

Northern Michigan District Church of the Nazarene

NORTHERN LIGHTS



I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED!

BY REV. DAN GILMORE, DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

For you have not passed this way before (Joshua 3:4).

These words were given as explanation for the precise instructions the Children of Israel were to heed when preparing to cross over into the Promised Land. They were strictly directed to follow the ark of the covenant as the priests bearing it came by, for they were moving through uncharted territory. I have been reminded of this event of our redemptive history in these unprecedented days. It seems that we have also crossed over into uncharted territory. Let us continue to keep our eyes on Jesus and follow His shepherds as they lead us in these days. Joshua, as he prepared to take the mantle of leadership, was given this clear instruction for himself and all the people of God: **...Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9).**

Our pastors and church leaders have faithfully led us in these strange days. They have quickly discovered and led in new and creative ways to keep us connected as the body of Christ. It is a joy to behold the creativity of our leaders. I have been blessed to join in on several different worship services weekly and have been particularly enriched by the many daily online events that our pastors are leading. Many pastors have noted a significant increase of contacts during these days. Truly God is helping us find new and vital ways of connecting people to the gospel.

We are all eagerly awaiting the time when we can physically join together in the worship of our Savior. However, I hope we will diligently continue to utilize these new ministry opportunities even as we return to more familiar days.

The Hymn writer, Daniel W. Whittle, penned these powerful words as he reflected on the promise of 2 Timothy 1:12:

I know not what of good or ill May be reserved for me, of weary ways or golden days Before His face I see. But I know whom I have believed, And am persuaded the He is able To keep that which I've committed Unto Him against that day.

Stanza 4, I Know Whom I Have Believed

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE WILDERNESS

BY BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS

Some have compared COVID-19 to a shared, global wilderness experience. The analogy seems appropriate. Whereas exile is more like the experience of not being at home in the culture, the wilderness is more akin to living in a time of scarcity and uncertainty. Consider what the wilderness involves: food in short supply, water is scarce, wild animals roam in the night, exposure to the elements is real, and one is far removed from the comforts of home. The wilderness is a place of scarcity and danger—there is much to fear in the wilderness. However, there is also much to gain in the wilderness.

The wilderness is often mentioned in Scriptures as a place of preparation for God's people. Moses spent decades in the wilderness before he saw a burning bush that was not consumed. David spent much of his early life as a shepherd and then as a fugitive trying to survive in the wilderness. Now we know this was by design—God was grooming him to be Israel's shepherd king. Elijah, John the Baptist, and Paul each spent time alone in the wilderness before launching God-ordained and Spirit-appointed assignments. Jesus Himself spent 40 days fasting and praying in the wilderness, during which time He was severely tempted by the devil but where He also enhanced an abiding reliance upon His Heavenly Father in preparation for His public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing. What is the point? God can, and He often chooses to use the wilderness periods of our lives to prepare us, refine us, and create a total reliance upon Him.

We are not happy for the COVID-19 wilderness in which we find ourselves, but we also trust that in the midst of the danger and uncertainty of it all, God is with us. There are lessons to learn in these places of unsettledness and discomfort. One of the major concerns we share for the church is that we would come out of this wilderness season and miss what God wants us to learn. Not to be any different would be a tragedy. Perhaps what we must come to crave above all else in these days of chaos is the gift of clarity, in addition to a renewed dependence upon the God who is present in every situation and invites us to cast all our cares upon Him.

We are on our way to Pentecost.

Grace and peace to you all,

Board of General Superintendents

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Upcoming Events

May 9 - ONU Commencement - ONLINE

July 27-31 - Children's Camp

Manton Christian Camp

Aug 2-7 Family/Teen Camp

Manton Christian Camp

- SDMI Convention - Sun. **Aug. 2** 6:00pm
Manton Camp
- NYI Convention - Wed. **Aug. 5** 7:00pm
Manton Camp

Aug 16-30 District wide revival services
with Dan Bohi - various locations

Aug 28-29 Men's Retreat

Lost Valley Camp, Gaylord, MI

Oct 9-10 Women's Retreat

Lakeside Resort, Houghton Lake, MI

Dec. 5 District Christmas Gathering for
Pastors & Advisory Board families
West Bay Beach Resort - Traverse City

It is God that girdeth me with strength,
and maketh my way perfect.

Psalm 18:32



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