

Coaldale Mennonite Church

2316 – 17 St., Coaldale, Alberta

***“Rooted in Jesus, Growing in Grace, Connected in
Community, Branching into the World”***

Keeping in Touch – Friday, March 27, 2020



- ✓ **Sunday, March 29th** is **Global Day of Prayer and Fasting**. Let us prayer for our world and this global crisis.
- ✓ **EMC Conference pastor, Layton Friesen**, has a note of encouragement to the EMC churches on the attached link. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IJtnlGCpKVwacm-yNbsHUIZ-OxktEf4k/view>
- ✓ There are various church services that are available online such as E-Free church in Lethbridge, EMC Canada, Mennonite Church Alberta, Mennonite Church Canada and others.
- ✓ **Pastor Gary** will be working from home. You can reach him via phone (403) 795-0350 or email (garygiesbrecht71@gmail.com).
- ✓ **Jodi** will still be working at the church office, weekday mornings, but the front door will be locked. If you need to come into the church, call the church office at 403-345-3363 and Jodi will come open the door.
- ✓ **E-transfer** is now available as a way to send your donations to the church. It doesn't matter what the security question is, as long as the password answer is **CMC**.
- ✓ The **Good Friday Service** scheduled for April 3rd at the MB Church has been cancelled.
- ✓ **Clothing Fest** has been cancelled for this spring. Save your items for fall.
- ✓ **MCC Relief Sale** scheduled for May 22nd - 23rd in Sherwood Park has been cancelled.
- ✓ **MCC Thrift Stores** are closed until at least April 1st.



PRAYER FOCUS



Pray for:

- † **Liz Ens and Jack Neufeld and families** as their brother, Peter Neufeld, passed away.
- † **Tina Bloudoff and family** as her sister, Anna Penner, passed away.
- † **Connie Wall's dad, Jake Dyck**, who is in hospital.
- † **Henry Redekop** who is in the Lethbridge Hospital.
- † **Bill Giesbrecht** who is in the Lethbridge Hospital.
- † **Our health care workers, grocery store employees and others who continue to go to work to provide us with our essential needs.**

Message from Pastor Gary

Greeting from my home,

This past week we had the opportunity to meet our daughter and grandchildren, the meeting was outside and we kept our social distance. Our grandson who is four years old wanted to give us a big hug, and when he was told he could not he began to cry. How do you explain to a four-year-old that life is not the same as it was 2 weeks ago? While the Covid-19 numbers continue to climb and the governments continue to send out the message “stay home, keep social distancing, wash your hands often,” we do well to heed the warnings which are turning into mandates. Not only does the virus take its toll, but the prevention also takes its toll. People have lost their jobs, parents have to educate their children at home, businesses have shut down, the stock market has plummeted and the list can go on. What does this remind you of? My dad might say this reminds him of the 30s and the great depression. It reminds me of how some parents tried to discipline their teenagers, when I was doing some in-home-counseling. Their teenage son or daughter had broken the curfew so the parents said something like, “you are grounded for one week,” to which the teen objected in an accusatory way, and the parents went on to say, “that will be two weeks” to which this teen got even more agitated and the grounding went to three weeks and so on. I would call a time out and remind the parents that when you ground your teen you also ground yourself, for you will have to stay home to make sure your teen follows the rules.

As a church we have shut down the public part of our church. Besides cancelling all the church programs, I am now working from home and Jodi will be at the church office weekday mornings making sure the doors are locked. However, this does not mean that we are not a church. **We have become the church scattered.** This changes how we do church. One example is how the Church Executive meets. Instead of meeting face to face the Executive has met via Face Time. While it is not the same as face to face, we meet in the comfort of our own homes, and for some of there is no travel time, and getting together is easier. Lil and I have been making phone calls to people in our church to check in on you and see how you are doing and encourage you. If you have not received a call, either give us a call or wait as we will try to include everyone. Next week I want to post a devotional on line. This email is an attempt to keep you up dated and connected. Right now, there are many options to participate in worship on line or on TV. I would also like to encourage you to make phone calls to each other, as well as to your neighbours and family. Continue to get your exercise by taking walks in the beautiful outdoors. And pray for each other. You could use the church directory in praying for each other. We also have the church prayer line for specific prayer requests. Let us continue to pray that the God will stop this crazy virus.

I am reminded what Paul says in II Cor 12:7-10;

“Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Like Paul it is better to admit that we are weak and that we have limits. Right now we cannot continue life as usual as our personal resources (spiritual, financial, emotional, relational, etc.) have been depleted. It feels like we have literally been “grounded.” This is a great opportunity to experience the “grace of Christ” in a personal and abundant way. As Christ said to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” While it is hard to admit that we need this grace, God’s grace becomes our source of strength. Grace that God continues to pursue us in his love, and continues to be with us in our suffering, and that whatever happens God

does not judge us. Paul sums this up by saying “when I am weak, then I am strong.” This virus has leveled the playing field of life. We must face our grief and loss even though it might be temporary, in order to claim that which is life giving. There will be times that we will feel angry, confused, sad and fearful. These are signs that we are giving something up. When we give something up we made room for something new and creative to come in its place. This is what Christ’s death and resurrection is all about. Without Christ’s death there is no resurrection. In His death we have been redeemed and, in His resurrection, given new life. We have been “forced” to give up certain ways of life, as our supports have been knocked out from under us and we have to face ourselves. This is also an opportunity to make room for a deeper relationship with God, and the seeds of new life to emerge. When we face our limits, God’s grace has an opportunity to do a new work in our lives.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Gary

PS. Your feedback is greatly appreciated. What was this helpful, and how could this communication be improved?