

*Grace and peace be with you!*

**Be well! Be courageous! Be loving! Be the Church!** *The Christian Church in North America has lost a whole lot of "flesh" in recent years. In many congregations, members are aging, attendance is declining, and there is a tendency to speak of the spirit of the past, rather than the hope of the future. The current public health crisis may be just what is needed to help us see that God can still breathe life into dust and into the things that seem done. If we want our tired bones to rattle and rise, then we need to be willing to step out of our comfort zones in faith and take decisive action filled with the love of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit! Read Ezekiel 37:1-14 this week and reflect on how nothing is impossible with God.*

**"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you." (Philippians 1:3)**

*In The Strong Love of Christ,  
Pastor Brian King*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ Effective until at least April 13, the Nazareth building will be open only from 9:00 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday. The building will be closed on Saturdays and Sundays. We have also reduced staff hours. Thank you for your patience as we take these precautions to keep our team and community safe! For the latest Covid-19 updates, please go to [www.naz.org/coronavirus](http://www.naz.org/coronavirus).
- ◆ The Spring Lutheran World Relief In-Gathering scheduled for Saturday, April 4, has been cancelled. There will be no truck for loading Kits and Quilts.
- ◆ The Blessed Beginnings Learning Center is seeking donations of bleach and/or vinegar at this time. Please deliver donations to Door #1 during office hours.
- ◆ THANK YOU! Nazareth's volunteers have been an incredible God-send during a week that was, to say the least, unlike any we have experienced. We are grateful, in ways we cannot even express, for the generous hearts, willing hands, and supportive spirits of all of our Nazareth volunteers this week. - The Salvation Army

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

*As we deeply desire to continue to do the ministry God has called us to here at Nazareth, your continued generous support – of prayers, service, and financial gifts – is so important. **Even while we are apart physically, giving is still possible online at [www.naz.org/give](http://www.naz.org/give). You can also mail your donation to the church office or use the free GIVE+ Mobile App (by searching "GIVE PLUS CHURCH" in the app store). We truly cannot do this without you and are deeply grateful for your continued partnership!***

## CONNECT WITH US

Address: 7401 University Avenue, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613  
 Phone: 319-266-7589 Email: [info@naz.org](mailto:info@naz.org)  
 Website: [www.naz.org](http://www.naz.org)  
 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MyNazareth](https://www.facebook.com/MyNazareth)  
 Instagram: [www.instagram.com/mynazchurch](https://www.instagram.com/mynazchurch)

## SUNDAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE IS ONLINE!

Each week, our Sunday Worship Service will be posted online at 9:00 a.m. You can watch by going to our Facebook page or by clicking the "WORSHIP ONLINE" icon at [www.naz.org](http://www.naz.org).

## FIND NAZ WORSHIP SERVICES ON TV!

Nazareth's Online Worship Services (from the previous Sunday) will now be rebroadcast on Cedar Falls Public Access Channel (Channel 18 on CFU) on Saturday evenings at 5:00 p.m. and on Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m.

## WE ARE FAMILY. MAKING CHRIST KNOWN.

As a family of faith, so many are making efforts to be creative about gathering together in order to share the love of Christ with one another and to lift one another up through the Word of God and through building relationships. Here's a look at a Naz small group gathered at their screens via Zoom to talk about "The Good and Beautiful God."



## CHILDREN/STUDENT MINISTRY UPDATE

Naz Kidz Ministry has been connecting with families via email and distributing faith-focused activity packets! BIGhouse, CHAOS AND BASIC - ministries with junior high, high school, and college students - have been using Zoom, Instagram, Facebook and Youtube to connect as well! Email questions to:

- ◆ [kim.albertsen@naz.org](mailto:kim.albertsen@naz.org) for Kidz
- ◆ [kristin.sauerbrei@naz.org](mailto:kristin.sauerbrei@naz.org) for CHAOS
- ◆ [kristina.mcburney@naz.org](mailto:kristina.mcburney@naz.org) for BIGhouse
- ◆ [sara.sladky@naz.org](mailto:sara.sladky@naz.org) for BASIC

Dear Nazareth Family of Faith:

In ages past in Africa, there was a tribal leader with three sons who gathered them together and informed them he was leaving the village for an extended trip and was entrusting to them the responsibilities of managing the villagers. The eldest son had the talent of caring for sheep. The flocks of sheep were important for providing meat as well as wool. The middle son had the talent of caring for olive trees. The olive orchards produced olive oil that was sold to provide resources for supplies. The youngest son had the talent to dance. When the villagers were discouraged and down-hearted, the youngest son would dance to lift their spirits with hope.

After meeting with his three sons, the father left on his journey. Soon afterwards as the olive trees were blooming in the spring, there was an abnormal hard freeze that killed many of the blossoms, resulting in reduced olive production. In the summer there was a severe drought that stunted the growth of the pastures that fed the sheep. The decision had to be made to reduce numbers in the flock. The winter was abnormally cold. Because there was no revenue from olive oil to purchase heating supplies, olive trees were cut down to provide heating fuel. There was just enough heating supplies to warm each home and enough meat from the sheep to provide nourishment so that no one starved. The stressful times discouraged the villagers, and as winter ended one by one the residents left their homes in discouragement, leaving only the three sons in the village.

Soon afterward the father journeyed home from his extended trip away. As he reached the heights overlooking the village, he could not believe his eyes. There was smoke coming out of only one home, his dwelling. Bursting into the house, he inquired of his sons, "What has happened to my village?"

The eldest son fell down on his knees before his father, saying, "Forgive me. I did not steward my gift well. You entrusted me with the sheep. Because of the drought and famine, I had to reduce the numbers from the flocks that your people would have enough food to eat." The father said to the eldest son, "You have used your gift well. Not one of my villagers perished from hunger".

The middle son fell on his knees before his father, saying, "Forgive me. I did not steward my talent well. I was to manage the olive tree orchards. The spring frost reduced the produce, and in the cold winter we could not purchase the wood to warm homes, so the olive trees had to be cut down for fuel." The father said to the middle son, "You stewarded your gift well. Not one of the villagers died from the cold."

The youngest son then approached his father, saying, 'Father, times were so uncertain, challenging and discouraging due to the spring frost, summer drought and cold winter. Times were so hard I saw no reason to dance.' The father then said to his youngest son, "Dance now for me, for my spirits are low". The youngest son got up to do his dance, but because he had not danced for an entire year, his endurance failed him and he quickly collapsed to the floor.

Then the father said to his sons, "People can withstand the perils of hardship, scarcity of food and money, but they cannot live without hope".

In this time of the Covid-19 pandemic, our lives have been turned upside down. Hospital and medical personnel are risking their lives to help those struggling for life. Small and large businesses are forced to be closed, causing economic hardship. Our daily life routine has been changed because for the short term it is important to stay home and avoid crowds in efforts to contain the virus. Throughout the world and in our community there is discouragement and fear.

In these times we are called upon by the Lord to 'dance in the hope of Jesus'. The sure hope of Jesus lifts spirits. The hope of Jesus moves us to new and creative ways to connect with others around us, in the conviction 'nothing (not even a pandemic) can separate us from the love of God which is ours in Christ Jesus' (Romans 8:37-39). The hope of Jesus also moves us to love and care for one another, so that now as well as in the aftermath of the pandemic, we will work together to help and encourage those most affected as people of faith.

Dance with me, my friends, in the hope of Jesus!

In the deep love of Christ,

Pastor Dennis Hanson

