

*The Lord reached down from heaven and rescued me; He drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemies, from those who.. were too strong for me. He brought me out into a broad place.*

*Psalm 18:16-19*

Hi Jim and the Missions Team,

*These verses describe what I believe God has been doing in our lives in ministry since the pandemic began mid-March. At first I felt closed in and surrounded by an unseen enemy that was too powerful for me. The unknowns about the virus, the partial truths from the media, the conflicting messages from our local and national governing authorities, and the restrictions left me feeling frightened and very alone -- as I sheltered at home, while my husband continued to go to work and my daughters stayed near their college campuses. Then a still small voice reminded me to “**look up**” rather than around at the **chaos** surrounding me. (You can read about Elijah’s experience in I Kings 19:11-13.) As I looked up, I saw God doing a “**new thing.**”*



### Kathi's Wasteland

*My **wasteland** ... was the loss of many things near and dear to my heart... Time spent with our immediate and extended family. Watching my daughters grieve their losses; Kaitlen's loss of finishing her last semester in the classroom, separation from her friends, and the loss of graduating from the Big House at U of M. Christina's loss of her outdoor running session, her summer internship, and separation from friends.*

#### **Praises!**

- *Kaitlen had a phone interview in June for a job that she hopes to secure for the Fall. **Please pray** she will get a meaningful job for the fall.*
- *Christina was able to find housing and employment for the summer. She was also able to take the MCAT at the end of May and scored well enough to apply to her top pick medical schools. **Please pray** that the site uploads her transcripts by the deadline.*

*Kathi's wasteland continued -- I had to walk away from a job that I also*

*considered a ministry, with latchkey children at the YMCA, as a precaution due to a history of respiratory issues. Shopping for my family, which I previously enjoyed became a stressful chore as I hunted for essentials, and encountered many empty shelves. The concern of shopping safely resulted in the need to secure a mask that effectively protected me from covid-19? (There are many conflicting reports about what masks are effective.) Then there was the concern of wearing a mask too long, which made it hard for me to breath and left me light headed. I also now needed to carry hand sanitizer and spray sanitizer as a way to clean surfaces while I shopped. Sadly, the purchase of seeds was restricted at a time I had been looking forward to putting in a vegetable garden while sheltering at home. We also lost two of our favorite date nights -- going out to eat and going out to see a movie. And finally I lost wandering through Marshall's to find treasures for my home at reasonable prices.*

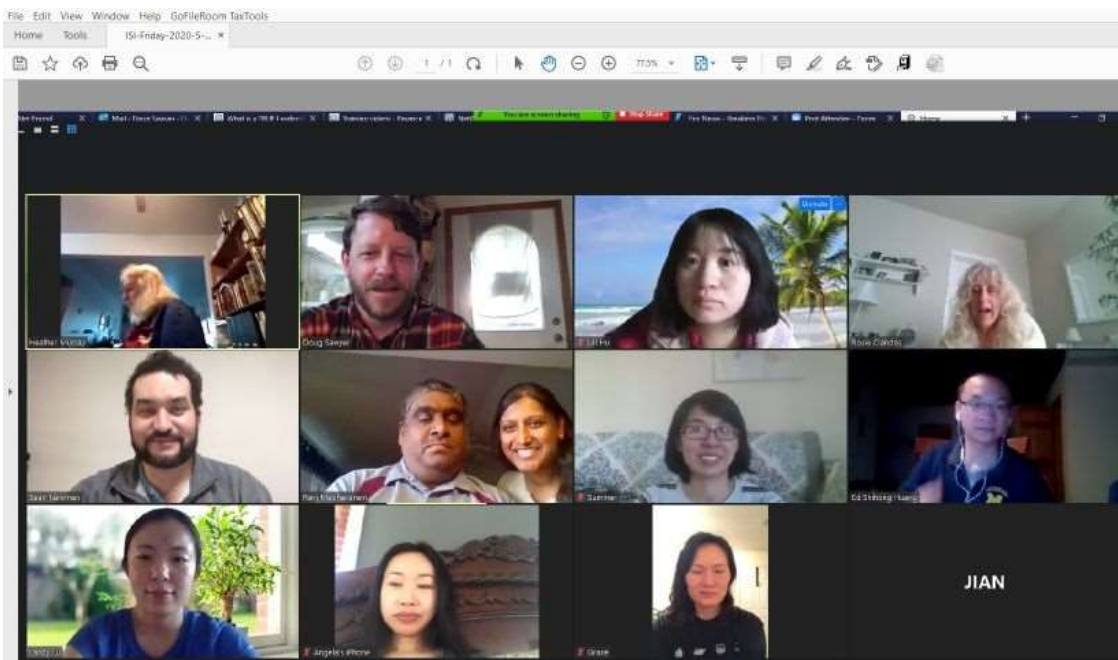
*I share this wasteland so you can see how loving and gracious God was when He reached down and drew me out of this very barren place.. as He exchanged my ashes for beauty and mourning for joy in the '**new thing**' that **sprang forth!***

**See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.  
*Isaiah 43:18-19***



***New things that sprang forth...*** I was suddenly free of things that had been filling my time but weren't necessarily God's central purpose for me. I was home with limitless time to pursue some things that I have always wanted to do... make cards from photos and send them to friends and family, start a garden from groceries and learn about producing food for my family, but God was bringing about other new things as well.

- *Due to a shift in Doug's work schedule he was able to attend a regional prayer time on Mondays for the first time in his ministry with ISI.*
- *Due to the need to change to a Zoom format for the Friday evening bible studies, attendance increased from 5-6 attendees to 10-12 attendees.*
- *Those outside the Ann Arbor area, **L** from Canada and **F** from California, have been able to join Friday Bible studies.*
- *Also, some of our volunteers who had not been able to attend these meetings in person previously are now able to join us because of the use of zoom.*



- *I, Kathi, have been able to begin meeting with two women, via zoom, to help them prepare for the TOFEL exam. This meeting resulted in a second meeting with the same women for English conversation about daily living in these difficult times. (Being a foreigner in a foreign land during these days is an even more difficult situation than I was facing.) After our first meeting about daily living, these ladies asked to invite another friend to join us. Then last week they asked if a fourth woman could join us. Had God freed up our time for 'such a time as this'?*

*[I hope you don't mind if I pause to share another brief story. Early in our marriage, God led Doug and me to Japan as tentmaker missionaries. During our last two years there, after losing our first baby to an ectopic pregnancy, I gave birth to our two daughters in a foreign land, far from my own home, family and familiar culture. The rest of this story about God's faithfulness is for another time, but I share this much to tell you ...]*

- *\*Three of the ladies I am talking with about daily life are pregnant and two of them will give birth to daughters this fall. We share the same experience of starting our families in a foreign land far from home and family. In their culture it is traditional for their mothers to come and care for them for the first month after their baby is born. None of their mothers are able to come as planned due to travel restrictions.*
- **Please pray** for good health for **S, L** and **D** and for them to be open to what God is doing in their lives. **Pray** for **M** to hunger after the things of God as she is a key influencer over the other women. Also, pray for God to give me wisdom as I share with them.

**More new things** - *Some of our leadership team was able to meet in person in June, while others chose to join the meeting via zoom. Therefore, Doug was able to test a microphone he purchased for the purpose of an in-person meeting, with zoom attendees as well. This technology worked very well!*

- **Praise!** *Thank you to those who kindly and generously gave us financial gifts during the pandemic that helped purchase this*

equipment.

*June 29- July 1. Doug and I were able to attend the ISI National Conference on-line in our living room. I would not have been able to attend had the conference been held in Colorado due to the expense.*

- ***Please pray*** as we seek God as to how ministry will look in the new day in which we are living. All ISI ministry staff, at the home office and around the nation are seeking God for wisdom regarding what our strategy for ministry will be in the coming days.
- ***Please pray specifically*** for our day of prayer and planning **July 11** as we gather to consider next steps in ministry for this coming school year. We have an amazing team of second-generation internationals working with us, former students from several countries who are reaching others for Christ.
- *For Doug and me, planning ahead for both on-line meetings and preparing to meet in person with many restrictions is a time-consuming process.*

### *New Strategy*

*In closing, I believe God is using this time of restriction in our nation to bring Doug and me to a broad place in ministry. We are freer than we have ever been to function in our giftings within ministry to internationals. Even though we don't have a specific road map yet of what that will look like going forward, I believe God will faithfully guide us.*

*Please let us know how we can pray for you!  
Together under His love and grace,  
Doug & Kathi Sawyer*

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**Our mailing address is:**

Doug & Kathi Sawyer

International Students Inc. (ISI)

507 S Adrian St

Tecumseh, MI 49286