

Good Friday afternoon, New South Family. Welcome to the 41st edition of the Weekly Word – this for the week ending April 24, 2020.

-----**The Critical**-----

Announcements

1) Annual Conference, 2020: As per the direction of our Bishops, we will not be meeting personally for Annual Conferences this year. After much discussion with our Board of Administration, we will instead work with all delegates to conducting normal business electronically. We will have a gathering, to include ordination service, as soon as we are able to meet together personally.

2) Encouragement in Quarantine From FM Elder Mike Henry: “Please receive a gift of encouragement from Missionary Phyllis Sortor at this most unusual time in our nation and for the Body of Christ. Five years ago Phyllis was kidnapped in Nigeria and held hostage for twelve days. In captivity, her life was threatened daily and terror gripped her. Then, she found turn-around hope in an act of love. Later, when recovering from the ordeal, she had to decide if she would return to Nigeria or remain captive to the traumatic fear.

During the process of making a documentary of her story we encountered a setback in our timing, but now we see a gift from God to bless the Church with hope. [In this fifteen-minute video, you will hear Phyllis' testimony of victory and message of new life as we face the "captivity" of this COVID quarantine.](#)

3) Congratulations: to Rev. Carl Brannon, who was recently elected as Superintendent of the North Central Conference. After serving as an elder in the Gateway Conference for the past thirteen years, Carl will be returning to his home conference, which voted overwhelmingly in favor of his election. Carl’s term will begin July 1. We congratulate Carl and Kim as well as thank current superintendent Rev. Mike Hopper and Janet for their service to North Central Conference. Carl and his wife Kim and their family plan to move from Greenville, Illinois to Janesville, Wisconsin in the near future. Please pray for the Brannon family as they step into this responsibility in full reliance on the Lord, in this challenging and opportune moment in history.

Church of the Week: Bowen FMC in Stanford, KY with pastor Bob Ritter

Conference / Superintendent’s Calendar (all times eastern)

April 27:	ABS (Area Bishop and Superintendents) - Zoom
May 14:	DL Zoom, 9:30a
May 29-30:	New South Annual Conference - Zoom
June 8:	ABS – Indianapolis (Zoom?)
June 15-20:	NSC Teen Camp
June 11-14:	NSC Family Camp
June 22-26:	NSC Kids’ Camp
August 9-11:	ABS – Baltimore
August 25-28:	Starting Strong for new pastors - Indianapolis
September 23-25:	New Room Conference, Nashville, TN

And now...

-----**The Important**-----

Resources, Articles and Attachments

1) Some Editorial Thoughts: These are, without doubt, the strangest days I've ever lived through, maybe because they are rather uncertain and full of contradiction. I watch the news and find that one moment I'd led to believe that all is really fine and things will be re-opening soon...and then the next report is nowhere near so rosy. I hear from friends and acquaintances a mixture of good news and hard news; some are just loving having their children home, even though that brings its own set of challenges. At the same time, people are grieving the loss of in-person communication with others they love. Some have really grown to like the change in schedules while others are concerned about the potential and realized loss of income and business. (By the way, this circumstance is proving particularly hard for some small business owners, who must lay off valued employees and who are concerned about their ability to keep their store or service open. Please keep all these needs in prayer and, best you can, shop local and small.)

Since we will likely not be having things like society meetings in the near term, it's perfectly fine, with your BOA approval, to continue officers until the necessary votes can be taken.

Also, please do follow your local guidelines regarding the reopening schedules. It seems that different states will go about this in different ways and according to different timelines, so "normal" will look different to us in the coming days.

2) Covid Comments: A few weeks ago I began asking different people from Wilmore to video record some of their thoughts as we walk through these strange days. They are all posted on Wilmore's YouTube Channel – [click here to access](#) – but I call your attention to the two offered by our own NSC elders – Tony Headley and Craig Saunders. Check them out as you have opportunity.

3) A Brief Article – Warm Hearted Thinking proved helpful to me this week, by Dr. Joseph Horton, professor of Psychology, Grove City College:

I do not hate my mom. Many in the media and some friends on social media seem to believe I do hate my mom, as well as other older people with compromised immune systems.

For more than a decade my mom has been taking potent drugs that suppress her immune system, and so I become a hypochondriac whenever a visit approaches. Is my throat scratchy? Could I be getting a cold...maybe something worse than a cold? I am keenly aware that my health affects not only her health, but her life expectancy.

But the thought that we need to consider the costs of shutting down economic activity is viewed with horror! The cultural message of the moment is that I value money more than people. But the human costs of our national shutdown are enormous.

Social isolation, the loss of productive work, limiting exercise opportunities, and removing control over our lives will produce significant mental and physical health problems. The research connecting these factors to well-being is well established.

We can be confident that the intensity of symptoms have increased for people who currently suffer from depression and anxiety. Further we can be confident that new cases of depression and anxiety are on the rise, as are problems with alcoholism, drug abuse, and domestic violence. Lives and relationships are being ruined and, yes, some of these people will die.

The people who are suffering the consequences of our extended economic shutdown have faces, too—just as the people who contract COVID-19 have faces. The media may not be counting the victims of the shutdown, but they exist.

Even the gyms are closed. Yet we know that exercise boosts the immune system and reduces the risk of depression and many diseases. How many more heart attacks and strokes will occur due to the forced closure of gyms?

What of the loss of purpose for laid-off workers? Does it feel like a slap in the face to get more in unemployment than one earned for productive work? What dangers will idle minds be drawn to?

When I walk through my neighborhood I pass a funeral home. Funerals are still taking place, but few people are able to attend. At the time of their greatest loss, families are disconnected from each other and their friends.

Then there are the young people who were to celebrate their marriages before family and friends. With legal limits on the size of gatherings and orders to shelter in place, nothing approaching a normal wedding can be had.

I think of shut-ins who long for visitors in normal times and now those visits are illegal.

At what point are the losses from the shutdown greater than the losses from COVID-19 itself? Considering this question comes not from a cold heart, but a warm one. We need to remember the invisible victims and consider their needs, too, as we decide the best course of action.

Yes, it is political leaders who will make the decisions, but they need to know that we the people recognize there is a downside to an extended shutdown, and that downside likewise includes very real human suffering.

Job Openings

At this point, we have a pastor or interim pastor in every NSC church, although those interim situations are, well, interim. We will have at least two pastoral openings this summer. Contact me for details.

Remember too that [if you click here](#), you will find job opening listings at FMC Human Resources.

April – May Birthdays (*that we know of)

Sylvia Brown – May 11

Mark Driskill – May 12

Roberta Zent – May 12

Tim Huff – May 17

*I would love to know the birthdays of all those related to the NSC who receive this communique – pastors, elders, delegates, special friends, etc. Please send month and day to Timothy at newsouthconference@gmail.com

This Week's Passage, Quote and Joke

Passage: This Sunday I'm beginning a series on some of the not-business-as-usual events in the Bible, starting with Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush in Exodus 3:1-12

Quote: “We need never shout across the spaces to an absent God. He is nearer than our own soul, closer than our most secret thoughts.” ~ A.W. Tozer,

Joke: Finally, Some COVID Humor:

The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house, and their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors!

Do not call the police on suspicious people in your neighborhood! Those are your neighbors without makeup and hair cuts/color.

Me: “Alexa what's the weather this weekend?”

Alexa: “It doesn't matter... you're not going anywhere.”

Quarantine has turned us into dogs. We roam the house all day looking for food. We are told "no" if we get too close to strangers, and we get really excited about car rides.

Blessings on your worship this weekend!

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