



# Northwest *FOCUS*

God at Work Through Northwest Independent Church Extension

MAY 2020



## Ministry in the Midst of Pandemic

***"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil."*** Ephesians 5:15,16 is being lived out by our NICE missionaries! They have been challenged to be wise in finding ways to continue ministry and make the most of opportunities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many NICE pastors, like Steve DeFord, Roger Hayden and Bill Williams are posting their Sunday messages online in a variety of ways. Rob Morris uses email, Facebook, and Youtube to send his messages. Nate Shinn shared, *"Those who don't have the internet, get a hard copy transcript of the sermon along with a letter delivered each Sunday by 8:00 a.m."* Weekly Bible studies and leadership meetings continue via Facebook and Zoom for Jeff Mullins and Toby Beck.

Maintaining connections for fellowship and encouragement have brought creative solutions. Matt Hallson said, *"We had a parking lot sunrise service Easter morning at a local lake."* Rob Morris delivered Easter "Church Take Out" boxes to families with children with a Holy Week daily devotional, activities, crafts and games. He continues to email children's bulletins. Some of Nate Shinn's church family gather in their cars to pray and sing together while still distancing. Additionally, he sends out weekly emails with links to other pastors' sermons, free Christian resources and articles and children's activities. Tim Atkins gathers and emails praise and prayer requests, and other pastors have seen an upswing in use of their prayer chain. Jonathan Beyer offers free resources on his website such as banjo lessons as a means of evangelism. Matt Hallson shared, *"Chuck Chapman and I are teaching on Facebook*

*live 4 times a week, giving tutorials on how to take advantage of the internet for Bible reading, studying, and devotionals."*

NICE missionaries have faced some challenges. Keith Singer, and other pastors mentioned the frustration of preaching to an empty church as they film, and feeling separated from their "sheep". For Stan Poeschel, the biggest challenge has been helping his church family overcome their fears.

Despite the difficulties, God has brought blessings. Jose Alvarez commented, *"With online services, we have reached more than twelve hundred people each Sunday locally and even internationally!"* David and Nancy Martin use the weekly visit to a laundromat to encourage others. Roberta Shinn shared, *"It is great not having to rush through morning devotions and praying for friends and loved ones."* Roy Sprague has written a two volume set of twenty of his sermons.

There have also been creative times of fun. Keith Singer had a long-distance cook-off with his sister; Nathan and Brittany Lundgren have taken their family to the mountains to lunch by a river; Earl and Shirley Brubaker have weekly breakfast with their daughters via video chat. Garland and Roberta Shinn sit on their porch and visit with their kids as they walk by.

Despite COVID 19 challenges, NICE missionaries have proven that by God's grace they *"are more than conquerors!"* (Romans 8:37. Linda Ott's church is reading through Psalms together, and she shared Psalm 57:1, ***"Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by."*** May you, too be more than conquerors as you find refuge in God!

***So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.*** I Corinthians 3:7