

WHEN I MISS CHURCH, I MISS CHURCH

Dan Williams

There is no way to sugarcoat it – 2020 has, so far, been an unusually bad year. But then, I'm not telling you anything you don't already know. We have all been dragged down by the daily drumbeat of dismal news.

A worldwide pandemic. Millions infected. Hundreds of thousands dead. Businesses shuttered. The economy in a shamble. Massive unemployment. Social gatherings suspended.

There are many lessons I have learned from this experience, but here is one takeaway: When I miss church, I miss church. That is, when I “miss church” (i.e., when I do not attend a weekly worship assembly), I miss church (i.e., I feel its absence in my life).

This is an unfamiliar sensation for me: when I was growing up, I was taught you just do not miss church. We were an “every time the doors are opened” family. For example, I was born on a Sunday in the fall of 1954. Seven days later, I attended my first worship service with my parents, setting a pattern that would continue for the next 65 years. In fact, before the onset of the present pandemic, I could count on the fingers of one hand the number of times I had missed a Sunday worship service.

Now, for the first time in my life, I find myself hunkered down at home on Sundays, worshipping online. While I am thankful to at least have some alternative, high tech is no substitute for “high touch.” I miss the smiles, handshakes, and greetings. I miss the comments of my brothers and sisters in Bible class. I miss harmonizing with the voices around me as together we sing hymns. I miss the shared sacred solemnity of the Lord's Supper. I miss the camaraderie of a community comprised of fellow believers who know me, care about me, and share the same values as we journey through life together. I miss church.

Yes, I know, we are the church wherever we are, whether individually or collectively. But there is a reason why Paul uses the phrase “*when you come together as a church*” in 1 Corinthians 11:18. There is a reason he tells them “*you yourselves (plural) are God's Temple and God's Spirit lives in you*” (1 Corinthians 3:16). There is a reason why he commands them to “*Greet one another with a holy kiss*” (1 Corinthians 16:20). There is a reason for all the “*one another*” commands in the New Testament. Read Hebrews 10:23-25. Social distancing keeps us at arm's length to safeguard our physical health, but our shared life together helps to keep us spiritually strong.

It is possible that by the time you read this some great breakthrough will have been achieved, social distancing will have become a thing of the past, and Sunday gatherings will once again be feasible. Until then, continue to pray fervently for a return to a normal, coronavirus-free life. Use every means – whether by phone, FaceTime, or mail – to reach out to your fellow Christians. And make a special effort to connect with those who were already shut-ins because of longstanding health challenges. Now, more than ever, we all know how they feel!



That meets at 701 South Wilbur, Sayre, PA 18840

(570) 886-1838

Arthur Barry, Evangelist- (607) 280-1732

May 31, 2020

WELCOME!

Sunday

Bible Class- 9:30 a.m.

Worship- 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Study-6:30 p.m.

All the churches of Christ greet you.

Romans 16:16

Today's Sermon: *What Do Your Eyes See?*

Sermons are recorded and are available for listening on the church website.

Bulletins are archived on the website.

valleycitieschurchofchrist.org

Find us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/valleycitiescoc

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 9:1-6

ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPCOMING EVENTS...

- **Wednesday Evening Bible Class: June 3rd**, live streamed and actual at the building at 6:30. Check the **Valley Cities Church of Christ Facebook page** for information. This will be one of the last times we use Facebook Live for this class.
- **Next Potluck:** TBD
- **Horseheads Ladies' Day:** postponed until further notice.
- **Next Regional Singing: August 30th (if possible) venue TBA**
- **Sojourners-** July 27th- August 6th
- **VBS-** August 8th



NEWS

- Please let Sandy know if you would like some **N95 masks** or if you would like some homemade **cloth face masks**.
- We have learned that **Jerry** flew home from his son's home in Las Vegas, NV, a week ago Friday. He was sick when he came home and is still unsteady on his feet and weak. We are kind of expecting to see him this morning!
- **G.K. Pennington**, who used to preach at Endwell, NY, and baptized Arthur, Sandy, and Darlene, has been diagnosed with esophageal cancer. It is an aggressive form of cancer and he has already begun chemo treatments.
- **We are now meeting in the building for worship on Sunday and for Bible study on Wednesday! We will still publish our worship on livestream for one more Sunday to allow the people who have been joining with us from all over the world to participate. God is good!**
- **Darlene** has bone spurs on both heels and will be having an unrelated procedure done on her foot on Tuesday.

PRAYERS

- **Pray for all those who are suffering with the Corona virus, and for the families of those who have died.**
- **Thank God for all the places where the corona virus seems to be receding and things are getting back to normal.**
- Pray for **Ted** as he waits for the surgery on his Eustachian tubes to restore his hearing.
- Pray for **Chris Henson and Devon Wolcott** and their little son, **Jace**.
- Pray for **Andrea Lentz**, friend of Darlene's, who has lung cancer.
- Please pray for **Mark Elsbree**, who needs a kidney donor. Mark is near the top of the list now, for which we are grateful.
- **Pray for Lori Kashorek**, who has lung cancer. Lori is dealing with two brain tumors, for which she has undergone radiation therapy.
- Pray for **Chris Beiber and sons, Nick and Nate, that we can stay in contact** and encourage them to draw close to Jesus.
- Prayer of thanksgiving that **Jeff Wyeth, preacher at Endless Mountains church in Tunkhannock**, has gotten better from double pneumonia and sepsis of the blood and came out of hospital on Friday.
- Pray for **G.K. Pennington** and his wife Jo as they deal with his cancer in the months to come.
- **Bill Dayton**, preacher in Kentucky, and classmate with Arthur at Northeast School of Biblical Studies is suffering from severe depression. Pray for him and for his wife Laura, who cares for him.

If you have any **PRAYERS** or **NEWS** that you would like included in the bulletin, please contact Sandy at barncat7237@gmail.com or text or call (607) 261-0911.