

We are living in unprecedented times, times that only the wisdom of an all-knowing, all-powerful God could see us through.

Who would have thought that the *coronavirus* outbreak in China would have an impact on every household in the United States within a matter of weeks? Things have been in such a state of flux for the last several weeks that it has been difficult to finish this newsletter that was started at the beginning of March. It was just as our older daughter completed her Spring break and our younger daughter began her break that the closing of schools and businesses began.



Family News

March 13, was my last day as program manager for the YMCA latchkey program at Lincoln Elementary school. Due to my age and history of asthma, my doctor recommended I not work around children during the pandemic. I have always said I needed a month of Saturdays to complete numerous projects – decluttering, sorting, cleaning and pitching around my house – and now I have that time. I am also having fun with an indoor garden. I have started using vegetables from groceries. Thankfully, Doug has been able to continue working at a remote office near our home for Thomson Reuters.

Both daughters have chosen to continue living near their college campuses to finish their classes for this semester/year on-line. The end of April, Kaitlen will graduate from the University of Michigan with a BA in Intercultural Studies and two minors in Chinese and Translation. The graduation ceremony with her department, April 29 and a university-wide ceremony in the Big House (Michigan Stadium) May 2, are both cancelled for the first time in history. Please pray Kaitlen is able to find a meaningful job in her field, and that she has godly

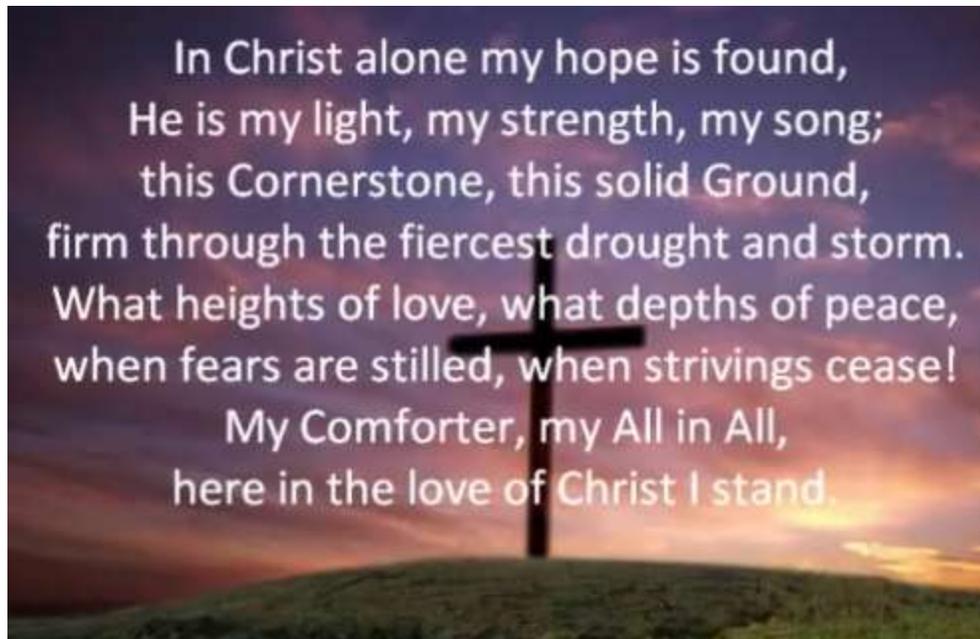
wisdom about next steps, since she has needed to postpone her plans to travel abroad this summer and next year with the desire/goal to improve her language skills.

Christina's outdoor track season was likewise cancelled, and then her summer internship at Cincinnati Children's hospital was cancelled as well. Please pray Christina is still able to take the MCAT at the end of May as scheduled, or in June at the latest.

Although these have been huge losses for both girls at pivotal times in their lives, we are trusting ...*"in all things God will work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose."* (Romans 8:28)

Increase in ministry hours due to leadership role changes

In the past six months, our ministry team in the Ann Arbor area went from six ISI staff to just Doug, who continues to fill the role of Ann Arbor Area mobilizer. I am partnering with Doug, along with a team of outstanding volunteers, but the unexpected staff changes thrust us into a leadership role that has required an increase in both planning and ministry hours. Because these changes came unexpectedly, it has been necessary to move forward in ministry before having the time to increase our financial support base. As a result, we find ourselves in a difficult place, wanting to increase our support, but not wanting to compromise the ministry to internationals in our area. More on this topic under current strategy below.



Effects of Coronavirus pandemic

As we were in the midst of adjusting to our new role of primary staff in the Ann Arbor area, a new challenge arose: how to continue ministering to students, who are primarily Chinese, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. For the last four weeks, Doug has conducted the Friday evening fellowship and Bible study time via Zoom. This has had a positive impact on attendance, since students and scholars outside Ann Arbor are able to join. PRAISE! We also continue weekly communication with our volunteers through WhatsApp, and our monthly prayer/planning leadership meeting via ZOOM.

I (Kathi) am sending weekly emails to my Bible study class of Japanese women to continue our Bible study in the gospel of John. There has been a positive response by many of the women, and they are spending time studying God's Word on their own for possibly the first time in their lives. A PRAISE!

Our Easter dinner event was canceled, so as an alternative we invited students and scholars to view a church service with us Easter morning on-line, and then held a Zoom discussion Sunday afternoon about what Christ did for us on the cross. This discussion went well. Please pray for S. to make a decision to follow Christ.

The ISI National Conference in Colorado (in June) was cancelled one week after Doug bought his plane ticket and paid his registration. Fortunately, the plane ticket can be used next year when the conference is rescheduled.

Current Strategy

Due to many factors that are beyond our control but continue to have an impact on our time, our current strategy is to view ourselves as *tent-makers*, working to provide most of our living for ourselves, and inviting our ministry partners to join us in covering a minimal monthly salary (set around \$650/month) and our ministry expenses. Therefore, we want to invite you to partner with us financially with a one-time or ongoing gift so this vital ministry to internationals is able to continue.

In December, January, and February, expenses for gas, food, high-speed internet, and supplies averaged around \$350.00. In March, our cost for gas, food and supplies decreased due to the stay-at-home order, but we added the small monthly cost of Zoom, which we will continue to use. Since our attendance is up with Zoom, Doug is looking into a way to include students who live outside the area long-term with a one-time cost of purchasing a high-quality multi-directional microphone and speakers to allow on-line students to participate even after we go back to having an on-site meeting. On our wish list is also a projector to use with his computer for larger events. Eventually, we will also need to upgrade our computer equipment to stay in touch with students on an ongoing basis. Currently Doug is using his computer from work.

Phase 2 of our strategy is to work part-time outside as our financial support base increases, and Phase 3 is to be in ministry full time and meet our living expenses through support when we technically retire from our current jobs.

Giving: <https://www.isionline.org/Donate/DougSawyer.aspx>

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