

FRONTLINES

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Renewing our families, our communities, and our world by bringing faith and life together in Christ.

CARTER IS TAKING A SABBATICAL

BY CARTER SANGER

I'm on Sabbatical

It's true. From May through August I will be away from Cornerstone and believe it or not, I'm already missing my Cornerstone family.

What is a Sabbatical?

A sabbatical is time away to rest from pastoral ministry. The goal is to be refreshed and renewed.

Why a Sabbatical?

More and more churches are sending their pastors on Sabbatical. There is no standard, though a common suggestion is to have one every 7 years. I've been at Cornerstone for 15 years, and this is my first. Ligon Duncan, Chancellor and CEO of Reformed Theolog-

ical Seminary, described it like this:

I'm thankful that I live in a time when more churches are giving pastors sabbaticals. I think that's a relatively new thing. I think it's also something that is part and parcel of the breakneck speed and the constant unrelief that pastors experience in this particular culture. I can't say for sure how often that ought to happen, but it ought to happen.

...sometimes the pace of pastoral life keeps pastors from appropriately focusing on our own hearts because we're focused on so many other things. We're thinking about

other people. We're invested in the structures and the ministries of the church, and we're not realizing how long we've gone without really fellowshiping with God, how dry we have become.

The pastoral ministry is a hard thing. You get your heart broken over and over in the pastoral ministry, and if there aren't seasons of time where we come aside as pastors and God deals with our own hearts, we're on the road to self-destruction. And so I do think sabbaticals in our own times are one of the ways that the church can help pastors stay fresh

(Continued on page 7)

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Cornerstone members will cover Carter's duties while he is away.
- The Session and Deacons are still meeting monthly via Zoom to take care of business.
- Three men from Haven were successfully examined at the last Session meeting, to be the founding members of Haven's Session. Congratulations to Ben DeBruler, Ian Call, and Andy Tate!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| SESSION HIGHLIGHTS | 2 |
|--------------------|---|

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| EAGELE SCOUT PROJECT | 3 |
|----------------------|---|

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS | 3 |
|--------------------------|---|

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| DEALING WITH FEARS | 4 |
|--------------------|---|

| | |
|------------------|---|
| FINANCIAL UPDATE | 5 |
|------------------|---|

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER—INSERT | |
|-------------------------------|--|

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON-LINE

Because of the "shelter in place" order, Cornerstone is joining other churches in streaming its services. You can join us for the service by going to the Cornerstone webpage, cornerstonekaty.org. The bulletin and order of worship are available there. Can't make it at 10:30? The wor-

ship services will still be available on-line.

There are other ways the you can be involved, too. Here are some ways:

Your family.

We want to see our families! It's great seeing each others' comments, but we miss seeing faces. Would you take a

short video of your family and email it to Roy Thomas? In the video, tell us who you are, what you've been up to during these stay-at-home days, and anything you might like to say to the Cornerstone family.

Everyone.

(Continued on page 2)

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

BY TOM LOTT



Mother's Day will be **Sunday, May 10**, this year.

We hope all our mothers will have a great day!



You can still be involved with our worship service, even remotely.

- Because of the ongoing Coronavirus issue, the Session met, along with the Deacons, by way of Zoom conferencing.
- Carter's devotional was from Tim and Kathy Keller's book, *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Book of Proverbs, April 14: Understanding Emotion*. A combination of Proverbs 14:30 and 17:22 reads, "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones... A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

English pastor Richard Baxter, even in the seventeenth century, knew that depression could be rooted in a physiological cause, emo-

tional trauma, moral guilt, or spiritual warfare. He knew this from Scripture, in general, and Proverbs in particular. Many times, depression comes because of emotions suppressed or emotions ignored, a besetting problem for some types of men. This book will be a very valuable resource for Carter during his upcoming Sabbatical. Please continue to pray for him and his family.

- Jim Kolesar gave an update on the Sanctuary project. This past week, an electrician came and brought the breaker boxes behind the sound booth up to code, which had been deemed a necessity. He also installed a new breaker box in the hallway closet. The work was completed on budget;
- John Barrett reported that the April finances are looking good. Please continue to pray for God's provision.
- The Session and Deacons had the pleasure of listening to Nathan Cotton examine the Haven Elder candidates, Ian Call, Ben DeBruler, and Andy Tate. They passed with flying colors! Nathan should be heartily commended for the training he's done with these godly men.
- As always, the meeting concluded with Shepherd-ing and Care Group concerns and prayer.

WORSHIP: YOU CAN HELP

(Continued from page 1)

Send Roy Thomas a picture of your family during worship with a one-sentence message to

the Cornerstone family.

One or two volunteers needed.

Technical help is needed to prepare the bulletins with music for worship. This person will get the lyrics from the Planning Center and update a formatted version of the lyrics into the worship bulletin. Requires about 30 minutes per week.

Click the "I can help!" button the the website or contact Carter.

Will train!

One or two volunteers needed.

Technical help is needed to update the website with the sermon video and audio. Requires about 30 minutes each Sunday afternoon. You can contact Carter for this, too. Will train!

To help with one of these, just click on the button on the website, or contact Roy or Carter.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT AIDS OUR CAMPUS

BY JEFF MAGEE

One of the many groups that use our facilities during the week is Boy Scouts. The highest rank that any scout can accomplish is the title of Eagle Scout.

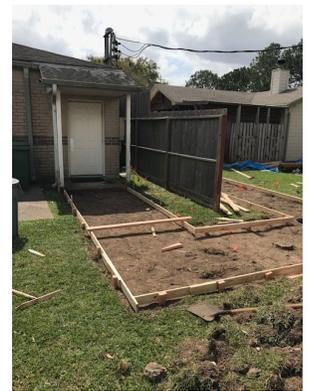
In February, we were approached by a scout Matt Tincopa who asked if we had a project around the church grounds that he could work on to fulfill an Eagle scout requirement. We discussed a few possibilities and decided on the construction of a side-

walk from the patio to the back door of the Education Building next to the trash bins.

There were several steps to the completion of the project. The scout had to create a project plan which involved creating a budget, staffing and finding the resources needed to complete the project. Once he had written out his proposal he met with the Session for the final approval. The Session was able to ask him questions about the

project. Matt and his team began the project the first week of spring break, which was March 6-8.

Now that he has completed the project we have a sidewalk to the back of the Education Building. I realize that many of you may not have seen the final product. The week after the completion of the sidewalk we all went into quarantine with the Coronavirus outbreak. Attached are a couple of pictures.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

BY CAROL KUTZER

☺ **Attention Dads:**

So Mother's Day is Sunday, May 10. Kids will not be making cute little Mother's Day cards and gifts at school this year. Why not help them create something fun? If you do, share it on the Cornerstone Facebook page. We would love to see them!!!!

☺ **Children's Sunday School Lessons:**

I am continuing to post Sunday school lessons each week and will continue to do so for as long as we are not meeting together on Sunday mornings. You can find them by logging onto Cornerstone Katy website under *Get Involved* and *News & Events*. They

will also be posted to Cornerstone's Facebook page and will be sent out in the weekly eNews on Fridays.

☺ **This Darn Covid 19 Virus:**

Our church leaders continue to watch the news for information about when we can return to regular worship services on Sunday mornings. At the time of publishing this newsletter, that announcement has not been made.

However, when we do begin meeting together on Sunday mornings, you should know we will NOT be returning with Children's Ministry activities. This means, no childcare, no Sunday school classes, and no VBS.

Traditionally, we do not have Sunday morning classes through the summer so that is not really a big change for us. However, losing VBS and childcare is rather hard. Please know that we will encourage families to come and worship all together on Sunday mornings.

However, we will continue to stream services for families who are not ready to return to worship either due to health issues or because they do not feel they can keep their young children inside the 6-foot distancing rule.

☺ **Ms. Laura:** I am sad to inform everyone that Ms. Laura will not be

(Continued on page 7)



When we do resume meeting on Sundays, there will not be childcare, Sunday school classes, or VBS.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND GIDEON: DEALING WITH FEAR IN A CRISIS

BY SAM DOWNING

We have all witnessed it or seen it on the news or heard about it ... at the beginning of COVID-19 concerns people buying 100 rolls of toilet paper, 32 cans of black beans, 75 cans of tuna fish, 50 pounds of meat from the deli, empty shelves of all types of sanitizers including rubbing alcohol, Clorox, and hydrogen peroxide, and empty coolers of chickens and hamburger and cheese. These are examples of panic buying and a herd mentality stimulated by the fear and uncertainty of COVID-19. One would think that such fear-driven activity would not occur here in Houston which has experience with crisis of dealing with hurricanes and flooding.

In Judges chapters 6-8, God's people had turned away from the worship of Jehovah and were worshipping Baal and Asherah, the gods of the nations around them. So the Lord sent them a significant crisis to deal with. The Midianites, every year for 7 years, would plunder, pillage, and kill all throughout Israel. Judges 6 describes the Midianite army like locust covering the land, and their war camels too numerous to count. The Israelites felt powerless to fight against them. So in their fear they took extraordinary measures to protect their lives and their harvest like threshing their grain in wine presses and hiding what grain they could thresh in caves.

Everyone was afraid. Everyone was stressed. Everyone worried and was full of anxiety. Everyone was afraid of losing their crops and livelihood and therefore being unable to care for themselves and their families. Everyone did what they could to protect themselves and appease the Midianites.

In the middle of this, in His own time, the Angel of the Lord (which is one of the titles of the Lord Jesus Christ in Scripture), appeared to Gideon, a scared farmer threshing in the winepress. Gideon's immediate response is to complain and ask why the Lord has abandoned Israel and given them into the hands of Midian and not rescued them like He did in Egypt. The Lord says to Gideon, "You are the man to deliver Israel from Midian." Gideon says, "Who? No, you have the wrong person."

Fear is a strong emotional reaction to a perceived imminent danger characterized by fight, flight, or freeze response. Fear can be real or imagined, rational or irrational, normal or abnormal. Fear was placed in us by our Creator and acts as a protective reaction to activate all our physical defense systems when we face real danger. We all face real danger in this life so to experience fear is a natural emotion, one of our basic emotions, designed by God and not a sin. However if I live in a state of fear, if I am

constantly fearful, especially if the danger is imagined or irrational or abnormal, then there is a problem.

The Angel of the Lord gave Gideon a task to tear down an altar to Baal and build an altar to the Lord. Gideon performed the task but because he was so afraid he took his own men and did it at night. In his fear and anxiety over facing the armies of Midian, Gideon asked the Lord for a sign. When he was given a sign Gideon was still anxious and asked for a second sign, which he was granted.

The fear Gideon feels is completely understandable. His enemy is real and his life is in real danger. However, God has proven Himself in His history with Israel to be both powerful and trustworthy. When the Israelites first cried out to The Lord because of the Midianites, He sent them a prophet who reminded them of God's ability and power to save in the past.

So why does God seem absent in this situation? It isn't that God doesn't see Gideon's circumstances or denies his dilemma. God knows neither is a problem for Him, and Gideon and the nation need to know that too! No fear, normal or abnormal is beyond God's ability to resolve.

So what does the Lord do? He takes the untrained volunteer army of Israel of about 35,000



When God called Gideon, he also showed him how to overcome the enemy.

“NO FEAR, NORMAL OR ABNORMAL IS BEYOND GOD’S ABILITY TO RESOLVE.”

(Continued on page 6)

FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR THE FIRST QUARTER

BY JOHN BARRETT

The first quarter of 2020 came to a close with significant uncertainty about the future. The Coronavirus has changed the way we worship and gather together, and threatens all of us financially. Many in our congregation have lost jobs and several have suffered losses in retirement and savings accounts. All of this is beyond our control, but we know where our security lies and we are certain God will help us get through this together.

In view of these events, the Session decided to delay all discretionary spending except Carter's sabbatical. Surplus giving from last year has been set aside in a Strategic Reserve Account and a portion of that will be used for Carter's sabbatical expenses. The remaining funds will be held in re-

serve for operating expenses and congregational support. The current pandemic and resulting economic situation may cause giving to go down and church members may need more assistance, especially if this continues for long.

The Building Fund, which was created to save for upcoming campus improvements and upcoming maintenance costs, will be used for major maintenance repairs and replacements, if needed. The Sanctuary Upgrade Project will be delayed for now and those improvements will be completed later if that remains God's plan. All support for missions will continue, as planned.

Giving in January and February was down, but came back strong in Year-to-date income through March, however, below budget. Expenses

have been below budget through the first quarter.

Most church expenses are ongoing even when buildings are not being used for worship services, meetings, and classes. Maintenance expenses are down slightly, but salaries, insurance, utilities, and other costs are being incurred, as planned. Thanks to the generosity of our members, all expenses are being covered even during this time.

Please pray that God will continue to provide spiritual guidance and resources as we take care of each other and navigate our way through these times.



With an eye on the current events, the Session is putting off sanctuary remodeling to make funds available to help our members.

FIRST MEN'S TWC SINCE FEBRUARY!

Scheduled for Saturday, May 9 at 6:00 p.m. at Tom Lott's home.

TWCs are events for men who attend Cornerstone (and their friends) to enjoy time together discussing theology.

Bring your favorite beverage and munchies, if you are able.

Contact Tom for more information.



Thank you to all our service men!

**Memorial Day
Monday, May 25**

GIDEON: DEALING WITH FEAR TODAY

(Continued from page 4)

men who are being lead by a fearful farmer from a not very important family with no military training and reduces that army to 300 ... to fight a trained battle hardened army of over 100,000. Why? We find the answer in chapter 7, verse 2, where the Lord says, ... because the people would become boastful, saying "My own power has delivered me."

God's ways are not our ways. God's plans for us are always for our good and His glory "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11) For Gideon and Israel that included the Midianites. For you and me that includes COVID-19.

Gideon's turn-around occurred when The Lord told him to go down into the camp of the Midianites on the same night that He had whittled down the army of Israel from 35,000 to just 300. That's 300 to fight over 100,000! "If you are afraid, take your servant with you," The Lord said. Of course Gideon was afraid and of course he took his servant with him into the Midian camp (What good would a servant be in the stronghold of the enemy except to help Gideon feel better). There Gideon overheard several of the Midianites talking about a dream in which Israel defeats Midian by Gideon's hand.

Then and there Gideon bowed down and worshipped. Then and there Gideon fully submitted himself, the army of Israel, the nation of Israel, and the battle ahead to The Lord. Gideon had a change of heart because he finally had a change in his thinking and his perspective. All along with persistence and patience The Lord had been telling him, showing him, demonstrating to him, and reminding him of the power and ability of The Lord to save. Gideon finally understood and that change in understanding changed his actions.

Was Midia still to be feared? Absolutely! Notice that Gideon's battle tactic was not a frontal assault in daylight. Gideon was convinced that The Lord would give the Army of Israel (these 300 volunteers) the victory but that did not give Gideon the freedom to act stupidly. Gideon's battle plan fit the reality of the situation and because The Lord was in it the plan worked brilliantly.

What about our Army of Midia? What about COVID-19? Is it to be feared? COVID-19 is highly infectious and disruptive and produces suffering, pain and even death. It is indeed something to be feared. Should I take reasonable precautions? Indeed you should. Is it OK for me to tremble and shake and ruminate over and over about the deadly possibilities of this pandemic? Nope. Can I quietly worry or

wring my hands over the possible loss of my job and income, the possible collapse of the economy, the possible advances of our enemies as they take advantage of the crisis? Nope.

Like Gideon and the nation of Israel, living in a state of fearfulness, worry, and anxiety is not part of the Christian life. Living in fearfulness happens because we are broken, fallen, sinful people living in a broken, fallen, sinful world, nation, state, and culture. But that does not mean that living in such a state of fearfulness is any less rebellion against God and His will for our lives.

Does that mean that God is going to send me a great warrior hero like Gideon to utterly defeat COVID-19 to prevent me from getting sick, save my job and rescue me from all harm, worry, and concern? Well, the good news is that He has ... and troubling news for some of us is that the hero the Lord has sent is you and me! We are the Gideons at this time before the watching world. We are the called ones, the chosen ones for such a time as this. The battle and the need for a hero is where you are and what is going on around you right now.

But what can I do? Trust the Lord from a position of submission and faith with your life, family, job, Cornerstone and your neighbors as you have opportunity. Love, help

(Continued on page 7)

"WE ARE THE
GIDEONS AT THIS
TIME BEFORE THE
WATCHING
WORLD."



Like Gideon, we can trust God with the future.

GIDEON: OVERCOMING OUR FEARS

(Continued from page 6)

and protect your family and those around you. Seek opportunities to help those in need. Use the time to grow your relationship with Christ, your spouse and family, the family of God, and your neighbors.

But I am still afraid and anxious and worried? How can I do all that and be Gideon now with all this fear? See next month's newsletter article for

the rest of the story. "Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God ... not on earthly things... You were taught... to put off your old self... to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness... Therefore, prepare your minds for actions; be self-controlled" (Colossians 3:1-2;

Ephesians 4:22-24; 1Peter 1:13)

If anyone is having problems dealing with COVID-19 and the anxiety and fear it is producing, please feel free to reach out to our pastors, our session members, or the Cornerstone Lay Counseling staff (Sam Downing, Jeff Magee, and Evelyn Saugier).



Our Lay Counseling members are ready to help, when you feel uncertain.

CARTER'S SABBATICAL: WE'LL BE CARED FOR

(Continued from page 1)

and stay in a healthy relationship with God as they continue in a healthy relationship with the leadership of the church, the membership of the church, and the mission of the church.

What will I do?

My goal is to slow down, read, write some devotionals, build a small cabin, and reinvest myself in my wife and family. Those aren't very metric oriented and that's on purpose. Slowing down and doing something different is my main goal.

Where will I be?

Much of my time will be spent on a small lake in Michigan, where there is a very slow pace and not a lot of activity. Some time, however, will be spent in Oklahoma visiting with and caring for aging parents.

What will Cornerstone do?

Cornerstone is the Lord's church, not mine, so she will be fine. God has raised up godly leaders in our session and deaconate, and gifted preachers to fill the pulpit.

What can you do?

I would ask you to pray for me and my family, for God's blessing and mercy to rest upon us; that we would grow more in love with Jesus and His gospel, and that God would renew my sense of calling. I would also ask that you pray for your elders and deacons and their families. Ask the Lord to guard their hearts and minds from temptation and the schemes of the evil one. Ask the Lord to bless their marriages and families and jobs.

With much love,

Carter



"I WOULD ASK YOU TO PRAY FOR ME AND MY FAMILY, FOR GOD'S BLESSING AND MERCY TO REST UPON US; ..."

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS: CONTINUED

(Continued from page 3)

returning as a nursery worker once we return to regular Children's Ministry operations. Her husband has serious, long-term health issues which makes him vulnerable to the Covid 19 virus. It just

is not safe for her to work around children until the threat of this virus has been defeated.



Get to know our Childcare Workers: If you could bring back any fashion trend what would it be?

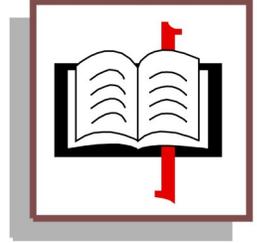
- Ms. Ann Alcorn: Members Only jackets
- Ms. Carol Rutar: Bathing suits from the 1920's would make beach going more pleasant
- Ms. Kinsey Spain: Sunglasses from the sixties

MORE FAVORITE VERSES....

From Sandy Nesbit:

*"The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?"*

Psalm 27:1



From Evelyn Saugier:
(one of many)

*"Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I
will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from
Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find
rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and My burden is
light."*

Matthew 11:28-30



**1351 S. Mason Rd.
Katy, Texas 77450**

**(281) 579-1080
info@cornerstonekaty.org**

**On the Web @
www.cornerstonekaty.org**

*Seeking to renew our families,
our communities, and our world
by bringing faith and life
together in Christ.*