

# *The Monthly Heartbeat*

## The Hope in Christ Church Newsletter

January 2020 Issue

### Improving Communication

By Pastor Scott



None of us are perfect communicators. We all struggle with relationships to a certain extent because relationships involve at least 2 sinful people: myself and the other person. This means communication is always flawed - prone to excesses and unhealthy patterns. One of the times this faulty communication exposes itself is over the holidays. So, how can we improve our communication so that each of our relationships has a better chance of being fruitful, beneficial and more in line with God's desire for mutual accountability and edification?

These four rules come from Randy Patten's exposition of Ephesians 4:25-32 and his lecture notes from Faith Biblical Counseling. Ephesians 4:25 begins by calling us to put away falsehood and in its place to speak the truth. Honesty will always improve communication, for no relationship can be built on lies and half or partial truths. When our words and actions don't match, there is dishonesty present. When our words are used to disguise the real meaning that is intended, this too is dishonest. We must remember that we are a people of truth and light, not darkness, lies and deception. But honesty without love doesn't improve communication. Our honest words must be spoken in love (Eph 4:15). The hard things we must say about how we feel, perceive things and understand the world must never be

spoken in anger, in order to harm another, or to lash out, but these truths must come from a heart that earnestly desires to further the relationship - not to irreparably damage it or get even. Such truths do more harm than good. **Rule #1: Speak the Truth in Love.**

**Rule #2: Keep Current.** Ephesians 4:26-27 instructs us to solve today's problems, today. The longer we postpone addressing the issues in relationships that are difficult, the more damage, distortion and pain is caused. The longer it takes us to address a situation, the more opportunity it has to morph in our minds and become something bigger than it originally was. The greater the distance between the situation and the discussion of it, the more opportunity there is for critical details to be lost and for our minds to recast the event into a manner in which we are the victim and they are the abuser. Good communication means addressing today's issues today, otherwise we are opening the door to distortions, sin and even the devil.

**Rule #3: Attack the Problems not the People.** Most often communication breaks down because we attack people - either the person in front of us, or people for whom that person cares. In both cases, communication breaks down because our natural human response is to want to defend those we love. Ephesians 4:29 tells us not to have corrupting talk, but rather to have edifying words. When we can focus on the issues, not the people involved, everyone maintains a saner interaction. In order to do this, we must focus on the actions, behaviors and words that are a concern and violation of scriptural teaching. We must seek to understand the other person's thoughts about those actions, behavior and

words and after truly listening, compare their understanding with the Word of God. As long as the discussion revolves around the Living and Active Word of God, the Spirit can and will be present among us to lead each person into truth and/or conviction and repentance.

**Rule #4: Act. Don't React.** Ephesians 4:31-32 remind us of common reactions which must be put off in order to put on the character of Christ. In order to act in a godly, healthy way, it is imperative for us to be self-reflective. Which of the 4 rules do we most often violate? What steps can we take to improve our communication?

In addition to the above 4 rules, I would add one more overarching instruction that I have found improves all my communication adventures. The mega-rule of all communication rules is this: pray before, during and after every communication event. Prayer has a way of changing us, preparing the ground for others and ensuring that miscommunications are minimized. When we invite the Holy Spirit into our conversations, both privately and even publicly before we start a difficult conversation, amazing things happen. The Spirit is committed to truth, reconciliation, love, forgiveness and the building up of the body. So, ensure that you pray a lot if you want to improve your ability to communicate with those in your life.



## The Yes (to Technology) in Our No (to Social Media)

### Part Three: Taking a Techno-Sabbath

By Kutter Callaway

*Recall that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there by strength and power. That is why the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.*

Deuteronomy 5:15

In the account found in the book of Exodus, the rationale for observing the Sabbath is that God rested on the seventh day of creation (Ex 20:11). In Deuteronomy, however, Sabbath keeping is connected to the Exodus from Egypt. Sabbath rest, it would seem, is about more than recovering the energy we expend during the work week. It has something to do with resisting the oppressive systems and structures within which we operate. Sometimes our participation in these power structures is willful, but more often than not, we are completely unaware of just how complicit we have become.

For this very reason, during the past Lenten season I chose to fast not from technology, but from social media in particular. I needed to observe the Sabbath. I needed to rest. I needed to resist. Of course, as my colleague and Fuller alum Aaron Dorsey says, “Fasting from social media is part of the modern world survival toolkit. Right next to using the do not disturb feature on your phone and YouTube tutorials.”

But that’s exactly the point of Sabbath keeping, isn’t it? It’s a routine (and somewhat mundane) reminder to ourselves and others that we are not to be held captive by life-denying structures of power, no matter the form they might take. It’s to remember that it is God and not Pharaoh that we serve. In this particular case, to observe the Sabbath is to say no to digital platforms that demonstrate very little concern for our bodies, our dignity, or our basic ability to empathize with others.

The theological twist, however, is that there is always a yes embedded in our no, and this yes involves what is potentially a radical embrace of technologies that provide us with the means for pursuing “*what makes for peace and for building up one another*” (Rom 14:19). From this perspective we need not be cautious or concerned about technology. In fact, we can confidently affirm the transformative potential of technological innovations, especially those that help adolescents cultivate virtue, that allow families to manage chronic illness, and that liberate people from economic structures robbing them of their dignity and worth.

And at least in my book, that’s something worth saying yes to.

Parts One and Two of “The Yes (to Technology) in Our No (to Social Media)” article may be found in the November and December 2019 Heartbeat newsletters.

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# A Special Northwest Hispanic Ministry Newsletter

By Joe Strong

My name is Diana, I am from Venezuela. On August 18, 2019, I crossed the border between the United States and Mexico. I turned myself in to the Immigration Authority of the U.S. along with my father and my cousins. During that process I can testify to the things that God has done in my life, long before I arrived. My plan was to come in May with a group of people. I was very excited to see my husband who was already living in Bellingham, WA. I couldn't leave in the month of May, so the people left Venezuela without me and that filled me with anguish and sadness. I did not understand why it was happening. Months later, I could see that God had kept me from bad experiences. Some of the people who left at that time were kidnapped for ten days by a drug cartel on the border of Mexico-Nuevo Laredo, one of them was killed for trying to escape. There were thousands of people on the Mexican side of the border, all hoping to cross and surrender to the Immigration Authority of the U.S. They lived in terror from the gangs. Knowing this event, I understood why God had delayed my plans, it was not His time.

On August 11, we left Venezuela and throughout the crossing I met good people, who encouraged me with the Word of God, I could feel His presence everywhere. We arrived in Mexico and to reach the United States we had to cross a river, whose water flow is very strong. Many people have died trying to cross it. That day on August 18, the river was so calm that I could cross and the water level did not reach my knees. When I was on American soil, I was arrested along with my father and my cousins. We were taken to a border station and there I was separated from my father. They took him away and I didn't know anything else about him. I was there 6 days, without communicating with my family. In that place I could bathe once a day and they would give us food from time to time. I thank God for being in that place, because there were other places called the "kennels," or the "refrigerators" where there were hundreds of people unable to bathe or eat for more than 30 days. They slept on the concrete floor and their blankets were very thin layer of aluminum.

On August 23, my birthday, I was transferred to a detention center in Texas, a much larger and more comfortable place. I was very afraid because there were 1,500 migrant women waiting to be interviewed to enter the United States. They had been waiting for more than five months. At that time, I remember asking God for strength and to be calm in that place.

Surprisingly, within twelve days of being there, I was interviewed and the following week a positive response arrived. Miraculously, the process accelerated in that place for all the women who were there. So instead of falling into depression, they sought God tirelessly, because He is our only Comforter.

Two weeks later, we were transferred to a Federal prison in Mississippi. Our feet and hands were shackled. There were old women equally bound, deprived of moving. Sometimes they fell to the ground. That broke my emotional state. It was a great emotional shock to enter that place for the first time. We were women who were only looking for a better life, and had surrendered voluntarily to the U.S Border Patrol.

When seeing themselves in that place, several women tried to take their lives. They hurt themselves in many ways. Fear began and more than at any other time the uncertainty began. We did not know what would happen to us. Nobody explained to us how our immigration process would advance. They only said that we would spend an indefinite period of time there. My faith was always alive and although adversity came, God was with me. My grandfather died while I was there. I was unable to communicate with my family, without knowing how it happened, without understanding anything. The only thing I could feel was the presence of God with me at all times.

On November 6, I was taken to court. The lawyer who defended me was negligent and they put me on a bail bond of 30,000 dollars to be released. Bail that was initially to be denied, but God was my lawyer and thanks to His mercy I was assigned. The amount was very high, in fact it has been the highest in the whole prison among all women, but bigger than that was the miracle that God did in my life. He defended me, He saved me. My husband had no way to pay that money, but God had prepared another miracle in my life. He put people with such a noble heart on the road, willing to help. He put Pastor Joseph Strong and a whole congregation (Amor Viviente) in my path helping in prayer and collaboration, of whom I am immensely grateful. My bail could be paid. I was released on November 16, after three months in detention.

Today I can paradoxically say that those months in prison have been the best months of my life. It was because at that time, the most difficult, I experienced the presence of God. I could know more of his Word. It was in that place I found the most precious treasure for me, the love of God. Now I understand that His time is perfect. My father is still in an immigration prison. However, I know that in God's time, he will leave, and that God will also transform his life. I am convinced that His plans are perfect and that I will never ever be alone because the love of God will always be with me.

# Sing! (part three)

By Jerry Hop

*This is the last in a series of three articles I've submitted that summarizes some material from a (Keith and Kristyn) Getty workshop attended by members of the worship team in October. This month I want to conclude with more excerpts from their book, "Sing!"*

## **Commanded ...to sing**

We are a singing people because God has commanded us to sing. It's what we do. Psalm 149:1 says: "*Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints.*" Repeatedly and throughout Scripture, we are *commanded* to be a singing people. There are more than four hundred references to singing in the Bible and at least fifty direct commands. God's commands are not arbitrary—they are always for His people's good.

**Where we sing:** The command is not to sing just to ourselves or by ourselves (like in the shower or in the car), but out loud as part of "the assembly of the saints." We are not to think of it as "just the singing"—something we can skip over or arrive late for—but something we are to take seriously to value, to set aside time for.

**What we sing:** We have so much creative freedom in our music and songs, which is seen in the diversity of sounds and styles expressed in the Church all over the world. But the Bible is more specific about *what* we should sing. Col. 3:16 says "*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly...singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.*" We are commanded to sing the Word of God—the truth revealed in the Scriptures, the story of redemption.

**How we sing:** Col. 3:16 also speaks into "*how*" we sing. The disposition of our hearts is not begrudging—"I sing because I must"—but rather "with thankfulness in your hearts to God." Deeply felt thankfulness produces a sound from our voices that is robust and enthusiastic. The command to sing leads us to Christ with joy to praise and follow Him. How kind of God to command us to something so wonderful!

## **Compelled ...to sing**

We are a singing people because the gospel of the Lord Jesus compels us to sing. It's what we do. Saved people are a singing people. Bob Kauflin in his book, Worship Matters, writes "*Worship isn't primarily about music, techniques, songs, or methodologies. It's about our hearts.*" God's love for us inspires our response of love for Him and calls forth songs of joy from our lips.

*Compelled.* What a strong and convicting word that is! Paul used it when defending his reasons for being so passionate about presenting the gospel to the church in Corinth. "*For Christ's love compels us,*" he wrote, "*because we are convinced that one died for all...and was raised again.*" (2 Cor. 5)

Our motivation to sing comes from so much more than ourselves—our likes, our comfort levels, our musical tastes and preferences. Intrinsicly, it's driven by the One who died and was raised. And the gospel is the revelation of the most glorious truth in history---we sing because we're free. Jesus came so that we might know Him, for "*The truth will set you free*" (John 8:32).

I sing (says Keith) because I'm free to run from all that tore me apart and to run to all that makes me whole. "*The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we may cry, 'Abba Father'*" (Rom. 8:15).

The book of Revelation paints a breathtaking, heaven-sent picture of angels, and saints, and indeed all creation, singing to the One upon the throne. Revelation 15 describes the saints as "*they held harps given them by God*" and sang the song of salvation that all God's people through all the ages shall one day join together in His new creation to sing.

We will spend our eternity singing, for the gospel compels us to sing. And we are a people who, as we reflect on the gospel, cannot help but sing. We do not sing because we have to. We sing because we love to.

In summary, we sing because we're created to, commanded to, and compelled to. And when we sing great truths, great things happen. Christ-filled, Spirit-prompted singing moves out in concentric circles changing your own heart and mind...changing your family...changing your church...and changing this world.

# Greeting Time - Real or Ritual

By Jerry Hop

You may have noticed that we've not had a formal greeting time in our worship service the last several weeks. It's been intentional.... the worship team is skipping the greeting time for a couple months in order to evaluate its purpose. (Actually, the cold and flu season is a great time to do this!)

If you're an introvert like some, you're likely to be O.K. with this; if you're someone who is energized by other people, you've probably missed the social interaction. You must admit that our greeting time has become, for some, "let's see how many hands I can shake in the next five minutes."

The worship team is continually looking at all aspects of our worship services, asking why we're doing them and if we could do things better or with more purpose. Recently we came across church surveys that said many first-time visitors don't like the "stand and greet" time. They feel awkward or ignored and sometimes don't return. About half of regular members/attenders don't really care for it either according to the same studies.

Is this something that can better take place before and/or after the service when there is more time to develop deeper relationships? Or is this something valuable enough to continue, but perhaps with some "fine tuning?" What is the purpose of the greeting time?

We will review this at our next team meeting with the intent of deciding how to best use that time. We're not trying to eliminate meaningful fellowship; but do want to make sure our worship services are purposeful and glorifying God. We ask for your patience as we look at this.

# Getting to Know Our Church Family

By Elaine Snapper

This month I am featuring Clair and Hildred A, who now attend our church after living in Salt Lake City, Utah. They moved in order to be closer to their daughter Melissa and her husband Brian and their grandchildren. Hildred was born in Hull, Iowa, and attended Christian schools throughout her education, including graduating from Dordt College with a degree in ele-

mentary education. Clair was born in Salt Lake City, the only American-born child of an immigrant family from the Netherlands. His parents were founding members of the CRC in Salt Lake. The couple met when Hildred served a S.W.I.M. (Summer Workshop in Missions) youth mission in Salt Lake City and stayed at Clair's family home. They became friends and renewed that friendship when Hildred later came to SLC on a Dordt band tour.

Clair served a year as a youth leader in Tacoma, WA and Hildred taught a year at Inwood Christian school. Clair joined the Army for a 3-year term so he could choose his MOS (finance Specialist-Payroll). Clair and Hildred were married in 1973 and moved to Colorado Springs where Hildred taught at the Evangelical Christian Academy. Clair served in the army and they became members of the Cragmore CRC. Clair continued to work as an accountant at Fort Carson. He was then ordered to serve in Okinawa, Japan. Hildred followed and taught English at the Okinawa Christian School. Clair's Army service ended in 1975 and they moved to SLC for Clair to finish his Accounting Degree at the Univ. of Utah and Hildred taught at Salt Lake Christian School. They became active members of Immanuel CRC which later became Mt. Springs Community Church. Clair began work as a cost accountant for Eimco Mining Machinery. In 1978 and 1981 Melissa and Michelle were born, so Hildred took a break from teaching.

They took many road trips between Hull, Iowa and Salt Lake City, which strengthened family ties with Hildred's family. When Eimco closed its plant in SLC, Clair began work as an accountant at Easton Aluminum, where they made baseball bats, arrows and other aluminum sports products. When the girls were in 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, Hildred returned to teaching at Intermountain Christian School where she stayed for the next 29 years. Clair worked 26 years for the State of Utah Dept. of Health and Human Services doing program and provider audit work. He served in several capacities as audit, finance and program manager, focusing the last 17 years to provide services to people with disabilities. Hildred retired from teaching in 2017 and then volunteered to work to teach reading and math to 5 boys whose mother had escaped from a polygamous marriage with 7 of her children. None of them were educated to even a first grade level, although they were 8, 10, 11, 11, and 13. It was very challenging and yet very rewarding. When Clair retired in 2018, they chose to move to Bellingham to be closer to their kids and grandkids, and have loved getting to know new

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acquaintances and friends at Hope in Christ Church. Looking back on their lives they can feel God's leading. They were both raised in Christian homes and recognize God's care in their lives. For example, Hildred lost her father at an early age and the following year their house burned down, but her mother realized the importance of Christian education. Although it was a sacrifice, she sent Hildred and her brother to Christian schools, including Dordt College. Hildred feels blessed. We are so glad they have joined our church. Clair is active as an elder and Hildred is a GEMS leader, and they are also youth leaders.

## Items of Interest: Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting

By Herman Laninga, Secretary

1. The roofing of our former sanctuary has been put on hold as after further inspection the firm that made the winning bid determined the project entails additional repairs that would more than double their bid of \$18K. The Admin Team is in the process of reviewing options.
2. Another outcome of this news is that Michael Boer visited Council and recommended we form a committee to evaluate all of our building and grounds to determine how the cost of maintenance of our aging campus will impact our ministry over the next few years. This committee will work closely with Vitality and Building and Grounds Committees. Contact Mike if you have further questions or if you may have an interest in serving on this committee.
3. The Elders reported that Vicki S came to them to express her desire to make Profession of Faith and become a member. Pastor Scott has reviewed our beliefs with Vicki and she shared her strong faith in the Lord. The Elders joyfully accepted her testimony. She will soon be making her Public Profession of Faith. Many of you were present when we welcomed Amber O as a member when she made her public Profession of Faith November 17. We thank God for this important decision by Amber.
4. The Vance family will be visiting us Sat/Sun January 25-26 to share their goal of moving to Libya to do Kingdom work. We look forward to their visit.

## Women's Winter Weather Shelter

Submitted by Terry Vander Woude

Over the winter holiday the ongoing Women's Winter Weather Shelter at Civic Field is seeking some extra helping hands.

The women's shelter needs volunteers for regular shifts, but they also have a special need for drivers for the 6:00AM -7:30AM or 6PM-7:30PM shifts.

Len and Terry are regular volunteers at the shelter, and would be happy to answer any questions or give you more information. You may also contact Cassidy Schroeder: (360) 592-7507.

## Deacons' Digest

By Elaine Snapper

The deacons are brainstorming different ways to get involved in a diaconal ministry of visiting people. We would like to get people involved in visiting members of our congregation.

The deacons approved Terry Vander Woude's request for cookie donations for the Women's Cold Weather Shelter, which is overseen by Opportunity Council. The deacons requested that Terry organize this outreach.

Year-end giving letters will be prepared and distributed soon.

The Christmas giving tree project and the drive to collect items for Lighthouse Mission should both be completed by this time.

## HICC GIVING NOVEMBER 2019

	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Designated Fund Offerings:	\$ 3,868	\$ 45,312
General Fund Offerings	\$15,232	\$240,860
Rent / Utilities Income	1,829	28,285
Interest Income - Undesignated	38	519
Total Undesignated Income	17,099	269,664
General Fund Expenses	<u>(22,024)</u>	<u>(245,596)</u>
Income Over(Under) Expenses	<u>\$ (4,925)</u>	<u>\$ 24,068</u>
Total 2019 budget, including ministry quotas		\$ 234,133
Year-to-Date Budget for 12 months		\$ 234,133
Total Undesignated Income		<u>269,664</u>
Income Over (Under) Budget		<u>\$ 35,531</u>

### Loan Balances:

Classis: \$ 12,500

# January 2020

## SERMONS

- 5 The Kingdom of God is the Foundation for Political Life (Psalm 146)
- 12 Government Derives Its Authority from God (Romans 13:1)
- 19 Government Exists to Praise Good Behavior and Punish Bad (Romans 13:3-4)
- 26 Submit to Government, Not Always Obey It (Romans 13:2, 5-7)

## CHILDREN'S LEADERS

- 5 Diane, Bekah, Jen R., Grace
- 12 Tena, Christine, Diane, Amber
- 19 Tena, Christine, Marjie, Zeke
- 26 Tena, Christine, Kylie, Ali

## SERVING ASSISTANTS

- 5 Brenna, Amber, Caleb
- 12 Chantel, Faith, Amariah
- 19 Grace, Michal, Micah
- 26 Clara, Kylie, Mattea

## COOKIES

- 5 Tanya O., Lisa O.
- 12 Deloris P., Mona R.
- 19 Darlys R., Ida R.
- 26 Jen R., Rockelle R.



## OFFERINGS

- 5 Kingdom Advancement Fund
- 12 Kingdom Advancement Fund
- 19 Outreach Fund
- 26 Kingdom Advancement Fund

## USHERS/\*FOYER

- 5 Joe & Barb Z.
- 12 Len V., Bud B.
- 19 Clair & Hildred A.
- 26 Elaine S., Lou K.



## GREETERS

- 5 Lou & Ev K.
- 12 Don & Elaine S.
- 19 Deloris P., Ruth S.
- 26 Helen B., Joe P.

## OBSERVERS

- 5 Jerry H.
- 12 Rockelle R.
- 19 Ruth S.
- 26 Elaine S.

## PRAYER ROOM

- 5 Del B.
- 12 Ev K.
- 19 Ali L.
- 26 Ida R.



# January 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5 9:30 WORSHIP & COMMUNION 11:00 SUNDAY SCHOOL	6 6:00 P.M. G.E.M.S	7 9:00 A.M. ELDERS MEETING 6:00 P.M. RICHARDS' GROUP	8 9:45 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 7:00 P.M. DEACONS	9 6:30 A.M. MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP 7:00 PM. MEN'S GROUP- SPEYER	10	11
12 9:30 WORSHIP 11:00 SUNDAY SCHOOL 4:30 ROBERTS GROUP 4:30 JESUS GATHERING 7:00 LANINGA GROUP	13 7:00 P.M. FRIENDSHIP CLASS	14 6:30 P.M. BOER'S GROUP	15 9:45 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 7:00 P.M. COUNCIL	16 6:30 A.M. MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP 7:00 PM. MEN'S GROUP- SPEYER	17	18
19 9:30 WORSHIP 11:00 SUNDAY SCHOOL	20 6:00 P.M. G.E.M.S	21 6:00 P.M. RICHARDS' GROUP	22 9:45 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 7:00 P.M. WORSHIP PLANNING TEAM	23 6:30 A.M. MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP 7:00 PM. MEN'S GROUP- SPEYER	24	25
26 9:30 WORSHIP 11:00 SUNDAY SCHOOL 4:30 ROBERTS GROUP 7:00 LANINGA GROUP	27 7:00 P.M. FRIENDSHIP CLASS	28 6:30 P.M. BOER'S GROUP	29 9:45 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY	30 6:30 A.M. MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP 7:00 PM. MEN'S GROUP- SPEYER	31	