

Nick Soyars – Warrenton (MO) Church of Christ  
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### **Report for June 2019 – April 2020**

#### New Additions

We gained a new member last year. Bryan Spencer began attending with us in late spring of 2019. He was a member at the Foristell (MO) Church of Christ, a few miles east of us. They are a so-called “institutional” group. Bryan is a single man in his mid-forties. He teaches both high school and college classes. He also happens to be in his final term as a State Representative. His district is adjacent to our east. Bryan is devoted to Christ but has been unable to get deeply involved due to his hectic schedule. He is running for a seat in the State Senate in 2022. On Bryan’s behalf, I request prayers for the Lord to give him wisdom and use him to advance the purposes of God’s kingdom as a teacher and in his political office.

Maurice and Linda Nebel began attending with us late in the summer of 2019. They were members of the High Hill Christian Church about 15 miles west of Warrenton. They are in their 70’s. Maurice is in poor health. They are wonderful people. Some members have begun to build relationships with them. Our kids have especially hit it off well with them. They share a love for *The Little House* series of books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. My prayer request for them is that they would be fully integrated into the congregation, that the Lord would cause them to continue to grow through their relationships with the members of the church, and that the Lord would provide for them as they face their health challenges together.

#### Bible Class

For the second quarter of 2019, Dave Bogert taught Heath Rogers’s workbook *Portraits of Discipleship*. Dave then taught Acts 1-12 or so during the third quarter. I taught the rest of Acts for the last quarter of 2019.

In January and February Charles Rollings taught a class focusing on a series of New Testament texts that focus on being transformed as Christians (Romans 12.1-2; Ephesians 4.1-7; 1 Peter 1.22-2.3; 2 Peter 1.3-11).

In March Dave began teaching Ephesians. We have suspended our Bible classes since the last week of April to comply with the social distancing recommendations of our local and national leaders regarding the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

Throughout April I have been recording Bible studies/sermons using Facebook Live on our church’s Facebook page. I have been doing two each week (Sunday afternoon and Wednesday evening). The passages I have led us to meditate on: Psalms 46, 86, 16; John 7.37-44 in light of Ezekiel 47.1-11; and John 20 in light of Ezekiel 36-37 (in both Ezekiel and John, the storyline obviously travels all the way back to Genesis 1-3).

## Sermons

### *Sunday morning:*

I preached a series on 1 Samuel from June 2019 through the end of January 2020. I wanted to preach through both 1 and 2 Samuel, but I ended after 1 Samuel 25.

Sports Analogies (Feb 2, 2020)

Series: Dying to Sin (Feb 9, 16, 23, March 1, 8)

Theology of Sickness (March 15, 2020)

COVID-19 Discussion (March 22, 2020)

### *Sunday nights:*

In June I finished a series I started in May on “The Apologetic of the Christian Life.”

Some of the topical sermons I preached:

- “Seen by Men vs. Not Seen by Men” (how to understand Jesus’s teaching in Matthew 5.13-16 and 6.1ff in the context of the Sermon on the Mount)
- “A Case for Congregational Meetings” (what do we do with those passages in the New Testament in which the whole congregation is present when church leaders make decisions?)
- “Reversal of Fortunes Theme in Luke” (provides a piece of the background for Acts from Luke’s Gospel)

To go along with our class on Acts:

- The Tower of Babel (Gen 11) & the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)”
- “What Does a Spirit-Filled Church Look Like in Acts?” (The Holy Spirit has often been treated as the Boogey-Man of the Bible. Although this is not what I focused on: Recognizing what Luke says about the Holy Spirit’s role in the life of Christ’s church does not lead to Pentecostalism.)
- “The Pattern of Pentecost in Acts 8-12” (this builds off seeing Acts 1-2 setting a pattern that Luke follows throughout Acts)
- “Calling on the Name of the Lord in Acts” (3-part series)

Series on Worship throughout the Fall and Winter of 2019:

- “Psalm 136 and Antiphonal Singing” (a way to engage the entire worshipping congregation in instilling God’s word in our hearts)
- “Congregational Self-Examination (2 Cor. 13.1ff)”
- “Worship Must Build Up (1Cor. 14)”

For the following series we changed our Sunday evening format so we can have a discussion instead of passively listening to something we’d forget an hour later:

- “5 Aspects of Worship”: 1) Praise 2) Confessing Sin 3) Assurance of Forgiveness 4) Thanksgiving 5) Supplications
- “Implementing the 5 Aspects of Worship in Songs and Prayer”

A number of times over the years I led singing and preached on Sundays. Everyone, notably our worship leaders, consistently voiced their appreciation for how I structured our worship. I finally decided to share the process I went through to prepare to lead worship. Additionally, I have noticed that men who lead public prayers (including myself) either pray the same thing (often verbatim) what they pray every time they lead or they feel as if they have no guidelines. Whatever comes into their head at the moment is what’s prayed for.

I wondered if we were up to the following challenges: conforming our prayers to what is prayed for in the recorded prayers in the Bible; the songs that we choose to sing to conform to biblical doctrine and what the Bible teaches about song leaders actually leading us in worship.

I did not work through everything I had intended because Ryan Petras, a former member of our local church, graciously volunteered to teach a class on Sunday evenings (January-March 2020). He had just taught a class on “Loving One Another” at his home congregation. He wanted to share his discoveries and exhortations with us, among whom he labored tirelessly while he was a member.

### The End of a Run

After an arduous wrestling match in my heart for over three years (the longest & most intense of my life, and I have had many), and with the guidance from biblically wise counselors (see, e.g., Proverbs 11.14), Katie and I have decided that I will not serve as a preacher for the Warrenton Church of Christ after May 31, 2020.

You all have been faithful supporters - in more ways than one - of the Lord’s work through me while serving the Warrenton Church of Christ. Words cannot adequately express my thanksgivings to the Lord for all of you.