

April 2020

West



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Community of Christ

RIO GRANDE MISSION CENTER



In case you haven't heard, the Juan Tabo Congregation has been having online Worship Services for the last couple of weeks.

Everyone in the Rio Grande Mission Center is invited to join these services. John and Scott Anderson edited a recording of the worship service last Sunday March 29 th.

Tap on this link to open the recording website. You may have to download the recording to watch all of it: [https://www.dropbox.com/s/0sxxs44n1vud79l/GMT20200329-145613 John-Willi 1920x1080%20%281%29%20-%20trimmed2.mp4?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/0sxxs44n1vud79l/GMT20200329-145613%20John-Willi%201920x1080%20%281%29%20-%20trimmed2.mp4?dl=0) —Please pass this on to others who may not receive the newsletter.

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You're Invited!!

Sunday is the day!
For the gathering of the Juan Tabo/Rio Grande Mission Center Communion Service via Zoom.
It's Palm Sunday, we will be hearing from Elaine Adams of the Juan Tabo Congregation for our Morning Message AND we will be participating in Communion together.



Please note that all are welcome to participate in the Sacrament of Communion. You do not have to be a member of Community of Christ to partake. In order to participate remotely, the only requirement is that you bring your own bread or crackers and juice or water to the gathering and be ready at home with the emblems. We suggest that you cover the emblems just as we do in our home congregations. Uncover the emblems during the time we sing Hymn 528.

Dan Cathey will direct you at the designated time to receive the communion emblems. You will follow along individually or with your family.

The link to join the call is attached at the bottom of this email. The link has also been dispersed on the Juan Tabo and the Rio Grande Mission Center Facebook pages. If you still need the link, please do not hesitate to let us know and we will make sure you receive it!

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We hope you will consider joining us for this one-hour alternative form of worship on Sunday morning. **ALL are welcome!**

Please pass this meeting invitation on to others who may not have email.

A Note about Online Communion:

"Technology presents opportunities for involvement in sacraments by priesthood members and participants in separate locations" (2019 words of counsel)." Celebrating Communion must occur in real time, meaning it is to be celebrated by all participants at the same time.

You may join the Zoom Meeting at the scheduled time in one of three ways:

- By internet; just go to: <https://zoom.us/j/6447892145> and follow the instructions. The

Meeting ID is: 644 789 2145 Password: 554992

When using this option, it will try to use video, so it would be good if your smart phone, laptop, or desktop computer has a camera (but you can get audio, if you don't have a camera). For you to talk, your computer will have to have a microphone capability. (Most laptops and smart phones, have this capability.)

- Join the meeting using any phone. Just dial 1 346 248 7799 and enter the Meeting ID: 644 789 2145 when prompted.
And Password: 554992

If you have problems logging in or dialing in, you may call one of the following people for help:

John Williams: 505-366-1250

Scott Anderson: 505-569-3608

Dan Cathey: 505-507-3359

Please note there is added time to visit and offer your Joys and Concerns this week:

- The Zoom meeting room will be open at 10:15MDT (30 minutes before the worship service) and won't close until 30 minutes after the worship service ends. This extra time is for you to enjoy visiting together as you like.

Thank you,
John Williams
President, Rio Grande Mission Center



Amarillo TX Congregation

On Sunday March 1, 2020, Colton Gage Phillips was blessed. Colton is the son of Dustin and Jamie Phillips. He was Blessed by his Grandfather Elder Chuck Phillips who was assisted by Grandmother Evangelist Debbie Phillips. Oh, and we have to include cousin Marshall Phillips who stood and held Colton's foot a large part of the time, while repeating most of the blessing that Chuck gave. He also assisted with the Disciples Generous Response.



Adults: Jerry Phillips, Dena Phillips, Jamie Phillips, Dustin Phillips, Chelsea Searcy, Tank Searcy, Chuck Phillips, Debbie Phillips, & Ruth Johnson

Children: Paisley Searcy, Marshall Searcy and Colton Phillips



Dustin & Jamie Phillips with Danny Gray Jamie's Dad and Colton



President Veazey's Video Message

Waiting in Faithfulness



A Guided Spiritual Practice

Project Zion Podcast has teamed up with Katie Harmon-McLaughlin, Community of Christ Spiritual Formation Ministries to provide a weekly guided spiritual practice. The series is called Awaken to God's Presence: Finding Calm in the Storm.



Consider these guided practices a gift of peace in the midst of troubling times. We hope they help you connect with the Divine no matter where you are or what's going on around you.

Featuring a new practice every Wednesday. Listen to one today.

[Prayer of Examen](#) [The Welcoming Prayer](#)

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Easter Services

As we continue to find new ways of being together when physical distancing guidelines prevent our gatherings, you're invited to join us for "Living Hope," an online Easter worship experience. (this pic is a link)



On Sunday, April 12 we will be hosting two online gatherings to share in Easter celebration and worship together.

Gathering 1 --- 4 a.m. (CDT) [Time zone calculator](#)

Gathering 2 --- 2 p.m. (CDT) [Time zone calculator](#)

By having two gatherings we hope to increase participation around the world and allow people to join in at a reasonable time of their day. Pick the time that best fits your day and worship with us through music, prayers, reflections from members around the world, and a homily by President Steve Veazey.

To provide opportunities for interaction from home, we'll be broadcasting the worship on the church's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) feeds. Viewers will be invited to share in the comments on Facebook and Instagram or by using #CofChristEaster on Twitter at several points during the worship. The broadcast also will be available at www.CofChrist.org/live-webcast and the church's YouTube channel.





Community of Christ

MISSION FUNDING

Message from Your Mission Funding Team

Difficult times can cause us to become emotionally and spiritually drained. Yet in our most challenging circumstances we have a choice. We can choose to slow down, breathe deeply, look around and appreciate what we have. Easter reminds us that God never stops giving, even in the most difficult situations.



When nothing made sense and everything was hard, God's love for us was demonstrated in the greatest blessing ever received. We can choose to reflect that same love. Generosity is love in practice. And it's not just about money - although that certainly can do some good - it's about generosity of heart...attention...kindness. They all matter. Let us be the ones who through our loving actions of generosity bring hope and the promise of Easter to a world that really needs it.

Onward!

Stassi Cramm
presiding bishop

Phyllis Gregg
assistant director of mission funding

A Disciple's Generous Response

God provides "enough and to spare" (Doctrine and Covenants 101:2f).

The struggle in the world is not the lack of financial resources for everyone. The struggle is in how we distribute the financial resources of the world.



Most disciples are open to receiving God's generous grace and love during the good times. However, one challenging question in life is where to find God's immeasurable generosity in bad times. The disciple's challenge is to find the light of God's generosity even when we feel we are living in darkness. An important step toward finding whole-life stewardship is to receive God's boundless grace and unending love in whatever form they take. Even difficult circumstances reveal glimpses of a present and generous God if we open our hearts and minds to the possibility.

In the end, whole-life stewardship is always about choosing. We recognize that God's unearned blessings continue to flow regardless of our choices as this is the nature of God's grace and generosity. However, God is always inviting us to choose to align our own nature in a way that helps reveal God's generous love to others.

"Generosity is spirituality in action, powered by grace, gratitude, and hope. Generosity is living the life of Jesus." (President Steve Veazey, 2016 World Conference closing worship message).

-Adapted from Choose Generosity: Discovering Whole-Life Stewardship, Herald House

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Tips and Insights

As many of us shelter in place for an undetermined amount of time, [The Greater Good Science Center](#) shares these daily questions for reflection by Brooke Anderson (emphasis added).

1. What am I *grateful* for today?
2. Who am I *checking in on* or *connecting* with today?
3. What expectations of "normal" am I *letting go* of today?
4. How am I *getting outside* today?
5. How am I *moving my body* today?
6. What *beauty* am I either creating, cultivating, or inviting in today



Reminders

During the COVID-19 pandemic, priesthood members will be asked to provide various sacraments. In all instances, priesthood members should respect public health guidelines that state people should practice social distancing and avoid, as much as possible, personal contact through which the infection spreads. In these unusual circumstances, the Presidency offers [guidance](#) related to the sacraments.

Oblation aid is available for individuals and families in financial difficulty as a result of COVID-19. As a reminder, oblation aid is part of the Worldwide Mission budget. Your contributions to Worldwide Mission Tithes support mission around the world, including aid to those who need it most. For information about oblation aid, contact a congregational financial officer.

Contribution Update

Worldwide Mission Tithes

Estimated [contributions](#) to Worldwide Mission Tithes in February are \$1,075,000. Amid these uncertain and challenging times, church leaders are grateful for those who continue to share generously not only financially but in many other ways. As a community, may we remain committed to working together to support growing needs locally and worldwide.



Even though we are not physically gathering, you can continue to support local and worldwide mission tithes through [etithing](#). Watch [this video](#) for step by step instructions.

Bridge of Hope Tithes

The most recent update on Bridge of Hope Tithes is at www.CofChrist.org/contributions-update.

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HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

The Mission Funding Council, with assistance from the Mission Funding Team at International Headquarters, helps members and friends understand their true capacity to give to support mission. Any member of the Mission Funding Council is available to answer your questions, share their testimony, or visit with you in your home, congregation or mission center.

Simply email missionfunding@cofchrist.org. We will put you in contact with a council member.



Mission in Action

President Veazey does a [spiritual check-in](#) with church members around the world dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pathway to Abundant Generosity

This month's scripture is from Exodus 16:4, and the reflection is by Phyllis Gregg from the March 16th [Daily Bread](#) blog (adapted).

Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day." ...

-Exodus 16:4



Every year I plant a garden. The first time I looked at the barren spot that would be my garden, I wondered if anything would really come from it. It still looked so desolate ... a few little green sprouts and a couple stakes marking where seeds were in the ground. I've been tempted to plant more, just because it looked so empty. But I've found when I overplant, I can't use what grows fast enough and things spoil. So, I've learned to be patient ... to wait ... knowing there will be enough and even some to spare.

When God led the Israelites into the desert, they were scared they would not have enough. But God told them each day the manna would fall, and they were only to collect what they needed for the day not attempting to hoard it. Even though they didn't always follow God's plan, the manna kept showing up. Every day God demonstrated no-strings-attached generosity.

If we view the manna as symbolic of the live-giving gifts God provides every day in our lives, do we really appreciate those blessings? God provides in such a way that sometimes this amazing generosity feels ordinary. Every day we can choose to be thankful for what we have. When we become anxious about what we need for tomorrow, next year, or even the next decade, we feel the need to hoard and we lose sight of God's sustaining gifts.

There is enough and to spare. The evidence of God's abundance surrounds us. We simply need to take the time to stop and see it. What we need is here.

When we recognize God's generosity and are transformed from a place of scarcity to abundance, then we are liberated to share with others. This generous sharing moves us closer to Christ.

May we be reminded of the lessons of the wilderness: collect only what we need, work together, share freely, and trust God even when the world shows us differently. The promise is that Easter will come. Not because we earned it, but simply because God gives, no strings attached.

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water,
and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.

I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their
light.
For a time I rest in the grace of the world,
and am free.
- "The Peace of Wild Things" by Wendell Berry



Editorial by Carol Bevel

Amarillo has been connecting with Yuma Colorado and sharing services for quite some time. They often include people in Montana and Nebraska. Since all of the self quarantining, we have been having services with them that have included 25 connections with over 43 people from 7 states Colorado, Texas, Nebraska, Montana, Wisconsin, Maryland, and Wyoming.

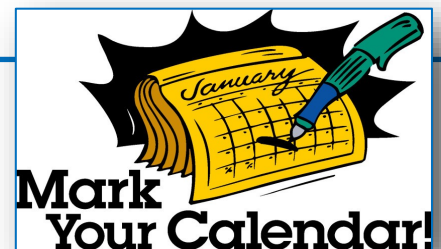
If you are interested in participating those services, feel free to contact me at rgcofc@ymail.com and I'll get you the information needed to do so.

Amarillo College, where I work, has experienced many interesting changes this Semester. Shifting to Technology based education hasn't been an easy thing, but I believe that it will make our teaching better in the long run. Instructors who have had aversions to using Technology, have had to adapt. I believe that they will find that it can make many things easier, and more interesting for our students. There are also many other ways to stay connected, even when you can't see each other face to face. I personally have enjoyed videos of my grandkids and have a group chat through Google Hangouts with co-workers as we all are working from home. I have personally found more time to have some private time with God through devotions and Journaling. I encourage everyone to find any small thing that you can do to keep up that connection. Maybe missing all of the physical personal connections, we can reflect on how much time we devote to our spiritual life.

In this newsletter, you will find suggestions and links for more information to Spiritual Practices, Video messages from President Steve Veazey and if you have even the remotest technology understanding, there are so many more things to find. I love to watch music videos and listen to hymns while I'm working to keep my spirits up. I hope to be able to virtually participate in Easter Egg hunts with my Grandkids who all live several hours away from us.

Please always remember we are in this together! Not only the extraordinary situation that this pandemic has us all in, but also our spiritual journey. I keep thinking that we will all be [butterflies](#) once we get through this whole thing.

2020 RGMC Calendar Information



May 2-3: Work Day at SMR

June 7-13: Sr. Hi Camp—Sionito TX

June 21-27: Jr. Camp—Sionito TX

July 5-11: Jr Hi Camp Sionito, TX

July 11-15: RGMC Reunion, SMR

**July 18-25: Spectacular; Graceland Univ.
Lamoni, IA**

Aug 14-16: Leadership Retreat SMR

Sept 18-20: Women's Retreat SMR

Nov 7-8: Mission Center Conference, Clovis

Please note: Dates changed in January