

OPEN HANDS

We believe the gospel — the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, the Son of God alone — is of first importance for all men and women of every tribe, tongue and nation everywhere on this earth. We believe, as followers of Christ, we are heralds of this good news.


ENCOURAGEMENT IN UNCERTAIN DAYS

James 4:13-15 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” – yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

Isaiah 46:8-10 “Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'"

Psalms 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Proverbs 16:9 The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.



The past couple of weeks have been a whirlwind. For ourselves and the rest of the world, things are changing in a way that most of us have never seen in our lifetimes. Based on how things seem to be progressing, we are preparing for many more weeks of uncertainty surrounding this new pandemic. That being said, the Church of God does not face uncertainty the way the world does. Our eyes are indeed blind to what tomorrow will bring, but our feet stand on solid ground. We stand firm in the truth that God will accomplish all of his purposes and that his purposes are good. Whether that means sickness or health, life or death, comfort or pain — we know that all things work together for the good of those that love God and are called according to his purposes (Rom. 8:28). In Christ, we stand on beautiful promises.

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THE COMING MONTHS

Ever since we started making plans for our transition into Quebec we have tried to be as open-handed as possible in prayer and decision-making. We've taken the caution of James 4 seriously and now we're experiencing the reality it speaks of. We have no idea what tomorrow will bring. Our trip to Louisville for Together for the Gospel was cancelled, as was our time in Southern Ontario where we had planned to meet with prospective partners and spend some time with those that have already come on board in support of our ministry. As of mid-March, Zach's reporting date for Mirabel was halted until further notice in light of travel restrictions in response to COVID-19. From what we understand, the prescribed social distancing is affecting all corners of our nation, so for now the decision to put a pause on relocating seems wise. Two immediate benefits are that we have more time to secure our remaining financial support as well as more time to continue our French lessons with John-William from New Hampshire. Pray for us as the coming months take shape.

One more benefit of an extended time in Sioux Lookout is that we get to be involved in our local church's recent push towards missional communities and discipleship/home groups. Last Sunday evening we opted for a virtual hangout via Zoom and we had a great time talking and sharing and brainstorming specific ways to be intentional and strategic about discipleship. Pray for this discipleship-driven vision of ministry to take hold in our members as well as boldness to walk in it. Pray that when we leave, others will eagerly step into these leadership roles and grow in their specific gifts.

We look forward to sharing our next steps with you in the coming weeks as God leads our families closer towards the harvest in Quebec.

In Christ,
The Laustsen's and Murray's

SPECIFIC PRAYER REQUESTS

- 🌀 Please pray for our continued growth as spiritual leaders. We have the opportunity to be involved with leading a new discipleship strategy here in Sioux Lookout. We are praying that God will grow our understanding of what it looks like to disciple well.
- 🌀 Zach's transfer has been halted in response to COVID-19. This means we will have some challenging, faith stretching decisions to make this summer about when to move and what it might look like to be in Quebec before Zach completes training. Pray with us that God would prepare our hearts, give us great wisdom and trust in Him.
- 🌀 Our April partnership trip has been cancelled. We were very much looking forward to spending two weeks together, growing as a team, meeting faithful and potential partners, visiting churches, and learning at T4G. Pray for us that we would have opportunity to grow as a team. For intentional time to learn about and from one another as we seek to pursue Christ together.
- 🌀 Pray with us for Quebec. The recent events with the pandemic leave the Church with a responsibility and opportunity to be the Church and to call people to Christ. Pray for the boldness of believers in Quebec to share the good news in the midst of chaos and confusion.