

Grace and peace be with you!

Take a few moments this week to read and reflect on Psalm 23 and John 10:11-18. We all face moments in our days where our souls crave deeply the restoration that only our Heavenly Father can provide. And, these passages have so much to say about finding rest in the “green pastures” that the Lord leads us to and discovering refreshment in the “quiet waters” He invites us to drink from. What a gift it is to know that Jesus, as our Good Shepherd, knows each of us completely and loves us so much that He has laid down His life for us.

Be well! Be courageous! Be loving! Be the Church!

In Christ,

Pastor Brian King

**I am the Good Shepherd.
The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.**

(John 10:11)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ Effective until further notice, the Nazareth building and all offices will be closed. Blessed Beginnings will remain open unless the Iowa Governor issues a mandate to close all daycares. Naz Food and Essentials Pantry clients will continue to be served, and donations can be dropped off at Door #1 from 12:00-3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. For all Nazareth Covid-19 updates, please go to www.naz.org/coronavirus. See page four of this newsletter for the most recent update.
- ◆ “Naz At Home” Worship Services will be recorded by our leadership team each week. We want to see you worship! Send videos/photos/stories of your “Worship At Home” experience to laura.sohl-cryer@naz.org.
- ◆ Would you like to learn more about how our Children and Student Ministries are utilizing technology to reach out and connect at this time of social distancing? Email:
 - ◆ kim.albertsen@naz.org for Kidz
 - ◆ kristin.sauerbrei@naz.org for CHAOS
 - ◆ kristina.mcburney@naz.org for BIGhouse
 - ◆ sara.sladky@naz.org for BASIC

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. 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
Website: www.naz.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/MyNazareth
Instagram: 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.

FIND NAZ WORSHIP SERVICES ON TV!

Nazareth's Online Worship Services are being broadcast on the Cedar Falls Public Access Channel (Analog Channel 18 or Digital Channel 95.5 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.

BEING THERE for one another has looked a bit different during this time of our lives. This picture shows Nazareth staff and friends staging in the Naz parking lot for an "Adoption Day Celebration" for one of our Nazareth families. The family explains: “We would like to thank you all very much for participating in the parade past our house as we celebrated. The kids loved it and were so happy to see all the cars and people show up for them. It really meant a lot to all of us to see the support we have from all of you, our church family, especially in this time of social distancing.” BEING THERE for each other is a really good thing to do right now. And, Hebrews 13:16a reminds us “...do not forget to do good...”



Do you know someone in the Nazareth family of faith who is making Christ known? Tell us about their story so that we can share it with others! Email your story (and photo or video) to info@naz.org.

Dear Nazareth Family of Faith,

One of the sins I have to repent of often is making plans and asking the Lord to bless them instead of seeking His will for me.

I was guilty of this in preparing this letter. I had the topic and several ideas written out. I was planning to finish it last Saturday after doing some yard work at the lake.

The Lord's schedule that day for me was different.

Many things in our lives have been rearranged in the past few months and new words have entered everyday vocabulary: self-quarantine, social distancing, essential and non-essential businesses and activities.

We have all been forced to give up things that we thought were extremely essential not long ago. The loss of some things has caused anxiety and chaos, and life is more stressful for many. The "stuff" of this life that we put so much stock in has become quite non-essential in the face of a pandemic and economic uncertainty.

What is essential is our relationship with Jesus. No matter what storms come our way, jobs that are lost, days and weeks and months separated from friends, our God is bigger than any of them and has promised to be with us.

I heard someone speaking last week about "vampire Christians"—those who just want the blood of Jesus, not the relationship. My prayer is that many of us are growing closer to Jesus during these challenging days and deeper into relationship with Him.

C. S. Lewis in his classic, "The Screwtape Letters" clearly describes Satan's tactics of distraction. Screwtape, a senior demon, offers advice to his apprentice nephew, Wormword. "But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy (Jesus). It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing."

Jesus said, "The thief (Satan) comes only to steal, kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10) Satan subtly distracts us with non-essentials that eventually replace that which is eternal.

Last Saturday, as I sat on my mom's bed looking at her small, frail body, I was reminded powerfully how non-essential everything in this life is except Jesus. Her soul had gone home to heaven. I sorted through a few drawers and her closet. As I left with two paper sacks filled with mostly family photos and a blanket quilted by Hospice volunteers, the sum total of her "essential items", I was comforted that, not only did she know the Lord, but she had brought me to church and raised me in the faith as well.

God is essential. He knows the number of our days here on earth. At the end of those days, whenever that may be, our relationship with Him is the only essential thing and the only lasting thing.

In Christ's Love,
Joyce Barbatti
Nazareth Church Council President

Find information about the Nazareth Church Council on our website at www.naz.org/church-council.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6



CARAVAN UPDATE FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY STAFF TEAM:

At this point we are temporarily closing the Caravan 2020 student and leader registration.

Our plan is to make a decision by May 15 on whether we move ahead or cancel Caravan 2020. Rocky Mt. High will have a decision by May 15 on whether they are moving ahead or canceling Rocky Mt. High 2020 and we will use that information along with the wise counsel of Nazareth and Orchard Hill church leadership and recommendations from the CDC to make our decision.

-If you have already registered for Caravan 2020 as a student or leader, your spot is still reserved and you do not need to make any additional payments at this time.

-If you were interested in registering, but have not done so please wait until we communicate our decision on May 15th.

-If Caravan moves forward as originally planned we will make sure that all interested students and leaders get registered!

-If Caravan is cancelled we will issue refunds (an exact amount has not yet been determined)

Thank you for your patience and prayers during this time of discernment!

With any questions, please contact kristina.mcburney@naz.org.

Take a look at some "blast from the past" Caravan photos below - from High School Ministry's 2014 Caravan trip to Estes Park!



COVID-19 UPDATE - APRIL 28, 2020

In her daily COVID-19 briefing on April 27, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds lifted restrictions on religious gatherings as long as churches implement social distancing guidelines and increase sanitary cleaning. The spirit of the her proclamation acknowledged the Church's autonomy and religious freedom, but it was not an endorsement of mass gatherings. This is very important to understand, as churches make decisions on reopening. Though churches are exempt, large gatherings are not being recommended. Mass gatherings continue to be prohibited in all 99 counties, and social gatherings continue to be limited to 10 people.

What does this announcement mean for us as a family of faith? Of course, we are so excited to be able to gather again in the future! However, because of the significant number of cases and the widespread transmission of Covid-19 in Black Hawk County (see www.blackhawkcovid19.com), the Black Hawk County Health Department recommends all residents here continue to stay at home whenever possible, participate in no social gatherings, and follow all self-isolation guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control in those locations with active outbreaks.

Your safety, the health of our staff team, and the wellbeing of our community as a whole is so important to us! So, for now, we will continue with our current plan:

- Nazareth worship services will be held online. We invite you to gather with us for "Naz At Home" on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. (via Facebook or by using the "Worship Online" link at www.naz.org) or on CFU cable television (channels 18/95.5) on Saturday evenings at 5:00 p.m. or Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m. We love to come together as a community in worship, and now is a GREAT time to invite your friends and family to join you!
- Nazareth offices are closed at least through May 15 (and this may extend if conditions continue to warrant such). Naz Food and Essentials Pantry clients will continue to be served, and donations can be dropped off at Door #1 from 12:00-3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday.
- Blessed Beginnings will remain open unless additional mandates are made by government officials.

The question remains: When will we open our offices and host on-site services again? We are not yet sure. We continue to ponder and pray over this question. And, as new plans emerge, we will keep you updated. Until then, these words from Philippians 1:3-6 ring truer than ever: *"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."*

It continues to be a daily blessing to be a part of the Nazareth family of faith alongside each of you!

Be well! Be loving! Be courageous! Be the Church!

In the Strong Love of Christ....Pastor Brian King

HOME COMMUNION AS PART OF OUR NAZ AT HOME WORSHIP EXPERIENCE

Since the middle of Lent, we have fasted from Holy Communion at Nazareth in response to the need for physical distancing and according to the best practices of preventing the spread of the coronavirus. Given the fact that we are in extraordinary times, I believe that we need the Sacrament of Holy Communion more than ever as we receive the gifts of God's love, grace, and mercy in a tangible way and hear Jesus speak to us once again promising: *"This is my body... This is my blood... given for you for the forgiveness of sins..."* Just the same way we trust that God joins us in the Worship Center or Chapel for the sacrament, I trust God will join us in our homes through the power of the Holy Spirit. Home Communion is a long-standing, pastoral way of bringing the sacrament to those who can no longer gather on a Sunday morning. We are all in that position now. Beginning the weekend of May 2-3, we will return to our normal rhythm of offering Holy Communion of the first and third weekends of each month by including the Words of Institution in our online and broadcast services on those weeks. All you need to do is provide your own bread/crackers and wine/grape juice and gather for our weekly broadcast and online worship services at 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays or at 8:00 a.m. on Sundays on CFU Channels 18 or 95.5, or on Sunday mornings at 9:00 for our online service at naz.org. Once this pandemic has abated, we will discontinue "virtual" communion to gather again in person for Holy Communion as has always been our practice. But until then, we invite you to join with your brothers and sisters in Christ in celebrating and sharing in this means of grace that meets us as we are and where we are offering forgiveness and new life.