

“Apply your heart to instruction, and your ears to words of knowledge.” Proverbs 23:12

In this edition, we hear from graduates without graduations, home activities, and hear from our newest member to come to the country!

Matthew Bokhoven
High School



After high school I will be attending Dordt University, majoring in mechanical engineering, and playing baseball. In high school, my best memories have been playing sports, weightlifting, and enjoying time with friends. My favorite part of high school was playing baseball and winning the district championship in baseball.

Now that I've graduated from high school, I am most looking forward to starting a new chapter in my life at Dordt and playing baseball for Dordt.

Over the past four years, I've concentrated on bettering my relationship with the Lord

and making sure that I am doing my best in all that I do for the Lord. My favorite verse is Micah 6:8.

The best way COVID-19 has affected me is that I am able to sleep in everyday and I can usually be done with my classes by Thursday. The worst thing about COVID-19 is I miss seeing my friends at school every day and having face to face conversations. COVID-19 has also caused the baseball season to be delayed and there is still a lot of uncertainty if I will be able to play in my senior year.

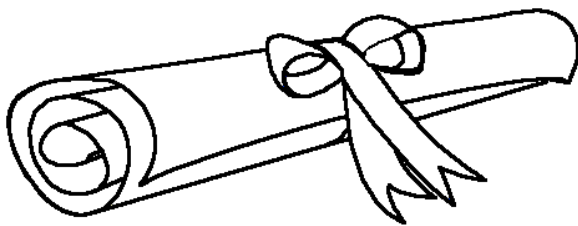
Charisse (Katie) Escoto
High School



I am Charisse Kate A. Escoto and my life verse since I was a kid was 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 for it can build up any relationships with the people in your life. I have been planning to stay in the United States for college, but I decided to go back home for personal reasons. It will be a different chapter of my life and it will require little adjustments but I guess I just have to look on the bright side! I'll be pursuing Nursing for college when I go back to the

Philippines, just as originally planned. I can say that in high school, my best memories that I had were: first, of course, being able to study at Pella Christian. It was the greatest answered prayer I've ever had in my life! Second, being able to be part of the cheerleading squad!! Honestly, cheerleading is the best highlight of my senior year! and lastly, getting to know these special people in my life right now. I thank God that He blessed me with such great people! Over the past four years, I've concentrated on being able to defeat all my fears in high school and now that I've graduated, I can say that I had a victorious battle during those previous years!

Personally, the best thing that had happened due to COVID-19 was having the opportunity to spend more time with the family that I live in here, especially knowing that I'm leaving soon. On the other hand, the worst thing that had happened was realizing senior year was already done. It's my last year for high school and my last year in America and it ended up being quarantined. I never expected Tulip Time 2019 to be my first and last Tulip Time. No one expected and wanted this to happen but I guess all we have to do is trust Him in whatever may happen in the future and thank Him for whatever happened in the past and what is happening in the present.



Lexie Matherly
High School



My favorite verse is Jeremiah 29:11-12: For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."

After graduation, I hope to work at Vermeer in the welding department.

My best memories in high school were having D-groups (Discipleship Group) and getting to know students a little better. Another one was when we have a chapel that we students have a hard day so we will have prayer time and go talk to students and talk about anything that's going on. It was just amazing to experience those chapels because we need those here and there.

After graduation, I'm looking forward to being able to get out and do more things such as traveling and seeing more of my family. I would like to travel to a different part of the US with my friends and family.

Over the past four years, I've been concentrating at college for me and wanted to prepare in advance for college but then

changed to how I was going work at Vermeer.

My favorite part of high school was Homecoming basketball because of all the students getting excited and having a fun time being dressed up. On the last day of homecoming, we would have school for a half a day and do student activities to see who would win the spirit jug. Sadly, the senior class did not win but we stole the spirit jug from the winning class.

The best way COVID-19 has affected me was that it has gotten me closer to my family and doing more cooking with them. Another one that has been the best is getting homework in advance so that I can get started on it earlier. The worst that it has affected me was my sleeping schedule and not getting back to the main routine I would get up for school. The last part would be how it has sometimes been making me sad and not being able to do anything outside with friends. I did not want senior year to be like this but we know that COVID-19 will slow down and people will be able to go out again.

Carson Tukker
Eighth Grade



My favorite verse is Isaiah 40:31 - "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their

strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."

In high school, I am looking forward to doing sound for the various events in the auditorium, as well as doing band, bowling and soccer.

My best memories in grade school have been from participating in different activities during recess and physical education. Throughout grade school, I have appreciated my teachers for being so good and patient with all the students.

COVID-19 has affected me in many ways. My favorite part is that I can work ahead at school. Some weeks, I am able to get all of my week's homework done in one day! My least favorite part about COVID-19 is that I don't get to go anywhere.

Tessa Vander Molen
High School



The best part of high school was being in band. I made many great memories and so many friends. I can't wait to be able to see them face-to-face again.

May-June

Pella II Newsletter

May 3, 2020

My plans after graduation include getting behind the wheel. As well as having the opportunity to vote.

With high school finished, I am looking forward to getting a job. It's hard knowing what I want to pursue at the moment but with God leading me, I know I will be led in the right direction.
I am not attending college.

Over the four years of high school, the thing that I most concentrated on was my grades. The classes were hard for me in the beginning of the year, but overtime, I managed to keep my grades up. Now I am on the honor roll.

My favorite verse is John 3:16. "For God so loved the world, that he gave His one and only son. Whoever believes in Him, shall not perish but have eternal life."

Although COVID-19 took away time from learning and my friends in school, it gave time for me and my family together. I've learned how to mow the lawn and though I'm not perfect, I do a pretty good job.



Alexis Vos
Eighth Grade



My favorite Scripture verse is Psalm 118:24. "This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it."

I have had many great memories at the grade school. One of my greatest memories was when I was in elementary, and our Principal, Mr. De Jong, would push us on the merry-go-round. Another is our 8th grade play, The Crown of Roses. I have appreciated all the teachers, and their effort to educate us and prepare us to succeed. They have dedicated their lives to teaching, and no one would be where they are today without them.

In high school, I plan on participating in volleyball. I am most looking forward to the high school's food. I am very excited for this new chapter of my life, and will do my best to serve the Lord.

The recent outbreak of COVID-19 has made life a little different. Some positive things about it is that I get to spend more time with my family. Some negatives are that I don't get to see my friends, and I am home all the time. I won't get to experience the rest of

my eighth-grade year, and I get to do virtual school.

Maxwell Wichhart
High School



In high school, I've been active in football, track, band, and cantabile. My favorite high school memory is Winterim's Houston trip or playing football at the UNI Unidome.

I would say that three words that describe senior year are: fast, short, quarantine.

If I could choose a song describing high school years, it would have to be "Feels" by Calvin Harris (featuring Pharrell Williams, Katy Perry and Big Sean)

My favorite verse is Ezekiel 25:17.

I plan to go to Central College in the fall.

Snow Derby
By Shane Tukker

On February 28, four cadets and four counselors left for the biennial Hawkeye Cadet Snow Derby in Hollandale, Minnesota. The cadets that participated from Pella II this year were Carson and Ethan Tukker, Ryley Hoekstra, and Kaleb Nunnikhoven. The counselors consisted of Wes Veenstra, Jon Yoder, Will Vande Voort, and Shane Tukker.

We arrived at Hollandale CRC around 9pm on Friday evening, after stopping for some Pizza Ranch on the way up. Per tradition, everyone had a bowl of ice cream and then camped overnight on the church floor. The boys and some of the counselors filled up the basement and fellowship hall. The rest of the counselors (the lucky ones) occupied the sanctuary.

After a mediocre night's sleep, we filled our stomachs with much appreciated pancakes, and went off to the frozen tundra. From 9am-2pm the cadets were broken up into groups and rotated through a plethora of



activities. These included axemanship, knots, lashing, snow sculpture, camp cooking, orienteering, black powder shooting, marksmanship, fire building, survival,

and chapel. A group would spend 15 minutes at a station before rotating on; only breaking for lunch.

Jon and I helped out at axemanship where we taught the important life skill of not cutting off fingers...at least not with an ax. Will worked at the knots station not to be

confused with the fully separate lashing station. They covered some of the most commonly used knots and then allowed the boys to hone their skills to tie as many knots as they'd wanted, informing them after the fact that the boys still had to untie everything. Wes assisted with chapel which provided the boys a time to rest, drink hot chocolate, and have a little Bible study.

After all the activities had been conquered, awards were handed out, and then we were back on the road for a quick ride home. The Lord blessed our whole time with beautiful weather and safety. I am grateful that we had a chance to experience His creation before getting sequestered in our houses for the last few weeks. Some might even say it was pretty neat.



homeschooling. We converted the formal dining room into a school room and they have been working hard getting all of their assignments finished.

Middle school students at PCGS already submitted a lot of their schoolwork electronically, using Google Classroom and email, so it was only a small jump for Carson to do all of his eighth-grade schooling through the internet. He has online meetings with his class and each of his teachers once a week. They

continue to take tests and quizzes and do assignments as scheduled, just all online instead of in person. What Carson most enjoys about online schooling is how much faster he can get through his classwork. He is usually the first of the Tukker boys to finish a week's worth of schooling, usually by Monday afternoon.

Homeschooling with the Tukkers

By Melissa Tukker

Like everyone, the Tukker kids made a sudden leap from school in the classroom a few blocks from our house, to school at home. The Pella Christian Grade School teachers did a phenomenal job of getting all their lesson plans onto the internet in a matter of days and Carson, Ethan, and Declan have been enjoying their new role of online



Ethan, in fifth grade, usually completes a week's worth of schoolwork by Tuesday morning, and enjoys having the rest of the week to read books and play outside. His schooling is a combination of online work and worksheets. His biggest struggle is finding enough books to read with the library closed.

Third grader Declan enjoys all the videos his teacher makes

explaining his lessons but hates when his assignments involve writing. He puts in a lot of hard work to get through his

assignments quickly and finishes his weekly work by Monday or Tuesday. Once his work for the week is done, he has been building a mud volcano in the backyard, complete with hot water for lava.

Overall, homeschooling has been a very smooth transition for us. None of us miss doing a full day of school, just to come home and do more homework. They are all in agreement that their homeschool teacher is not their favorite, but the free time more than makes up for it.

Our Adoption Journey to Thailand

By Will and Allison Van Wyngarden

February 23rd was a crisp, clear morning as we headed to Des Moines to board our first flight and begin our day and a half journey to Bangkok, Thailand. Our flight left at 8:30, a quick jump to Minneapolis. From there we boarded a plane bound for Seoul, South Korea. That would be the longest flight of our journey, over 13 hours. We left around 11 a.m., and due to time zone changes, it was early afternoon the next day when we landed. It was weird to miss an entire day without the sun going down. We tried to grab a quick nap in the airport before our late afternoon next leg of the journey. Our flight from Seoul to Bangkok was around 6 hours, so we landed in Thailand just before midnight on Monday, February 24.

The streets of Bangkok were eerily quiet after midnight, although there were still many people out at restaurants. We took a taxi to our hotel and tried to get some sleep.

The Jasmine Resort Hotel would be our home for the next 12 days.

The next day was our day to relax and recover before we had anything else to do on our schedule. We walked around a little, trying to get the lay of the land. We rode the elevated train to the Tesco Lotus, which is like a Wal-Mart or Target. We tried to relax by the pool, but the experience was surprisingly chilly, considering that it was 95 degrees outside. However, we were out of the sun and there was a breeze on the 7th floor where the pool was located. Later that afternoon we met the other couple from South Carolina who would also be meeting their daughter the next day. They were first time parents, so we had a lot of good conversations about parenting and our expectations.



Wednesday would be the day we finally meet the child that we had waited so long for. There was definitely a mixture of anxiety and excitement, not knowing how we or our daughter would react in that situation. We travelled to the office of Holt Sahathai Foundation where we watched a video about their organization and they gave us a packet with information about our daughter. I'm sure the video was only a few minutes long, but it seemed like an hour!

The first physical glimpse of little Kaiya also gave us a glimpse into her personality. I could see her peeking through the door before she was brought in to meet us. She was grinning from ear to ear. They had warned us that sometimes it takes a little time for adopted kids to warm up to their

new parents, but that was not the case with her. She came right to us and we looked at her picture book and blew bubbles. We started making a mess with the soap from the bubbles, and we got quite a laugh when Kaiya pulled a roll of toilet paper out of her backpack to clean it up! As we left to go eat lunch together, Kaiya wasn't shy about taking her new mommy and daddy by the hand and walking with us.

After lunch at our hotel we went out to visit her orphanage. It was interesting to see where she had basically spent her whole life. She slept in a room with almost 30 other little girls! We got to see her interact with some of her friends from the orphanage. Unfortunately, we had to leave her there for the night, although she was certainly ready to go with us!

The next morning, we traveled back to the orphanage to get Kaiya for good. She had packed up all her earthly belongings in a backpack. The orphanage also gave us pictures of her from when she was younger, as well as a few other things she had accumulated. As we pulled away, I think the moms were more emotional than the little girls.

We then had a few days off before our next scheduled appointment. It was good to spend time with Kaiya in her home country. We kind of developed a daily routine. Every morning she would take a shower and then we would head down to the restaurant at the hotel and have ABF, which of course stands for American Break Fast. They had familiar foods like pancakes and omelets, as well as

traditional Asian food, like noodles, which always seemed kind of an odd thing to eat for breakfast. Then we would try to fill up the morning by moving around the city, walking to see different sites, or sometimes going to the mall.

Hopefully we were close to lunch by the time we finished our morning activity. We often ate at the food court in the shopping center, which featured American chains like Pizza Hut, McDonald's, and Subway, albeit with a Thai twist. Oddly enough, the most popular restaurant in Thailand is KFC. We found out that someone occasionally brought KFC out to the kids at the orphanage.

After lunch we would try to spend a little quiet time in our room, and basically every afternoon we would go to the pool. Again, not as refreshing as one would hope, but it was good play time for Kaiya and her new parents. We bought three balls one of the first few days we were there. She loved to play ball. Plus, they were all three different colors, so we could also practice learning colors. It was usually quite breezy up by the pool, so Kaiya spent a lot of time chasing after the balls as they blew out of the pool.

Our evening meals were when we would try to eat more traditional Thai food. We shied away from some of the food carts that were everywhere on the streets, but we did eat at an outdoor plaza that had many different food stands surrounding it. We found that Thai food was quite cheap. Often, we could all eat for less than \$10 total.

One special thing we did was visit my cousin Kelli. She is a missionary in China, who was actually living in Wuhan! When



the pandemic hit, they moved her and her team over to Bangkok, so we visited a big outdoor market with her. Another fun activity was visiting a big aquarium with another adopting family. Kaiya got to see a lot of animals she hadn't seen before.

So that was our routine until Wednesday, March 4. That would be the day we would meet with the Thai Adoption Board. The tendency is to worry about every meeting, mentally going through all the scenarios of what could go wrong. But this meeting went very smoothly. The Adoption Board was 3 older ladies who asked us a series of questions about how things had gone so far with Kaiya and about our situation back home. The head of the board had been to Iowa, as her son had gone for his doctorate at Iowa State! After meeting with the board, we were then given paperwork that we would give to customs as we left Thailand and entered the US.

The following day we had our meeting at the U.S. embassy. We rode the train to our stop and thought we knew where we were going. We were wrong. Well, actually, we were right. But we made the mistake of asking a Thai local on the street which way to the US embassy. He told us to go the wrong way. Keep in mind that it is very hot, and we didn't want to miss our appointment. We walked a few blocks and asked directions of another gentleman. He pointed across the street...to the British Embassy. We think that probably those two men didn't speak English well, so when they heard us speaking English, they must have assumed we were British.



Fortunately, there was a British fellow waiting at that embassy, and he told us to head back in the direction we came from. So, we walked several blocks. Block after block passed by as our appointment time neared and we passed many embassies but not the one for the US. We kept walking. Block after block, until finally we saw the US embassy... on the other side of the road. We crossed the busy street again, fortunately this time there was a pedestrian bridge going over top. We walked up to the gate and told the guard why we were there. He said, no, you need to be at the U.S. Embassy visa building...on the other side of the road. We hurried back over, finally arriving, on time, at the right building. We assumed we would get to go right inside, since we are American citizens, and we had an appointment. But no, we had to wait for a gaggle of Thai school kids to get through security to apply for study visas.

We finally got inside, paid our fee, and got to meet with the people who would process our paperwork and issue Kaiya's visa a few days later. We found out that two of the other families had similar struggles finding the visa office.

We were told that we would be able to pick up Kaiya's visa the next Monday. We were originally scheduled to leave the next Wednesday because our agency had told us it could take up to three business days to process the visa. We began trying to get a hold of Delta to try to change our flights, but due to COVID-19 the phone lines were clogged and the flights were few.

We had nothing but free time until we were due back to pick up the visa package, so we had decided we would spend the weekend in Hua Hin, at a beach resort called the Anantasila. Hua Hin is a popular beach town on the Gulf of Thailand. In fact, the king and his family spend most of their time in their residence in this town. It was about a three-hour drive from Bangkok largely due to the horrendous traffic in Bangkok.

We would spend much of the weekend either swimming in the pool or playing in the waves on the beach. We were glad to get out of the hustle and bustle of the city. One unique thing we did was

visit a Buddhist temple on the side of a nearby mountain. We had to climb a lot of stairs to get to the top. The area was seemingly overrun by monkeys as they ran around wild all over that area.

On Sunday night we got the good news that Allison had been able to change our flights to leave early Tuesday morning, one day earlier than planned. The only thing left to do was return to Bangkok to get the visa paperwork Monday afternoon and try to get a few hours of sleep Monday night. The cab ride back to Bangkok was delayed as the taxi was forced to wait for the king's procession to arrive in Hua Hin from Bangkok. That night I was arranging our paperwork for the next day and noticed our papers had gotten mixed up with the other family from South Carolina. Fortunately, we were able to get in touch with them and get things straightened out late Monday night. Unfortunately, it seemed like a harbinger of how the next day would go.



We rose early Tuesday morning to take a cab to the airport. While checking out we encountered our first problem of the day as the hotel wouldn't accept our credit card. Fortunately, Allison was able to find an ATM so that we could pay cash. We arrived at the airport shortly before 4, right before the ticket counters would open. It was a good thing we got there early because there was a glitch with transferring our tickets.

Allison and Kaiya were able to get their boarding passes, but mine did not go through. Second problem...

Fortunately, the lady at the help desk allowed us to call Delta on her cell phone, as neither of us had service on our phones. I told the girls to go on ahead without me, as Kaiya needed to clear customs, which could have been a potential problem. I waited on hold for over an hour as our departure time neared. Needless to say, it was frustrating and concerning. I finally got through, and after simply checking the right box on her computer, someone at Delta was able to secure my boarding pass, with 30 minutes or so to spare. Unfortunately, they wouldn't give us Kaiya's boarding pass for the rest of the flights, which would lead to problem #3...

After a relatively short six-hour flight to Tokyo, we were made to go through security before we could advance to our next gate. At the end of the security line, we needed to produce our boarding passes for the next flight, which of course we didn't have for Kaiya. So, we had to wait in line until everything got straightened out. I really wasn't worried about time, because I thought I had seen that our next flight didn't leave until 6:45, and it wasn't yet 4. We decided to go ahead and make our way to the next gate, and while on our way we heard them

calling our names over the intercom. It is a good thing we were on our way, because I had misread the sign which actually said 16:45, aka 4:45. They needed us to get to the gate so they could straighten out the boarding pass situation. They also moved our seats so that we could all sit together.

The next leg was the long one again, this time flying into Detroit. Exhausted as we were, Allison and I didn't get a lot of sleep on the twelve-hour flight but thankfully Kaiya slept a lot and wasn't scared. We made it to Detroit just fine, and we thankfully went through the U.S. Customs quite easily. We finally had some good old American Chick-Fil-A and waited to board our last flight, a quick hour and a half to Des Moines.

When we walked out of the secure area, there waiting for us were my parents, Allison's parents, our kids, and my brother Cory and sister-in-law Sara. We had a happy reunion there in the terminal. Kaiya quickly warmed up to her new family and we were finally home.

As I reflect back on the trip, I can't recall how many times things happened that were answers to our prayers. It was a good lesson to trust God because He has things under control. We had asked for prayers, and we could certainly feel them many, many times as we made our way through the trip. What was true for the trip was also true through the process. God was always in control, and as we look back it is clear seeing how everything fell into place. As believers, we know that things don't just "fall into place." Rather God guides us along the path and we must trust Him.



Outreach During Corona

By Joel Vander Molen

In the last two months, we have seen the world around us change more than we could have imagined. Words such as pandemic, coronavirus, and self-quarantine have suddenly become very familiar, as well as isolation.

March 8 was the last day we had a regular church service. Since then, every message and worship song has been received through electronic means. Activities that are also common for this time of year have also been canceled in order to decrease the spread of the virus.

Originally, this article was going to report on a planned outreach event based at Pella 2 during Tulip Time. Like most activities, that

event was also discontinued. However, that doesn't mean we have to stop reaching out to people with the good news of the gospel.

In the United States, and in Iowa, many things

seem to have become more important than God. It might be watching, or participating, in a certain sport, following an athlete or other celebrity, or even giving more attention to work than following Christ. Suddenly, most of these things have been abruptly stopped and it has left many people searching for answers, and things to do.

In April, a survey said that 44% of Americans see the virus as a wake-up call from God. It was also reported by one publisher that sales of Bibles increased by 143% from this time last year. People are

concerned for the future and looking for answers, and we as Christians can help provide answers.

Staying at home and not having any close contact with people makes sharing the gospel more of a challenge, but not impossible. In the past few weeks, I have seen pictures of people putting stuffed bears in multiple locations and letting families try to find them. Sharing God's Word and Jesus' saving grace can also be done, if we keep it in mind.

For those on places like Facebook and other social media, they are great platforms to share information. One, or more, Bible verses can be given daily pointing to our hope for salvation. With kids at home from school, they can read, or even memorize, passages on video that can also be shared. If you're not on these platforms, gospel tracts can be left with tips for food deliveries, notes in the mail, and other creative ways.

Just before His ascension, Jesus said in Matthew 28:19 to go and make disciples of all nations. We are living at a time when all nations have eternity in mind and are looking for answers. By the time this article comes out, regulations for the coronavirus will likely have changed. No matter what they are, use the time to fulfill God's commission in any way that you can find.



Ain't No Grave By Luke Nieuwsma

It was around Easter, the first Easter I have ever had to stay home due to COVID-19,

when I was asked if I would do a song review for the newsletter. As I thought about what song to review, the first song that came to my head was an old song. This song and its backstory seemed to have some parallels to our present time dealing not only with the fear of disease but also death. The song title is 'There Ain't No Grave Gonna Hold My Body Down.'

The song writer born in 1922, Claude Ely, was then a twelve-year-old boy from Virginia sick with tuberculosis and

was told he would die. Fearing for his life, his family gathered in his room to pray for his miraculous healing, at that point Claude stated that he was not going to die, and he started to sing 'Ain't no grave' which was a song he wrote in that moment.

Following his miraculous healing, he went on to be known as Brother Claude Ely or "The Gospel Ranger." With his cowboy hat and gold front tooth he led hundreds of tent revivals throughout the Appalachian region. In 1978, Ely Claude passed away of a heart attack while playing the organ in church! Other interesting things to note was how Claude is given credit in shaping early rock and roll, Elvis Presley, Little Richie, and Johnny Cash have said that Claude's song influenced their music. 'Ain't no

Grave' was the last song recorded by Johnny Cash.

Pastor's Pen
Topsy-Turvy

The original lyrics of the chorus are:

There ain't no grave can hold my body
down
There ain't no grave can hold my body
down
When I hear that trumpet sound I'm gonna
rise right out of the ground
Ain't no grave can hold my body down

What I enjoy about this song is how many times it has been redone by countless artists, verses have been added, but all the while, the main theme stays the same. It is interesting to note that this song was quite rebellious for its time with the loud upbeat music and poor grammar. Today those things are the norm, but now it remains rebellious in the face of our society declaring that Jesus defeated death, and not only did he rise from the dead, but one day, for those who trust in Him, ain't no grave can hold our bodies down! For those that want to have a listen, they can hear the original on YouTube [here](#). If you want to read more details about Claude Ely's life, you can find it at the npr.org website linked [here](#) which is where I sourced most of my information.

Photo "Courtesy of Macel Ely"



Dear Pella II Congregation,

In my last two Pastor's Pen articles I began discussing four important practices of an outward reaching congregation. I'll resume that discussion later. Today I want to briefly address our current life situation in light of the COVID-19 shut down.

Topsy-turvy. I think that pretty well describes our situation right now. That phrase literally means "to take the top and turn it down". Merriam-Webster defines the phrase as meaning, "in utter confusion or disorder." Our world is topsy-turvy. What was normal just a few weeks ago has been turned on its head.

Many of us are weary from the long isolation, and people are facing financial hardships, fears, confusion and grief. For some, there is restlessness, boredom, and too much aloneness. For others, like parents with kids at home, there's not enough aloneness! For some, like medical workers, there are incredibly long hours and intense weariness. For many, there's the "new normal" of working from home. And for some, who are still going to work and whose kids are no longer at home, not much has changed at all, except for not being able to gather together on Sundays, which is a big deal in and of itself. We all are missing church on Sunday, and Life Groups or other small groups, and choir, and special events. But whether the changes in our individual lives are great or small, this is a topsy-turvy time in our nation and world in just about every way.

The Bible assures us, “we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28) God is at work. What each of us is trying to discern is, “how is God working in my life, in my family, and in our congregation through this crazy situation?” God’s good work will be different in each life, and we may not fully understand all he is doing for years to come. God sees way further into the future than we do!

God may be teaching you stillness. He may be stirring you to spend more time with him alone to find the nurture for your soul that we so need. The Lord may be working to simplify some of our lives. He may be teaching us to trust him more deeply, to look to him more fully when we feel we can’t go on. He may be using the time to deepen our appreciation for the friends that we take for

granted, but whom we now greatly miss. He may be using this to deepen relationships with the few people that we can see day in and day out. He may be teaching us to more deeply appreciate the joy and encouragement that comes when we gather as the body of Christ. He may be teaching you to slow down, to relax, even to learn to have fun and enjoy relationships more deeply. Let the Lord show you what he is doing in your life and family. We may well never have a time like this again in our lives. May we allow the Lord to do his good work in us.

And how we will rejoice when we meet together again as a congregation! We will have a huge celebration of thanksgiving!

Rejoicing in the Lord,

Pastor Paul

In Loving Memory of

William (Bill) Schimmel



June 4, 1923 – March 25, 2020

Dorothy Rus



May 17, 1935 – April 13, 2020

Thank you to everyone for pictures and articles for this newsletter!