

We don't have any idea what it means to be a slave, right? I mean, even the best treated slave has no comparison to anything most of us have been through (unless you've been kidnapped or something). And so, even while we sit in our homes, forced to care for our *own* kids 24/7, feeding them 3 meals a day, not able to go to the park or the movies or even to work for some of us, it's still so much better than slavery.

And you might wonder why I'd even compare slavery to our current situation, but I think some people get the comparison. To be restricted in this way, to be forced into simpler lives and choices, feels like our freedoms have been taken away. And, again, I don't want to push back too hard, but I do want to point out that we are getting just a taste of something others around the world deal with daily. And we still have Netflix and the internet and can pick up food at restaurants, but life isn't what it used to be. We've been forced into a different way of living, and in some ways, we might feel a little stuck, even trapped.

Henri Nouwen writes, "The state of the world suggests to me the urgent need for a spirituality that takes the end things very seriously, not a spirituality of withdrawal, nor of blindness to the powers of the world, but a spirituality that allows us to live in this world without belonging to it, a spirituality that allows us to take the joy and peace of the divine life even when we are surrounded by the powers and principalities of evil, death, and destruction. I wonder if a spirituality of liberation does not need to be deepened by a spirituality of exile or captivity." I think Nouwen's words are incredibly fitting for where we are right now. Especially when he says that we should 'find joy and peace of the divine life, even when we are surrounded by the powers...of evil, death and destruction' and that to find that joy and peace in

the midst of evil and chaos, we need to develop a deepened spirituality of exile and captivity. And, so, for me, I've found that to deepen anything spiritually, often we need to live through it and learn from personal experience. And so we have an opportunity here to grow, learn and develop a purpose, despite our circumstances right now. And, if Nouwen is right (and I think he is) in order for us to develop joy and peace, especially lasting joy and peace, we need to allow ourselves to live through and experience hard times, even exile or captivity. Which brings me back to the opening of this article. Though we don't know the depth of slavery that many experienced throughout history and even today, we can allow ourselves to experience more fully the loss of freedom and growing isolation, so that, as we experience those things, we have a deeper understanding, a deeper spirituality, of what it means to be free. And not just physically free, but free from sin and free from death, free to choose God's will and to bring his kingdom more fully into this world. This is the truest freedom. I pray that we use this time to deepen our spirituality and ultimately our relationship with Jesus. We allow this 'captivity' to bring us a better understanding of what real freedom, the freedom only Jesus can offer, feels and looks like. So that, we can find joy and peace in the midst of any situation.

Serving Him and you,
Matthew

Keep Up to Date

If you haven't already checked it out, the best way to keep up to date on what's happening during the stay at home order is our Facebook page (facebook.com/astoriachristian/). You should be able to check it out even if you don't have a Facebook account.

Also, you can watch our live stream every Sunday at 9am on our website, too at www.astoriachristian.com/live-stream.

Summer Dates

Currently all of our summer dates are still in flux. VBS and Day Camp are probably going to be combined, but either way things will change. Please check the website and/or Facebook for updates.

Summer Camp

NOTE: THE DATES FOR ALL CAMPS HAVE CHANGED. PLEASE VISIT THEIR WEBSITE OR CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE FOR UPDATES.

And so, as you plan your summers, as best you can, please make sure you check out the camp's website (<http://lamoinecamp.org/>) or contact the church about dates for your youth. If you register online, there are two codes that need to be entered for you to get the best deal. First, there is the 50% off code for the church to pay half of the cost (**ASTCC2050**). Second is a 15% off code for everyone who registers through our church. This is a special discount because we are a member church (**20MEMCH15**). Please contact Matthew with any questions or if you need more financial help.

Mobile Food Pantry

Our local event has been postponed until the stay at home order is lifted. We will keep you posted when the new dates is planned.

Offerings

We are working on a way to give online while we are doing stay at home procedures. Currently it is still pending, but we will post the information on Facebook and on our website once we get it up. It will go through Facebook and should allow 100% of any offering or gift to be received by the church.

April Financials

	Weekly Actual	Yearly Actual	Yearly Budget
Apr 5th	\$ 465.00	\$ 15,598.95	\$ 18,638.06
Apr 12th	\$ 905.00	\$ 16,503.95	\$ 19,969.35
Apr 19th	\$ 1,420.00	\$ 17,923.95	\$ 21,300.64
Apr 26th	\$ 790.00	\$ 18,713.95	\$ 22,631.93
Totals	\$ 3,580.00		

Prayer List

Tina Althiser (Judy B's friend) – cancer spreading
 Tammy Bowman – stage 4 kidney failure
 Jenny Farr – sudden, severe cancer
 Todd Hamm – cancer treatments
 Marilyn Hendricks – congestive heart failure
 Laurie Martin – high blood sugar
 Reggie Merrill – tests
 Lori Rodriguez – stage 4 cirrhosis of liver
 Cindy Steagall (Pam S's niece) – cancer
 The Thiner family
 Teens in car crash

Condolences:

Madison Allard family

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You Are Welcome At
Our Services!

Sunday

Morning Worship.....9 a.m.

Sunday School.....10:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Family Night.....6:00 p.m.

Events:

No events are planned for the month of May at this time. Please stay posted to social media, astoriachristian.com or the live stream to see if adjustments have been made.



Astoria Christian Church

Spring

A stylized red tulip flower with a green stem and two green leaves. The flower is positioned above the letter 'i' in the word 'Spring', which is written in a blue, hand-drawn, textured font.

*To Everything
there is a Season,
and a time
to every Purpose
under Heaven.
Ecclesiastes 3:1*