

# **A Publication of the Port Orchard Church of Christ • May 3, 2020**

## **Amid coronavirus pandemic, a theology for not 'assembling'**

If the Gospel is real and relevant, and the church is truly bigger than our buildings, now is the time to show it!

- By Jeremie Beller

OKLAHOMA CITY — Well, this is awkward.

We are used to arguing about the importance of the church “assembling together.” We’ve debated the importance of Bible classes, Sunday nights and Wednesday nights for years. Now we are trying to justify not meeting.

Who saw that coming?

Of course, the church has ignored government bans before. Rome didn’t want Christians meeting and “advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice” (Acts 16:21). They still met. Courageous Christians in China and Iran have met underground in defiance of government regulation for years.

But this time is different. It’s not because of our conviction that “Jesus is Lord” that the government has asked us not to assemble. Instead, the government has requested we not meet out of concern for our neighbors. Ironically, they are calling on businesses, schools and churches to practice justice and mercy. We are being asked to love our neighbor. Government officials have even called for people of faith to pray.

The church is being asked to be the church. They want us to live out the meaning of our confession. And our confession is much bigger than our assembly. That’s not to say being together is unimportant. In moments of fear, the church assembled to pray (Acts 4:23ff). In times of doubt, Christians were encouraged to continue meeting (Hebrews 10:25).

“Forsaking the assembly” has nothing to do with canceling meeting times out of love and concern for our neighbors, older members and others most at risk. It has nothing to do with reorganizing or repurposing times of assembly for other kinds of ministry.

“Forsaking the assembly” is a conscious effort to avoid being with other Christians, selfishly turning your back on the community of faith and refusing to live out the responsibilities of our calling. Elders and church leaders choosing to cancel or reimagine assemblies are doing anything but “forsaking the assembly.”

Being together is not the end in itself. The church assembles because we are saved, not to be saved. Assembling is how we encourage each other, lift each other up and blend our voices in praise to the God who saves us. Thankfully, many of us are blessed with modern technology allowing us to accomplish some of these objectives in different ways. It is not a perfect replacement, but it is helpful. (Our resident church hugger declared last Sunday that this virus is clearly of the devil.) Technology allows us to receive many blessings of community without threatening to harm our broader community.

It turns out, not assembling for a short time may be the best way to be the true church in these difficult times. God sent Jeremiah to encourage the Babylonian exiles to “seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile” (Jeremiah 29:7). Now is our chance to do the same.

The religious police of Jesus’ day accused him of ignoring the sabbath when he chose to “do good” and restore a man’s withered hand (Matthew 12:13). Jesus reminded them how God desires “mercy, not sacrifice” (Matthew 12:7). His desire is unchanged.

If God chooses, this crisis will pass. But this crisis has created unlimited opportunities to live out our confession. Our brothers, sisters and neighbors are sick, hungry and anxious. If the Gospel is real and relevant, and the church is truly bigger than our buildings, now is the time to show it!

JEREMIE BELLER has served as Congregational Minister for the Wilshire Church of Christ in Oklahoma City since 2002. He also serves as an Adjunct Professor of Communication for Oklahoma Christian University.

(Reprinted from Opinion page, Christian Chronicle, May 2020)

## May we help?

With so many of us sheltering in our homes as best we can, life and it's needs go on, such as trips for food, medications, etc, etc. A young man in our congregation is offering his time to make grocery and pharmacy pickups and deliver them to your front porch. His time and expenses are being covered by a local businessman/member of our church so there is absolutely NO charge to you for this service. Take advantage of it and stay safe! Just like Jesus, the debt has already been paid!

Here's how it works:

If you have needs, do one of the following:

Phone or text: (253) 380 4806 (Lorri Celletti) or, Email: [mlcell@wavecable.com](mailto:mlcell@wavecable.com) (Michael/Lorri Celletti)

Give your name and contact info, list of items needed, prescription pickup info etc.

Your items will be delivered to your front porch with a phone call to let you know they have arrived. Your receipt will be left in an envelope, then you can forward a check to the address on the envelope or call the above number to arrange payment when convenient.

There will be no personal contact between you and the person making the delivery. We want to keep everyone as safe as possible! If you should need financial assistance in procuring the items you need, please let us know. The goal is making sure everyone's needs are met until God conquers this virus. In the mean time, God bless all of you and stay safe!

P.S. You may also call (253) 223 9095 (Bob McDaniel) If you have questions or are unable to get through on above contact info.

## Meals on Wheels Information for Seniors

Any senior 60 + is eligible for this program . If interested and would like to get these meals please call the Meals on Wheels Kitsap Office. If you want to ask me about it, I will be happy to talk to you . If you know of anyone who can use this please pass the information along.

This is for those seniors who are not homebound. Suggestion donation is \$3.00 a meal . If you unable to pay - that's ok.

Bonnie 360-265-3266

Meals on Wheels To Go Program - Community dining clients now may pick up five (5) frozen meals one day a week. Meal pick-up remains the same -- 11:45 am to 12:15 pm -- at the sites and day of the week listed below no later than 2:00 pm one working day before pick-up. New seniors in need who qualify should call the office to apply.

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MONDAY	Burley Community Hall, 14853 Burley Avenue SE, Burley
	Pinewood Manor Apartments, 280 Sylvan Way, East Bremerton
TUESDAY:	Conifer Ridge Apartments, 1721 Fircrest Dr. SE, Port Orchard
THURSDAY:	Silverdale United Methodist Church, 9982 Silverdale Way NW, Silverdale
	Bainbridge Senior Center, 370 Brien Dr. SE, Bainbridge Island

**New Office Hours** - We are shifting to a Monday through Thursday work week. Phones are staffed from 9:00am to 3:00pm on those days. Please call **360-377-8511** or toll-free at **888-877-8511** if you need to reach us.

We welcome your tax-deductible contributions to ensure that providing healthy, nourishing meals to vulnerable seniors who rely on our services remains uninterrupted. Donations are gratefully [accepted online by clicking here](#) or by mail at 2817 Wheaton Way, Suite 208, Bremerton, WA 98310

## Our Prayer List

- Bonnie Mitchell's friend Chris Kalac suffered a stroke on Tuesday and was airlifted to the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center ICU. The next few days are critical as the medical staff tries to break up many blood clots. She is considered at high risk. Pray also for her husband, Ron. Due to current restrictions, he isn't allowed in the hospital. Pray for all involved.
- Pam Woodrow requests prayers for Amber Parrault who is having a breast biopsy on Wednesday.
- Michael Mathis had a stroke and is in the hospital.
- Michelle Johnson may lose her job as her employer is cutting jobs.
- Stimulus money received by a member has been donated to help someone who would be unable to pay their rent due to the current situation.  
If you know of anyone who could use this blessing, please let Bonnie Mitchell know and she will pass it along.
- Please lift up Mark Riordan to our powerful and merciful GOD - details are already known to our Creator - Much thanks and love
- Brittany (Gary & Tammy White's daughter) is a nurse and has volunteered to go help at the hospital in New Jersey for a month. She left earlier this week. and plans to return on May 23rd. Pray for her safe travels. Safety while she is there. and that she will stay healthy and not get the virus. Pray for Gary and Tammy and their family also.
- Daniel Tillman is recovering from brain surgery.
- Steve Smith is undergoing chemotherapy.
- Ashley (Ariana's mother) is recovering from pneumonia.
- Pray for our school children who will do online schooling for the rest of this school year. Pray for the children whose parents don't have the facilities to let their children do the online schooling.
- Pray especially for those families for whom domestic violence is common and very likely is increased during this time. We don't know their names or who they are, but God does.
- Pray for encouragement to all those who are tirelessly working to deal with the Covid-19 virus. Prayers that God will guide them.
- Continue to pray for our Deacons, Leadership Team, Our church family, Our missions, Families, Our nation and its leaders.
- Shirley Deford and Rick Velasco's Uncle Jack and Cousin Laurie for healing
- George who has Lou Gherig's for his health and safety

- Wayne Hammock and the passing of his nephew
- Whitney, granddaughter of the Byrd's for safety as a nurse dealing with treating patients with Covid-19
- Karen Taylor's friend, Virginia Latham recovering from surgery for a broken jaw
- Greg and Sandi Warner as they wait completion of the renovation of their home
- Greg and Sandi Warner for their son Michael to get court ordered medication to help his healing

Note: If you have a prayer request or an update, please contact Bonnie Mitchell at [mitbem0519@gmail.com](mailto:mitbem0519@gmail.com)

From Deja Cormier

I will be graduating with my bachelors in organizational leadership and technical management this coming summer. For my senior capstone I wanted to focus on a project that brought the seniors of our church together with our younger kids. With Covid-19 hitting hard I have had to make many changes to my project to put everyone's health at the forefront. With that being said, my new plan is to get several kids from our church and match them up with a senior saint.

My hope is to have these children in some way twice a week to do something special for "their" senior saint. That could include a drawing, a card, calling them and reading a bible verse or calling them just to talk. Any Non contact activities such as going to their window/door (6ft away of course) and having a long distance convo. Doing yard work for them if the weather permits, planting flowers or even making cookies. whatever our young ones imagination comes up with. Aside with doing something special for them twice a week I would like all of the kids to keep a journal of the things they do how it made them feel and possibly the response they got after doing it. This will be a way to track everything that's going on.

Pictures would be even more helpful. I would like to put a video together at the end of all of this. I feel this is a great way to keep the generations connected even more so now with everything going on. I know that a lot of families have had to adjust their schedules; some moms even became teachers over night lol. With that being said I need volunteers who are willing to see this project through and remain committed. This will start now and end in June but I would love for it to continue thereafter. If this something you feel you would like to be apart of please respond as soon as possible. You can text or call with with your child's name and the senior saint they will be "adopting" for the duration of the project. You can text or call me at 360.900.6199. Thank you for your help!

### **Happy Birthday!**

May: Isaac Benjamin – 2, Gary Chasteen – 3, John Bickle – 5, Julia Karn – 17, Barbara Chasteen – 25, Levi Herbert – 26, Gene Gerard – 28, Sarah Hill – 31

Bonnie received the following on our FB page and felt it was good to put out this information as some may be supporting this great work.

### ***Tithes and Offerings***

Several members have asked how to give their tithe to the Lord during this time. There are three options that allow me to enter your information in for tax purposes.

1) If you use on-line bill pay with your bank or credit union, set up a payee for Port Orchard Church of Christ. Your bank will mail your check for you. Other members have been doing this and it works well.

April 26, 2020 – Tithes & Offerings - \$1,117.00

2) Mail tithe check to the Church. We have a lock mail box.

3) Or drop the check in an envelope into our mailbox out front of the building.

#### Church Address:

Port Orchard Church of Christ  
4135 Carr Lane SE  
Port Orchard, Wa. 98366

Any questions, please give me a call. God bless you. Gary Chasteen - (cell) 360 731-4104

## **Hello from Orphan's Lifeline International!**

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, we have been contacted by many individuals from the Church family who are concerned about the orphan children we all care for around the world. A lot of you give through your church and therefore, do not receive a newsletter. For those of you in that situation, the best way to keep up on current news from the homes is through Facebook or by signing up for our newsletter.

Our main Facebook page is : <https://www.facebook.com/OrphansLifeline/>

This page will provide general updates and news. For news and updates specific to a children's home that you provide for, use the navigation (list) on the left side of this page and click on "Groups." There you can look for the home you support and ask to join that private group. If you are not on Facebook and wish to receive our newsletter, just click

here: <https://www.orphanlifeline.org/>

This is our website and at the bottom of the page is a form to sign up for the newsletter.

In the meantime, we want you to know that all of the children are safe and being cared for! None of the children or caregivers have the virus and while the situation in these countries is very difficult right now, we are working hard to keep the children safe and healthy! )

Secondly, we simply want to let you know that we are all praying for you. We pray that you stay safe and healthy and that God continues to bless each and every one of you! These are difficult times for us all, but we know that God is faithful and as Christians we have nothing to fear.

Thank you for all that you do and thanks for helping us get this important information out to individuals who are helpers of the orphans!

In Christ, Tim Murphy, Orphan's Lifetime International Kalispell MT

## **Worship @ Home**

Links for Church Bulletins, Sermons, & Worship

Port Orchard Church of Christ:

<http://pococ.weebly.com/weekly-church-bulletins.html>

<http://pococ.weebly.com/teachings.html>

Central Kitsap Church of Christ:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ckcocorg1/featured>

Bellevue Church of Christ:

<https://www.bellevuechurchofchrist.org/resources/sermonsbulletins>

Lakeview Church of Christ:

<https://www.lakeviewchurchofchrist.church/bulletins-2020/>

<https://www.lakeviewchurchofchrist.church/media/sermons/>

Puyallup Church of Christ:

<http://puyallupcofc.org/audio.html>

Max Lucado also publishes an "Online Church" on Facebook. This is a collection of videos of some of his weekly sermons. [https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=search&v=518183309102665&external\\_log\\_id=cc2ff9cd\\_e8e2930b32b0c5e8f56c3750&q=max%20lucado](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=search&v=518183309102665&external_log_id=cc2ff9cd_e8e2930b32b0c5e8f56c3750&q=max%20lucado)

The Acappella Company:

<https://acappella.org/>

Acappella Praise & Harmony:

<https://acappella.org/praise-and-harmony/>