

JOURNEY NEWS

A publication of Journey Church of Clinton, Iowa

SHINE TODAY!

BY SENIOR PASTOR TOM LOYOLA

The coronavirus pandemic, which has profoundly impacted our daily lives, provides a ripe opportunity for believers in Jesus Christ to shine!

“Shine. Everyday.” That is the motto of the senior living facility where my mother-in-law resides. I imagine that for them this means things like ... let’s smile, let’s be cheerful, let’s have a positive attitude, and let’s be active. Good things, certainly.

I have some other ideas in mind when I say we can shine as believers in Jesus during these months of COVID. Here are four.

We can shine with peace in the face of fear. People are afraid. Many aspects of COVID can bring on fear. We can fear getting sick. We can fear that a loved one might get sick. We can be afraid of the economic impact on our country. We can fear that we might inadvertently spread the virus to someone else. We can be afraid of dying.

Fear seems to always be lurking around the corner, now more so than ever. And with our present circumstances, fear may seem to be totally understandable, even expected. However, God has a word for us: “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). This is but one of many, many admonitions in the Bible in which God tells His people not to be afraid.

But how can we find peace in fearful times? Isaiah 41:10 gives two very important answers to that question: God Himself is with His people, and, He will help us. Simple statements; hard to truly take to heart. However, hard or no, believing that God is really with you all the time and that He will strengthen and help you even in the most dire circumstances, that is the path to calm in the storm.

If we want to experience the peace of God, we must fix our minds on the Word of God, and, especially, on His promises. Promises like Isaiah 41:10, and Hebrews 13:5-6, and Joshua 1:9. Resisting the temptation to fear is really a battle of the mind, deciding what you will and won’t think about. If we think about the right things, we will experience the peace of God. That is precisely what God tells us in Philippians 4:8-9.

I think it is helpful to realize that what some Christians may call “fear” is really prudence. That raises a question: Where is the line between fear and wisdom? When do we cross over from being prudent into being afraid? Is wearing a life vest while canoeing evidence of fear or wisdom? Is it prudent to stay behind the guardrail at the Grand Canyon or are you just being afraid?

It is difficult for me to answer for you whether your decisions are based in fear or in wisdom. I cannot see into your heart and mind.

In that regard it is charitable for us, members of the Body of Christ, not to rush to judgment about one another, thinking thoughts like, “Wearing a face mask means you are living in fear.” Not necessarily. You might choose to wear a face mask out of respect for the directives of our governing officials. You might choose to wear a face mask because you would like to make a purchase at Jewel Osco, and they do require masks. And you might wear a face mask out of love for others around you.

Which leads to a second way we can shine during COVID: we can shine with love for others. The pandemic provides an opportunity to show love for others in new ways. We could buy groceries for neighbors who are housebound because of the virus, we can ask coworkers how COVID is affecting them and then listen, truly listen, with sympathy and without quick “fix-it” responses.

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CELEBRATE OUR CHURCH FAMILY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 1 Pete Hinrichsen
- 2 Breton Williams
Scott Smith
- 4 Joe Haan
- 6 Elijah Eslick
Gary Fier
Jennifer Boysen
- 9 Patricia McClung
- 10 Ben Logan
- 12 Isaac Decker
- 13 Kinzie Gordon
- 18 Linda Gordon
- 19 Marcia Duval
- 23 Jeff Eggers
- 24 Linda Cornelius
- 25 Linda Puckett
- 26 Mike Ketelsen
Kyle Norman
- 28 Carolyn Livingston
- 30 Kate Foster
- 31 Rose Johnson

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

- 2 Tom & Sue Ann Loyola
Kevin & Rachel Hansen
Wayne & Jenny Gordon
Earl & Jeanne McBride
- 4 Chris & Becky Pluister
- 5 Samuel & Corrine Sheets
- 6 Jaryd & Tiffany Prince
Josh & Anna Traverse
- 8 Daryl & Wendy Yoder
- 13 Brad & Cheri Hirl
- 19 Jerry & Joyce Duey
- 22 Dan & Kathy Liedtke
- 28 David & Carolyn Livingston
- 29 Russ & Deborah Damhoff

EVENTS CALENDAR

August 2020

- 2 Communion Sunday
- 2 Life Groups & Sunday School
On break until September 13

For a day-to-day calendar go to JourneyClinton.org/calendar

SHINE TODAY! continued

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Another example of shining with love could be to choose to wear a mask when shopping at Hy Vee, a store which does not mandate masks. After all, wearing a mask is more about the other person than about the mask-wearer. Granted, there is debate about the effectiveness of masks in preventing the spread of the virus. However, one thought is that a mask at least keeps droplets from inadvertently flying out of your mouth into your surroundings (e.g. when speaking, sneezing, and coughing). Realizing that you could be an asymptomatic carrier of the virus, you could decide to wear a mask for the sake of other people.

One of our members was recently thanked by a cashier for doing that in her store. To this cashier, the choice of our member to wear a mask communicated care and concern. This same kind of concern could motivate you to wear a mask to our worship services, even though we don't require masks.

A third way we can shine is by being remarkably gracious with one another. The issues we are facing today, COVID, national unrest, and the upcoming elections, can drive wedges between us. There are differing opinions within the body of Christ on these issues. And there is room for different opinions. However, dividing over these issues is not shining for Jesus. Rather, working hard to maintain unity in the gospel does shine brightly. As we humbly show each other patience, grace, kindness, and compassion, we bring glory to the Father.

My last thought about how we can shine during COVID is by sharing the good news of Jesus with others. A time of fear and uncertainty can be an open door to tell people the gospel. Thinking again of fear, for the believer in Jesus, even the "worst case scenario"—death—is not the worst. We can live lives of trusting contentment while those without the hope of Christ may be living daily in dread fear of catching the virus. Perhaps your coworkers or neighbors will ask you how you can be so calm during these days. What a great opening to tell them the reason you have hope and peace and joy—because your eternal home is secure in heaven, thanks to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

Borrowing again from the motto of StoryPoint Senior Living, let's shine. Everyday.

AWANA 2020 UPDATE

With all the uncertainties with the Covid restrictions, the Awana program hopes to have more concrete information about this school year's program in the near future. Please stay tuned.

Jeremiah



Missionary Focus

Pray for Christians persecuted for their faith and the missionaries and front-line workers serving in restricted access nations. These people choose to risk great danger rather than renounce their faith in their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The believers are not merely men and women in far off countries, but are your brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. How can you support them? PRAY:

Our Father in heaven

Provide for the needs of persecuted Christians, for their needs of shelter, food, education, and places to worship. (*Philippians 4:19*)

Heal the divisions between friends, neighbors and brothers that exist. (*James 3:16-17*)

Provide for the widow and orphan, and help them know your comforting presence. Meet them in their loneliness through your spirit. (*2Cor. 1:3-4*)

Strengthen the faith of those who have given up or wandered away. Provide Bibles, good teaching and sound leaders for those who are searching (*Hebrews 13:9*)

Use the testimonies of released prisoners and of Christians who have endured persecution for your glory. (*Rev. 12:11*)

Create a longing in the hearts of many observing to know the transformative power of Jesus Christ. (*Rom. 8:18-19*)

Rekindle the desire for worship and prayer in the lives of persecuted Christians. (*Psalms 107*)

Help our brothers and sisters know their value in your eyes despite what society tells them.. (*1 Peter 2:9-10*)

Turn what the enemy intends for evil into good for your glory, Lord (*Gen. 50:20*)

Amen

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From Voice of the
Martyrs, August 2020
issue page 10.



You can find out more at www.persecution.com

YOUR ASSISTANCE REQUESTED

Marilee Mueller is writing a book and would like to include stories from the Church Family about how God has worked in your life. If interested, please email stories to Marilee at iolamary@hotmail.com



Popsicles in the Park

