

# Well Digger

“The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14 ESV)  
August 2020

It has been quite some time since the last issue of this newsletter. A lot has happened since. Not least of the events has of course been the coronavirus pandemic and the social and political unrest in our country. We have had to find different ways to do so many things, including meeting together for church. The way the people in our church have handled all these things has encouraged me greatly. I think we have taken steps forward into a greater maturity in the Lord, gotten more resilient, and managed to minister to other people as well (some of whom we would not have touched if it had not been for the strange new circumstances). My prayer is that we keep on growing and learning through each new challenge, discovering how God is working out his purposes in every new situation.

Meeting in person again, we have come back to a newly renovated auditorium. Thanks to everyone's giving and work, the aging and musty interior of our main meeting room has been replaced with a brighter and more pleasant (and dryer!) environment. Glenn K. in particular is to be thanked for doing the lion's share of the remodeling. It looks great.

The renewal of the sanctuary is, I think, a visible step into the future of where our church is

going. Where is God calling us? I believe that God's intention for us centers on one primary goal: to be transformed into the image of Jesus. To become like him is the key to the fulfillment of God's greatest purposes for his people. As he is revealed in and through his people, the church is enabled to know God deeply, and the world sees who Jesus truly is. Let it be so!

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As we have begun meeting in person again, wearing masks has become a rather unwelcome part of our experience. It is not forever! We are trying to do our best to comply with measures that value and protect everyone's safety, but we will also joyfully throw our masks away as soon as the government gives the clear signal or when the Lord says it is time. Whichever comes first! Till then, we hyperventilate together.

Is wearing a mask a sign of lack of faith? If we believe in healing and divine protection, why would we wear masks? Is it hypocritical to wear a mask and preach healing? These are the sort of questions that some in the larger church have asked, and some believers and churches have dispensed with wearing masks to show their faith. (Others have stopped just

because they were tired of wearing masks.)

I suggest that a stronger understanding of New Testament teaching could help folks get unstuck on these questions. The New Testament teaches that the kingdom of God has two dimensions—that which is already here and that which is still future. Jesus healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, and raised the dead. After him, the early church did the same. Yet, people still got sick, and people still died (including believers). Jesus' followers understood themselves to be living “in between” what was present and future, thankful for what they had already received, believing and pressing forward into that which was still ahead, and assured that in the end they would receive the full measure of the kingdom. They lived with two realities: the power of God's kingdom and the weakness of the present age.

So do we. We have been saved, we are being saved, and we shall be saved. Healing has come in the gospel, we pray for healing by faith through the gospel, and the gospel promises that we will ultimately be entirely and forever healed when the kingdom comes in its fullness at Jesus' return. In between the “already” and the “not yet,” we live with two

realities, the age to come and the present age, side-by-side.

Wearing a mask and preaching healing—just like wearing glasses and praying for people’s eyes, or taking medicine and laying hands on someone to be cured—reflects that life in between the times, when the kingdom has come in part but not in full.

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Some testimonies since the last newsletter:

We had just concluded church, and I was talking with a lady on the front porch of the church. She shared that she had wanted to get prayed for by our visiting minister that day, but she had not had the opportunity since so many others had gotten prayed for. She explained that she had several problems with her eyes, including macular degeneration. She shared that she loved to read the Bible and to study, but that this was becoming increasingly difficult because of the eye problem. I offered to pray with her, and she accepted. I prayed briefly and commanded macular degeneration to be gone and her eyes to see clearly. She admitted she had not felt anything, and I just smiled and said, "That's ok." We said good-bye, and she headed home. Later that day, I got an excited message on my answering machine. She was so excited! "I can see better! I can see better!" she exclaimed. A couple of weeks later, she demonstrated to my wife and me, pulling a book from the shelf

with small print and reading it clearly without aid from any glasses, contacts, or other helps. Still wearing our own glasses, we thanked God together.

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Baby O., being cared for by her grandmother and others in the church, was taken forward for prayer. The visiting evangelist prayed over the baby. The grandmother reported several weeks later that the baby seemed to be "a new baby" the next day and was no longer afflicted by choleric. In the same service, the grandmother had come forward when the evangelist asked if anyone had asthma. The evangelist spoke one word to her, "Breathe!" She fell to the floor, and all those around her could hear her pull in a full breath of air as her lungs expanded to capacity. She sat on the floor, thanking God for what he had done.

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As I left church, with no one left but me and my family, I noticed that a Harley-Davidson “trike” had pulled into our lot. As I came out the front door, I saw the rider, who had not noticed me, get off the bike, take a wad of tobacco out of his mouth, and throw it to one side. My first reaction was annoyance, and I almost said, “Hey, this is a church. Could you pick up your tobacco?” Inwardly, something else said, “This is God’s opportunity.” So I walked over and said hello. As it turned out, his exhaust had started falling off as he came up the mountain

on the road past our church. I asked if needed tools, but he only asked if I had some wire. “I do!” I said, and I got a couple of strands from in the church. The exhaust was too hot for him to touch, so he was trapped there with me. I shared with him about repentance from sin, being born again, and the need to meet Jesus personally. I also offered to pray for him for anything he might need. At first, he said he did not have any need. The longer we talked, the more came out. He had been paralyzed and on a ventilator for three months with a nerve disease and, after that, his horse had reared back and fallen on him, damaging his leg and spine. He had prayed a lot through all of that and had come through, but the nerves in his feet were damaged, and he had to wear braces to keep his feet from dangling uselessly. I prayed for his feet, commanding the nerves to heal and use to return. Nothing seemed to happen, so I prayed again. Still, nothing seemed to happen. But I got to share with him that God had a purpose for him, loved him, and that he was an amazing person. I tried repeatedly to end our conversation and leave with my family, who were waiting for me. Somehow our conversation kept moving. Finally, it was time to go. I don’t know if I will ever see him again, and I don’t know what God is doing regarding his legs, but I got to see that a small choice to value a person rather than criticize opened the door to engage and minister.

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