

GOD STORIES FROM DESERT HOPE FAMILY

DESERT HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH | APRIL 2023



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“Raise the sails” is the theme that our President, Terry Bredehoft, used in his first note to Desert Hope. In that note, he expressed that it is time for Desert Hope to stop looking inward and backward and to start moving forward. Therefore, that is the theme we have chosen for this issue of Desert Scrolls.

We want to encourage everyone to seek God’s help to drop “survival thinking” about our church and to discover “faith thinking.” God has brought us through a difficult period and now wants us to look forward. This will bring us renewed energy and refocus us on the primary task of the church: Being disciples and making disciples for Jesus.



Hello Desert Hope Family!

My name is Jarret Sample and I have been a member of the Desert Hope Community since 2018, along with my wife LeeAnn. I was raised in Southern California and attended a Catholic church, including catechism classes, in my grade school years. While attending college in the state of New Mexico, I transitioned to a Presbyterian church, attending services on Sundays while balancing a full course workload in science, mathematics and engineering studies during the week. When I look back on these early years of personal development, I appreciate the values and discipline that my parents, family, friends, teachers and spiritual leaders helped instill in me; many served as strong influences on me, and each contributed in their own unique way to help teach me many of life's lessons. For that I am truly grateful.

I have lived in Tucson for nearly 24 years now since graduating college and starting my professional career. While it did take me several years to find Desert Hope and my lovely wife LeeAnn, my journey in the way of personal growth has been tremendous. Over the course of that time span, I helped raise my two sons, Isaac and Dominic (from a previous marriage), and worked through several difficult personal, family and career-related



I believe upholding core values, a strong sense of faith and reliance on God for guidance not only helped me through challenging times, but it also certainly helped me grow into the man that I am today. At this point in my life, I find it more important than ever to continue strengthening my faith and ensure that I am walking with God on a daily basis. Through Him all things are possible. He is our comfort and the help He provides is unmatched.

BLESSED TO FIND CARING PEOPLE

Chad Hemingway

My name is Chad Hemingway. I'm from Conway, South Carolina, but I have spent the last five months in Tucson. I am originally from the Midwest. I went to college at Michigan Tech, which is located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where I studied Civil Engineering and life in the snow country.



After college, I decided to begin my career in plastics manufacturing and have been working in that industry for the last eleven years. My other interests include hiking, biking, running and volunteering at the local animal shelter.

I found Desert Hope while searching the LCMC website directory for a Lutheran church. I was looking for a church with similar characteristics to my previous one - small, friendly people, genuine, and plans for the future. It didn't take me long to choose Desert Hope.

Everyone is very welcoming, the pastor's message is forward thinking (not to mention his sense of humor), and the music is inspirational. Desert Hope is highly connected to its congregation via Hope Notes, dedicated website and online community. I especially enjoy the welcome crew. They are very persistent and friendly.

I have been very blessed to find such a caring group here in Tucson and I am looking forward to what the future may bring to Desert Hope.

LEARNING TO BE DEPENDENT

Jack Martin

Well, it finally happened. After avoiding it for nearly three years, I got COVID-19 while in Florida this February. I was in Florida for my final in-person training with Pioneers, my missions organization, before I move to Japan long-term this October.

This meant I had to take a lot of the training online. Fortunately, Pioneers has a good camera and Zoom setup, so I was able to do this from the comfort of my guestroom. What was most uncomfortable (besides my COVID symptoms) was having to rely on other people for everything - asking people to bring food, water, and medicine. I like to feel independent; I don't like to feel like a burden. But there I was.

There was a lesson I think I needed to learn, and probably still need to learn more, because the life of a missionary is similar to being stuck in a guestroom with COVID. That is to say, a missionary is reliant on other people for a lot - financial support, prayer, and guidance in the field. Even more than that, I feel ever more aware of my need for God's work in me. When it comes to God, do I still want to feel independent? Do I think of myself as big enough to burden God? It sounds ridiculous when I put it into words, but I act as if I think like that.

Sometimes you know the right answer, but it's hard to apply to your life. For now, I'm finding that I feel equal measures of discomfort and comfort as I learn to rely more on God and on others, but also greater gratitude as I recognize God's provision. If you would, please pray that God would continue to work in my heart. His work in my life is something I need even now, ahead of the challenges of life in Japan.

I'm grateful for your prayers and your ongoing support, both through the church and through Pioneers, for those who have partnered in that way. This support allowed me to get to training in Florida, will help cover the costs associated with moving to Japan in October, and will enable me to engage in long-term ministry in Japan. Thank you!





QUINCY'S QUEST

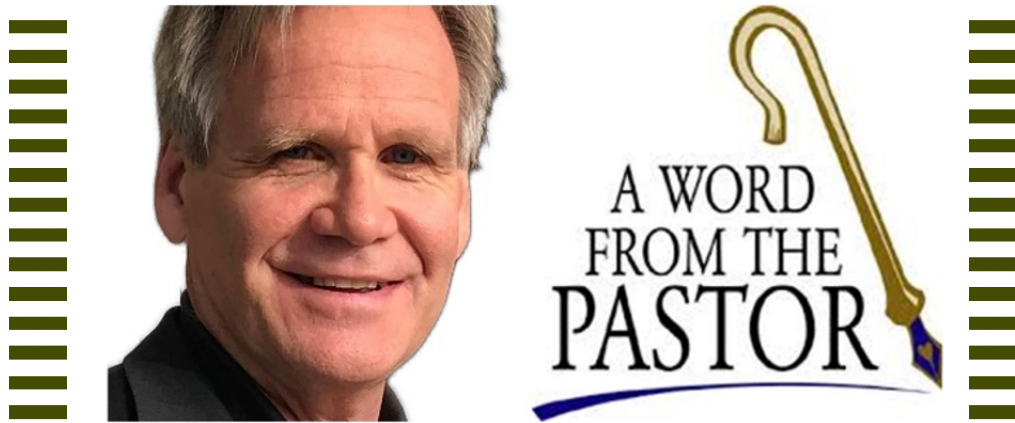
Quincy our mascot is looking for glimpses of where God is working in the lives of Desert Hope's people.

One church member told Quincy how their faith was strengthened by reading Pastor Kent's book, Miracles. (Pick up a free copy from the Narthex). It opened their eyes to how God works every day in people's lives. They were inspired to start a gratitude journal, writing thanks to God for the big and little things God does for them.

Some Desert Hope members are blessed to be part of the new Pastoral Care Assistants ministry. They visit those who are home bound, hospitalized or in a care facility. During their visit they read the Bible, pray and serve Communion. On one visit, two of the Pastoral Care Assistants were inspired by the person they were visiting. The lady showed faithful devotion to the Lord even though she had health challenges. She spoke of reading her Bible every day.

Quincy heard how a Desert Hope Quilter is blessed to be part of the quilting ministry. They glorify God by giving quilts to those who are baptized, high school graduates, and to other ministries around Tucson. Quilts are also given to Agua Prieta families who receive a new shelter built by the church team. One Quilter spoke of the blessing to be there for the dedication of the shelter and quilt presentation. Seeing the tears of joy showed that God was working.

A husband and wife from Desert Hope prayed that their neighbor's stolen truck be returned and the thieves caught. Many stolen vehicles are never found, nor are the thieves brought to justice. Six days after the theft, DPS caught the thieves driving the truck. You never know how God will answer your prayer - He can do it in amazing and unexpected ways!



The images of someone riding a bike versus sailing the seas are quite different. Riding bike has to do with us exerting all our energy to get somewhere. Sailing has to do with allowing an outside power (the wind) to get you to your destination. In Christian thought, biking would symbolize our life if we were trying to get somewhere on our own energy, creativity, and strength. It is what we call works righteousness. We depend on and trust our own abilities. That would go for salvation or simply serving God with your life.

Sailing is a much more beautiful picture. In the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, the same word is used for Spirit, wind or breath. Pointed toward Christian thought, this image of sailing is a picture of the wind of the Holy Spirit getting us to where we want to go, or rather, to where God wants us. Salvation has nothing to do with our efforts to gain reconciliation with God and everything to do with God filling the sails. Also, living the Christian life is much more fruitful if we learn how to allow God's plans, agendas and will to get done by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Filling the sails as an image for being saved is found in *Ephesians 2:8*

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift from God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Continued...

I think most of us get this one. Growing up in the Lutheran church, we are drilled with this idea. There is nothing one can do in the saving process except allow the wind from God to transform us and lead us to redemption. The problem, however, is that while many believe faith and salvation are 100% gift (wind in the sails), living out the Christian life is often thought of as our chance to do the work. Even at seminary, it seemed assumed that while faith is a complete gift, what we do with living out our Christian life after that is our work and effort. Let me say here, the Holy Spirit fills the sails of both endeavors.

At the end of Luke, the resurrected Jesus tells the disciple not to go out yet to proclaim Christ risen from the dead. He told them to wait. He did this because He knew if they would have gone out in their own strength and energy, they would have failed. The sails were not up yet to catch the movement and guidance of the Spirit. At Pentecost, the disciples were filled with the wind of God. The Spirit fell on them, and they received power to go preach God's kingdom and invite men and women to faith in Jesus. What came after that was the world turned upside down because of the Spirit-empowered followers of Jesus.

Desert Hope is seeking God's vision for our lives of service in God's kingdom. We need to be careful not to let the sails down, but learn to get the sails perfectly positioned so we go in God's power to do His works. Pray for our church - that we would experience a new Pentecost - that He would fill our sails and power us onward. Ministry and serving will be fruitful if we allow him to run the show and fill the sails. Come, Holy Spirit!

Pastor Kent Groethe



**God provides
the wind**

**Man must
raise the sail**

Saint Augustine



Raising the sails of prayer and Bible reading is not easy. Yet it is obviously important. A sailboat will not go anywhere unless the sails are raised. That is also true in our spiritual lives. God has promised to fill our sail of faith when we read His word. He invites us to open our hearts in prayer so His Holy Spirit can fill our sails with power to move forward in our Christian lives. Yet we often don't do it. Why?

Romans 12:2 instructs us to not be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. I like J.B. Phillips translation of this verse: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold but let God re-mold your minds from within."

We must recognize we live in a different spiritual realm. When we choose to raise our sail of faith, we move into that realm. Otherwise, the ever-present society will squeeze out the spiritual and squeeze us into its mold. We must raise the sail of Bible reading so God can mold us to His pattern. Raising the sail of humble faith will lead us to choose God's mold and not the world's.

Someone has said, "We do not drift into a deeper Christian life." Yet that is what we so often try to do. We don't see the importance of determining to raise our sails. Every morning I try to say, "Lord, you are here, and I choose to follow your way." When I don't, I drift into the world's destructive pattern of thinking.

But as I choose to go against the natural current, the Holy Spirit pushes me in a different direction. And that direction is good, and God blessed. I will confess this has not yet become a natural pattern for me, but I am growing into it. I see the frustration and the dead end of society's way of thinking. I am learning to avoid that frustration by affirming my relationship with Christ at the start of and through the day.

I encourage you to raise your sails each morning by acknowledging your relationship with Christ. Remember the stability of your relationship is not based on your feelings, but on the security of Christ's love for you. As we focus on that truth, the spirit will fill our sails with His presence and power.



SCRIPTURE: In my Bible, I read..
OBSERVATION: This is what I notice...
APPLICATION: How it looks in my life..
PRAYER: My prayer regarding it...

SCRIPTURE

1 Chronicles 4:10 ^{NKJV}

And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So God granted him what he requested.

OBSERVATION

One might call Jabez a “nobody.” He even carried a burdensome name that meant “one born in pain.” His prayer asks for a greater purpose in life, opportunity to act on that purpose, God’s guidance in all that he did and protection from his enemies.

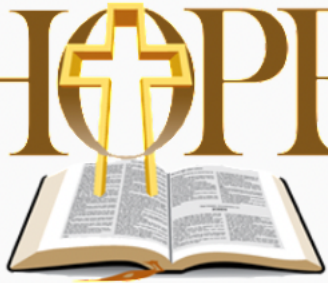
APPLICATION

Even though Jabez came from humble origins, he prayed a bold prayer and put his full trust in God.

PRAYER

Father, help me be like Jabez and be bold in what I strive to do in Your name.

DESERT
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