

The City Centre Scroll

Easter 2020

City Centre Church
The Scroll



From Pastor Gabriel's Desk

The Tomb is a Womb

In the beginning God created heaven and earth. The creation story starts out in a garden with trees and a specific tree that played an important role in the plot. This garden was a place filled with beauty, abundance and most importantly, intimacy. God and man share a union of life. Therefore, mankind could be 'naked but not ashamed' in each other's presence. Things fell apart when death mysteriously appeared at the tree and seduced man into a union with death.

Fast forward to the bible's end with a vision of a city, but a city with the features of a garden like streams and trees. And again, there is a very specific tree that heals, and bears fruit all year around. It seems that God is heading with mankind to an even better place than the paradise lost.

How would God manage to take mankind in a self chosen union with death to a place even more life-giving than Eden? Death wasn't readily accessible to God because He did not create it and He was the very opposite, being Life and Light. But God could also not let death "just be" because the crown of His creation and the object of His love, we entered death through infidelity and disobedience. We see this not only in the creation myth of Adam and Eve but also in a very personal form in the story of our own lives.

God had to enter death somehow and sever the bond between us and death's grip. He had to enter it through faithfulness and obedience rather than through infidelity and disobedience like Adam did. So, Jesus took on human flesh and entered our tragic existence. And soon He found himself in another garden called Gethsemane. It was not one of beauty, abundance and intimacy but one of betrayal, shrouded in darkness and anxiety. And Jesus was then put on a dead tree. He

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PRAYER AND PRAISE

Praise God For...

- Regular online Zoom Church Services, every Sunday <https://zoom.us/j/435172943>
- The cross of Christ. Let us gaze in wonder, horror and awe at this image of sacrificial love, grace, mercy and forgiveness
- For resurrection Sunday. Hallelujah, what a Saviour!
- All the front line care workers who put their lives at risk to service the public.
- Spring! A reminder that God is still in control and life still resurrects after a winter season.
- For Pastor Gabriel, who encourages and gives leadership to City Centre Church. How thankful we are for his encouraging blogs and sermons.
- Emails, letters, texts and phone calls!

Prayer For...

- Those feeling lonely and isolated socially.
- Doctors, nurses, hospital personnel, SUM place workers that they will be protected and strengthened as they give of themselves.
- For those who are sick with COVID19 that they would be healed and regain full health.
- For businesses in this hard economic crisis—that they can weather the storm and operate again.
- For peace for those who are experiencing anxiety and uncertainty.
- For the homeless who don't have the ability to self-isolate or shelter in place.
- That God will use this hard situation to draw people to Himself.

A Prayer for anxious times

Father you know my anxious heart . I am so thankful that I can turn to your Word for encouragement. You have promised never to leave us and never to forsake us. You have reminded us that not a word is spoken that You don't already know about. You clothe the flowers of the field and feed the birds of the air, and how much more will you care for us. You have assured us O Lord that You are in control—nothing takes you by surprise, not even COVID19. Continue to remind us of Your mercy and grace that is new every morning, that we might rest in you. Amen.



- When feelings of anxiety rise up, read this prayer, or make it part of your morning.

-thanks to Linda Littlejohn for these contributions.

“If God were small enough to be understood, he would not be big enough to be worshiped.”

The Pastor's Message (continued from Page 1)

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entered death because He knew we were there. He died on the dead tree called the Cross and was buried in a garden.

But being life and love, he defeated death. And in that garden, He did the unthinkable. He turned a tomb into a womb. He came out of that grave as the first born of a new creation, a new mankind. In between the Garden of Paradise Lost and the Garden City of Creation completely restored, stands the garden of Gethsemane and a dead tree, a cross that makes a passage, from one to the other, possible for everybody who belongs to God.

If lock-down, the sense of loss and the economic devastation gets to you...if what we are going through feels like the end ...remember this: Jesus turned every tomb into a potential womb of hope and new life. We believe Jesus was resurrected and that He is alive. We believe creation is being restored. We believe death is a passage even though it might be still be a scary one to travel.

And if we lose everything but hang onto this truth in faith, we will still be rich beyond words May God grant us the grace to do just this.

Happy Easter!



Mark 16:5-7 "As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you."

LOVE WASTEFULLY

⁶ Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,^[a] ⁷ a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. ⁸ And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? ⁹ For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” ¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹² In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. ¹³ Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is pro-

“Our friend Derrick Tennant quickly became a celebrity in Copan Ruinas (pop. 39, 000). It was difficult for him not to stand out in a small rural Honduran town, but he sure didn't make it any easier on himself. As a teenager Derrick suffered an unexpected brain hemorrhage, which left him paralyzed on the entire left side of his body. He walks with a limp, so that automatically attracted the attention of locals. Combined with his boisterous and magnetic personality, at first glance it seemed like he might be able to run for mayor not long after he had arrived.

Derrick also had a habit of wearing sleeveless shirts and boardshorts wherever he went, regardless of the occasion. I think he missed the class on how to be cross-culturally appropriate. That's ok though, because Derrick would have just written his own book on the topic. And it would have been summed up in one phrase: **LOVE WASTEFULLY.**

One day we were at lunch when we heard a pattering of footsteps scurrying up to our table. Up popped several children selling beautiful handmade corn husk dolls. They walk endlessly around the town square looking for gullible—kind-hearted-tourists in search of a catchy souvenir.

Derrick loved them. And they loved Derrick.

I helped broker the deal as he quickly bought a handful of dolls — one for every member in his family. But the transaction didn't end there. In broken Spanish, Derrick went on to ask the kids a whole bunch of questions ranging from their school to favourite food, while also trying out some jokes in Spanish. By the end of the encounter, he made sure the kids knew his name.— Loco Derrick (Crazy Derrick).

I generally don't like buying random goods from street peddlers, so that one instance was enough to make me

uncomfortable. You can imagine how I felt when Derrick started doing this – every – time– he saw the kids. Throngs of children would run up to him yelling, 'Loco Derrick!' every time they saw him. Like I said, he was a celebrity.

It took me a while to get over myself. I would have preferred purchasing one or two dolls, not entering into too much conversation, and politely declining every future request from the children. I would have preferred controlling the situation a bit more.

Derrick was the opposite. He had no control. He even let the situation spiral out of control. He only cared about lavishly loving those kids.

I was so concerned about my next appointment, or doing something in the most culturally sensitive way, that I had lost my ability to creatively consider a lavish response of love.

-above excerpt taken from “Sitting in the Circus” by Blair Quinius

The actions of Derrick and the woman with the alabaster jar (Matthew 26) defy the voice inside telling us that there's not enough to go around, that there is a more appropriate use of our time or resources. Their actions inspire, and grow, more generous responses of love within us towards our brothers and sisters.

Will your actions be controlled by the fears so abundantly permeating our world right now? Or will you take advantage of the opportunity to think differently and more creatively, about how to love others?

In the midst of unforeseen circumstances, how will you love wastefully?

- Blair Quinius

Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentile to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!” -Matthew 20; 17-19

“Isolation” Ideas and Activities

Get started planting: It’s getting to be that time for planting some things. You could start by planting seeds at home, for tomatoes, lettuce, peas, - nearly anything. In fact lettuce, any kind of mesclun blends, cabbage, peas, beets, parsnips radishes, swiss chard, onion, spinach and green onions can be planted now! You can border your garden with clusters of sunflowers as well. It’s great fun to watch how incredibly tall they become; each one sprouts many flowers from one thick stalk. You and your spouse or children can start the sowing by planting in egg cartons, the cardboard type. Simply plant in some good quality soil and put in a bright window. Egg cartons or clear plastic food trays work, and kids will love watching their seedlings sprout, use the clear lid on top to act as a mini greenhouse.

Soil Preparation: Many vegetables grow well in containers. Be careful with tomatoes as they like a high pH level soil or neutral soil, so soil preparation is important. You can buy a tester for pH levels at your local garden store. To improve the pH level you can add lime, a fertilizer that includes potassium and phosphorus. As well, ash from your outdoor firepit or wood-fire fireplace is excellent when added to the soil. The ash is rich in nutrients such as potassium and calcium. Use your gardening tool to break down the chunks of charred or burnt wood and pulverize into ashes, then add to the soil for the tomatoes. This early preparation of the soil is highly recommended before you plant the 3 inch high plants, whether you start from seed or buy them as seedlings.

Kids Art: Websites are a great source of information and often include videos for both adults and kids alike. One site the kids may really enjoy is a free art tutorial for kids by Mo Willems, a best-selling children’s author and illustrator. His daily [Lunch Doodles](#) is featured on [kennedy-center.org](#) Try it out! You can also find his videos on Youtube.

Reading and Study the Bible: Since it is Easter time, read the Easter story in all the gospels and think of what stands out to you. Pray and ask God to open up your understanding. Take a few minutes to reflect and absorb the meaning of the verses. Read the verses at least three times. Think of the culture at that time to help open up the meaning. Even better, discuss the verses with a friend or your spouse. Or join one of the ongoing Zoom Bible Study groups!

Eggs! Boil eggs and paint for Easter! There are a multitude of ideas online for how-to’s. You could even take out the egg by pinhole. With playdough or clay you can build the scene of the tomb. Post your product online for friends or grandparents to see! This site has some unique egg decorating ideas:

<https://www.rd.com/home/decorating/unique-egg-decorating-ideas/>



Peter 1; 3 “Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

COOK'S CORNER

Mango Curry Chicken Breasts

- 4 boneless chicken breasts (about 1 1/2 lbs)
- 1/3 cup mango chutney
- 3 tbsp liquid honey (or melt solid honey)
- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp reduced sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp minced garlic (or garlic powder)
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin

Arrange chicken in a glass baking dish. Whisk together remaining ingredients in a small bowl. Reserve 3 tbsp marinade for basting and pour remaining marinade over chicken. Turn pieces to coat both sides with marinade. Cover and marinate in the fridge for at least an hour. Preheat grill to medium setting. Lightly oil grill rack. Remove chicken from marinade and grill for about 5 min. per side until chicken is no longer pink. Baste with reserved marinade. Serve immediately.

Note—any kind of fruity salsa would work, as the sweetness is a nice mix with the spicy flavours. (280 calories, 2.2 total fat)



Seasoned Yam Fries

- 4 medium sized yams or sweet potatoes
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp each of ground cumin, paprika, and dried oregano (optional: garlic powder)

Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray and set aside.

Wash yams and pat dry using paper towels. Leave skins on. Slice yams into french fry like pieces. About 1/2 inch thick. Toss wedges with olive oil and seasonings in a large bowl, until they're evenly coated with spices.

Arrange yam slices in a single layer on baking sheet. Bake 450 degrees for 15-20 min, turning over halfway through. Baking time will vary depending on thickness of wedges. Serve hot.

Great served with ketchup or a garlicky mayonnaise aioli (mayo mixed with garlic powder, salt and pepper and maybe a dash of cayenne (optional))

Have you thought about tackling a more challenging cooking or baking activity? Try your hand at yeast dough—a simple and easy way to start is by making your own pizza crust. Add a bit of flax seed or whole wheat flour for more taste. Or, try making a homemade soup, a pot of chili, or even a two layer cake? Have fun, put cooking on your daily schedule and get creative with the kids.

As a child, my family's menu consisted of two choices: take it or leave it!

-Buddy Hackett

STRESS BUSTERS

At this very odd and stressful juncture in time, many folks are feeling out of sorts. This is natural, in that our time and days are way out of routine with a lot of us at home, instead of going about our days at the workplace. Here are some helpful hints to help you along.

1. Keeping busy most of the day. There are many things that can still be done. Make a list. Maybe even set a schedule for yourself. Put reading on your list, prayer time, devotional time, as well as some outdoor activities such as gardening, raking leaves, pulling weeds, planting seeds, walking around the block (or farther), tidying up your shed or outdoor area, etc. As for indoors, set aside time for crafting: knitting, crocheting (not just for women either. My brother in law learned to knit!), paint or colour by number (paint a picture, rocks, sticks as labels for your garden). Pinterest gives many great ideas. Look up crafts online or simply color in an adults colouring book while listening to your favorite music station, CD or iTunes. Colouring is very relaxing, about the same as petting your dog or cat or whatever animal you have. Learn a new language online (check out DuoLingo), write a story, keep a journal, do a Sudoku, a crossword, or a word search. Its important to keep up your faculties and be sharp. Challenge yourself! At the end of the day, treat yourself with a favourite movie.
2. Feeling focussed. Focus on an area of your body where you hold your stress. Maybe its your back, your shoulders, your tight jaw muscles, or your face. Recognize your area and focus on it. Breathe in deep breaths and relax that area. Breathe slowly and deliberately. Which brings us to yoga. This involves deep breathing and slow breathing as well as fantastic movements of stretching that help with flexibility. Great for relaxing and feeling better.
3. Exercise. As mentioned earlier, walking is highly recommended as a stress buster. It's free, and is easy to do. You can vary the times that you walk; try the morning one day and sunset another day. Try walking in the rain - singing in the rain! Walking strengthens bones, increases your cardiovascular and heart health, reduces body fat, etc. Take a different route, or increase your time on the same route.
4. Phone a friend. Its recommended that you have four to five friends who you can call and chat with. Tell some funny stories, talk of "the old days", help with each others concerns, etc. If we cannot meet in person we still can do it by Skype, Facetime, Zoom, text, or just a plain phone call.

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As Karl Barth, the great theologian once said, when asked if he could condense all the theology into one simple sentence...."Yes...I can. Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

Stress Busters, [Continued from page 7](#)

5. Be joyful. True joy can be found in in the heartfelt gratitude of Gods mercy, love and grace, even in troubling times. Here are some verses to help you along the way, From Psalm 47: 1 “Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.” From Romans 15:13 “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Nehemiah 8:10b “...this day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” Psalm 30:5 “For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”
6. Music! Listen to your favourite cd, or music station. Try Praise 106.5 FM for encouraging music, prayers and commentary. Try some of these strategies in unison with others mentioned. For example, go for a walk and listen to music, do your craft to music, colour to music in the background, etc. Try different genres. Suggestion....try MercyMe’s latest song “Shake”.
7. Pray. Pray for yourself, for others, for healing of this land, and pray for others searching for meaning in their life at this time. Take time to be thankful as well.

DID YOU KNOW?

- That some members of our church are helping with bagging breakfast and lunch bags for Surrey Urban Mission? Under the guidance and incredible connections of Brenda Locke, the church basement is overflowing with juice boxes, water bottles, fruit, granola bars, chips, breakfast baked goods, ready to be served to our neighbours.
- Gabriel is writing a blog most days on our church website. Have a read (click [here](#)) and pass on the info to others so they can read it as well. <http://www.citycentrechurch.org/home/blog/>
- We also have a City Centre Church WhatsApp group to help us all keep in touch. It is used for prayer requests, praise announcements, information, questions, etc. It’s a great way to stay connected to the church community. Ask your elder for information on how to be added.
- We have missed many birthdays! Stef and Maryse Snyman, Jack Farquahar, Caitlin Santic and Sandy Gaudette to name a few. Happy Belated Birthday!
- Missing friends? Why not send out a text or an email for some cheer? Handwrite a note and scan it or send a picture. You can do that to thank workers at your nearest senior’s residence!
- Every evening at 7 pm, around the city (around the world) people are getting together to stand in their doorways or patios, to thank the medical front-line workers! Get your pots and pans and a spoon (or any noise maker) and sing praises and thanks. Tell your neighbour!
- Be creative! If you are already mourning the big Easter dinner with your family, then Skype them or do a Zoom conference and “eat” together.



“...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”. Phil.4:7

Relief, Reflect and Stretch!

Some scriptural words of relief, encouragement and hope in these unusual times.

Isaiah 35; vs 3. 4a “Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come....”

Psalms 103; 19 “The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.”

Romans 15; 13 “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

And finally...let this keep you calm. Keep this in mind from the Bible...the four words “Do not be afraid” are mentioned 365 times in the bible. One for each day.

Reflect

If I am inconsiderate about the comfort of others, or their feelings, or even their little weaknesses; if I am careless about their little hurts and miss opportunities to smooth their way; if I make the sweet running of household wheels more difficult to accomplish, then I know nothing of Calvary love.

-Amy Carmichael

For those of you hunched over the table or desk working all day staring at a computer screen, you may need a break to stretch out those tight muscles. Or these may be advantageous to perform at the end of your day in the evening.

Wrist Figure of 8s: First of all, while you are standing clasp your hands together near your chest and start with your elbows bent. Roll your wrists in figure ‘8’s. Progress to straightening your arms out, and turning your whole arms and hands, not just the wrists. (20 reps, 3 sets)

Rhomboid and middle traps: Next, clasp your hands together, and hold them in front of your body—shoulder height. Push your arms as far forward as you can whilst rounding your shoulder blades. Gently drop your chin down to your chest. Hold this position while you feel a stretch between your shoulder blades. (5 reps, 3 sets)

Trunk Extension: Stand with your legs at hip width apart and straight. Place your hands on your hips. Lean your body backwards, trying to arch in the lower back as much as you can., lifting your chest up towards the ceiling. Try to avoid allowing your hips to swing forward too far. Hold this position before returning to the start position. (5 reps, 3 sets)

Upper Trapezius: Sit down and place your hand on the symptomatic side under your chair. Take your other hand and place it on the opposite side of your head. Tilt your ear directly down towards your shoulder and hold this position. You should feel a stretch down the side of your neck. You may want to switch sides as well. (5 reps, 3 sets)

-thanks to our ‘resident’ physiotherapist Isabel Snyman

Romans 6:9 “We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.”

PAIN

*Pain so deep, writhing within my heart,
Crying out, "From you I'll never depart."
Snatching from me, all my strength and life
Leaving turmoil of soul and constant strife.*

*Deep dark tunnels of emotions swirling round,
Spinning, spinning 'til no hope is found.
Sucking, devouring His freedom from me,
Consuming all dreams, all truth, all reality.*

*Why, oh why must this be so?
Did I not have peace so long ago?
Moments of time seem like hours now,
Will this pain never end? - it must somehow.*

*But then, I see Mary at the foot of the cross,
Anguished in the pain of her personal loss,
Crying, sobbing to the Father above,
Is this the path you've chosen for the one that
I love?*

*How could it be that the fruit of my womb,
Would end up in a dark, damp tomb?
Hated, despised, so unjustly, so cruel,
Are you not Almighty God so powerful to rule?*

*I had such dreams and hopes for Him,
But you tell me His suffering has brought freedom
from sin.
You tell me He bore all my griefs and my sorrow,
Tore down walls of darkness and brought light for
tomorrow.*

*You tell me to wait, to ponder, to see,
For the plans You have are for eternity.*

*Can I trust You my Father for all You have said?
Tis so hard—for it's my son's blood that was shed.
Slowly, purposefully, I turn my eyes to the One
And I choose to trust the Father and Jesus, His
Son,
Who willingly bore my sorrow, my hurt and my
pain,
Knowing that soon, very soon, I will smile again.*

Linda Littlejohn

(Written a few years ago but perfect for today)



Romans 8:34 "Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."

How the Virus Stole Easter (with a nod to Dr. Seuss)

'Twas late in '19 when the virus began,
Bringing chaos and fear to all people, each land
People were sick, hospitals full,
Doctors overwhelmed, no one in school.
As winter gave way to the promise of spring,
The virus raged on, touching peasant and king.
People hid in their homes from the enemy unseen.
They YouTubed and Zoomed, social distanced, and cleaned.
April approached and Churches were closed.
"There won't be an Easter," the world supposed.
"There won't be church services, and egg hunts are out.
No reason for new dresses when we can't go about."
Holy Week started, as bleak as the rest.
The world was focussed on masks and on tests.
"Easter can't happen this year," they proclaimed.
"Online and at home. It just won't be the same."
Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the days came and went.
The virus pressed on; it just would not relent.
The world woke Sunday and nothing had changed.
The virus still menaced, the people estranged
"Pooh, pooh, to the saints," the world was grumbling.
"They're finding out now that no Easter is coming.
"They're just waking up! I know just what they'll do!
Their mouths will hang open a minute or two,
And then all the saints will cry boo-hoo.
"That noise," said the world, "would be something to hear."
So it passed and the world put a hand to its ear.
And it did hear a sound coming through all the skies.
It started down low, then it started to rise.
But the sound wasn't depressed.
Why, this sound was triumphant!
It couldn't be so!
But it grew with abundance!
The world stared around, popping its eyes. Then it
Shook! What it saw was a shocking surprise!
Each saint in each nation, the tall and the small.

Was celebrating Je-
sus in spite of it all!
It hadn't stopped
Easter from coming!
It came!
Somehow or other, it
came just the same!
And the world with
its life quite stuck in
quarantine
Stood puzzling and
puzzling,
"Just how can it be??"
"It came without bonnets, it came without bunnies,
It came without egg hunts, cantatas, or money."
Then the world thought of something it hadn't before.
"Maybe Easter," it thought, "doesn't come from a store.
Maybe Easter, perhaps, means a little bit more."
And what happened then?
Well...the story's not done.
What will you share with that one
Or two or more people needing hope in this night?
Will you share the source of your life in this fight?
The churches are empty—but so is the tomb,
And Jesus is victor over death, doom, and gloom.
So this year at Easter, let this be our prayer,
As the virus still rages all around, everywhere.
May the world see hope when it looks at God's people.
May the world see the church is not a building or steeple.
May the world find Faith in Jesus' death and resurrection.
May the world find Joy in a time of dejection.
May 2020 be known as the year of survival,
But not only that -
Let it start a revival.
-anonymous (and excellent to share!)



"You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead We are witnesses of this." -Acts 3:15