

Midweek Messages - 2022

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December 29th - Grateful for Being Part of Something

At our last basketball practice before the Christmas break, I was handed a card by one of the new players on our team. I did not open the card at the time, but instead waited until Christmas morning to do so. I was deeply touched by the words she wrote in her card. It said: **Thank you coach so much for letting me be part of this special team.**

I do not often see this kind of gratitude expressed by somebody so young. As I am getting to know her better, I am discovering showing gratitude is part of her nature. One thing that has stood out to me about her is how she always thanks me after every practice, even when she is exhausted by the end.

I know she is grateful for being part of this team, but in all honesty, I am the grateful one. She was an answer to prayer when she decided to join our team. She did so when we still did not have enough players. She helped me recruit another player to join us this season as well. Her positive energy and attitude have contributed to this being a very special team for me to coach. I guess we are both grateful for being part of a very special team this year.

Her card on Christmas Day got me thinking about the many people who expressed gratitude for being part of something very special when it came to the birth of Jesus. Mary was one person who was grateful for the opportunity God was giving her of being part of this special plan. She expressed this gratitude in a song that she sang called *The Magnificat*: [Read more](#)

December 22nd - A Sign of Being Busy

I stopped into a jewellery store on Friday morning around 11:30 a.m. to get a new band for my watch. The band had broken on Wednesday, and it was the first time I had the opportunity to be up to that end of town. I already had a very busy morning by the time I got there. I went to school with the owner of this jewellery store, so we always take a few moments to chat whenever I go in. He was telling me his morning

had been so busy that he had only time for one coffee when usually he has had 3-4 by that point. I am an avid coffee drinker too. When he said that, it made me pause and think how many coffees I had time for so far that morning. I realized I had only had 1&1/2 cups by that time of the day, when most days I have already had 3-4 cups just like him. Both of us had busy mornings on Friday, and this truth was reflected by how few coffees we had been able to drink up until that point.

This incident reminded me how we all have signs that reflect how busy things are for us. Maybe the indicator is coffee like it is for the jeweller and me. For others, these indicators might be the number of messages we have not returned, or piles of things left by the door that we have not had time to put away, or laundry that we have not gotten at, or ironing that has piled up. These may be indicators to us revealing we are going through a busy stretch.

This week leading into Christmas adds a whole different layer of busyness to our lives. There are last minute gifts we still need to get. We may still try to find time to send out a few more Christmas cards. We have to get to the grocery store to pick up everything we need to make Christmas dinner. Let's not forget about trying to find time to wrap gifts. It is such a busy week leading up to Christmas. Imagine if we were ministers during this week. I do not have to imagine when it comes to that. Somehow, we find the time to get these things done before the big day because we know it is important to us and to others that we do.

I pray that in the busyness of this week that we will find time to be with God like the shepherds did on the night Christ was born. [Read more](#)

December 15th - Empty

On Sunday afternoon I noticed my bird feeders were empty so I went out to refill them. After I did this, my bird feed container became completely empty. About twenty minutes later I took my daughter out driving and noticed my windshield wiper fluid was empty when I tried to clean the back window. I solved one empty on Sunday but discovered two new ones. These kinds of empty are not too bad as I can easily go and get more bird seed and wiper fluid. It is more difficult however to replace what is empty when it comes to our feelings and emotions.

Unfortunately, the Christmas season can leave many people feeling empty emotionally. It is supposed to be a joyous time of year reflected by some people asking us if we are feeling the Christmas spirit. Many of the songs in this season talk about feeling the joy as well. Some years we may feel this kind of joy, but it often depends on what is happening in our life. When life is going well for us, then it is easy for us to get into the joy of the season. It is when we are going through seasons of loss, hardship, suffering or disappointment that we feel empty when it comes to the joy of the season. Maybe this is the case for some of us reading this mid-week message. Perhaps we are struggling with some challenge in our life right now that is causing us to feel empty emotionally, or even physically. These challenges may be:

- grieving the death of a loved one,
- a care giving situation that is draining us of all patience,
- added responsibilities at work or in the home,
- sadness or depression that affects many of us as the nights become longer and the days shorter,
- health issues that linger or still go undiagnosed,
- money issues as we adapt to the rising costs of utilities, gas, and groceries.

These kinds of struggles do not make us feel empty right away but rather gradually over time. Before we know it, we begin to notice that we are on empty when it comes to our strength and emotions. I hope this is not a reality for any of us right now, but if it is, then we may find strength from being reminded how God steps in and deals with empty things when He sees them. [Read more](#)

December 8th - It Has to Do With the Attitude

My family often goes out for brunch with my mother after church on Sundays. We usually alternate between 3 or 4 different places and have become familiar faces to some of the waitresses. This past Sunday the waitress who seated us marvelled at my mother being in such fine health for being 93. (Yes, she got my mom's age wrong by one year but I will get back to that later). She proceeded to tell us how her mother is 93 as well and still spends her winters living in Florida. After telling us this she said, "I think it is because our mothers have such a good attitude toward life and living that they are doing so well for their ages." I could not agree with her comment more. It is so true how a person's attitude can make a difference with how they approach life and living.

The waitress' comment made me think back to some of the mid-week messages I wrote during the pandemic about how it was beginning to affect some people's attitudes toward life. At the beginning of the pandemic, we were all very much supportive for the most part of the lockdowns and measures that needed to be taken since this was so new and unknown to us. As things progressed, we began to see how the restrictions were beginning to affect some people's attitudes. I sometimes commented in my messages how we were seeing more incidents of people getting angry and upset with others in stores and parking lots. These kinds of things happened before, but they were becoming more common place in our new reality dealing with the pandemic.

I also wrote a few times in messages how these changes in attitudes were resulting in more divisions and splits happening amongst family members, friends, colleagues, and neighbours. If we are being honest, one of the things the pandemic has done is change some people's attitudes in ways not for the better.

The season of Christmas is another time when we see people's behaviours and attitudes not always change for the better. It is at this time of year we will hear of

altercations happening in parking lots at the mall as drivers fight over the same parking space. We also hear about unkind words exchanged between shoppers in some stores. Store clerks and cashiers also notice customers seeming to be ruder and less pleasant at this time of year. [Read more](#)

November 30th - Hope Burning

We lit the candle of hope in church this past Sunday as we celebrated the beginning of the season of Advent. While it is nice to see a candle burning to remind us how hope can be found in the Lord regardless of the circumstance, stories can provide us with an even more powerful reminder of this truth.

One of my basketball players shared with Nadine last week how she was impacted by seeing hope displayed recently. This particular player had tried out for many different teams before coming to one of our practices. I have shared with you in previous messages this fall how challenging it has been to find players to form a team because so many decided not to return to the court this year.

At one tryout this player attended the coach was very pessimistic about the chances of forming a team. This coach did not leave her with very much hope at the end of the tryout. She then attended our tryout. I was honest with my players at that tryout that we did not have enough players to form a team yet, but that I would keep trying and not give up. She shared how it was seeing this hope and optimism displayed on my part that made all the difference in her wanting to accept a position on our team.

When she joined our team, we still had to fill 2-3 more positions before we had enough players. One parent commented how hard I worked to find those other players. It was not hard work on my part that made the difference but rather **maintaining hope and keeping it on display** for the players and parents to see. **God was the one doing all the hard work** of finding the other players we needed.

Last week I not only heard this story from my player who was touched by hope, but also discovered the other coach who had shown pessimism was not able to put a team together. My heart breaks for the coach and the girls of that other team. I have a heart filled with thankfulness though that hope made all the difference and it is one lesson I will be able to pass along to my players this year.

This player's story reminded me how we can offer people the gift of hope as we go through difficult circumstances together. As Christians our hope is found in our belief in God through Jesus Christ that nothing is impossible for Him since He is in complete control. Difficult circumstances are an opportunity for us and others to see that we truly do have hope in God to work in these situations to make something good happen. [Read more](#)

November 24th - When One Looks After the Details

With the American Thanksgiving taking place this week, and Advent beginning on Sunday it is now time for Nadine and I to get more intentional about shopping for Christmas. My daughter Coral has made it much easier for us this year. She has always given us a list of the things she wants for Christmas, but this year it was more detailed than in any previous one.

When I first saw the list, I noticed Coral had it all typed out so it was easy to read. Besides typing it out she had all of her gift wishes arranged by category. Books and records were just two of the categories that were included on her list. In previous years she ranked which books she wanted in order of preference. This year I noticed numbers placed beside some of the other items she had listed in other categories.

At first, I thought she was ranking her preferences like she does with her book wish list. Nadine pointed out to me that the numbers beside certain items actually referred to links and websites where we could purchase these items. Sure enough at the bottom of her list was a whole series of links we could click on to buy these items. She provided us with eleven links in all. When I looked at all of her links it reminded me of a list of citations one might see at the end of an essay.

Coral put so much work and detail into providing us with her Christmas wish list this year. If she had just provided us with a list with no links included, it would take a lot of work on Nadine's part (notice I did not say my part) to research where to find and purchase them. By providing us with all the details, Coral has made our job (okay I should say Nadine's job) of purchasing gifts for Christmas a whole lot easier.

Coral's Christmas list reminded me how much easier some things can be for us when somebody else looks after all the details. It made me begin to think how God looked after all the details that first Christmas in order to make things easier for all involved.
[Read more](#)

November 17th - I Still Got It

Last week was very busy for me to say the least. Besides all of my regular ministry duties I had to find time to help my daughter with her upcoming math test. Coral is in Grade 11 right now and she is taking functions in math. She is usually really good in math, but this recent unit has been giving her some struggles. I was really good at math back in my day so she asked for my help as the test approached.

It has been 42 years since I did Grade 11 math. When I first looked at the math, none of it looked familiar to me. I told Coral I would have to spend a little time familiarizing myself with the unit before I could help her. That was Wednesday of last week. On Thursday I began reviewing each unit being covered on the test. I had to familiarize myself again with:

- quadratic functions and their various forms

- determining the maximum and minimum values of quadratic equations
- finding the inverse of a quadratic function
- solving operations with radicals
- solving quadratic equations
- finding the zeros of quadratic functions
- finding families of parabolas

I am sure many of you remember how to calculate these things despite the years that have passed. I talked with two ministers on Thursday and shared with them how I was reintroducing myself to these math concepts. They both shook their heads and were thankful it was me and not them having to do it. In fact, the one minister who has two children in high school said he refuses to help them with math and pays for a tutor instead.

There were moments when I was thinking about opening my wallet and doing the same, but my cheap (frugal) side won out. [Read more](#)

November 9th - Together Making Seven

One of the things I enjoy about handing out candy on Halloween is getting the opportunity to talk with some of the children in our neighbourhood. I see many of these children often throughout the year waiting for the school bus, or playing at the park when I am walking our dog Daisy. I do not get the opportunity to talk with them on these occasions but they are willing to talk on Halloween if I just delay handing out the candy to them for a slight minute.

When two of the children came up the driveway last Monday night, I recognized them right away and took a moment to catch up with them about what grades they were in now. The oldest sibling shared she is in Grade 5, and her younger brother said he is in Grade 2. What they said next caught me by complete surprise. They said, "Did you know 5 and 2 make 7!" I was not expecting a response like that. I thought it was fitting coming from siblings identifying that together they make 7.

I had a good laugh about this interaction as they went off to the next house after getting their candy. If you are wondering, I did not give the oldest sibling 5 chocolate bars, and the other 2. I might have if I thought about it then as opposed to now as I am typing this. It would have been interesting to see how these siblings would have handled that math equation.

I have been thinking a lot about what these two siblings said. Adding five and two together is just one way to come to the number seven. There are other possible combinations too:

$$7 + 0 = 7$$

$$6 + 1 = 7$$

$$3 + 4 = 7$$

All four of these combinations can be used to add up to seven. As I focused on the seven, I was reminded of how in the Bible this number has a symbolic and deeper meaning attached to it. Seven is not the only number from Biblical times that carries with it a symbolic meaning, but it is the number most often used in this manner in the Bible. [Read more](#)

November 3rd - It Is Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas

I still remember this one November 1st very well. I was working as an accountant at the time and stopped into the food court at the mall to grab a coffee on my way to work. It was 8:45 a.m. and the mall was already decorated for the Christmas season. What shocked me was how just the day before the mall had all of its Halloween decorations up as I grabbed my morning coffee. From the time the mall closed on October 31st until it reopened on November 1st staff were busy taking down Halloween decorations and replacing them with their Christmas ones.

That was probably 25 years or more ago. Today we do not have to wait until Halloween ends to see signs of Christmas. I noticed by mid-October the Dollar Store I shop at already had their aisle of Christmas decorations on display. The W Network started showing some of their Hallmark Christmas movies a few weeks ago. I received a few catalogues during October showing items that might be purchased from their store for Christmas.

Now that Halloween has passed, we will see even more signs that Christmas is coming soon. It won't be long before we hear Christmas music being played on the radio, or in stores while shopping. Soon we will be hearing about Santa Claus parades taking place, or when children can expect to find him in the mall to sit on his knee. If we have not already done so we will be making our Christmas gift list and asking others to come up with theirs.

Advent and Christmas services are fast approaching and ministers like me are already busily planning ahead. After the American Thanksgiving we will be seeing more of our favourite Christmas shows and movies being aired on television. In a few weeks I will see my neighbour's Christmas lights and decorations on display when I walk my dog around the block. Despite the warm temperatures of late and the fact we still have leaves in our trees and many more on the ground it is starting to look a lot like Christmas.

It is during this time of year we are sometimes asked if we are feeling in the Christmas spirit. Our answer to this question usually depends on whether we are feeling cheerful, excited, and happy as we get closer to celebrating the birth of Christ with family and friends. Our emotions can swing and vary so much in the days and weeks leading up to Christmas. [Read more](#)

October 27th - Bumpy Roads Smoothed Over By Jesus

One of my favourite stories in the Bible which can be found in Mark 5, is about a man named Jairus. Jairus was the leader of the local synagogue and he had been on a bumpy road prior to Jesus arriving in his town. Jairus' daughter, who was 12 at the time, had become very ill. I imagine he had seen doctors and tried many things as any parent would in order to help his daughter get better but unfortunately Jairus experienced many bumps in these attempts.

On the day Jesus arrived in the town, the daughter's condition had become even worse. Jairus went to greet Jesus and pleaded with Him to come heal his daughter. Jairus must have breathed a sigh of relief when Jesus agreed. As the two of them began the journey to his home Jairus experienced a few bumps along the way:

- The first bump came when Jesus stopped to find out who had touched His robe in the crowd of people resulting in healing power flowing out from Him.
- The second bump came when Jesus took time to listen to the story of the woman who had touched Him and shared with her how her faith had made her well.

These were bumps in the road that must have frustrated Jairus. He knew time was of the essence to get Jesus to his house in order to heal his daughter. Before Jesus' conversation with this woman finished, Jairus experienced the worst bump of all when he was notified by a messenger that his daughter had died. This bump would have shattered Jairus' heart and soul of all hope. Jesus heard what had been said and told Jairus: **"Don't be afraid. Just have faith." (Mark 5:36)**

If anybody other than Jesus had said this to Jairus after the bump he had just experienced, the words would have come across as being insensitive. Jesus was smoothing the bump Jairus had just experienced out by giving him hope. [Read more](#)

October 20th - Outnumbered

On Friday morning my daughter's high school basketball team was in Hamilton to play the opening game of the St. Thomas More Hoops Invitational. We had to play the host team in the opening game of the tournament. Little did we know before we arrived what we were in for. St. Thomas More's student council turned it into a spirit day event where students could pay \$2.00 to come to the game and miss their first period class. That is a pretty good deal for teenagers to be able to miss class and hang out in the gym with their friends to watch basketball.

I am guessing over 500 students were sitting in the stands for this opening game. We know which team they were rooting for. The only fans at the game from BCI were yours truly, another dad and one other parent. The dads decided to sit together to form a cheering squad for BCI. We were not only outnumbered by all of the students there, but also by their cheerleading squad. I am guessing 20 cheerleaders were positioned at the end of the court cheering loudly for the home team. We were also outnumbered by the school band. As loud as we dads tried to yell and scream the band proved to be much louder. We were also outnumbered by their team mascot.

Their team mascot was on hand, but I do not think I qualify as the team mascot even though I am at almost every game.

The BCI basketball team was certainly outnumbered and at a disadvantage going into this game. It reminded us of the atmosphere we see on television when watching a football or basketball game at one of the USA colleges. The BCI players had never experienced this before, and I could see how nervous they were at the start of the game. It showed in their play as BCI went down by 6 points very early. Whenever our players went to the free throw line to shoot, the fans from St. Thomas More would try and distract them by making lots of noise. If our player missed the shot, their fans would cheer. When BCI made a basket, only the two dads could be heard cheering. After the game the players acknowledged how intimidating it was to be so outnumbered but admitted it will be one of those experiences they will never forget.

This story is a reminder of how we can find ourselves in situations where we feel outnumbered based on the challenges we are facing.

[Read more](#)

October 14th - It Is Getting Dark Earlier

Have you noticed how it is getting darker so much earlier these days? We expect this to be part of fall just like we anticipate leaves turning colour and falling to the ground. Not very long ago it would be about 9:00 p.m. when we would see it getting dark. By the end of August, we noticed a slight change with respect to this timing. As September rolled into October, we saw a more significant change in timing. I was walking our dog Daisy last week around 7:15 p.m. when I stopped to talk with a neighbour who commented on how much earlier it was getting dark. Nadine's mother made the same comment on Monday night when she was over to our house for Thanksgiving dinner.

With it getting darker earlier in the evenings we begin to notice a difference in people's behaviours and patterns. For instance:

- I used to see families with their children playing in the park until 8:00-8:30 p.m. during summer but now they are heading home by 7:00 p.m.
- I used to see people walking their dogs around 8:00 p.m. most nights (probably after Jeopardy was over) but now they are going by my place around 6:30 p.m. (before Wheel of Fortune).
- I used to see my neighbour out in his yard doing various chores until 8:30 before calling it a night, but now I see him doing it either before supper on weekdays, or on the weekends instead.

We see changes like this occurring once the evenings start getting darker sooner. When the time change happens, making it become darker even sooner, we will see other patterns begin to unfold. [Read more](#)

October 5th - Always Thankful?

The first thing I do every Monday morning after I get up is take the garbage out to the curb for pickup. Most of my neighbours will do this on Sunday nights instead. I have walked my dog enough on Monday mornings to see garbage bags that have been opened by racoons or recycling bins overturned by these nocturnal visitors to realize I would rather wait until the morning of to put my items out.

During the week I store my garbage in a shed underneath our car port. On Monday I noticed that the door to my shed was wide open. When I went outside, I found both of my garbage bags had been ripped wide open by a racoon and found a huge mess needing to be cleaned up. There I was at 6:15 a.m. picking up two bags worth of garbage from my driveway. As I was doing this, I thought to myself what an awful way this was to start off my week.

It was very unpleasant to have to pick up uneaten oatmeal, eggshells, and other items of rotten garbage with my bare hands. Fifteen minutes later I finally got everything cleaned up and the bags out to the curb. When I got to the curb, I noticed every one of my neighbours who put bags out the night before did not have their garbage opened by a racoon. It was my luck, or lack of, that a racoon somehow got my shed door open and began exploring through my garbage. It would have been so much easier if this critter had gone for a stroll down the road instead of stopping at my shed. It did not happen that way and as a result I had a messy start to my Monday.

After I got back inside my house I wondered if it was going to be one of those days or weeks. You know what I mean. Sometimes a bad start to a week makes us wonder if it is a sign of how the rest of the week will be for us. I was beginning to wonder if this would indeed be the case when a few other things did not go well on Monday morning. A few hours later I began to realize as unpleasant as it was to have to pick up all that garbage, the experience was a reminder of some of the things I can be thankful for. [Read more](#)

September 28th - Another Fall

Summer turned into fall last week on September 22nd. We are starting to see signs of fall all around us:

- Some mornings we are already seeing frost on peoples' roofs
- Furnaces are being turned on to remove that morning chill in the house
- People are beginning to wear coats and pants again after wearing summer attire for the past few months
- We are beginning to see some trees turn colour and others begin to drop their leaves
- We are seeing pumpkins and gourds for purchase at stores
- Turkeys are beginning to be advertised with Thanksgiving fast approaching

So many signs are beginning to appear to let us know fall is definitely here. I just have to look around my house as I write this to be reminded. Nadine got out our fall

decorations on Sunday afternoon and has them beautifully displayed around the house. Fall is definitely here. The Bible reminds us in many places how God created the seasons. One place in Scripture we see this is in Psalm 74:16-17: **Both day and night belong to you; You made the starlight and the sun. You set the boundaries of the earth, and you made both summer and winter.**

Scripture not only reminds us how God created the seasons, but also encourages us to pause with the beginning of each one to reflect on His character and attributes.

[Read more](#)

September 22nd - Pass It On

My daughter had a math test right after lunch on Friday. As the class was about to start, I received a text from her. One of her classmates, who knows that I am a minister, asked Coral if I would say a prayer for her before she started the test. I will be honest I was surprised to see this request. I have never had one of Coral's classmates ask me to do this before. I sent a quick "thumbs up" text back to Coral letting her know I would do so. She passed this confirmation along to her classmate.

I not only prayed for this classmate but for my daughter too because I knew she was also worried about this test. About 30 minutes later I received a text back from Coral to tell me the test was over, and it was not as hard as she thought it would be. It was then that I shared with Coral I had prayed for her as well. I was very impressed with this teenage girl asking Coral to have me say a prayer. I was equally impressed with Coral for passing along this prayer request from her friend. Obviously, I was so impressed by both of these teenagers that I decided to pass this story on as my mid-week message.

When we look at this story, Coral could have made the decision not to pass her friend's prayer request along to me. Think of some of the things that may have been missed out on if she had not done this: [Read more](#)

September 14th - It Keeps Coming Back

I have had something very interesting happen to me these past two Mondays. Monday is garbage pickup day in our neighbourhood. Usually, I have a couple bags of garbage to put out each week along with our two recycling bins. One of the items of paper I put in my recycling bin that first week was the schedule from last May when my basketball team played in the Provincial Championships in Ottawa. I had been cleaning out some of my basketball files that week and realized I no longer needed to keep it.

The recycling truck came as usual that Monday around noon and emptied both bins. Just after supper I happened to take our dog Daisy for a walk around the block. When I got around the first corner from our house, I noticed a piece of paper on the road. I looked down at it and realized it was the basketball schedule that I had put in my recycling bin. I do not know if the wind blew it out of the bin that morning or if it fell out

of the truck once it turned the corner. I picked it up and put it back in my recycling bin once I got home from walking the dog.

That piece of paper stayed there for a week with more recycling added to it. This past Monday I put the recycling out once again. To ensure no papers would get blown away this time I put the other bin containing the plastics and glassware on top of it. Once again, the recycling truck picked everything up by noon. I took Daisy for a walk around 4:00 p.m. that afternoon. When Daisy and I got to the front of our house at the end of the walk I noticed a piece of paper on the road. Sure enough, it was the schedule from our Provincial Championships. It looked like it had been run over a few times by cars and stepped on as well. Some of the ink had smeared due to the road still being a bit wet from the rain earlier in the day.

Just as I had a week ago, I picked up this piece of paper again. Instead of putting it back in the recycling again I decided to bring it in the house. I just had a feeling that this was no coincidence but rather God letting me know He did not want me to dispose of it yet. [Read more](#)

September 8th - Because I Asked

Last week I was asked if I would offer pastoral support and comfort to a person who has been struggling to find hope. A time was arranged for the two of us to speak by phone around 8:00 p.m. one night. We had never met before so I was a bit anxious wondering how the conversation would go. Sometimes in pastoral care situations it takes time to develop trust before somebody is willing to openly share their feelings. I was also feeling anxious about this call because the situation causing this person to struggle with hope was something I had not encountered very often in my twenty plus years of ministry.

Because of my anxiousness I decided to pray asking God to give me the right words to say in order to provide this person with some much-needed hope. Part of this prayer was asking Him to use me as a vessel in order to share what He wanted said to this person. I felt more assured after praying and as 8:00 p.m. approached I went outside and sat awaiting the person to call me. This person contacted me right on time.

I started the conversation by asking questions in order to get a better understanding of what this person has been feeling.

About 5-10 minutes into our conversation a bunny rabbit suddenly appeared and came to a stop right between my feet. We get a lot of rabbits around our place. Usually, they stay still and if I happen to approach closer, they will hop off. This bunny did not seem to be afraid or anxious by my presence. After a few minutes I moved from the side of my house to the front while still talking on the phone.

Sure enough, this bunny followed me to the front of the house. As the conversation continued the evening light turned into darkness. Once again, even as it became

darker, this bunny stayed within three to four feet of me at all times. The conversation lasted for about 75 minutes in total. A lot of sharing was done during that time. I was able to offer this person some suggestions on how to maintain hope and strength in difficult times.

Once we disconnected, I looked down at the bunny. It had been with me almost the entire time of the conversation. Now that the conversation was over it was time for me to head back into the house. As soon as I turned to walk into the house, the bunny went on its way around the opposite side into my neighbour's back yard. Five days have passed since that night. I have been outside many times since that night making phone calls and working around the yard. I have seen a couple of other rabbits since but not this same bunny. [Read more](#)

September 1st - Help*Hope*Prayer

I have had a three month break now from coaching basketball. During these three months I have spent some time researching new drills and examining some different plays to introduce. These things are within my control as a coach during the off season. What is beyond my control however is wondering if we would have enough returning players and new ones to form a team this coming season. The team I coached last year was made up of girls in Grade 10. Many of these players were balancing their schoolwork with extracurricular activities, jobs, and competitive basketball.

As the season was coming to an end, I knew some of the players were worried about their school work load going into Grade 11 and were considering not returning this year to our team. Over the summer I received word four players were not planning on playing this year. Suddenly I began to wonder if we would have enough players to form a team. I knew my daughter was beginning to worry about the same thing. I shared with her I had been praying since June for God to provide us with enough players.

I kept making this request part of my daily prayers since then. Last week I was sent a list of players who had signed up to try out for our team. When I looked at the list there were three players from last year who decided not to return. On this same list were the names of three new people who had signed up to try out. Seeing their names was an answer to prayer for me. I could see God had been at work speaking into these player's hearts to direct them toward our team.

Just when I thought my prayer had been fully answered I received news the day before tryouts that another one of my returning players had a change of heart and was not coming back. I received more bad news that two of the three new players had not paid their fee to tryout and could not do so unless the money was received before Tuesday night. [Read more](#)

August 25th - Christmas in August

Some of you might have wondered why I did not publish a mid-week message last week. Perhaps others of you who read this message regularly did not notice it at all. In case you are part of the group wondering why there was no message last week you will be happy to know I finally took a week of holidays. It was my first week of holidays since August of 2019. A pandemic has had something to do with a few missed weeks of holidays since then.

Due to all of the uncertainty with flying we decided to drive across the border into Michigan and spend the weekend in the Frankenmuth area. If you have ever visited this part of Michigan, chances are you have gone to the Bronner's Christmas Wonderland store in Frankenmuth. It is advertised as the largest Christmas store in the world. We spent a few hours there on Saturday. When you walk into the store it is hard not to smile right away and feel the Christmas spirit. You are put into the spirit hearing your favorite Christmas songs playing over the store's speakers while you are shopping. Before you know it, you are singing or humming your favourite songs. Seeing display after display of Christmas decorations puts you into the spirit of wanting to add to your decorations around the house. There were so many decorations my family wanted to buy but when we looked at the price and factored in the exchange rate, my cheap spirit took over and put it back down instead of placing it in the cart.

The spirit of the season continues when you get to the section where they have all kinds of Christmas ornaments. It is so easy in this section to begin imagining your own tree at home and wondering if there is room for a few new ornaments. My daughter found two new ones she plans on adding to our tree this year. At the back of this large store, the spirit of the season is found while gazing at and admiring all of their Christmas trees. It is wonderful to see them lit up and decorated. You also have to look up in each section of the store where you can see some of the best displays and decorations this store has to offer. Nadine and Coral took a lot of pictures of these beautiful displays.

It was so nice for two hours to get a taste of Christmas in August. My focus for those two hours was on good memories about Christmas, on songs I love to hear, on seeing smiles on people's faces, and of course on Jesus. For two hours I did not focus on my work, nor on the long list of things that were awaiting my attention once I returned from holidays. Experiencing Christmas in August was a much-needed gift and blessing.

As I returned to work on Monday and began contemplating my mid-week message, I could not help but think if we all need to experience a little Christmas right now in our lives. [Read more](#)

August 11th - What a Father Did - What Our Father Does

I officiated at a funeral service last Sunday afternoon. I usually have funeral services on other days of the week, but over the years I have had a few on Sunday afternoons. I did not know the deceased, but the family had been to a previous funeral I had done and asked if I would do this service. Three eulogies were included in this celebration of life. I always listen carefully to the eulogies to ensure the things I plan to say about the deceased match up with what those who know them best are sharing.

One of the people who spoke at this funeral was the deceased's daughter. My ears perked up when the daughter shared about her time at Brock University. I happened to do my understudy years there, so I know the university well. She shared how on the days she found challenging at Brock she would call her father, sometimes in tears. Whenever he received these calls from his daughter, this father would stop what he was doing and drive down to the university and bring her back home for the rest of the night. After being comforted spending a night at home in her own room, in the company of her parents, she shared how her father would turn around the next morning and drive her back to Brock so she would not miss any classes. By sharing this story and so many others, this daughter revealed so much about the character and nature of her father whom I had never met.

This daughter knew it was part of her father's character that he would always be there for her whenever she reached out for help on those difficult days at university. If we are going to turn to a person in a time of need it is so important that we know it is part of that individual's character to be dependable and reliable. Something The Bible does for us is to **reveal our Heavenly Father's character traits** so we will know that it is part of His nature to be reliable and dependable whenever we may reach out to Him. One passage that describes God's character traits to us is found in **Proverbs 15**.

[Read more](#)

August 4th - Knowing the Severity - Knowing the Greatness

Last Wednesday I finally got the results from my sleep apnea assessment that I did back at the end of March. I will be honest, I was expecting ahead of time to be diagnosed with severe sleep apnea. The reason why I was thinking this is because usually when I am diagnosed with something they tell me it is one of the worst cases they have ever seen. For instance, when a nurse did an assessment on me when I was 5 years old to see if I was colour blind, she informed me I was the worst case of it she had ever seen. Then in 2007 when I had my gall bladder removed the surgeon said it was the most diseased one she had ever extracted.

I do not have health issues very often, but when I do they tend to be of a severe nature. Now you know why I was expecting to be told I had severe sleep apnea. Sure enough, my results revealed I have severe obstructive sleep apnea. There are benchmarks for what is considered to be normal, mild, or severe. In my six hours of sleep at the clinic that night I blew by all the criteria for normal and mild. When I slept on my side, the number of sleep apnea occurrences I had every hour were six times

over what would be considered normal. When I was sleeping on my back these occurrences rose to eight times above normal on an hourly basis.

Yes, I would consider these statistics to be severe. I did not disappoint on my oxygen levels either during the study. These levels dropped to just seventy per cent of what would be considered as normal. Being an accountant prior to becoming a minister, I did take note that I had 209 occurrences in my six hours of sleep. I am just glad I did not make that many trips to the bathroom during the night.

I share this with you as a reminder how we all have to deal with various issues that may arise at times in our lives. These issues do not always involve our health. [Read more](#)

July 29th - Some Water Cooler Conversation

I had a great water cooler conversation on Monday. Usually, water cooler conversations happen in work environments amongst employees. My water cooler conversation happened to take place at a funeral home which can be a workplace for me. Prior to the funeral I was about to conduct I went to the water cooler to get a drink and met a ten-year-old boy already standing there. I asked him how the water was, and he told me it was not bad because the cooler was doing a good job of keeping it cold. When he finished drinking his water, he turned to me and said, *Well I better get back to my seat before it starts*. Off he went. As I stood there sipping my water I had to agree with this young boy's assessment of the water.

After the funeral I went back to the water cooler to get another drink before we made our way to the cemetery. To my surprise I found the same young boy standing at the water cooler. I said to him, *The reason why I need to drink so much water is because I tend to drink more coffee than I should*. He nodded and said, *My problem is I drink too much tea*. Then he said something that caught me totally by surprise. He said, *I want to tell you what a good job you did up there*. To receive a compliment like this from a ten-year-old boy caught me off guard. I had seen him during the service and at one point he was crying in his pew. Obviously, he was listening and taking it all in. I thanked him for the compliment, and we left the water cooler to make our way to the cemetery for the committal service.

At the cemetery, this same young boy placed a medal that had belonged to the deceased beside the urn. This young boy showed a calm demeanor as he did this in his great-grandfather's memory. After I completed the committal service, I went over to this young boy's parents and told them how their son complimented me earlier, and how impressed I was. The biggest smiles crossed the parents' faces when I said this. The father reached out and shook my hand, and the mother said to me, *Thank you for being such a good role model to him*. Again, just like at the water cooler, I was not expecting to hear that. What started off as a simple conversation between two thirsty people at a water cooler turned into a series of uplifting compliments.

Some who are reading this message right now may be retired and no longer experience conversations around the water cooler. [Read more](#)

July 22nd - Depending on the Shoes I Wear

Our dog Daisy is paying very close attention to what shoes I put on lately. If I happen to put on my old running shoes, she gets very excited and runs to the back door thinking I will be working out in our pool area. The reason why she gets excited is because there are usually lots of chipmunks for her to chase around our pool area. Even if there is not one initially for her to chase, if she stays patient, one usually appears, and she sets chase. If I put on my newer running shoes, then she assumes it is time for her to go for a walk. When she sees me put these shoes on, Daisy will usually jump off the couch, stretch her back legs, and come over to have her leash put on. If she sees me dressed up on a Sunday morning and start putting on my dress shoes, then Daisy usually puts her head back down and falls asleep. It has been interesting of late to see the various reactions I get from Daisy depending on the shoes I put on.

I am sure we all have shoes we put on for different occasions. We may have a certain pair of shoes we prefer to walk or exercise in. We may have some shoes that we wear with a particular outfit. We may have other shoes for cutting the lawn or working in the garden. We may have certain shoes we tend to wear depending on the season. The fact that we are in summer right now brings out certain shoes and sandals that we do not wear in other seasons. We may have certain shoes that we purchased to wear to work, or when we dress up to go out to the theater or church. Some of us may have a lot of shoes we like to wear, and others keep just a few.

Back in Biblical times, I imagine most people had just one pair of sandals that they would wear until they wore out. One of the interesting things we discover in certain passages of Scripture is how the wearing or removing of sandals reveals a lot about a person's attitude toward God. One example where we find this is when Moses began to approach the burning bush. As he got closer, Moses heard this warning from God: ***Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. (Exodus 3:5)***

It was God's command here for Moses to remove his sandals as a sign of respect and reverence. Moses did as God desired and approached Him with the right attitude and the respect deserving of our sovereign Lord. [Read more](#)

July 14th - The Difference a Win Made

My daughter Coral loves to read. Something I did not realize is she has been going onto a certain publishing website that posts about new books coming out. On this website she can enter a contest to win a copy of a new book before it is even released. It was last Thursday when I first learned about this. Coral and I were about to take Daisy for a walk when we noticed a big envelope in our mailbox. I pulled the envelope out and saw that it was addressed to Coral. When she first saw the

envelope, she wondered if she had accidentally ordered something from Amazon she did not mean to. When she opened the envelope, inside was a free book that will not be released in stores until September. She could not believe she finally won. She shared with me on the walk with Daisy how an ordinary day suddenly turned into a good one all because of winning.

Winning does have a way of changing our attitudes and feelings. I saw this so often during the past season of coaching basketball. I am not one of those coaches who believe that we must win at all costs. I came across a few coaches during the year that had this mindset. My philosophy is one of trying to provide my players with the right training, skills, and plays to put them in the best position possible to win. We lost more games than we won during the year, and I was proud of my players regardless of the outcome.

As a coach it is hard not to notice the difference in the attitude of these players depending on whether we had won or lost. We lost a few games in overtime and some others by just one point. After these losses the girls would sometimes be frustrated that they missed a basket near the end or that a referee's call did not go in our favour. I would not see much smiling or talking going on after these losses. Whenever we won it was definitely a different mood. The girls would be laughing and joking as they removed their shoes and packed up their gear. They would gather around the score sheet to see how many points they each got. They would also gather for a team photo holding up the score sheet after the win. As their reactions show, we have different attitudes and emotions when we win.

My daughter's reaction to winning the book reminded me how everyday life has its share of wins and losses for us. **We face battles every day in life.** [Read more](#)

July 7th - Some Gifts From Canada Day

Canada Day has come and gone for another year, and I hope each one of you had a blessed time last Friday. I was blessed this Canada Day with three gifts. The first gift was the opportunity for our church to have our first social gathering in over two years. Of course, we have gathered for church when we have been allowed during the pandemic, but we had not restarted any of our social gatherings. We arranged for people to come at 11:00 a.m. to the church on Canada Day to enjoy strawberries and ice cream while visiting with one another in the back yard. It was so good to see those in attendance enjoy being able to socialize with one another in a comfortable and safe way.

I was worried about the weather as showers had been forecasted earlier in the week to occur around the time this event was to take place. I prayed many times throughout the week that if it was His will for us to have this event to hold off the rain for us. God gave us this gift. We received another gift during this time of socializing. Right at noon, just as we were about to bring the gathering to a close, O Canada started playing on our chime system. It was so fitting for us to be able to stand together

outside as our national anthem was being played on Canada Day. Having this social event happen at our church topped off at the end with the playing of O Canada was the first gift on Canada Day.

Later that afternoon we went over to Lions Park in Brantford for the Canada Day celebrations. Our plan was just to walk around, grab a bite to eat, and then come home shortly afterward. We had just finished eating and were about to head to our car when I happened to notice two of my daughter Coral's teammates from her basketball team walk by. What was so surprising is they live in Ancaster and we had no idea they would be there that day. They asked Coral to stay with them and go on the rides and watch the fireworks together.

Coral was so excited at the opportunity as she rarely gets to hang out with these friends outside the basketball season. The parents of one of these girls offered to bring Coral home after the fireworks, which gave Nadine and I the opportunity to return home and to get some work done in preparation for Sunday. About an hour after we left Coral texted to say another one of her basketball teammates was there and now all four of them were hanging out. These four girls received the gift of being able to spend time together on Canada Day even though nothing had been previously arranged. It was a gift I know my daughter appreciated.

The final gift from Canada Day was something a young girl in our neighbourhood did. On Canada Day, she decorated the tree in front of her house with Canadian flags. She then attached an envelope to the tree with a sign on it that said:

Please take a lollipop inside the envelope and enjoy Canada's birthday!

When I saw this sign in front of her house, I thought to myself what a great gift she gave to people on Canada Day. The interesting thing is I did not see this gift that she had given others on Canada Day until two days later. I saw it as I was walking my dog Daisy on Sunday afternoon. A few minutes earlier on the walk I began praying and asking God what my mid-week message should be about this week. It was shortly after I prayed that I stumbled upon this kind gesture and gift from Canada Day. It was then I knew exactly what I would be writing on this week.

I think these three gifts have something more in common than the fact they had to do with Canada Day. What these gifts also share in common is that in my eyes they all came from the generous and loving hand of God. Here are the reasons why I see it this way. [Read more](#)

June 30th - Was Lost But Now Is Found

On Saturday June 18th we received a knock at our front door around 9:45 p.m. It is an unusual time for us to have somebody knocking at our door. When I opened the door, I saw a lady that lives three blocks over from us. I usually see her riding her bike holding onto a dog leash while her husky runs beside her. She told Nadine and I that

she found a lost dog in the area and wondered if it was our Daisy. She found out right away it was not Daisy as she was barking up a storm behind me.

Nadine and I went out to see this dog and sure enough it had a lot of similarities in looks to our Daisy. Standing with this lost dog was this woman's daughter, and another neighbour from down the street. I did not recognize the dog, nor was there a tag on its collar. We were all surprised that nobody was out looking for this dog at the time. We decided to walk over to the home of a neighbour who knows a lot of people and their dogs in the area. Nadine knocked on her door but being the time of night it was, they did not answer. By this time, it was 10:00 p.m.

We began discussing what we should do at this late hour. We could not take the dog in because our Daisy is not very pet friendly with her colleagues. The one lady aiding in the search said she would take the dog for the night even though her husband would have a fit. Before departing Nadine suggested that she put a photo of this lost dog on our neighbourhood Face Book page with the hopes somebody might see the picture and recognize who the owner was. Nadine did not have her phone with her so she told the lady who would be keeping the dog she would come over to her house to take the picture once she got her phone from our house. Before we all left the three people who originally found this lost dog thanked us for trying to help them find its owner. We thanked them in return for having done everything they had.

I am going to leave you in suspense for a few short moments about whether we found the dog's owner or not. What I want to focus on is how the three people thanked us for making the effort to help find this lost dog's owner. We all lose things from time to time. I am not talking about our patience or our minds, even though we sometimes lose these things. When we, or somebody we know loses something, how much effort do we put into finding it? For me, it depends on what it is and who is asking. [Read more](#)

June 22nd - Letting People Know We Appreciate Them

As I write this message Fathers Day has come and gone. What I loved most about this Fathers Day were two cards I was given. The first card was given to me by two girls who were in Sunday School that day. At the end of the service, they presented me with a Fathers Day gift. One of the items included was a piece of paper that listed some of the things I enjoy in life, but also what these girls have come to appreciate about me. It was so great to hear from them how they enjoy my sense of humour when I do crazy stories to help them learn about God. It made me smile to think they appreciate how I try to find fun and creative ways to help them come to know God.

The other card I was given on Fathers Day came from my daughter. She is really good at making personal cards for her friends on their birthdays or for Nadine and I on special occasions. Something Coral does each time she makes a card for somebody is to include pictures of things she knows that person likes. Coral had pictures of a coffee and a peanut butter and jam sandwich on the front of my card; two staples in

my diet I love every day. On the inside of the card, she included a picture of my favorite basketball coach and team. Then on the back of the card she put a picture of my favorite music performer.

If Coral wrote nothing in the card, these pictures that she included would be enough for me to know she appreciates me. Along with these thoughtful pictures, she also writes inside each card quite a bit about what she appreciates about that person. To sit there on Fathers Day and read everything that Coral wrote about the things she appreciates about me was the best gift she could have given. I know how much she loves and appreciates me, but to see it written out and said in a card is very touching.

These two cards got me thinking about whether we do this often enough in our lives for others. We get so caught up in our busy lives that we often take the people in our lives for granted. We think these people already know how much we appreciate them and feel we do not have to take the time to remind them of this fact. We all need affirmations from others that we are appreciated and valued. Affirmations like these can also be the key to developing positive and lasting relationships in our life. We see an example of this in the life of Moses. [Read more](#)

June 15th - When We Know Our Forgiveness is Complete

There is an interesting story in the Bible where some people were not completely sure if they had been forgiven until a death happened. We find this story in Genesis 50 when Jacob died. Upon his death, his sons were fearful that their brother, Joseph, had not truly forgiven them for selling him into slavery. Joseph had already forgiven them when he revealed his true identity to them but now that their father was dead the brothers wanted to be reassured that they had been completely forgiven by their brother. Joseph assured them by saying:

Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so that I could save the lives of many people. No don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children. He reassured them by speaking kindly to them. (Genesis 50:19-21)

At this moment after the death of their father, the brothers were assured that they had been completely forgiven. I think Joseph too received confirmation at this moment from God that his forgiveness was complete.

Sometimes death provides us with an opportunity to see if we have completely forgiven somebody. I experienced this reality last week. I was notified on Thursday that somebody from my past had passed away. I spent a lot of time around this person for a two-year period when I was 15 to 16 years old. This person had a very negative effect on my emotional well being during those two years. Things were said to me that were very hurtful. Some of the comments left emotional scars. I began to

lose the love for the sport I was playing at the time because of the emotional abuse. I was always on edge wondering when the next emotional outburst would occur.

I began to realize the negative impact this emotional abuse was having on my overall wellbeing. I decided to take a year off from playing that sport at a highly competitive level in order to focus on healing from the scars I incurred emotionally over the previous two years. Even though some people questioned my decision at the time it was the best thing I could have done. That year away from the abusive environment allowed me to heal emotionally. I found a love for the game again that had been taken away from me. My sense of self worth began to improve. I also found my inner strength again that helped me to have a newfound confidence not to let negative comments from this individual or others adversely affect me again. Most of all I learned to forgive this person during that year. A sign of my healing came the very first game I returned to playing at a competitive level. [Read more](#)

June 9th - The Barker and the Talker

I had my dog Daisy tied up on her leash in front of our house Friday morning while I was doing some chores outside. All of a sudden, I heard some barking and some talking out front. The only two that were out front were Daisy and the person who delivers our mail. It is not hard to figure out who was doing the barking and who was doing the talking. If Daisy was able to talk, I might be able to make some money off that reality. Personally, I am glad Daisy cannot talk because I would then have three people in my house complaining about my snoring.

When I heard the barking and the talking, I came out from the side of the house to check on things. It was wonderful to see this mail delivery person carrying on a conversation with Daisy while she was barking loudly. He put his own interpretations on what Daisy was conveying with each bark. It was quite refreshing and entertaining to see. Usually, I have to apologize for her behaviour whenever she barks excessively at the person delivering the mail. No apologies were needed this time. In fact, I noticed that this man had an interesting affect on Daisy. Usually, she keeps barking at the person delivering the mail until they are far enough down our street that she cannot see him or her. Because he carried on a conversation with her in a pleasant tone, Daisy stopped barking the minute he crossed our property and went to the next house. As soon as I watched this all transpire, I knew I had my next midweek message idea to share with you.

As I have shared with you previously, one of the things I have noticed more and more during the last two years is how people are barking at others rather than talking. I cannot count the number of times I have been in grocery stores hearing complete strangers getting into confrontations with one another, barking words of profanity and anger at one another. I also see it a lot more in parking lots and on the roads when a driver does something that the other person does not like or appreciate. I think a lot more of this behaviour and speech is going on in people's homes, workplaces, at sporting events and so on.

The pandemic has resulted in many people becoming less patient with others and responding in a manner like my dog Daisy does with the person delivering the mail: barking in an aggressive nature. [Read more](#)

June 2nd - What Works Best on Deep Roots

One day recently while I was spending some time in my backyard trying to get rid of dandelions my neighbour happened to come over to chat. If you are wondering, yes it was the neighbour who is a Montreal Canadiens fan. I was using one of the claw tools you may have seen that allows you to stand over the dandelion and twist it around until you pull up the weed and hopefully the root. After watching me dig up a few dandelions with this tool, he said to me, *What I find works best on dandelions is getting down on your knees and digging them out!* I have done that before and agree that it works best at getting the entire root out. The problem for me is I have a 300-foot-deep back yard by 70 feet wide. I have a lot of dandelions that appear at this time of year in my back yard. If I took this approach every year of getting on my knees and digging them out, besides taking me forever to do so, I probably would need to book a few visits to the chiropractor as well. We talked for a little bit longer before I returned to my dandelions, and he went off to do some chores around his property.

I began thinking about his advice that the best approach to getting rid of dandelions is getting down on the knees. Naturally, I began to think about how this wisdom works best also to deal with deep rooted problems and issues that arise in our lives. A powerful tool we have as Christians is to be able to get down on our knees and pray. We are blessed to be able to know that each time we do pray God not only hears us, but answers when we call on Him. David expressed this confidence in Psalm 4:3 saying:

You can be sure of this:

The Lord set apart the godly for Himself.

The Lord will answer when I call to Him.

When we are on our knees in prayer, we not only realize God is listening but are also reminded about His attributes such as goodness, love, and faithfulness. We have this very powerful tool at our disposal. This tool we call prayer can help remove deep roots that try to take control of our hearts and lives. Think of the many things that are trying to take root in our lives right now: [Read more](#)

May 26th - Coping Through This Tragedy

By now all of us have seen or heard the news about the terrible tragedy that took place in Uvalde, Texas on Tuesday. We were all shocked when we learned that a man carrying a gun entered Robb Elementary School and killed 19 children and 2 teachers. Just 10 days earlier a similar incident happened in Buffalo when a man carrying a gun killed many people both inside and outside a Tops grocery store.

Both incidents are sad and tragic. I have noticed a greater outpouring of frustration and anger the Texas event. The frustration may have to do with both incidents

happening so close together, or the Tuesday shootings taking place in a school that mainly consisted of students in Grades 2 to 4. As I watched various news outlets report from the scene in Uvalde, I began seeing people I know post messages about the shooting. People I do not normally see post too often felt the need to share their feelings about the tragedy. I took a moment to reflect upon the situation and just stood in silence listening for God. The message He planted on my heart was this:

Let the little children come to me!

After the Spirit placed these words on my heart, I began to understand why He did so. I immediately began to think about when Jesus spoke these words to His disciples. One day some parents were bringing their children to Jesus so He could touch and bless them. The disciples actually began to scold these parents for bothering Jesus. When Jesus saw this happening, He was not angry with the parents, but rather with His disciples. He said to them:

Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. (Mark 10:14)

By remembering this story, my thoughts turned immediately to what the young children who were killed on Tuesday were experiencing that very moment. I envisioned Jesus coming to each of those children as they entered heaven on Tuesday and all of them sitting around Him as He comforted them. [Read more](#)

May 11th - Finally, Something Easy

This weekend Coral asked me if I could help her with something at school she is struggling with. I am always willing to help her when she asks, but she realizes my limitations. For instance, I am not a science guy, so she has come to learn it is easier for her to figure it out herself, than to try and watch me painfully try. In English she just finished reading *Macbeth* by Shakespeare, and I knew I could not help her understand it any better. Even though I am pretty good at math, because I struggled helping Coral with it in Grade 8, she asks me less and less for help.

One of the courses Coral is taking right now is business. Currently the teacher is teaching income statements and balance sheets. Knowing I was an accountant before God called me into ministry, Coral realized I could help her understand this topic. It was so nice for me to be able to look at one of her assignments and know immediately everything about it. I did not have to refresh my knowledge on anything or do any practice examples before sitting down and teaching her the basics about income statements and balance sheets. It was wonderful to finally be able to help Coral understand a subject at school that comes so easily to me.

How I wish every subject that Coral might need help with at school came so easily to me. When she attended a Christian school from Grades 6-8, helping her in Bible class came easily to me. There was one time though when she was learning online during

the pandemic, and she yelled to me from the top of the stairs to help her with a question that her teacher was asking about the Bible. I gave her the answer and when she offered it to the teacher, he said it was wrong.

I never have said I am perfect. It would be nice if everything in life came easy to us. There are some things that we find easier to do than others. I am sure all of us found certain subjects came easier to us at school than others. Now that we are adults, there are certain tasks and skills that come to us easier than others. Even as Christians some aspects about our faith may come to us easier than others. For instance:

- Do we find it easy to forgive others, or do we still struggle with this?
- Do we find it easy to wait patiently upon God to answer prayer, or do we struggle and become impatient?
- Do we find it easy to turn control of our lives over to God, or do we struggle with giving Him complete control?
- Do we find it easy to trust Him completely, or do we still struggle with having a confident faith in Him?

Just as we find some things come easier to us than others, there are aspects about our faith that may not come so easy to us. [Read more](#)

May 11th - Giving Others One of Their Best Experiences

My first year as a head basketball coach has come to an end. Many people shook their head in disbelief when I told them I would be coaching basketball this year. Some of these people questioned if I had the ability and skills to do so. It was a fair question, having never played basketball myself. I knew I would have to prove myself to my players, my assistant coaches, and even the parents that I have what it takes to be a head coach. Others questioned whether I had the time to do so being as busy as I am as a pastor. Coaching a basketball team does require a lot of your time. Most weeks it would require about 10 hours of my time to plan out practices, travel to and from the facilities, and run the team through the various drills. On the weeks we had games on a Saturday or Sunday coaching would take sometimes 20 hours out of my already busy week. Tryouts took place at the end of August, practices started in September, games began in December, and the Provincial Championship was played this past weekend in Ottawa. Add it all up it was a lot of time, and travel put into head coaching this year. Now our season is over.

One of the goals I had for the season was to try and make this year one of the best experiences the girls had playing basketball. I knew many of these girls were disappointed they had lost out on playing basketball as a result of COVID. When COVID lockdowns began in March 2020, many of these girls were training hard to play at the Provincial Championships that year. Naturally, the season shut down and the championships were cancelled. These girls not only lost out on that experience but did not play the entire 2020-2021 season either. Knowing how much these girls had lost out on over the past two years I tried my best as a coach to make this year as

special as possible. Our girls were really excited about heading to Ottawa for the Provincials this weekend. That was great to see. Our players played with such heart and determination this weekend. They were able to beat the top ranked team in one of the games but lost very close games to the eventual silver medalists and to a team from Huntsville. It would have been so nice if we could have ended the season with a medal, but we fell short due to the many injured players we had. In fact, in the final game three of my players had to play the entire game due to so many being injured. Even my two assistant coaches were sick before the final game and could not be on the bench with me.

After the final game, I gathered my players together and shared with them how proud I was of how far they had come as a team. They had overcome so many adversities, and yet had never given up trying their best. After I finished speaking, one of my players spoke up and said, *I just want to thank all of you for making this my best experience at the Provincial Championships ever!* What I found so interesting about her comment was she had played with other teams at these championships in her earlier years. Some of the teams she was on actually won medals at these championships. To hear this player say what she did could not have made me happier. It was not just my contribution as a coach that made this year the best experience playing basketball this player has had. Her fellow teammates, my assistants, as well as the parents also contributed to all of this happening. For me, all of the time I put into being a coach and stepping out of my comfort zone to take on this position, was all worth it to know it helped somebody to have the best experience playing that she has ever had.

The reason why I wanted to share this story in my mid-week message is to hopefully inspire other people to do the same and try **to help somebody experience one of the best memories in their lives too.** [Read more](#)

May 5th - Memories

On Saturday we had to drive to Sarnia to play two basketball games. These games were not for the team I coach, but rather involved players from the high school team. We were excited to go to Sarnia because from 2001-2009 we spent a lot of time there living nearby in Petrolia. The town of Petrolia is only a 15 to 20-minute drive to Sarnia, similar to driving from Paris to Brantford. Between games on Saturday, we decided to take our daughter on a trip down memory lane.

Coral was only 3 years old when we moved from Petrolia back to Brantford, but she can still recall a few things from that time. One memory she still recalls is when we would take her under the Bluewater Bridge in Sarnia. If you have ever been there, you will know how beautiful it is to spend a summer afternoon or evening under the bridge. There are playgrounds and swings for the kids, an area where you can feed fish, food trucks to enjoy French fries or an ice cream cone, and many benches to sit on and watch boats and ships pass under the bridge. Coral can still remember playing on a pirate ship slide at this park and feeding the fish.

On Saturday we spent an hour or two reliving some of these memories. We bought our lunch from one of the food trucks and enjoyed sitting at picnic tables watching a ship go by. Then we went over to the play area and looked at the pirate ship that Coral used to play on. It seems to be a lot smaller now than when Coral played on it as a 3-year-old. Coral listened as Nadine and I pointed out certain slides she preferred to go down on the pirate ship. Then we made our way over to feed the fish again just as we did so many times when Coral was younger. After this, we showed Coral some of the things we used to do with her there that she could not remember like getting down close to the water to throw stones in and make big splashes. We all enjoyed the opportunity on Saturday to walk down memory lane and revisit some of our experiences from our time under the Bluewater Bridge in Samia.

Revisiting some of our pleasant memories can be such a joy and blessing. I often share at funerals that I officiate how the memories we have of the deceased are a gift that God has given to us. Remembering some of those pleasant memories, as my family did on Saturday, are a much-needed gift that God provides. For an hour or two our minds were taken off all our priorities and focused instead on special times we were provided by God at a certain season in our lives.

With Mothers Day coming this weekend, I hope that you might be able to take a walk down memory lane and remember some of the special times you spent with your mothers. [Read more](#)

April 28th - Time is Running Out

Time is running out for me as a basketball coach right now. Time is, in fact, my enemy. The reason why I say this is because in just under two weeks my team is supposed to travel to Ottawa to play in the Provincial Championships. If the tournament was to be played today, I would have to forfeit. The reason why I would have to do this is at the moment I do not have enough healthy players. The minimum number of players I need on my team in order to play in the championships is 8. Even though I have 10 players on our team, only 6 are healthy at the moment.

My best-case scenario will be to have 9 healthy players for these championship games. I already know that one of my players who currently has a concussion will not be available to play. Her doctor has already ruled out the possibility of her playing. Another one of my players sustained a broken finger a few weeks ago in a weekend series of games we played. She is still wearing a splint on her broken finger. The doctor thinks it will be able to be removed before we go to Ottawa, but that decision will depend on what another x-ray shows later this week. Fingers crossed, including broken ones on this player. My other two players who are injured have back and ankle injuries. These girls have been battling these injuries for nearly five weeks now, and they don't seem to be getting better. In fact, the player with the ankle sprain reinjured it last week at her school dance. The reality about back injuries and ankle sprains is there are no timelines with respect to recovery.

With less than two weeks to go I am running out of time with respect to these healings. My assistant coaches are beginning to become concerned if we will be able to attend and play. I will admit my mind has thought about this possibility often of late. Every time my mind goes there, I am reminded of a story in the Bible that encourages me that I may be running out of time, but I am not running out of hope.

The leader of a local synagogue named Jairus was running out of time when it came to the health of his twelve-year-old daughter. We do not know how long her health was declining, just that it had worsened to the point that she could soon die. With time running out when Jairus heard that Jesus had just arrived in his town, he went immediately to see Him and pleaded for Him to come and lay His hands on the little girl in order to make her well. This father obviously had faith in Jesus that He could heal his daughter. Along the way Jairus received word that his daughter had died. It would appear time ran out for Jairus. Naturally this father was devastated at this moment and lost all hope. The words Jesus spoke to Jairus at this moment were these: ***Don't be afraid. Just have faith. (Mark 5:36)*** [Read more](#)

April 21st - What Spell Check Missed

Last Wednesday afternoon I had a meeting to moderate. When I got to the meeting, I looked over the agenda and noticed my name was misspelled. Usually, people have trouble spelling my last name, but this time they got my first name wrong. It was quite a shock to see my name on the agenda as Dead Adlam. Dear Adlam, or Deal Adlam would have been easier to see than Dead. The funny thing was I was not the only Dean at the meeting that day. The other Dean present also had his name on the agenda, but his was spelled right. I almost got up and left, not out of anger, but if I was dead than it gave me a good excuse to be absent from the meeting. When I pointed out the mistake to the person who did up the agenda, she laughed and said, *I guess spell check did not pick up on that one!* She was right. Spell check would not see Dead Adlam as a spelling error.

We have come to rely on technology so much in order to make our lives easier. Using spell or grammar check after we have typed a message is meant to find the mistakes we have made. As helpful as these tools and aids are, they are not perfect in finding every mistake. Typing my name as Dead Adlam was a mistake that spell check was unable to recognize. If we want to avoid mistakes like this, we must still carefully review what we have written, even after completing spell check, to ensure nothing was missed. It was not a big deal that this mistake was missed in my case. I am a pretty forgiving guy, and everyone at the meeting had a good chuckle. Not everyone would be as understanding in this situation. Some people or employers would be very upset and angry by such a mistake.

The Bible cautions us to be very *careful about the words that we speak*. The words we choose and speak are very powerful, and are a reflection to others about our

relationship with God. That is why we find passages in the Bible like James 3:2 which say:

Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

We not only make mistakes with the words we speak, or don't speak, but also in the ones we write. [Read more](#)

April 14th - Things I Need That Start With C

About two weeks ago my Keurig coffee maker stopped working. Both Nadine and I tried to fix it but nothing seemed to work. After disposing of it, I had to rely on my old coffee maker which makes six cups. My old coffee maker is okay, but I admit I prefer my Keurig. I thought about waiting until Easter to get a new Keurig as a gift from my mom, but I could not wait. Last week after doing some searching online, I found that Walmart had certain kinds of Keurig machines on for \$59.00. One morning after dropping Coral off at high school I went up to Walmart. When I got to the Keurig section in the store, I could see the machine that was advertised for \$59.00, but at first glance they did not have any on the shelves. My next option was going up to a price of \$99.00 which I did not want to do. So, I searched through the inventory again and found the one and only \$59.00 Keurig unit they had left. I was happy to say the least.

Once I had my need for coffee fulfilled, I decided to go over to the cereal aisle before leaving to see if they might have my favourite brand on sale. Finding my favourite cereal has been as much of a challenge for me at times as finding the last Keurig on the shelf. You have probably experienced the same thing that I have in cereal aisles where the shelves are rather bare. When I do see my favourite cereal, sometimes they are charging \$5.00 a box. I love this brand of cereal, but I am also cheap and will not pay above a certain amount. Sure enough, Walmart had my cereal on sale for \$3.00 a box. I got three boxes and proudly walked out of the store carrying my new Keurig as well as my cereal. When I got to my car, it hit me that I was able to get two C's that are important in my life - coffee and cereal. I prefer cereal for breakfast and for a late-night snack over anything else. Most people who know me, realize how much I love my coffee too. Last week, I was able to fulfill two very important things in my life, getting my favourite cereal on sale, and brewing my coffee again in a Keurig. That was last week. This week I am reminded of two more things that start with C that are necessities in my life, namely the **cross** and **Christ**. Holy Week has begun and by the time you read this message Good Friday might be just hours away. [Read more](#)

April 7th - What a Conversation Revealed

Apparently, I snore. I do not think I have a snoring problem because it never wakes me up. If you ask my wife and my daughter however, they both claim I have a snoring problem. Apparently, I can keep them both awake at times. They will even send texts back and forth some nights saying, *The bear is snoring again!* I find it interesting that

the other female in our house, our dog Daisy, does not complain about my snoring. She snuggles right into me at the beginning of most nights and has no complaints or howls.

I decided to do something about my supposed snoring and had my doctor make a referral to a sleep clinic. Last week was my first clinic appointment. If you have ever been to one of these clinics, you will know there is quite a process to have all the straps and probes connected to you. I began chatting with the technician as she began to attach all of the necessary probes. I asked questions about how many nights she works a week, how COVID has affected the clinic, and various other questions. The more I chatted with her, the more she began to open up about some of the challenges she has been enduring recently.

She shared how early on in 2020 her husband passed away at the age of 50. She then revealed some of the challenges she has been encountering raising her teenage daughter. We talked the entire time she was attaching all of the probes to me. I offered words of sympathy and compassion along the way and listened as she opened up about these and other things going on in her life. As she attached the last probe, she looked at me and asked, *What do you do for a living?*

I smiled at her and replied, *I am a church minister.*

With that she said, *I knew it. I could tell by the way you talked.*

Not once during the conversation did I mention I was a Christian, or quote scripture to her. I just started up a conversation and talked as I would with anybody. It was interesting that the words I was speaking revealed to her that I must be a Christian minister. This story is a reminder how the words that we use can be very revealing about ourselves. [Read more](#)

March 31st - Is Showing Grace Natural For Us?

The basketball team that I coach played four games this past weekend. We played two games on Saturday and had two more games to play late Sunday afternoon. I was tired heading into the last two games after having led worship on Sunday morning. Besides being tired, I was also very frustrated before our fourth and final game of the weekend. In the third game we had the lead for most of the game despite the referee calling 33 fouls against us. My team is not a rough or dirty team by any means, but it seemed this referee was calling everything as an infraction. All these fouls allowed the other team to catch up and force overtime. In overtime, my four best players had fouled out of the game leaving me with just five players. We lost the game due to all these fouls against us.

I admit I was frustrated with the poor officiating but was more upset because of the impact it had on my players. Some of my players were in tears afterward, and others were upset thinking they had lost the game for us with all of their fouls. We had only

90 minutes to cool down and regroup before our next game. Little did I know at that time my ability to show grace would come into light at this moment when I was already tired and frustrated. A few minutes before we were to go onto the court the other coach came over to me and shared how one of his players had forgotten her jersey and would have to play wearing a white t-shirt instead. The only way she could play was if I as the opposing coach was okay with it.

Naturally I was. I did not want her to miss out on playing the game. I even shared with the other coach that I would go over to the referees and let them know I was okay with it. As we walked on the court, my assistant said to me, *I am surprised you showed such grace. Most opposing coaches would not have let her play if she did not have on a proper uniform.* It never even crossed my mind for a second to disqualify her from playing. It just came out so naturally for me to extend grace in this situation even though I was tired and still frustrated from what happened an hour earlier. Imagine if I had not shown grace in that situation. Imagine how disappointed this teenager would have been not to be able to play. Imagine how upset her teammates, her coach and even her parents would have been if I had not allowed her to play. Imagine the negative witness I may have displayed to my assistant coach or my own players or parents if I had not shown grace. Extending grace in that situation came naturally to me even though I was exhausted and frustrated from the previous game. I am so thankful and glad it was my natural response.

I have thought a lot about this incident over the last 24 hours. The question that I keep pondering is whether showing grace comes naturally to us, or if our ability to offer it is affected by various circumstances and situations we find ourselves in. [Read more](#)

March 23rd - The Ultimate Caregiver

Back in February I had an appointment with my financial planner to purchase an RRSP before the deadline. Yes, it may surprise you that even ministers who used to be former accountants will use a financial planner. During my appointment, the financial planner took time to review various forms they have to keep on file for every client they handle. Most of the forms we reviewed together were ones I have had on file with them for the better part of 30 years.

This time around there was a new form they wanted me to fill out. The form required me to name a caregiver they could contact in case the financial planner was beginning to worry that I was declining in my ability to make good decisions or properly look after myself. The first two people who came to mind for me were my wife and my daughter. The financial planner proceeded to say that it could not be either of their names on the form. That eliminated the two most obvious ones. The planner asked whether there was a friend, or colleague, or an independent person who could be this contact person.

I was honest with my planner that no name was coming to mind because I am the caregiver for so many people at this moment in my life. This is my reality being a

father, a husband, a son, and a pastor of a congregation. There was one name that came to mind, but I do not think the planner would have allowed that name on the form either. Just as the planner would not accept my wife or my daughter, I doubt they would have accepted Jesus as my caregiver.

I have no problem, nor complaints about being the caregiver for so many people. I am glad that others can find comfort and support in me being their caregiver. I relied on my wife Nadine as my caregiver when I was ill for two years back in 2007-2009 and am not too proud or stubborn to admit that I rely on Jesus as my caregiver always. There are certain qualities we look for in somebody to be our caregiver. [Read more](#)

March 17th - Encourage Each Other

I attended a funeral recently with my daughter after the grandfather of one of her friends had passed away. The friend actually asked my daughter to attend in order to offer her some encouragement and support through this difficult time. My daughter certainly stepped up in offering encouragement to her friend.

She did the same for me after the reception. At the reception I met the father of the friend for the very first time. During our conversation he shared with me he grew up in Brantford and attended high school at B.C.I. where our two daughters currently attend. I asked him what years he went to B.C.I. because I also attended high school there and wondered if we overlapped in any years. When he shared with me that he went there between 1991-1995, I was really glad that he did not ask me when I attended B.C.I. I would have had to be honest and tell him that I went there from 1978-1983. It is easy to do the math to see that I am much older than this other father.

One of the realities of becoming a dad at the age of 42 is that I am usually a lot older than the fathers of my daughters friends. It is usually very humbling when I am reminded of this fact. When I told my wife Nadine about this conversation, she laughed about the age gap. Now you understand why it is humbling for me. When I shared the story with my daughter later that day she said, *Dad, that surprises me because you both look about the same age.*

Her words were a source of encouragement to me. Now some people might be reading this and thinking perhaps the other father looks older than his actual age. I can honestly say this other father still had a full head of hair, just a little bit of greying, and only a few wrinkles. It is because this father still looked this way that I took the words as a compliment and source of encouragement.

We all need a little bit of encouragement at times, but I think we need this more than ever right now in our lives. [Read more](#)

March 10th - Kind People Needed

I had a medical appointment last Thursday for the first time in several years. It was nothing serious, just my annual physical which has not been so yearly of late due to COVID. When I arrived at 3:30 p.m. the receptionist questioned me immediately if I had come on the right day for my appointment. These are not the words one wants to hear when they arrive at the office. I assured the receptionist this was the date and time they had given me when I made the appointment. She looked at her computer screen and could see that the appointment had been originally booked for this time and day.

She then looked up at me and said, *Didn't we call you to reschedule your appointment?* I replied, *Your office called my wife and rescheduled her appointment this month, but she wasn't told that mine had been changed.* I could see the receptionist becoming more and more anxious, so I said to her, *If you have to reschedule, I will not be mad or angry.* She replied, *You are sure we did not tell your wife on that phone call we were changing your appointment?* I once again reiterated no, then said to her, *You need to remember it is usually husbands who fail to pass on messages not wives!*

Right after I said it, the whole waiting room and the two receptionists burst out laughing. I did not realize the other patients waiting for their appointments were listening to what was transpiring. After I said this the receptionist smiled and said, *You do not know how stressful my day has been. Thank you for being so understanding.* With that she said, *Normally we are booking three weeks in advance, but because you have been so kind and understanding I am going to get you in early next week.* I walked out of the office about 5 minutes after arriving with a new appointment in hand.

I showed kindness that afternoon instead of frustration and anger. As I was driving home, I began to reflect on the impact a little kindness had at that moment. [Read more](#)

March 3rd - Properly Grieving

While I was walking our dog Daisy on Sunday afternoon, I happened to spot another couple down the street doing the same thing. Normally I run into this couple two or three times a week walking their dog around 6:45 a.m. On those early mornings when I see this couple with their dog usually the husband is just wearing a sweatshirt rather than a winter coat even when the temperatures are well below zero. On Sunday afternoon the temperature was around zero and I was surprised to see him wearing a warm coat. When I caught up to them, I said, *I am confused. Normally I see you in a sweatshirt on the coldest of days but here you are today wearing a winter jacket. You are confusing me.* We all laughed about his typical attire on cold, winter days, and his wife agreed with me completely. I used this as a conversation starter to ask what they had planned for the rest of the day. I knew they must have had something planned because this man is a contractor, and he usually works seven days a week. It is odd to see him home on a Sunday afternoon.

They shared how they were going to the home of her sister for supper to celebrate her dad's birthday. When I asked how old her dad was, they shared with me that he had passed away four years ago. They then proceeded to tell me how they have done this every year since his passing. The family gets together on his birthday for dinner, and then they watch some of his favourite movies. This family has found doing this every year very healing in dealing with their grief. Knowing a little bit about grief as a pastor who has done a lot of funerals, I commended them on keeping this tradition up and dealing with their grief in such a healthy way. There were no expressions of sadness on their faces as we talked, but rather excitement looking forward to their annual tradition to recognize their loss and honour his memory.

This encounter made me contemplate the amount of grief people have experienced over these past few years. So many people have lost loved ones during these past two years, and perhaps have not had the chance to properly grieve because they had to postpone the funeral or celebration of life. Grief is not only experienced when a loved one dies. We feel grief when we experience declining health, retire from work, lose a job, have a friend move away, or go through a divorce. During these past two years dealing with COVID, we have also experienced grief due to lost opportunities, missed celebrations and other things that have been taken away from us. Grief is a feeling we experience whenever we go through a loss of any significant kind. A lot of people are ashamed to grieve thinking it is a sign of weakness. Other people are uncomfortable grieving and try to keep busy so they can avoid dealing with their feelings. This approach may work for the short term but eventually those feelings associated with grief catch up with us.

I think it is important for us to recognize that we have all experienced grief in certain ways due to the various losses that have occurred to us during COVID. [Read more](#)

February 24th - In Need of Healing

We ran into one of our neighbours yesterday while we were out walking Daisy. She had just returned recently from Vienna, Austria after attending the funeral of her mother-in-law. She shared with us how she watched all the protests going on in Ottawa and at the Ambassador Bridge on television while she was away. She was surprised these events were making news in Vienna. I discovered these events were also making the news in Slovakia after I talked recently with a friend who is now living there. CNN and Fox News in the United States have also been carrying coverage of these events. The world has been watching these events unfold and so have we. It seemed so surreal to me at times to see these events happening in Canada. We have maybe seen this happen in other countries, but not here.

Watching all of this unfold made me think back to two years ago when COVID began drawing our attention. Do you remember how united we were for the most part when we first had to confront COVID in March 2020? We were united in staying home and keeping ourselves and others safe. As life slowed down, we saw families and people come closer together. Businesses stepped up by changing their production lines in

order to produce masks, ventilators, and other items needed in the fight against COVID. People would step outside at 7:00 p.m. to make noise in order to show support for our front-line workers. Some people banged pots and pans, others played music, and we played the chimes at our church. When encouraged to start wearing masks we put them on even though it was strange at first. For the most part we were united when we began this journey with COVID.

Over these past two years we have lost that sense of unity and have become divided. I have heard stories of families that were once close but are now divided and disagreeing over vaccines and other issues surrounding COVID. I have heard similar stories happening between once close friends, neighbours, and even in some church settings. I am sure many workplaces are experiencing it as well. The recent events in Ottawa, at the Ambassador Bridge, and elsewhere in Canada are showing this division is happening across this great country of ours.

As I thought about this shift from unity to disunity during these past two years the saying, *United we stand, divided we fall* came to mind.

[Read more](#)

February 16th - An Unexpected Call

On Sunday afternoon, I spent a bit of time planning out my basketball practices for the coming week and catching up on e-mail. The phone rang around 3:00 p.m. and I was surprised by whose name appeared that was calling. It was a colleague of mine in ministry that I had not talked to in three years. Prior to that, we probably only talked once since 2009. I got to know this minister when I was in Petrolia from 2001-2009. She became a good friend during that time, and we shared a lot of conversations together over coffee. After I moved back to Brantford, we just failed to stay in touch with each other. The busyness of life and ministry has a way of doing that between ministers. We still send Christmas cards to each other every year, but rarely pick up the phone and talk. In 2019 her son died, and Nadine and I went to the funeral to offer our support. I called her once on the phone after his death, but that was the last time we talked before Sunday. It was so good to hear her voice on the other end. She shared with me how she just felt led by God to give me a call that afternoon. I am so glad that she followed His prompting and reached out. We talked for over an hour. This is unusual for me to talk that long on the phone. I may talk a lot in a sermon, but when it comes to the phone, I try to keep my conversations short and sweet for the most part. There was so much for the two of us to catch up on. One of the things she shared with me was her journey to seek healing after the death of her son. The last time I talked to her after the funeral, I knew she was not in a good place emotionally, or spiritually. I prayed with her on the phone, and afterward to God asking Him to bring the right person into her life to help her to heal. My friend shared with me how God had answered that prayer for her. I noticed a huge difference in her from the previous conversation. She is stronger and more at peace right now. By the end of the conversation, we both realized that God had arranged for this unexpected call to

happen. God not only wanted two old friends to be reunited, but for each of us to see how He had answered our prayers.

God has a way of arranging unexpected calls for us. Look at what God did for Moses as he approached the burning bush in curiosity. [Read more](#)

February 9th - Playing for Him

Back in September I shared with you that the hardest part of being a basketball coach was making the final cuts of players. At the end of tryouts, I had to decide which of the final two players would get the last roster position. When I made my final decision and informed her mother that she made the team I realized at that moment that God had influenced my decision. When I shared the good news, the mother told me my call had come on the one-year anniversary of her stepfather dying from cancer. I had no idea about this when I shared the good news. God did and knew the perfect timing to share this good news.

This is the first year this player has played basketball at the rep or all-star level. I knew this when I selected her but saw in the tryout her love for the game, and her dedication to keep improving. She has worked so hard over these past four months. She listens well to instruction and works hard at improving her skills and getting to know how to play the game better.

Last weekend we had two games on Saturday in Toronto. In between games I had the chance to talk to the mother. She opened up a bit more about the death of the stepfather a year ago. I was told that he was a basketball player and loved the game. It was his love for it that drew the daughter into wanting to play. In fact, she spent a lot of time with her stepdad learning how to play and they became quite close as a result. As you could imagine, it was hard for this young lady to experience the loss of her stepdad being as close as they were. Something the mother shared with us this weekend was how her daughter wanted to honour her stepdad by making a rep level basketball team and play for him. I have been impressed by this young lady ever since she first made the team. Hearing about her commitment to play in her his memory has left me even more impressed.

I have been thinking about what she has committed to do since Saturday. It made me begin to wonder if we have made the same commitment when it comes to Jesus.

[Read more](#)

February 3rd - Evidence in the Footprints

I shared with you in a mid-week message a while back how I went out one morning to get the garbage bins that belong to my neighbour which were on the road, and he came out of the house at the same time. It led to a little trash talk between neighbours, but he appreciated the fact that I wanted to help him out by taking his bins in. Last week it was my wife who did the same for our neighbour.

Nadine saw that his bins were out on the street as she came home for lunch after finishing at the client she cleaned for that morning. Before bringing in our bins, Nadine went next door and took in the recycling bins and trash container. I did not know she had done this for our neighbour until four days later. He sent a text message on the Friday thanking her for doing that for him.

When she received this thank you, Nadine wondered how he knew it was her and not me who brought the bins in. Neither he nor his wife was home at the time when she did this. I said to her that I bet he saw her footprints in the snow on his driveway once he got home. When Nadine texted him back to ask how he knew it was her he confirmed that he could tell it was her by the size of the footprints left in the snow. It is easy to recognize Nadine's footprints because she wears a size 2 youth boot. Not many kids with that size of feet would carry recycling bins in, but my wife certainly would, as a kind deed to a good neighbour.

The incident was a reminder to me how the footprints we leave can be a source of information about us. Snow, sand, and dirt can be just a few surfaces in which we leave our footprints. A quick search on the internet reminded me that footprints can also be left on countertop surfaces, chairs, and even people. [Read more](#)

January 26th - Out of Service Again

I shared with you last month how our e-mail was down for 10 days after somebody hacked into it. We could send out e-mails after a few days but could not receive any until Bell could resolve the issue. I did not like being unable to receive my e-mails for that length of time. I was worried that I was missing important messages and wondering if people were questioning why I was not responding to their e-mails. We have become reliant on e-mail as one means of communicating and staying in touch.

This weekend I experienced the problem of not being able to receive messages again. Thankfully my e-mail was not hacked this time. On Friday night our smart phone which has our home phone number on it began to overheat. An error message popped up on it saying we needed to shut it down to save the device. Nadine turned it off and let it cool for a few hours. Before we went to bed that night, she tried turning the phone on again only to get the same warning. We turned it off for the entire night and went to bed. On Saturday morning we tried turning the phone on again only to have the same error message come up that the phone was overheating.

Nadine did some reading on the internet to see if there was something we could do to fix the problem but many of the sites she looked at said the phone was probably beyond repair. Here we were again, just like with our first e-mail issue, not being able to receive phone calls or messages from others. Not that we get a lot of phone calls some days, but a pastor needs to have a reliable phone so people can reach me if there is a pastoral emergency. I felt so helpless once again knowing that I might be missing out on people trying to reach me.

It is amazing how reliant we have become on our internet and phone providers to communicate with others. As much as we appreciate the advancements we have made in these areas of communication, there are times when our devices or our providers can fail us. As I was experiencing this problem again on Saturday morning, I began to think about how we communicate with God. [Read more](#)

January 19th - Getting What We Wish For

Before she went to bed on Sunday night my daughter was hoping that Monday was going to be a snow day resulting in school being cancelled. Sure enough, she got what she wished for. We let her sleep in when we learned school was cancelled. Just as I sat down at my computer to type this message around 10:00 a.m. on Monday morning I heard my daughter get up and scream with excitement that she got what she wished for.

Each one of us has this tendency to wish for certain things to happen. For instance:

- Leaf fans wish their team could play to their actual potential on a consistent basis, but we do not see that happen enough,
- my parishioners wish to hear a good sermon every Sunday, but I will have to let them tell you if that happens or not,
- we may wish for the doctor to report good news after a series of tests and check-ups,
- we may wish for God to answer our prayers in a certain manner and time frame,
- we may wish to take a trip or vacation to a certain destination,
- or we may wish for somebody to call or pay us a visit sometime.

The list of the things we wish for is endless. Our wish list can vary day to day, and there may be some items on it that remain consistent. Some days we get the things that we wish for, but other times we do not. Those are not the days we let out an excited scream of joy like my daughter did that morning. On the days we do not get what we wish for we let out a sigh of frustration or find ourselves frowning and disheartened due to the disappointment. Not getting what we wish for is never easy for us. If this kind of day tends to become repetitive and consistent, then it can greatly impact our emotional and physical well being. Something else it can affect is our view of God. We see how this happened with Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Adam and Eve seemed to have everything they could ever wish for living in the Garden of Eden. They certainly did not have to worry about fashion trends. [Read more](#)

January 12th - Revealing Our Weaknesses

Nadine and I had our booster vaccines last week. After my booster shot, I basically had the same side effects or symptoms afterward that I did with the first two. Like so many people, my arm was sore and hard to lift for the first 24 hours. I was so glad I

did not get the booster on a Saturday because it would have been hard for me to raise my arms for the benediction at church on Sunday.

With each vaccine I also noticed that my sciatic nerve began to act up for 24 hours or more afterward. I injured my sciatic nerve when I was in Grade 9 playing hockey. I recovered after six months of treatment and never had a problem with it until about three years ago. Whenever I exercise or workout, it sometimes acts up on me. Usually with a little rest it heals quickly, and I can resume exercise. For the past year I have noticed that it does not bother me in the daytime but rather when I crawl into bed. If I turn on my right side to try not to snore as much and keep Nadine awake, my sciatic begins to hurt immediately. So, I turn back over to sleep on my back or turn onto my left side to relieve the pain. When I wake up in the morning the pain is gone until I crawl back into bed that night.

With each of the three vaccines however, my sciatic nerve would pain me constantly for 24-36 hours. It seemed to attack this weak area in my body. We noticed the vaccines did the same thing with Nadine. She suffers from tinnitus or ringing in the ears. Sometimes the buzzing is loud in her ears, and other times it is not. After each vaccine shot however, she noticed the buzzing noise intensified. I do not know if you had the same experience or observation that we did after our vaccines that it seemed to target some of the weak areas in your body.

Something this pandemic has done over the past twenty-two months is reveal some of our weaknesses. We all have areas of weaknesses whether we recognize them or not. [Read more](#)

January 5th - Something Bad, Something Good

On the morning of Friday, December 17, 2021, our e-mail was hacked. Around 10:30 that morning I started getting messages, phone calls, and texts from people about an e-mail they had received that my wife Nadine was asking for help. I could not keep up with all the messages. I would be on the phone talking to one person, and could hear my phone beeping that other calls were coming in. I would check my voice mail messages as soon as I hung up and discover my mailbox was full of messages. As soon as I tried to listen to some of them the phone would ring again. In amongst the phone calls, I was bombarded with text messages from people. Nadine was not home at the time, so I was dealing with this solo. I could not even sit down at the computer to see how the problem happened or try to resolve it with our internet provider Bell. For 90 minutes it was a non-stop frenzy of calls, texts, and voice messages. The timing of this could not have been worse. Nadine and I were planning to go to the church after lunch to film our online service for Sunday. I had to go to St. Thomas later that day for a funeral visitation. I still had a Christmas Eve service to work on that morning for the following week. An already busy Friday turned into a very hectic and chaotic day all because our e-mail was hacked.

This was the first time that my wife and I have ever experienced having our e-mail hacked. I know of others who have experienced it and I would not wish it on anyone. When Nadine did get home, she was finally able to get on the computer and contact Bell about what happened. She had to spend a lot of time on the computer and on the phone with various technicians. Due to a few mishaps and miscommunications on the part of Bell, it took ten days for us to get the situation fully resolved. With Christmas being such a busy season, this misfortune happened at the worst time for us.

One thing this unfortunate situation did do was remind Nadine and I how much people care. [Read more](#)