



From Grief to Joy

This week marks a significant anniversary. It was a year ago that the first big season of pandemic “lockdown” began, and we all found our lives turned upside down. We’ve all experienced a lot of emotions over the last year, one of which has been grief over the absence of loved ones from whom we have found ourselves unwittingly and unwillingly separated.

When Jesus gathered with His disciples on the night before He died, one of His ‘objectives’ was to help prepare them for the separation from Him that they would have to experience in the days ahead. The next day He would go to His death on the cross, and His disciples would know a grief so deep that we can scarcely imagine what it must have been like.

Jesus didn’t tell them that they should not grieve for Him once He was gone. He acknowledged that they **WOULD** experience grief. They would weep and mourn. But the hope - and the promise - that He offered them was that the grief would not last. He told them,

“Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ... Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy” (John 16:20, 22).

By the time you are reading these words, we will be just about half way through the season of Lent. As we prepare our hearts to enter again into the story of Christ’s passion, we are reminded that the journey from Good Friday to Easter is a journey from grief to joy. And we are encouraged by Jesus’ promise that the grief that we are experiencing now, as the pandemic separates many of us from many of the ones we love, will be turned to joy again when we are reunited.



This Friday Night!

7:00 P.M.
Friday, March 12

Sevenoaks Alliance Church
presents

Virtual Montage

Just visit our website at
sevenoaks.org
Click on the WATCH button

*Sign in to join the
Online Chat*



Then enjoy the show!

The Breastplate of St Patrick

Did you know that St Patrick's Day (March 17) is named for a real Irish "saint," who died during the 4th century? There is a very old hymn, attributed to Saint Patrick, which has been passed down through the ages as a prayer called "The Breastplate of Saint Patrick." The language of this prayer reflects the idea that we as Christians are able to begin each day by putting on the armour of God (Ephesians 6), and walk through each day protected by all the various aspects of God's grace which we can bind to ourselves.

In 2008 the Christian musician Steve Bell recorded a song, written by a friend of his named Gayle Salmond, called *The Lorica*. *Lorica* is the Latin word for breastplate, and when used in reference to prayer, the term *lorica* refers to a prayer of protection. The lyrics are as follows:

*I bind unto myself today
The gift to call on the Trinity
The saving faith where I can say
Come three in one, oh one in three*

*Be above me, as high as the noonday sun
Be below me, the rock I set my feet upon
Be beside me, the wind on my left and right
Be behind me, oh circle me with Your truth and light*

*I bind unto myself today
The love of Angels and Seraphim
The prayers and prophecies of Saints
The words and deeds of righteous men*

*God's ear to hear me
God's hand to guide me
God's might to uphold me
God's shield to hide me
Against all powers deceiving
Against my own unbelieving
Whether near or far*

*I bind unto myself today
The hope to rise from the dust of earth
The songs of nature giving praise
To Father, Spirit, Living Word*

Food Bank Satellite at Sevenoaks

We are excited to announce that starting on April 19 - and on the third Monday evening of every month after that - we will be setting up our gym as a distribution centre for the Archway Abbotsford Food Bank. Each month we will welcome from 40 - 50 of Archway's regular registered Food Bank guests, as they come to pick up their monthly hampers full of groceries.

About 40 members of the Sevenoaks family have come forward already to volunteer to help out with this wonderful new ministry initiative, which will provide us with a way to use the space that God has given us to love and care for people in need, to partner with a great community agency, and most of all to bear witness to Jesus' love by loving and caring *for* people who he loves and cares *about*.

Food Bank Home Delivery

Did you know that the Food Bank has a program that provides home delivery to Food Bank guests who are not able to visit the Food Bank to pick up their monthly food hampers? Sevenoaks is helping out. On the fourth Wednesday of every month, two members of our Community Care Committee volunteer as drivers for this program.

Financial Giving = Buying Power

The most effective way to provide material support to the work of the Food Bank is to make a financial donation, which allows them to make wholesale purchases of much needed food items in larger quantities and therefore at lower prices.

<https://www.abbotsfordfoodbank.com/donate-choice/>

Donating Food

If you would like to make a donation of food for the Food Bank, we now have a donation bin set up in the lobby at the church office.

The following list sets out the Food Bank's "Most Wanted" items:

Rice	Pasta and Sauce
Hearty Soups	Cereals
Canned Meat	Granola Bars
Canned Beans	Peanut Butter
Canned Veggies	Jam/Honey
Canned Fruit	Crackers

“Go and Do Likewise”

*The Parable of the
Good Samaritan*



At Sevenoaks, the term “Community Care” refers to all of the ministries, programs, events and activities that we undertake - both together as a church and in our individual lives - to provide compassionate, generous and loving care and assistance to people in our community who find themselves in need of financial, material, social and psychological help.

Sunday, March 21 will be Community Care Sunday at Sevenoaks. We’ll be reading Luke 10:25-37, and Pastor Brian will lead us in unpacking the ways in which the story of the Good Samaritan shows us what it looks like to truly “love our neighbours.”

Then, the members of our Community Care Committee will provide us with a special video presentation, in which they’ll outline all of the different facets of community care ministry here at Sevenoaks.

Community Care Sunday

March 21, 2021

See you there!

From Grief to Joy



In the beginning of 2020, approximately 80 women participated in the CHatS Bible Studies under 5 facilitators/teachers. We enjoyed great fellowship with Kathy's coffee service & in-depth group discussions. All this was suddenly halted with Covid restrictions enforced in March. NO MORE fellowship, NO MORE Bible study, and NO MORE coffee!!! To those women living alone, their lifeline to in-person fellowship was terminated. Loneliness, depression, & frustration invaded many lives.

Then, in September - a glimmer of hope - as in-person meetings with social distancing were allowed - only to have those also quashed at the end of November.

Now in March 2021 these restrictions still exist. Some of our members feel abandoned, but God is so faithful as He says in John 14:18, *“I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you.”*

PRAISE GOD for the creativity of the human mind in developing technology that enables face-to-face contact, when in-person fellowship is denied. And thanks to Pastor Tim who planted the idea in our minds.

We now have all 5 of our groups in *Zoom* meetings on a regular basis. Although, due to computer challenges, this meets the needs of only half of our women, it is encouraging to realize that God always provides a way. To those involved, it has turned our frustration to a time of joy as we encourage each other & explore scripture together. We have really been stretched in our 'possibility' thinking & thank God for 'forward' thinking facilitators/teachers who were all willing to tackle a new form of teaching. After stumbling through the first few sessions with perseverance & a dash of humour, we have adjusted to this new normal & look forward with anticipation to each scheduled session.

God is truly building us as 'living stones' into His spiritual house that we may be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). We praise Him for making a way for us to keep growing and enjoy fellowship with one another.

Holy Week Prayer Guide & Special Prayer Event

Holy Week is the week that begins on Palm Sunday and runs through to Easter Sunday. This year we will be marking Holy Week with a special week of prayer, and we are inviting you to take part.

As we do every year, so also this year we will spend Holy Week tracing the story of how Jesus spent His final days on the way to the cross. It is a story full of emotions, from the triumphal joy of Palm Sunday to the deep sorrow of Good Friday, from the solemn reflection of Holy Saturday to the surge of rejoicing on Easter Sunday. As we journey through Holy Week, reading scripture together and engaging together in prayer, we are given the opportunity to explore the place that these emotions can have in our life of prayer.

On March 15 we will be sending you a Holy Week Prayer Guide. This Guide is designed to help you engage with Jesus – during this most special of times – in a deep and reflective way. Each day there will be some form of prayer exercise – devotional, spiritual exercise, prayer activity – to help you delve deeper in your spiritual walk. Each day also highlights an emotion that is descriptive of that day.

We will of course be praying together collectively that week as we hold our regular Holy Week worship services, on Palm Sunday and on Good Friday and on Easter Sunday. But mark your calendars as well for Wednesday evening, March 31. That night we will be livestreaming a special prayer event, as we offer up together our prayers for God's church, God's mission, and the world.



Annual Report and AGM

We are presently putting the finishing touches on our Annual Report for the year 2020, and it is shaping up to be an extraordinary account of an extraordinary year in the history of our life together as a church. We will be sending out the Annual Report to you all in a couple of weeks' time, along with a formal notice that we are going to be holding our 2021 Annual General Meeting on the evening of Thursday, April 15. Included in that package will also be the report of the Nominating Committee, our final Financial Statements for 2020, and the proposed Budget for 2021.



The big question is whether or not we are going to be able to organize an actual in-person meeting for the purpose of holding our AGM. At the time of this writing we are very optimistic. On Monday, March 8 the Provincial Health Officer indicated that unless we see a sudden INCREASE in the number of new Covid-19 cases being reported daily, we can expect to see the current restrictions on in-person religious gatherings begin to be relaxed before Easter.

However, even if we are able to hold our AGM “live” on April 15, there will likely still be some sort of “cap” on the number of people who we can have in attendance. Plus, we are aware that even if in-person gatherings have resumed by then, not everyone in our church family will yet be in a position where they feel safe in attending a public event. For this reason the Board of Elders has decided that, regardless of whether or not we will be able to hold an in-person meeting, there will also be an option for Active Members of the church to have their votes cast for the AGM via a mail-in ballot form. More details on how that will work will be included in the package when we send out the Annual Report later this month.



Reading your Bible Better

*A six-week course
starting this May*

Reading the Bible is something we know we should do, and something we probably all want to do more of. But sometimes it can be difficult. Have you ever tried starting, but found yourself with more questions than answers? Where do I start? Why are there so many different translations? Or maybe you've been reading the Bible for years, but sometimes you are just not sure how to understand parts of the Bible and you know there is always more to learn.

If any of that sounds like you, or you just want to learn to read the Bible better, *do we have a course for you!* The course we have planned will run over six consecutive Tuesday evenings starting in May, and will be lead by Regent College student and Sevenoaks family member Mike Evanson. Subjects to be covered will include:

- What the Bible is and why we should read it.
- About translations, and how to choose one
- How to read the different parts of the Bible
- How to read the Bible in context and avoid misinterpretations
- And much more

Those who attend can expect thought-provoking teaching, engaging discussion and lots of fun learning with others. Learning to read the Bible is a journey, so why not come, bring your Bible and be prepared to grow in your Bible reading skills.

We will have more information available about how to register starting early in April.

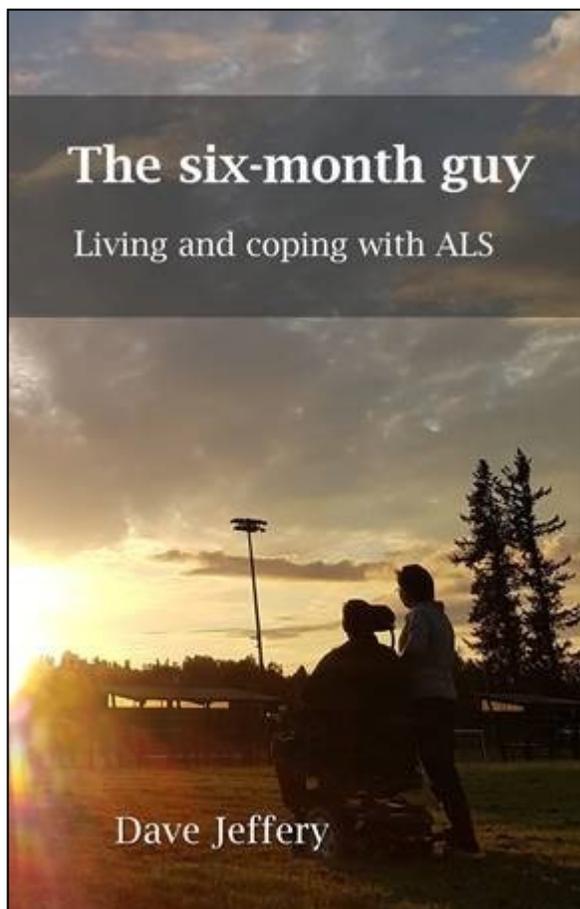
Dave Jeffery's Third Book!

Dave Jeffery has written a third book, entitled ***The Six-Month Guy***. A follow-up to his first book - ***While We Pray for Miracles, God Gives us Grace*** - this book provides an account of some of Dave's personal experiences living with ALS over the last six years. (Dave's second book, ***Teach Me to Number My Days***, is a collection of some of his sermons, chapel talks and other writings.)

Although *The Six Month Guy* is no less theologically informed than its two predecessors, it provides a more intimate and personal account of Dave's particular experience of living with this life-draining disease.

The book is available from Amazon as a paperback or a Kindle ebook.

<https://www.amazon.ca/six-month-guy-Living-coping-ALS-ebook/dp/B08VHQ83TJ/>



FAMILY CAMPGROUND CAMPING AT KAWKAWA

Kawkawa Camp & Retreat in Hope, BC, is offering a rare opportunity this summer to book a chalet/camping spot for your family to come and enjoy their beautiful lakefront site and some of their on-site activities. Step out of your day-to-day life and create family memories on their 20-acre mountainside forested retreat on the shores of Kawkawa Lake.

Beginning Monday, June 28 through to Sunday, August 15, Kawkawa will be opening up their site for family camping, with a maximum of 50 guests each week. They have a fully catered option which will run from Monday supper time through until Friday lunch time each week, and will have a wide range of supervised activity options available. They are also offering a self-catering option from Fridays through to Sundays, when they will not have any supervised activity options, though guests will be free to use a number of their on-site recreational activities.

You must be BC residents to book and not have travelled outside of Canada in the 2 weeks preceding the start date of your camping trip. You can book one of their chalets or bring your own trailer, tent or RV. Each accommodation option is restricted to families who live in the same household.

For more information, and/or to make your booking, visit their website at

<https://kawkawa.com/family-camping-at-kawkawa/>

ROOF CAMPAIGN UPDATE

A little over a month ago I launched the Main Auditorium Roof campaign. I explained that the roof had gone far beyond our ability to patch-up and was in need of replacement. Our hope is to replace it this summer so that it doesn't have to go through another rainy fall and winter. This will protect our facility for years to come, preventing expensive damage to the interior. So far, in the first month, we've raised just under \$20,000 toward a project total of \$160,000. Thank you so much to all of you who have given to this project; you are much appreciated! Let's all continue to ask the Lord how we might be able to contribute to this goal.

With thanks,
Pastor Jamie



**Daylight Savings
Time begins
March 14 so
remember to set
your clocks ahead 1 hour Saturday
evening before going to bed!**

Financial Giving

Cheerful, sacrificial giving is part of our life in Christ, an act of worship to the living God & an expression of trust in Him. Your generosity helps us fulfill our vision of knowing Jesus & making Him known.

Online via Tithe.ly

Make a secure, one-time donation or set up a recurring gift to the church using *Tithe.ly*. Use a credit card & designate where you want your gift to go.

Online Banking

There are 2 ways to give through your financial institution's online banking site:

1. Bill Payment

Add **Sevenoaks Alliance Church** as a payee. Note your offering envelope number as your account number.

2. E-Transfer

Add **life@sevenoaks.org** as a payee. Enter the amount you want to give & make up a security question. Then be sure to send the security question answer for the e-transfer in a separate email to **life@sevenoaks.org** so that we can accept it.

Cheque

Make a cheque payable to *Sevenoaks Alliance Church*. Ensure that your name or offering envelope number is clear for tax receipt purposes. Place the completed cheque in an envelope & mail or bring it to the church office.

Thank you for supporting the ministry of Sevenoaks Church!

Contact Information

Sevenoaks Alliance Church
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Office hours: M-Th 830am-430pm

Help us keep your information current.
Contact Tammy at the church office or
email ttoews@sevenoaks.org