



Committed to Trust!
Compelled to Go!

Issue #140
March 27, 2020

Dear Friends, Family, and In-Pact Partners:

It came as a shock to us when we realized we had not sent out a genuine update newsletter since last September, but only Thanksgiving and Christmas greetings. It seems that life has been one of constant unpredictability a lot of flying by the seat of our pants. In spite of this season's fluidity, it has been one of the most rewarding and enjoyable of all. So, let us fill you in on what's been happening. We are foregoing pictures in this letter so we can keep it short and get it to you quickly after such another long time of not communicating.

++ Yuma:

> Personal: As you may remember from our last actual newsletter, Bob was to have knee replacement surgery, and that took place last October 16th. For several months his recovery was "ahead of schedule" as he steadily switched from recliner to walker to cane. With two and one-half weeks between surgery and our first Sunday of services at Chapel de Oro, he had recovered well enough to preach while sitting down on a stool, and he never missed a Sunday throughout the entire season.

People tell us it takes up to a year for full recovery, so we are just over half way there. He still has a general mild ache most of the time and then in the wee hours of the morning has pain strong enough to awaken him. He feels there is some "play" in the joint, probably because the ligaments are still stretched and his muscle strength is still deficient. Having said that, he walks most of the time without the cane (unless he wants sympathy ☺).

In the meantime, Jo Ann has developed a pretty severe case of what we think is carpal tunnel syndrome in both wrists. She has tingling in both hands most of the time that radiates up into her arms sometimes as far as her shoulders. She also deals with extreme stiffness during the early morning hours until she's had time to be up and about. She is going through a regimen of specific exercises once or twice a day, and each day begins with Bob massaging her back, neck, and shoulders.

Every month we had some kind of celebration – Thanksgiving in November, Christmas in December, our 61st wedding anniversary in January, Jo Ann's birthday in February, and Bob's birthday in March. All were pretty low key this year. We really wanted to get back to the Midwest for at least Thanksgiving or Christmas, but we didn't feel we should travel so soon after Bob's knee surgery. Each celebration was still special and personal.

> Chapel de Oro Life: This third season at Chapel de Oro has been nothing short of amazing. Even though we lost at least thirty (30) people from last year, including some from the "board", services began Nov 3rd on a high note, and we never looked back. Once again we had first-time attendees in every service, and had several couples and singles who quickly became regulars. Late in the season we lost another couple who were key leaders (he was worship leader and she was treasurer), but even with that we didn't lose a beat as others immediately stepped in and filled the gap.

All in all, our weekly attendance averaged only about 10 to 15 below last year. Our high Sunday was 183 and during January and February we never dropped below 145. Then the drop was because our Canadian folks have to start heading back north because of the "out-of-country" limits on their national health insurance. In spite of the lower attendance averages, our offerings did just the opposite and were the highest they have been in the three seasons we've been here. The Chapel ended the year with over \$10,000 left in the bank after all bills and reimbursements had been paid. That enabled us to increase our season-end contributions to the four missions projects the Chapel supports. And, they even added a \$500 gift to Life Unlimited Ministries, which came at a very opportune time.

The women's and men's Bible study groups were amazing this year as well. The women watched a video study on the armor of God (Eph 6) by Priscilla Schirer and the men began a study of the Book of Colossians that Bob first wrote back in our first pastorate in Mountain Grove, MO, in 1969 entitled, "The Christ-Life In You". Due to a shorter Bible study group season, they only got through Chapter One. The women's group that in the past averaged around ten to twelve women this year simply blew the lid off running consistently in the upper 20's and even into the 30's. Both studies were spiritually pivotal in the lives of many who participated.

This past season Bob used the preaching theme, "Straight Answers For Serious Questions", because he sensed that many in the Chapel were facing many health, financial, and relational issues that were causing anxiety, fear, confusion, and uncertainty as they faced their senior years. He spent the first five Sundays preaching on the authority and complete reliability of the Bible before doing a Christmas series on the Incarnation of Christ as the "Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world." Many people raved about both series, but a number of them asked for copies of the videos to send back to their home churches (so he's been working on those and will finish editing the fifth one this week and next.

> The COVID-19 Virus: Needless to say, the CoronaVirus situation impacted both the Chapel life and us personally. Because of it, our Canadian folks were ordered to return to Canada immediately. In that, we lost our worship leader, all of our set-up volunteers, and 40% of our remaining attendees. Then the Park shut down all group activities, the pools, and then the offices. As far as we know, the only thing still operating is the Park Post Office. All communication with the Office is done by e-mail and a drop box outside the door.

Our final Chapel service was Sunday, March 15th, and left everyone feeling sad because we never had opportunities for a final farewell or many chances to say good-bye for the season. So, the two of us are hunkered down in the ministry's park model, getting out only when necessary, and seeing remaining chapel members only "at a distance" or communicating by phone.

++ Missouri Bound?

That's a very good question. It's been our plan to spend a few weeks back home in Collins so we can keep our doctors' appointments in April and May, and also complete some projects around the house. However, at the moment, we don't know when . . . or even IF . . . that will happen. We aren't travel restricted in AZ, and we don't think we would be in MO, but NM, TX, OK, and KS all have more restrictions that would create potential problems for lodging, food, and gas access.

We're monitoring that at the moment and will decide if and when we can make the trip. We really need to but, frankly, Yuma is by far the most convenient spot for us under the virus circumstances, with everything we need just a few minutes away. And, there are only four confirmed virus cases in Yuma County where we are located. While there are currently less than 400 cases in Missouri, St. Clair and Polk Counties apparently still have no cases. A number of our Chapel friends from Alaska are having to wait for either permission to drive across Canada or find an airline flying into Alaska. So, we're certainly not alone in our travels dilemma.

All four of our daughters are not in the safest places to be just now ---- Cindy and Kevin (in Medellin, Colombia, quaranteed 'til April 13th), Debbie and Mike (in Buena Vista, CO), Cheri and Bob (in St. Paul, MN), and Jim and Deanna (in Galesburg, IL) are all in locations with significant virus activity; so pray for them, too.

++ Greer in May:

Unless we are prohibited by restrictions, we plan to head to Greer in late May for our summer ministry at Greer Chapel. Weather is still pretty chilly and prone to snow before mid May, so the possibility of going there and living in a cold 5th wheel is not part of the plan. However, we are super excited about the season because it marks the 25th anniversary of the Chapel's beginning. We are making big plans to celebrate on Sunday, July 5th as part of the community's July 4th celebration, and hope to have all of the three previous pastors present. As you remember, Jo Ann's sister and brother-in-law, Dot and Bill Hutchison began services in the Molly Butler Lodge restaurant in 1995. We expect it to be another great year – our fifth to serve the amazing people there.

+ Prayer Requests:

As we thank you again for your many prayers and support, please pray for, among other things, our 2011 5th wheel in Yuma badly needing to sell. If any questions, e-mail, call, or text us.

In His Bond, By His grace, and for His Kingdom,

Bob and Jo Ann (the Tollivers) -- Sure wish we had more time and space to tell you more!!!

If you desire to contact us, do so in one of the following:

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