

Country Faith Church

Winter Newsletter



“Growing & working together to love God, love each other and spread the Gospel.”

December 2020—February 2021

Pastor’s Heart - Pastor Larry & Becky Dorman

“What a Year!”

As we come to the close of another year, 2020 was anything but “another year”. Lots of new words became a part of headlines and conversations. Words like pandemic, lockdowns, distance learning, shelter in place, zoom meetings, etc. We all became familiar with the names George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. We watched rioting and looting in major cities, neighborhoods taken over, police precincts burned, and lawlessness abound. We are still in the throes of the most disputed presidential election in history, an indicator of how divided our nation is, especially concerning key moral issues. Despite these things, I am encouraged!

I am encouraged because Jesus Christ is on His throne and in control. I am so thankful that He is not only the Lord of the Universe, but He’s the Lord and Savior of my life.... and your life also, if you’ve received Him. Beloved, these are days where He is shaking many things around us. We who are “in Christ”, born again Christians, are citizens of a kingdom that is unshakeable. How blessed and privileged we are to know Jesus and have His peace that “passes all understanding guarding our hearts and minds”!

God doesn’t want us merely to survive in these trying times, He wants us to thrive! Of course, the enemy desires the opposite, and would love to see us filled with fear and drifting away. The Holy Spirit has been urging us to do some basic things that will keep us where we need to be. First, press into God. He is our refuge and fortress, our place of peace and safety in the midst of life’s storms. If you haven’t already, it’s crucial to develop the habit of daily devotions. Reading His Word, thanking and praising Him, and “letting your requests” be known to Him in prayer, will guard your heart and mind (Phil.4:6-7). Second, stay connected to the Body. Just like a vicious predator, the devil seeks to separate and isolate sheep from the safety of the flock. God makes it very clear in the Bible that we need each other. If you’ve been unable to regularly attend worship services, stay connected through our livestream. Make the effort to stay connected to your Christian friends and encouragers, even though you might not be able to see them as often in these days of Covid. This season will pass. When it does, will it find you closer to God and your brothers and sisters in Christ? I hope so!

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From the Heart of the Dormans (Cont)

Becky and I feel incredibly blessed to be a part of the Country Faith family! We want to thank you for your love, prayers and support. We see exciting opportunities ahead for being the “hands and feet of Jesus” as a church body. In a time where so many are hurting and without hope, what an amazing privilege we have to love people and welcome them into the Kingdom of God! May He richly bless you and yours this Christmas and coming New Year!!



From the Heart of the Nordlund Family

There is GOOD NEWS in this year that we call 2020, and it's not that its almost over. I have heard from many recently how they can't wait to see this year go. Certainly, this year has been full of uncertainty, disappointment, and challenge, as many of us have experienced. I won't run through the list of experiences and events we know too well. This year has been especially difficult for many, but the reality is that life in this broken world is so often marked by these things.

⁵ *Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.*

⁶ *Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.*

⁷ *My salvation and my honor depend on God;
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.*

⁸ *Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge. Psalm 62:5-8*

But there is GOOD NEWS. In these days of doom and gloom, trial and hardship, sickness and pain, we have a place of rest. That place is in the presence of the Prince of Peace, the great I AM! Over 2000 years ago God gave a gift to mankind that changes the course of our eternity; His son. The coming of Jesus was in the midst of much trial and hardship. But in his coming he brought a new reality, the reality that the Kingdom of God was at hand. The reality that there is a place of refuge, a fortress, a place that is not shaken. In the presence of God we find hope and salvation!

In 2020 I pray that you have enjoyed the refuge God offers to us. Let's be a church that keeps our eyes fixed on our refuge. Let our hearts be filled with the hope, love, and adoration that comes from knowing the love of our heavenly Father. Let's raise our eyes off the circumstances of our life and look up to Him!

It is a blessing and privilege to serve alongside this church family. Charis and I and our girls are grateful for each one of you. Thank you for the many ways you encourage and serve us. It is so good to dwell together in unity with our church family.

Love and Blessings,

Nathan, Charis, Raya & Ahna

From the Heart of the Binder Family

Eagerly Awaiting

One of my favorite parts of scripture is the story of Simeon in Luke 2. Simeon was a righteous and devout man eagerly awaiting the Messiah's arrival. While baby Jesus was being presented at the temple, eight days after his birth, Simeon saw Jesus. The Spirit of the Lord revealed to Simeon that this baby was God's salvation for the world. He held Jesus and praised God.

The word "eagerly" has always caught my attention. Simeon eagerly waited for the Messiah to come. Simeon had waited his whole life for this moment. Imagine the excitement, the joy, the peace that must have been flooding his heart. Simeon actually says "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace."

The Christmas season cultivates and builds anticipation. For a month, often times longer, everything is designed to point to one big day...December 25th. We even have candles designed to stimulate Christmas like smells that get us in the Christmas mood. But what is always kind of sad to me is what December 26th brings. Almost like a sense of "OK, the fun is over, back to real life. Every year I want to scream...WHAT?...WAIT? THE MESSIAH HAS COME...OUR SALVATION HAS COME...OUR PEACE HAS COME...OUR JOY HAS COME!!!

2020 has been a challenging year to say the least. But guess what...Our Messiah has come!!! We must dwell in the reality that over 2000 years ago our Sovereign Lord sent us Salvation that Christmas Day. Our source of joy and peace is rooted in Jesus!! Now, similar to Simeon, we eagerly await His return! No doubt Christmas will be a little different this year in many ways. Maybe one of those ways is we are a little more eager for Jesus' return. I know I am.

From my family to yours we want to wish you a Merry Christmas.

Eagerly Awaiting
Pastor Brad, Carrie and Family.



From the Heart of the Ubert Family

Driving home from work, recently, an image of my much younger self sitting in front of our family Christmas tree came to mind and it caused me to reflect. Our Christmas tree went up the week of Christmas and I would often spend that week sitting in front of it admiring the lights, bulbs, and tinsel. Yes, the tinsel was my favorite! It was a simple tree, but I loved the immense feeling it invoked. Younger me did not fully understand the true significance of the Christmas season and certainly much of my joy and awe were misplaced. However, there is something very significant about the innocent joy and awe I, and I am sure many of us, experienced as a child in some way. If I could talk to that young girl sitting in front of the tree, I would tell her most importantly, why we even get to celebrate the Christmas season with an everlasting assurance of Joy, Hope and a Peace that came with our Savior's birth. I would also tell her you are going to need to remember that very pure feeling of uncomplicated awe and joy... especially when you reach times in your life where it is challenged. I do not know about you, but I think many of us have felt challenged this past year in ways we may not have experienced before. Burdened with decisions, thoughts, and unexpected last-minute changes within our day to day routine that were not there a short bit ago. We know COVID-19 has affected the world as a whole and for many we might be "tired" of navigating the many facets of it, or maybe it's something entirely different that has challenged that childlike wonder (faith). Is it hard right now to find Joy, Hope, and a sense of Peace in this season we are in? Is it hard to navigate your thoughts and actions and keep them in step with what God's word teaches... love, patience, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? What better time of year to take a step back and reflect on our Saviors' birth and find that innocent and uncomplicated awe, wonder, joy, hope and peace this season should truly mark. He was sent as a gift for each one of us regardless of where we land on the current issues in our world. He is a remarkable gift and the only gift that can bring the hope and peace we all so desperately need. So, I encourage each person to take some time over the next days to try and truly seek Him. Lay down, at His feet, all that burdens or gets in the way and go to Him in prayer, in worship, in service to others and watch Him begin to fill you with a pure wonder. Look to the children around us if needed, they are great models of showing us how to not miss and respond to those moments.

From our family to yours I wish you a very blessed and wonderous Holiday season. Look for what Jesus has in this season for you and your family even if things are a little different than last year, and be sure not to miss the opportunity He may be trying to present as an unexpected gift.

God is with us,

Love the Ubert family

(Nicky, Andy, Jack, Nathan, Bentley & Amari)



Holiday Schedule

With the Christmas season here, our church schedule changes just a bit...below are a few changes that everyone will need to be aware of. Please be sure to mark your calendars~ Have a blessed Christmas!

SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

December 6~ Normal Sunday

9:00am - Sunday School, 10:00am - Worship Service

7:00pm - Youth Night (Tentative)

December 13~ Normal Sunday

9:00am - Sunday School, 10:00am - Worship Service

6:00pm - Youth Christmas Open Event (Tentative)

December 20~ NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

Church starts at normal time, 10:00am but will be a shorter Christmas service for families to enjoy together.

December 27 ~ NO SUNDAY SCHOOL...

Church starts as normal (10:00am).

January 3 ~ Back to Semi-normal Sunday Schedule

9:00am - Sunday School, 10:00am - Worship Service

*** Children's Ministry programming will be announced as it is decided. Please check your email, and regular methods of contact for communications regarding upcoming plans.

*** Youth Ministry dates above are tentative and subject to change.

Thank you for your understanding during this time.



Also a couple dates to remember....

Thursday, December 24th ~ Christmas Eve Service for all ages starting at 5pm

Friday, December 25th~ Merry Christmas! (Church Office will be closed)

Office hours during the holiday season are subject to change based on staff vacation time. If needing something please call ahead or e-mail.

Connection - Engage Life Groups

God has designed mankind for relationship. He has designed us to be in fellowship with one another, encouraging, supporting, and enjoying one another. God's design for his church is based on connection. Connection to Him. Connection with one another. Connection with the lost world around us.



This year has, in many cases, brought strain to the God ordained connections of our lives. We just don't rub shoulders with one another as we used to. There are less activities going on that bring us together. Regular family gatherings have been altered or canceled due to illness or in an effort to prevent illness. Connection isn't easy in these days, but has it really ever been easy?

Relationships do take effort. Connection with others might look different than we are used to and feel uncomfortable but it's worth it. We must choose to make time for connection - for people.

Sometimes we need to have our eyes open to new opportunities for connections. For me that opportunity has come with a guy named Joe. Joe lives down the street from us. I had often seen him drive by, not knowing for sure where he lived or who he was, until he stopped one day this summer while I was working in the yard. Joe is retired. He enjoys the outdoors, goes to church on a regular basis, and has a very kind demeanor. Since, Joe's initial stop we have enjoyed a few other conversations that have been enjoyable and encouraging for both of us. I won't share Joe's story with you, but he has shared some of his story with me. I have had opportunities to pray for him and the events of his life. I have a new connection that I believe is God ordained. I believe there are lots of opportunities to pause during our daily routine to connect with others. Who knows, maybe if we do it more often we will find more Joes.

Fostering new connections outside our church family is important, but so is maintaining and building relationships within our church. I want to encourage each of us to be intentional about maintaining connections with our church family. Who can you reach out to with a phone call or text? How can you share some words of appreciation for someone who has blessed you? Is there somebody you know that probably needs some encouragement? Let's be a church who has our eyes and ears open to the lives of others, to see when we can be an encouragement and blessing.

Again, reaching out can be uncomfortable but I believe it's worth it. I believe you will find rewarding connections that strengthen the body of Christ. If you find yourself lacking connection in these days, please reach out. We would like to see each of you connected to our church family in a meaningful way. God has a place of connection for each one of us in his family.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Nathan & Life Group Team

Ruby's Pantry

When we started as a host site for Ruby's Pantry a couple years ago, we soon realized we needed to be prepared for the unexpected. The truck often would arrive late, or maybe too early. Pallets of product would be in complete disarray or we would have thousands of pounds of produce to weigh and sort. The unexpected became expected. Even with having developed that mindset of expecting the unexpected, none of us had in mind the level of uncertainty 2020 would bring.



The end of March brought much uncertainty for our Ruby's team. Should we continue? Can we continue with shutdowns? What is safe for our volunteers? If we have Ruby's what should it look like? As we waded through these questions, we began to have the rising conviction that we needed to continue to be the tangible hands and feet of Christ. We believed providing this service to our community during this time would be more important than ever.

Moving forward with Ruby's meant more change. We hosted everything outdoors. Guests utilized our new drive-up system, never leaving their car. The system is simple, efficient, and minimizes the chance for transmission of covid. The system is also much less personal. We no longer were welcoming people into our sanctuary, helping them through the line, smiling and chatting with them as they moved through the food line. It became harder to see the impact of our efforts. However, our efforts are having an impact. God is using our service for his glory. People are tasting the goodness of God.

Todd and Lori Lundell have often been in the position of collecting money from the guests as they drive through. In this position they are the first point of contact with our guests. They get to see a glimpse into the impact Ruby's is yet having. Over the past several months they have had several comments to the effect of "You don't know what this means to us.", "Oh, if I could hug you guys!", "I didn't know what I was going to do without this." Todd told of a touching moment last month in which a young boy proclaimed, "We get food now!" The overwhelming and growing response from our guests is a huge "Thank YOU!" There really is a heart of gratitude from many in our community for your efforts.

So yes, "Thank YOU!" is very appropriate for all your efforts with Ruby's pantry. Thank you for working so hard each distribution. If you haven't volunteered in the past or it has been a while, we'd love to have you come help us out. We are in need of bolstering our volunteer numbers again. Please consider coming and joining our team or inviting someone new to help alongside of us. Anyone interested in helping can fill out a volunteer application at rubyspantry.org.

Blessings to you and yours!
Pastor Nathan

Operation Christmas Child

706 Operation Christmas child boxes were packed and sent out from CFC!! All shipping costs were covered!! Thank you to all who packed and sponsored boxes!! They are among 11,455 boxes that were sent from Baxter, MN to Chicago to be processed. (Picture shows volunteers praying over the boxes in the semi prior to departure).

They will then be delivered to children all around the world with the love of JESUS



Children's Ministry News

The Holiday season is soon upon us and normally at this time we would be busy practicing for the Christmas program. As mentioned in the fall newsletter we will not be holding our traditional Christmas program this year. Although we will greatly miss doing the program with the kids this is a season to look at what does Jesus have for us this year?!? Recently you should have received a revised plan, in the mail, that the Christmas program planning team produced for 2020.

Since we currently have hit “pause” on Children’s Ministry our “Christmas program plan”, for 2020, will need to be altered again.

One thing we had planned was a Christmas service project where the kids (1-4) would pack gift bags (during Jr Church) with items to bless homebound seniors in the area. These gift bags will be distributed through the Clear Waters Life Center. Since we are not currently gathering, I will pack them and have them distributed in honor of the children of Country Faith Church. When we do gather again, I will meet with those classes to share what the gifts were and how they may have blessed area residents.

We had also planned to make Christmas Cards to be distributed to an area nursing home. We will still do this when we regather JR Church however, they will be “New Year” Cards instead. We can still create these cards and write a message for the New Year and how we will be praying for them in 2021.

One thing has not changed! You can continue to work on your illustrations for the Christmas story, at home, and bring them in at any point. Please bring them in by Sunday, December 6th (ideally) so we can get them ready to display! Please see the enclosed flyer for more details (pg 9). Kids let’s fill the church with creative illustrations of what the Christmas story represents. **This is meant to be an easy at home project** to be created in your free time.

Starting December 13th – December 27th the children, nursery-6th grade, can pick up their Christmas gift, from the children’s ministry team, either before or after church. A table will be set up in the entrance for distributing. Crafts that had been purchased to be used over the coming weeks will also be placed in the gift bags to be used at home.

Look for seasonal resources and lesson materials over the coming weeks on our Children’s Ministry Facebook group page. If you are not a part of the group page but would like to be please let me know. Additionally, I will continue to put together resource packets that can help during sermon time or be used at home.

Our CM team and Leadership will continue to evaluate over the coming days/weeks a return date for nursery/Jr Church and will notify as soon as that is available.

As always if you have any questions or needs please be sure to contact me!

Nicky Ubert

Children’s Minister

KIDS CAMP 2021

“Tentative Save the Date” for Kids’ Camp July 8-10 more information to come early Spring.

Children’s Ministry Covid-19 Reminder:

If your child is not well in any way, we ask that you keep them with you. It is very hard to make those judgment calls, right now, as to what is and is not okay so default will be, **if they are not well...wait to use nursery and Jr Church services until they are feeling better.**

Additionally, if your child has been asked to quarantine due to close contact with a positive Covid-19 case we ask that you wait to use nursery/Jr Church services the duration of the 14-day quarantine.

Please notify Nicky Ubert if your child was in a Jr Church or Nursery classroom if they start to show symptoms shortly after attending and are being tested for Covid-19. No identifying information will be given out however, it will help us to determine if we need to notify families/teachers of possible exposure.

It's time to get creative

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. Matthew 2:10

What do you think of when you think of the Christmas Story?

This is a project to complete at home for all 5K-6th grade.... create something that makes you think of the Christmas Story! Options are endless!!! Bring your work of art to church by Sunday, December 6th and we will display them starting December 13th.

Read the Book of Luke Chapter 1-2 to get inspiration!

Need ideas: Lego Builds, Crafting out of clay, perler beads, photography, drawing, painting, mosaic, newspaper collage, paper mache, wood working... or with a parent search Pinterest for ideas!

NEED HELP WITH SUPPLIES~ TALK TO NICKY UBERT, SOME BASIC SUPPLIES AVAILABLE

Clear Waters Life Center

Homemaker & Chore Services

Free for Clearwater County residents, 60 & over

Homemaking services:

General housework - washing dishes, vacuuming
Laundry
Sorting/organizing
Preparing meals
Shopping or taking you shopping
Managing money
Answering or making telephone calls
Readying your home for the holidays - cleaning, decorating
Holiday baking & shopping

Outdoor maintenance:

Winterization projects, small outdoor repair
Snow removal

Call with questions or to schedule a visit. Donations of any size would be accepted but not required.

Phone: 218-776-2789



Clear Waters Life Center

256 2nd Ave SW Phone: 218-776-2789
PO Box 155 Fax: 218-776-2786
Clearbrook, MN 56634 Email: cwlc@gvtel.com

Building Lives, Growing Relationships, Imparting Hope

Youth Event Schedule

For Teens 7th - 12th Grade

As always: Invite your friends, All are welcome!

Sunday, December 6th - Youth Night

7:00-9:00pm



Sunday, December 13th - "The Christmas Open" Youth Event

6-9pm

Indoor Miniature Golfing

More details to come at Youth Sunday, December 6th.

Sunday, December 20th - No Youth Night

Sunday, December 27th - No Youth Night

**Please keep an eye on the Elevate Youth Facebook page and the church website for more details on the upcoming schedule for January and beyond.

Weekly Schedule:

Sundays:

Sunday School: 9:00am

Worship Service:

10:00am

Youth: 7:00pm

(most Sundays)

Tuesdays:

Men's Prayer: 6:30am

218-776-3367 ~ cfchurch@gvtel.com

www.countryfaith.org

For sermons & up-to-date information



Find us on Facebook: Country Faith Church
(Now Streaming Weekly on Facebook Live during the sermon)

Youth & Youth Parents:

Join our "Elevate Youth Group" group on Facebook
And our "Band" app (talk with Pastor Brad with questions)