



SEVENOAKS
alliance church

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January 13, 2021

The Upper Room



No event that happened during Jesus' life is described in as much detail as is the Passover supper that Jesus shared with His twelve disciples on the night that He was betrayed ... the night before He was crucified. They met in an Upper Room, and the things that Jesus said to His disciples that night were designed to prepare them to become the church – the body of believers and followers who would serve as His body - in the days and weeks and months after His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. 2000 years later, the words that He spoke on that night still provide the fundamental framework for our understanding of who we are in relationship to Him.

On January 3, Pastor Jamie began to lead us through a series of messages that will take us through the account of the last supper as set out in the Gospel of John. We have picked up where we left off last spring in our long series entitled *John: The Eyewitness*. This coming Sunday, January 17, Jamie will be preaching on John 13:31-38, the passage in which Jesus predicts that Peter will come to deny Him three times before the cock crows at dawn.

We invite you to commit yourselves to immersing yourselves in the richness of the passages we will be looking at over the next few months. Make time to read them, reflect on them, interrogate them, and let them interrogate you. You may struggle to understand what Jesus means by some of the things that He says. But so did the disciples who broke bread with Him that night. And His answer for us is the same answer that He had for them – to trust and submit ourselves to the instruction of the wise Counsellor who He has sent to dwell with within us - the Holy Spirit - who will guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

How Long, Oh Lord?

The last 10 months have been profoundly challenging for churches, church leaders, and church members. As much as we may embrace the idea that the church is more than a building, that as members of the body of Christ we are deeply bound to each other even when we cannot gather together in person, the practical reality is that it is much harder to maintain our sense of community, common purpose, and shared mission when we are so limited in our ability to be together in the flesh.

On Thursday, January 7 we learned that the Province is asking us all to continue to refrain from participation in social and religious gatherings for at least another month. The public health order which prohibits us from holding in-person worship gatherings, as well as most other gatherings for other ministry purposes, has been extended until February 5.



Circumstances are not as we would have them be. But if so, we find ourselves in the company of a great cloud of witnesses who have experienced seasons of dissatisfaction before us. Read your Bible from cover to cover, and you'll discover that God's people have spent a great deal more of their time living under hardship than they have living in contentment. Think of the centuries spent in slavery in Egypt. Of the 40 years of wandering in the desert. Of the uncertainty of the years when the Judges ruled. Of the successive waves of invasion and conquest by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. Think of the Babylonian exile. Think of the 400 years during which the voices of the Prophets remained silent and the hope of Messiah seemed like a lost cause.

Throughout those long centuries, Scripture tells us, God often heard the cry of "How long, oh Lord?" And so it does not offend His ears if it is a cry that some of us might be tempted to take up again. But our God is not a stone idol who listens in silence. Our God is a God who speaks. So ask the question. But listen, then listen for an answer, and you will find that His answer remains ever the same:

"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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile" (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

“Missions Fest” Goes Virtual January 29-31

As January rolls around each year, people start to get excited about *Missions Fest*. For many years now, Vancouver has been the home to one of the largest missionary and missions conferences in North America, and Sevenoaks has been a long-standing *Missions Fest* Partner Church.

Over the past few years, *Missions Fest* has been adapting and changing, as it has shifted from being an organization whose sole purpose was to put on a single annual three-day event to being a ‘hub’ organization that creates and coordinates numerous events, activities, projects and initiatives that happen throughout the calendar year. Although the big annual conference that is held in Vancouver is still called *Missions Fest* by lots of people, the organization itself has changed its name to *Mission Central*.

As so often happens when the Holy Spirit is at work, it seems as if the changes that have been gradually happening over the past few years were all designed to prepare *Mission Central* to be in a position to adapt when the Covid-19 pandemic came along. Obviously it was not going to be possible for there to be an in-person conference held this year, so this year *Missions Fest* is going online. It all starts in about two weeks time, and registration is FREE.

Although many people from Sevenoaks have attended *Missions Fest* over the years, many more who might have been interested in going have chosen not to because the long-time conference location, at the Vancouver Conference Centre, is just too difficult of a venue to get to from Abbotsford. Certainly the difficulty and expense involved in attending has meant that many of those who have attended have ended up going for one day only, and thus have had to miss out on a number of the conference events that took place on other days. Many of those challenges have now been resolved.



Although nothing can replace the buzz and excitement of attending a conference where thousands of people are gathered together in one place, the necessary switch to an online format has made the *Mission Central* conference significantly more accessible to everyone, as everyone can now ‘attend’ from the comfort of their own homes. And the conference organizers have also put in place another extraordinary feature which will make it possible for more people to experience more of the conference features that interest them, by dividing the online conference into three separate smaller and more focused conferences, each of which will be held on a different weekend.

The first conference in the series, entitled SERVE, will run from Friday, January 29 until Sunday, January 31. For detailed information, including lists of speakers and sessions, lists of exhibitors, and schedules, please visit the *Mission Central* conference website at <https://conference.missioncentral.ca/>.

Registration is FREE, but you must register to attend. Don’t miss out on this great opportunity to have the entire world of Missions come to you in the comfort of your own home!

<https://conference.missioncentral.ca/>

Opportunity to Volunteer

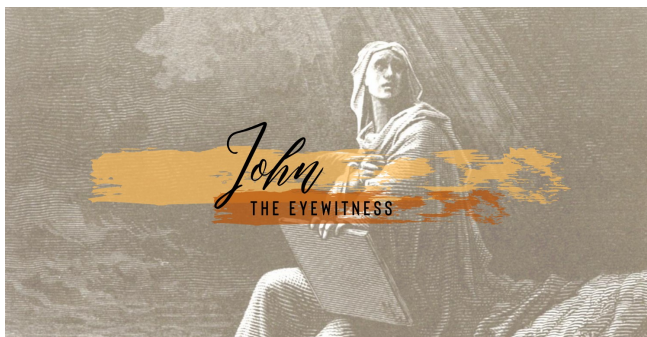
During the month of January, we have made our gym available for use as temporary location for the *Extreme Weather Shelter* which is operated by a team of staff and volunteers from Gateway Community Christian Reformed Church (as well as the Salvation Army). Jenny Vanderheide, the Gateway EWS Coordinator, has space on her team for a few more volunteers, and has asked us whether or not there might be some members of the Sevenoaks family who are willing to join.

On the nights when it is in operation, the shelter is run by 2 paid staff members at all times. Volunteers work with and provide assistance to the staff members, working on 2 shifts: an evening shift from 7:30 until midnight and a night shift from midnight until 8:30 a.m. The shelter is currently short on volunteers for the evening shift, especially on weekends.

Volunteer duties include serving food to the clients, handing out clothing items, checking in and storing personal belongings, helping clients locate their assigned sleeping bags, and assisting with general cleaning and sanitizing of the eating areas and bathrooms. And of course, as Christians whose desire is to show Christ's love to those who need it most, volunteers are also there to provide a smiling face, a willing and compassionate ear to listen, and a word of encouragement.

Training and orientation is provided. All appropriate Covid-19 safety protocols are in place, including mask wearing.

Volunteering to work in a homeless shelter isn't something that most people would volunteer for, but if this sounds like something you think God might have equipped you to step up and help with, for the sake of His love and for the glory of His kingdom, contact Brian Robertson (our Community Care Pastor) or Keegan Greenwood (our Building Superintendent), and we'll introduce you to Jenny.



We're Collecting for the Food Bank!

Starting this week, we have set up a collection box for the *Archway Food Bank* in the lobby at the church office. If you're coming by to see us, why not bring along a donation? If you weren't planning to come by and see us, now you have an excuse!

Set out below is a list of the top priority items the Food Bank is always in need of.

- Rice
- Hearty Soups
- Canned Meats
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Beans
- Canned Fruit
- Peanut Butter
- Pasta and Sauce
- Cereals/Granola Bars
- Crackers
- Jam/Honey

If you'd prefer to make a direct cash donation to the Food Bank, please visit their website at

<https://www.abbotsfordfoodbank.com/>



Upcoming Passages

January 17	John 13:31-38
January 24	John 14:1-11
January 31	John 14:12-21
February 7	John 14:22-31
February 21	John 15:1-8
February 28	John 15:9-17

Gospel Communities Still Meeting Online!

Video-conferencing programs like Zoom have been making it possible for several of our Gospel Communities to continue to meet online. If *your group* would like to know more about how to do this, contact Pastor Tim at tolson@sevenoaks.org, and he'll be glad to help you get started.

Alpha Online!

We're pleased to announce that over the course of the next three months, we are going to be able to offer the popular Alpha Course in an online format using Zoom! The course will start at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 28, and run every Thursday night for 12 weeks. From the security, safety and convenience of their own homes, Alpha Course participants will be able to gather together virtually, watch the teaching videos onscreen, and then participate in discussions afterwards. These discussions will take place in online chat rooms, where the discussions will be lead and moderated by course facilitators.

The Alpha Course is for everyone, but it is particularly useful for new Christians, those who are seeking spiritually, those who are looking for 'life's answers', and those who are just curious to learn more about who Jesus is and why people put their trust in Him. If you have never taken the Alpha course, or have taken it before and would like to take it again, consider joining us. Better yet, consider taking the course and inviting a friend to join you!

Advance registration is required for this Alpha Course, and there are three ways to register:

1. Visit our website and register online at <https://www.sevenoaks.org/pages/alpha>
2. E-mail Pastor Jack at jcampbell@sevenoaks.org
3. Phone Pastor Jack and leave a message at 604.853.0757, ext 227

Once you have registered we will send you all the information you need to access everything online. Then on January 28 we'll start off together on a great adventure.



Financial Update

I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge **thank you** to all who have given financially to Sevenoaks Alliance Church this past year! It was an unparalleled year in our lifetimes and one that brought great challenge, not the least of which economically. It is, therefore, all the more remarkable for me to be able to announce that we made budget by a few thousand dollars! What a tremendous thing to announce! This was made possible by your continued, faithful and generous giving – thank you.

An additional help to us this year was the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) which we were eligible to receive for some of the months of 2020; this helped us over the line. A huge thank you to Jenn Pitzel, our bookkeeper, who kept a diligent eye on what we were eligible to receive and made all the necessary applications.

I will give you a more precise update in a few weeks once we've been able to complete all of the 'year-end' financials. This will enable us to see how we finished with regard to expenses versus income. For now I just wanted to share the good news that income was strong; to thank you, and to express my (our) thanks and praise to God for seeing us through a tough year. Thank you Lord.

Pastor Jamie

2020 donation tax receipts will be available for pick up at the church office starting Monday, January 18. Any donation receipts not picked up by Thursday, February 18, will be mailed.

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

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