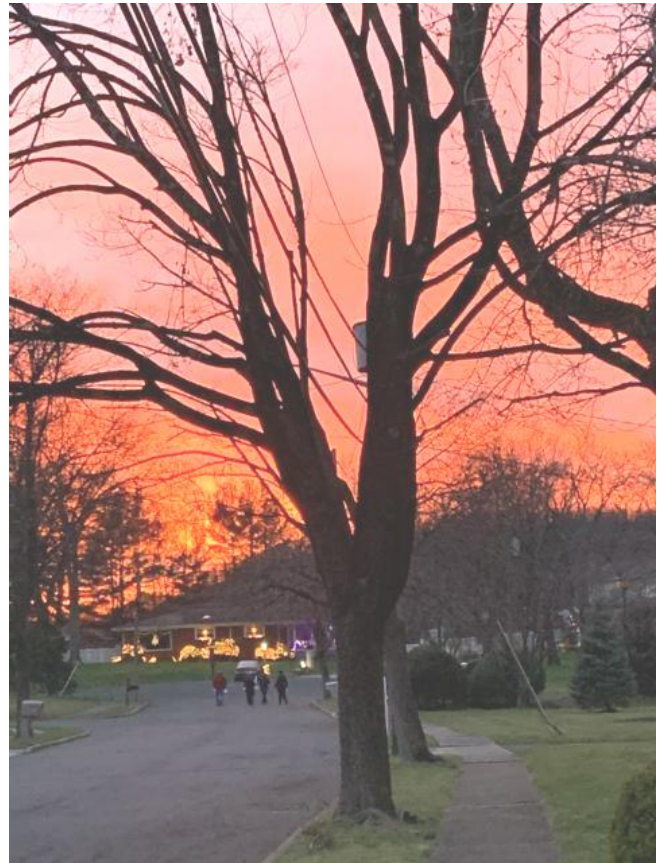
Beautiful Star, the hope of rest, for the redeemed, the good, the blest,
Yonder in glory when the crown is won;
For Jesus is now that Star divine, brighter and brighter He will shine
Beautiful Star of Bethlehem shine on.

Did You Know?

Kathy Klaassen



God provided a spectacular sunset for our Christmas Caroling event. First we visited our shut in members to bring joy and cheer. Upon returning to church, we split into two groups to blanket the neighborhood in song, and then met again at church to enjoy hot chocolate and cookies around four fire pits. Thanks to all who helped make the night special.



Christmas Caroling and the Gorgeous Sunset



The Joy of Giving

Kathy Lodema

Thank you to the Living Word Ladies Bible Study group for their generous amount of gloves, hats, and socks that were given to the men at the Good Shepherd Mission. The collection included 166 pairs of socks, 40 hats and 30 pairs of gloves. The men residing at the Mission were so appreciative and it humbled Jim and I that these men were so excited to receive these items of clothing.

The generosity of these ladies resulted in being filled with a servant's spirit, and God being praised through cheerful giving!

Above: Socks, hats and gloves waiting to be delivered

Below: Rob and Kathy at the Good Shepherd Mission

Kathy at the Good Shepherd Mission



JANUARY

Greeters

January 3 Jim & Kathy Lodema
 January 10 Kathy Cooper
 January 17 Rob & Lois Harriman
 January 23 Wayne & Betty Kuiken
 January 31 Ted & Maureen Terpstra

Ushers

January 3 Ken Wiegers
 January 10 Bob Breeman
 January 17 Dave & Marie Ten Kate
 January 23 Bob & Joyce Breur
 January 31 Kathy Cooper

Audio Visual Systems

January 3
 Sound Joel Wesseldyke
 Camera Lois Harriman

January 10
 Sound Jilly Wesseldyke
 Camera Lois Harriman

January 17
 Sound Joel Wesseldyke
 Camera Lois Harriman

Audio Visual Systems continued

January 23
 Sound Joel Wesseldyke
 Camera Lois Harriman

January 31
 Sound Jilly Wesseldyke
 Camera Lois Harriman
 January 31

january BIRTHDAYS

03 John De Haan
 04 Marjo Reitsma
 15 Robert Breeman (Mr.)
 16 Joel Wesseldyke
 17 Alyssa Kathleen Rappold
 Grace Ellen Terpstra
 21 John King, Jr.
 30 Lois Hartley

