



# North Fort Myers Church of the Nazarene *Messenger*

April, 2020, Volume 10, Issue 12

We have all made a lot of adjustments in the last few weeks to try and protect ourselves from an unseen force that seems to be no respecter of persons. We've tried to comply with the government's instructions and the best advice of the medical community. We've made changes physically as well as emotionally and mentally. We've given up events that require gathering together. We've given up a quick trip to the grocery store to pick up a few things. We may have given up some things we never thought we would have to give up. Some of us may have secretly welcomed the break. Others may have suffered more than they would admit. But wouldn't it be interesting, in the midst of all this reordering of our lives, to take a survey and learn how many people have taken the time to ask themselves how much of what we've given up has actually been essential? You know, really important – things we thought we could not live without?

That is what crises typically do for us. They force us to make those choices – face those truths – think about those things we don't necessarily choose to think about all the time. What is really important to me? What should I be spending my time doing? What is so vital to me that I cannot do without it? Who is important enough to me that I really don't want to do without them? How much toilet paper do I really need?

We have found ourselves in circumstances that none of us have ever faced. The last pandemic to affect America was the post-war Spanish flu of 1918. Since, we do not have anyone in our circle of friends who lived through that crisis, we are facing more than just a "new normal." We are being forced to accept some circumstances that America has not seen in over 100 years.

The question that should be at the forefront of all our minds is, "What now?" Every one of us must choose. Do we simply do our best to act as though nothing has changed? Do we try to maintain our lifestyles as they have always been? Keep the routine to which we are most accustomed? Try to get back to "normal" as soon as possible? Or do we look at this as the perfect opportunity to reevaluate, reassess, and reorder accordingly?

When we evaluate our priorities and take a closer look at what should matter most to us, as believers in Jesus, where do we stand? Is it all about church attendance? Is it all about not being able to meet together and worship collectively? If we have found a vast emptiness in our spiritual life because we cannot meet together regularly, perhaps we should reevaluate what our relationship with Jesus has become.

The apostle Paul wrote several of his New Testament letters while under house arrest or in prison. Think of the amount of time he was away from other believers and unable not only to meet as a body, but unable to meet with them at all. There are currently hundreds of thousands of Christians all over the world who are either in prison for their belief in Christ or at least unable to freely gather together as the Church.

When we who make up the Church witness to people about our faith are our first words to them about a church building where we gather? The apostle Paul wrote, in his first letter to the Church at Corinth:

*For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received—that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures,*

Paul's words, "first importance," should give all of us a clue about the sieve through which every issue, decision, action, and thought should pass as we contemplate the larger meaning of this day in which we find ourselves.

The world may think Easter has been placed "on hold." But we, the Church, know that no matter what may happen within our world, the monument that stands at the center of everything we hold dearest is the cross. The price that was paid for we who are currently caught up in "social distancing," was paid to enable us to make it our clearest intent to "*draw near*" to Him Who paid that price. Is that the center of your world? When we gather together once again won't it be grand to learn that we have all reordered our spiritual lives in order to make that our "newest normal?"

## Calendar

Until further notice –

Sunday morning worship

11:00 A.M. live-streamed on

Facebook – on [nfmnazarene.com](https://www.facebook.com/nfmnazarene.com)

at “Past Messages” after the service is completed.

Wednesday night

announcements/prayer/devotional at 6:00 P.M.

Beginning April 1, Harry Chapin Food Distribution Mobile Food Pantry

1 – 3 P.M.

10 – Good Friday

12 – EASTER SUNDAY

20 – One Blood Bloodmobile 11-5



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

02 – Tammie Joslin

02 – Andrea Bergman

08 – Perry Souzis

12 – Dan & Tammie Joslin

16 – Mary Ellen Steckhan

20 – Tom Blakeman

24 – Jim Corle

27 – Sheryl Colie

30 – Richard Colie



## Prayer Needs:

Phoebe Barr

Ida Chaplow

Laurel Chapman

Ernie Rybold

Sheryl Colie & Family

Ardyth Eldridge

Mark & Kim Barr

Kenny & Gail Goodman

Children & Teen Depts.

A Youth Pastor

Patrick Lindsey

Elis Lodge

Judi Predko's family

Paul Jones

Tim Dillehay

Marlene Ryan

Louis Perez

Phyllis Obney

Eileen Jennings

Unsaved Loved Ones

Betty Coolie

Janice O'Lynn

Eileen Massett

Betty Predko

Dorothy Chapman

Joseph Groves

The Monroe Family

Regina Williams

Kitty Baxter

Those affected negatively by the Corona Virus

Ben Bergman

Pastor Jim Spear

Mark & Lisa Koch

Tom Blakeman

Paul & Grace Boling

Lorraine Jungles

Dave Peck

Allice Daugherty

Our District Family



**Harry Chapin Food Bank**  
**OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**

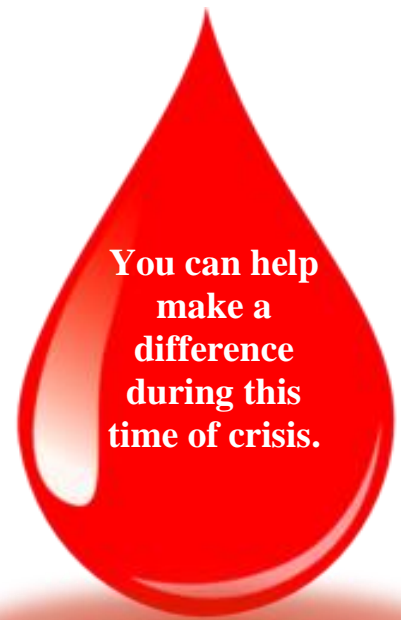
Clearly, a lot has changed since the current Corona Virus crisis has become a worldwide issue. We as a church are doing everything we know to do in order to try and address the needs that have arisen as a result of this “new normal” for our church and our community.

As a result, we are joining forces with the Harry Chapin Food Bank, and beginning Wednesday, April 1, from 1:00 to 3:00 P.M., and every Wednesday until further notice, we will be holding a drive-through food distribution event.

The current plan is that people will drive through the church parking lot, encircling the church, and **with no personal contact involved**, will be receiving food from our church's volunteers. Although the typical sign-in for the recipients will not be required, in order for the food bank to maintain their accountability, and in order to keep correct counts, names of recipients will be recorded as people receive the pre-packaged food.

Gloves will be provided for all our volunteers. If you would be willing to volunteer for this outreach, please call the church or Pastor Van and let us know. Please pray GOD will use this special program to reach as many as possible. And please pass the word on to everyone you know who may benefit from this resource.



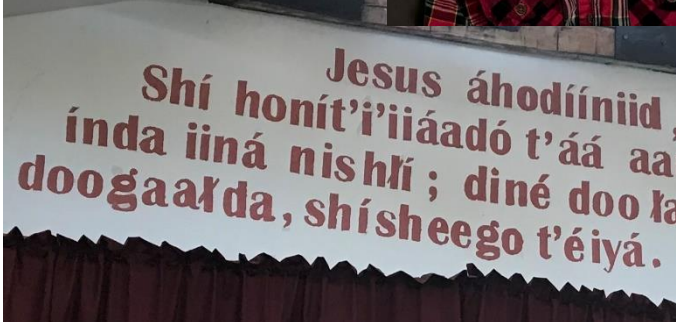


**Monday, April 20**

**11:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.**

**The One Blood mobile bus will be conducting a blood drive in the church parking lot. The need is great at this time, and we want to do all we can. Please help us spread the word.**

**Pictures from our Work and Witness trip to Native American Christian Academy**





## Focus on what God has done and is doing!

*Psalm 33:3-11...Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy. For the word of the Lord is upright, And all His work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.*

Being in the middle of the Coronavirus outbreak, sometimes it's hard to understand and focus on what God is doing in your life. However, over time, I've learned that we can identify His fingerprints in several ways:

First, take a look at the work God does. It is creative and powerful. He made heaven, earth, and all living creatures, and He molded each of us in our mother's womb.

*For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.  
Psalm 139:13,14*



Twelve of us just returned from a work and witness trip to Sun Valley, Arizona, where the Church of the Nazarene runs a boarding school for Native American children. It was a great blessing to work with and help these wonderful kids. While there, we were able to visit a few of God's creative wonders. The most awe inspiring for me were the Grand Canyon and the Painted Desert. The overwhelming massiveness of the Grand Canyon is something that everyone needs to experience at least once in their lifetime.

Next, we can see God's work through Christ-centered prayers which narrow our focus on the Lord. When we pray actively and persistently, we can more readily identify His actions and see how to join Him. There is a lady in our church whose grandson has been going through some very rough medical treatments for a rare blood disorder. Our church has prayed diligently over the past years and we have seen God work in some very powerful ways. So much so that his doctors and parents have been amazed at his progress.

Finally, the work of God becomes clear to a yielded heart, which prepares us to listen and obey. Regularly concentrating on God's Word will clear our mind and help us understand what the Lord is up to.

Don't get so distracted by the news media to notice what God is doing. If you want to perceive His work, these things can give you a fresh perspective. Admit your lack of attention and refocus your heart and mind on the Lord. I promise you will be blessed for it. Wash your hands. Stay well! Blessings, Pastor Van



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