

## From Pastor Gabriel's Desk

### Meaningful and True

(spoiler alert—the plot of “The 100” revealed below!)

Some time ago, our family became hooked on a series called “The 100”. A neighbour of ours was on the production team of this series and much of it was filmed in Vancouver and Surrey (our impressive library features in it quite often). The series is a story from the sci-fi genre. It tells about a dystopia where earth has become uninhabitable and a whole generation born on a space station await the time and opportunity where a remnant, the so called 100, could return to earth, join the few remaining survivors, and restart civilization. The day comes and we were sucked into all the drama of the 100 returning to a hospitable earth (mainly to the Vancouver region by the looks of it).

Now with our neighbour being involved and Neil Sandilands, one of our favourite South African actors, playing in it, I watched with enthusiasm even though sci-fi is by no means my genre of choice. But after a while I lost interest. I could take only so much acid rain, tribal fighting, and romantic intrigues. My son Steph dropped out with me but Isabel and Marise maintained their enthusiasm and watched through all the seasons while Steph and I played chess upstairs.

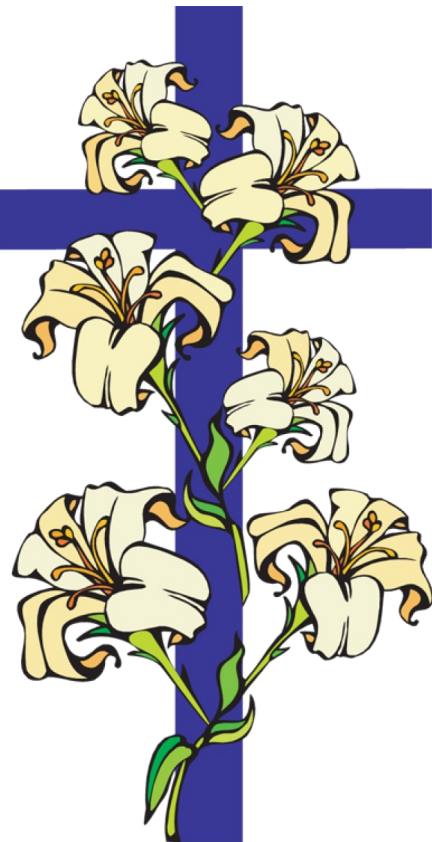
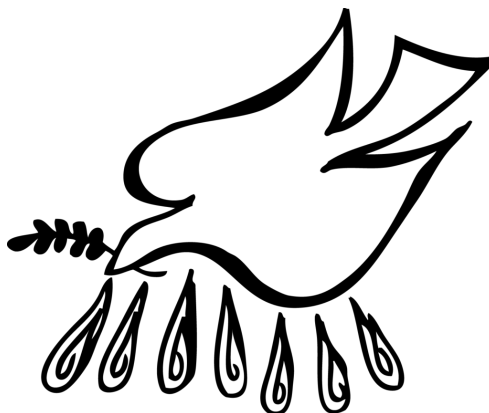
I forgot all about the series but yesterday it came to mind again. I asked Marise what happened to The 100 at the end. Here is what she said:

*“Oh, their leader sacrificed her life so that the 100 could live and have a new beginning elsewhere”*

Now this plot sound awfully familiar, doesn't it? It is the theme found in many a story humankind tells and retells for inspiration and hope. We know this theme as an echo of our master story, the one of Jesus who sacrificed his life to give us new life by defeating death and raising from the dead.

See, as human beings we are wired in a way that makes us seek meaning by arranging what happens to us and what our imaginations come up with, in a story. These stories become for us maps of meaning that navigate us through life. You think of your own life not as a set of random events and experiences but as a story that integrate all those events and experiences into a meaningful whole that in turn connects with other stories. The content of our faith isn't really dogma, but it is what we believe to be the story of all stories, the grand story or meta-narrative. And as Christians we believe this story to be the one about Jesus and his love for us.

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# PRAYER AND PRAISE

## Praise God For...

- Regular online Zoom Church Services, every Sunday <https://zoom.us/j/435172943>
- Or join at Facebook Live at <https://www.facebook.com/citycentrechurchsurrey>
- The blooms and shoots of new flowers and shrubs-we welcome spring!
- Dr. Bonnie Henry and her wisdom in keeping us safe and for her hard work as our provincial health officer.
- The safe arrival of the three South African families
- Meeting our budget with a bit of extra too.
- All the hands that prepare the bagged lunches five days a week.

## Prayer For...

- Covid and all of its implications to go away
- The lonely and shut-in folk to regain their freedoms
- Covid relief to be given to war torn countries and poorer nations
- Love and commitment for marriages and families
- Peace in struggling countries
- For our planning for a potential building project.
- Godly wisdom, knowledge and love for others for missionaries serving around the world
- God to be in all our church dealings and decision making-meetings, session, and study groups.

Father God we come to worship, praise and thank You this Easter season. Just as in spring when the sun awakens the cold earth and the seeds of life spring forth in their beauty, Easter reminds us that we too as sinners need the "SON" to give us new life. Father I pray that we would gaze at the cross this Easter in wonder, horror and awe, at his reminder of the greatest freedom ever bought and the greatest love ever given. You graciously provided your Son, Jesus Christ to be that Lamb of God who takes away our sin. Thus the cross will always be a reminder of the ultimate sacrifice. But You are no longer on it. YOU ARE RISEN and ALIVE! The world has never been the same since that first Easter morning. Now we have a risen Saviour who calls out to us in our doubts, fears and insecurities to a new life.

Risen Saviour, we join in that glorious Charles Wesley hymn that so aptly speaks of Your victory over death:

*"Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia! Sons of man and angels say, Alleluia! Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia! Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!"*

We don't deserve Your sacrifice, we can't earn your victory; we can only thank you with a grateful heart for salvation.

Amen. Linda Littlejohn

John 11: 25, 26 "Jesus said to her. "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

# Meaningful and True

(Continued from Page 1)

What makes this story so special? What makes it worth contemplating and celebrating year in and year out for as long as we live? I am glad you asked...

See, there are broadly two kinds of stories. There are stories that contain truth and there are stories that are true. The 100 would be an example of a story that contains truth. Even though it narrates events that did not actually happen and probably never will, it has themes, experiences and symbols that make it relevant to us. These point out and remind us of things that make our own lives meaningful. Things like sacrifice, loyalty, friendship and challenge. These things all show us *what is meaningful*. Then there are stories that are true. They tell us about things that actually happened. They show us *what is possible*.

The best kind of stories are ones that do both. Stories that are *true* and *contain truth*. Stories that show us what is meaningful as well as what is possible. And what makes the story of Jesus such a global, repeated and echoing story is that it is this kind of story *par excellence*. In whom Jesus was and what He did for us, we not only find what is most meaningful but also what is absolutely true and relevant for us. Any story that touch your heart does so because it in some way echoes the truism and the truth of the story of Jesus. Any story that leaves you untouched, leaves you like that in the measure it fails to echo this story.

According to my daughter The 100 end with the leader being left behind with just a sad dog for company as the others depart for another, better earth like planet. She dies (and I assume the dog as well). Is the Jesus story ever better! He raises from the dead and those He loves with Him. They become one body. They share a table of fellowship for all eternity.

What I thank God for this Easter is that I get to serve and share life with people whose lives are the best kind of story. Stories that are both true and full of truth and meaning. Because they echo the best story ever. And because we do that even better together. Jesus's story...is ours. Our story...is His. Hallelujah!

Happy Easter

Gabriel J Snyman

April 2021



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"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." -John 6:51

## Wonder of Wonders

The world is full of wonders. There are wonders in nature, science, medicine and inventions. In fact, the world is one big wonder.

**SALT IS A WONDER.** When we think that salt is composed of 2 poisonous substances, we are filled with wonder. How is it possible that salt, which is necessary to life, is composed of sodium and chlorine, either of which, if taken individually, would kill us? We cannot answer it; it is a wonder!

**WATER IS A WONDER.** Its chemical formula is  $H_2O$ . That means it has two parts of hydrogen for each part of oxygen. Oxygen is flammable and hydrogen burns readily. Unite hydrogen and oxygen into water we put out fires with it. That is another wonder!

**SALVATION IS THE WONDER OF WONDERS.** How God can take a poor, vile, hopeless sinner and transform him into a respectable person is the greatest wonder of this earth. Is it happening? Yes, it is happening, every day. On the skid rows of our cities, in wealthy homes, in jungles; in fact, wherever any soul will accept Christ, the wonder of the new birth is taking place.

*-Author unknown.*



There are several billion people on the earth today, but there has been and there never will be another you. You are a rare, exclusive, different and unique being on the face of this earth.

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God didn't remove the Red Sea. He parted it. God doesn't always remove your problems. Bu he will make a way to get through them. *Toby Mac (Christian music artist)*

## How does your Garden (and Church) Grow? Page 5

Spring is upon us and excitement is in the air. Our dreams have intersected with God's invitation to be His people in our neighbourhood in the most tangible way...through a garden. Why a garden? There are many reasons that you've heard and dreamed with us about, but I would say that the garden is a place where we can meet Jesus and share in the transformation of our community. This is about being with others and Christ being with us. And this is a recipe for our shared transformation.

We just finished construction and are at the stage of planning what we will plant. Thank you to all who have helped so far and for those who have helped in other ways. This is truly a community effort! Soon we will bury seeds and watch the dirt break with new life. I have visions of a rich harvest working its way to the needy. Trust in the journey, God is faithful and is with us; be watchful for the harvest. Things are about to get really fun around here so put up your hand and join the adventure!

*-thanks to John Santic*

### Plant a Garden

Three rows of squash: Squash indifference, squash criticism, squash gossip.

Four rows of turnips: Turn up for church, turn up with a smile, turn up with a visitor, turn up with a Bible.

Five rows of lettuce: Let us love one another, let us be faithful to duty, let us give liberally, let us welcome strangers, let us worship God.

-Author Unknown



### Review of the Annual General Meeting (thanks to Jane Kyle secretary)

Our Annual General Meeting took place Feb.28, 2021 via zoom. The attendees were able to view the Powerpoint presentations as well as vote on motions online. It has been so wonderful during the last year that Facebook and Zoom have allowed us to worship together and stay part of our church community.

Despite Covid, our church has still been able to have a strong presence in Surrey. Over the last year, the sandwich ministry has made nearly 50 000 bagged lunches to support Surrey Urban Mission and Cove services. At Christmas, in place of our yearly community BBQ we added treats, socks and toiletries to the lunches. Our community garden has also not been held back during Covid. Over the fall and winter planning was continued and on March 20, the building of garden boxes started!

During the last year, there has also been a building committee formed whose purpose is to look at options on how the Church can better serve the community. The committee has met several times, discussing options to expand the facilities by building a structure that would offer more space for the Church as well as housing for homeless/low income members of society. Exciting times to come!

Salvation is the work of the Cross, acceptance is the work of the heart.

# COOK'S CORNER

How about treating yourself to a true English crumpet for Easter morning or for Good Friday breakfast? It's surprisingly easy. Yes, the recipe does take yeast but if you purchase the instant kind you simply need to add it to the flour mixture, and the proofing only takes 15-20 minutes. Crumpets can be described as a cross between an English muffin and a pancake, only they have distinguishing holes that allow that luscious butter to melt into.

- 1 cup flour
- 3/4 c plus 1 tbsp warm water
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp white sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder

## Yeast Mixture

- 1 tsp yeast (any type will work)
- 1 tbsp warm water (tap water)

Place flour, water and salt in a bowl and whisk for 2 min. (electric beater 1 min.)

Next, dissolve yeast in 1 tbsp warm water in a small bowl. Or if using instant yeast, simply add to flour mixture. Add yeast mixture, sugar and baking powder into bowl then whisk for 30 seconds. Cover with cling wrap or plate, then place in a very warm place for 15-30 minutes until the surface gets nice and foamy. It will increase in volume by 10-15 %.

## Cooking Crumpets

Grease 2 or 3 rings with butter (approx.9cm by 3.5" wide but any size works or even a cookie cutter. Personally, my mixture was thick and stayed in a basic circle after pouring-no ring needed). Brush non stick skillet lightly with melted butter, then place rings in the skillet. Turn stove on med-high. Pour 1/4 cup batter into each ring. Cook for 1-1/2 min. Bubbles should start appearing on the surface but not popping yet. Turn heat down to medium and cook for 1 more minute. Some bubbles should pop around the edges. Turn heat down to medium low, cook for a further 2-1/2 to 4 min., until the surface is set and its clear there will be no more bubbles popping. At this stage you can help the final bubbles pop with a skewer. Remove rings and cook reverse side very briefly for a blush of colour. Works great if popped into the toaster the next day or is fantastic buttered with jam while warm. Makes roughly 6 crumpets. Enjoy!



Which friends should you always take out to dinner? -Your taste buds

## Your Contagious Smile

Smiling is infectious  
You catch it like the flu.

When someone smiled at me today  
I started smiling too.

I walked around the corner  
And someone saw me grin.

When he smiled I realized  
I had passed it on to him.

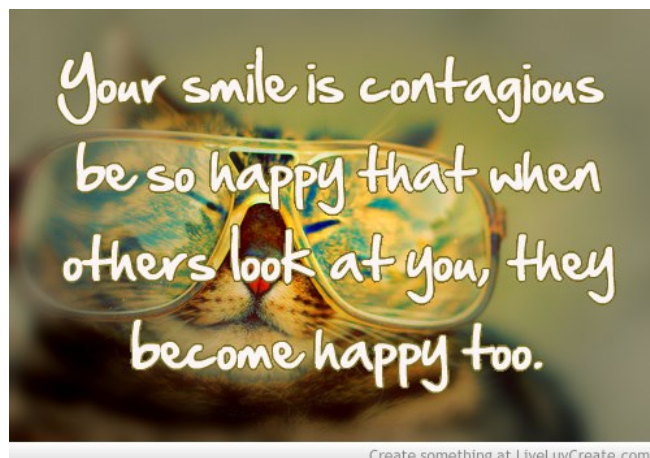
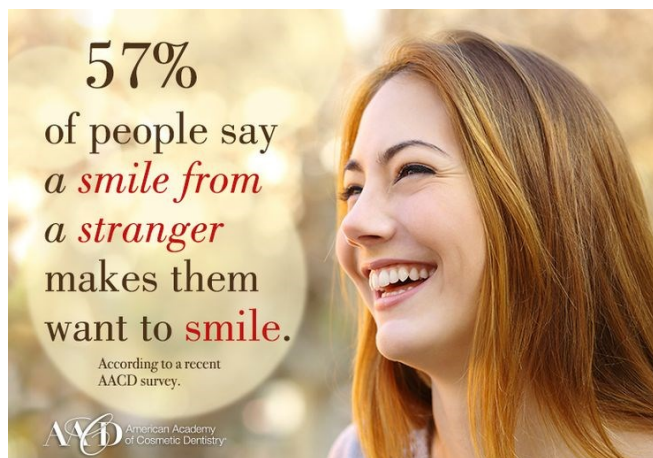
I thought about the smile  
And then realized its worth,

A single smile like mine  
Could travel round the earth.

So if you feel a smile begin  
Don't leave it undetected.

Start an epidemic  
And get the world infected.

*-Spike Milligan (a British-Irish actor, comedian, writer, poet and playwright)*



“For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.”-1 Corinthians 15;21

# Church News

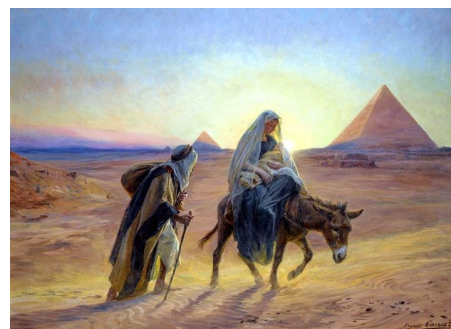
Please pray.....

Please read the following which is roughly transcribed through Pastor Severine from the African Church. This special family needs all of our prayers.

There is a refugee family of six that reside in a camp in Rwanda far away from their home due to a dire and dangerous situation. Many of the details cannot be published due to the need for protection for the family. The father is not with the family either because of the unique situation they are in. As Pastor Severine says "...the only way to save this family from insecurity and traumatism is to find them an asylum in another country where they can finally meet again and reunite as a family". As a result, Faithful Spiritual Pentecostal Church, who meet in our building, are trying to get the family to Canada. We are applying to bring them in through the PCC immigration / refugee ministry. The Faithful Spiritual Pentecostal Church is paying for the application, but the PCC head office treats the application as if they are our people. We are proud to stand with our brothers and sisters. We pray for safety for the family, as the camp is traumatizing for them, for togetherness and for an expeditious transfer out of the camp and to safety in Canada.

\*PCC-Presbyterian Church of Canada

**(last minute update—we have just heard that this family was approved by the PCC to be sponsored! Now we need to pray that doors continue to open to move the sponsorship forward.)**



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## DID YOU KNOW?

- That word of the muffins being made by Fleetwood Christian Reformed Church for our bagged lunches has got out? Nightshift is now using some for their ministries.
- That word has also got out regarding our community garden? Neighbours, friends from the Community Learning Services, and members from various other churches that share our space have all expressed interest in assisting.



- Do you have an extra hour or two a month? Could you consider being a part of the Board of Managers. There's a meeting once a month and some behind the scenes work. If you're handy with a paintbrush, or other tools you could be needed. See John Santic at johnsantic@icloud.com

- The gardening group could use your cash donations or any gloves, shovels, small garden tools, etc
- If you would like to do a scripture reading or a children's story one Sunday, please tell your elder, or Gabriel, and we'll get you connected.

Romans 6; 8-11 "The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."



## No Accident

Read this quote from the first sermon ever preached about the cross and see if you can find the revealing phrase

*“Men of Israel, listen to this; Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge: and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross.”*

Did you see it? It’s the solemn phrase in the paragraph. It’s the statement that rings of courage, the one with roots that extend back to eternity. It is the phrase which, perhaps as much as any in the Bible, describes the real price God paid to adopt you.

Which phrase? *“God’s set purpose and foreknowledge.”* The Revised Standard Version translates the phrase, “The definite plan and foreknowledge of God.” Today’s English Version translates the phrase, “In accordance with His own plan.” Regardless of how you phrase it, the truth is ever so sobering; the cross was no accident.

Jesus’ death was not the result of a panicking, cosmological engineer. The cross wasn’t a tragic surprise. Calvary was not a knee-jerk response to world plummeting toward destruction. It wasn’t a patch-job or a stop-gap measure. The death of the Son of God was anything but an expected peril.

No, it was part of a plan. It was a calculated choice. “It was the Lord’s will to crush Him” (Isaiah 53:10). The cross was drawn into the original blueprints. It was written in the script. The moment the forbidden fruit touched the lips of Eve, the shadow of the cross appeared on the horizon. And between that moment and the moment the man with the mallet placed the spike against the wrist of God, a master plan was fulfilled.

What does it mean? It means Jesus planned his own sacrifice. It means Jesus intentionally planted the tree from which his cross would be carved.

It means he willingly placed the iron ore in the hear of the earth from which the nails would be cast.

It means he voluntarily placed his Judas in the womb of a woman.

It means that Christ was the one who set in motion the political machinery that would send Pilate to Jerusalem.

It also means he didn't have to do it—but He did. It was no accident.

*-taken from “God Came Near” by Max Lucado (thanks to Linda for passing on the book’s excerpt)*



Luke 24:6,7 “He is not here; he has risen!”

## WISDOM AND WIT

When frustrated and impatient with living in these Covid times, remember....

Grapes must be crushed to make wine.

Diamonds form under pressure.

Olives are pressed to release oil.

Seeds grow in darkness.

Whenever you feel crushed, under pressure, pressed, or in darkness, you're in a powerful place of transformation. Trust the process.

Now try this out for a little bit of outside-inside!

Take a little walk to the outdoors, maybe just to your backyard, and pick a pinecone to take home. Put the cone in a pot and make sure most of it stands out. Everyday pour a small amount of water on it. Too much water and the cone will rot. After some time, a teeny, tiny tree will make an appearance. This is an ideal little project for the little ones to do but it does require some patience.



### Easter Dad jokes.....

One Easter, a father was teaching his son to drive when out of nowhere a rabbit jumped on the road. Slamming on the breaks, the son said, "I nearly ruined Easter! I almost ran over the Eater Bunny." His father replied, "It's okay son- you missed it by a hare."

Where does Christmas does come before Easter?  
In the dictionary!

What kind of bean can't grow in a garden? A jelly bean.



### Easter Quotes to Remember

"Never look down on anybody unless you're helping him up." -Jesse Jackson

"I ask not for a lighter burden, but for broader shoulders."

"It's not about the bunny, it's about the Lamb."

"Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in spring-time." -Martin Luther

"The great gift of Easter is hope." -Basil C. Hume

"Spring: A lovely reminder how beautiful change can truly be." -Unknown

"The Earth laughs in flowers." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

Romans 6:8-11 "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again: death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died. he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."