

# San Pedro UMC Weekly News: 8/10/2020

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## *Pastor's Ponderings...*

Greetings, I have gone to the mountains to relax and rejuvenate. Stay safe and be well. See you next week.

## *Idle thoughts from an Idle Lay Leader...*

You may have heard Pastor Lisa ask for suggestions or ideas on how we can do church in times of COVID. Well, I am in the middle of a leadership project looking for the same thing.

Below is my challenge project and I will be writing a five-page solution paper this week. That is where you come in. No idea is bad and ALL are welcomed.

If we are to grow as children of God, we need to communicate with each other. How else can we think outside the box!

Thanks,  
John S.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

COS 124

JOHN STEPHENSON

## RALLYING THE TROOPS IN THE TIME OF COVID

Ministry is challenging! Yeah, no kidding! Life is challenging! COVID is challenging! But we were specifically chosen to lead. We have indeed been called.

I draw some comparison to our churches struggles with COVID and it's effects on our people and our ministry to the first World War.

In that war, men found themselves in the trenches fighting the enemy, low on food, ammunition and clean water. Leadership was at best confused and scattered. Yet the boys in the trenches gallantly fought on. Slow progress would take place one day and the next day required retreat. Their leaders screamed out the orders to go over the wall of the trenches and take on the enemy. Battered and bruised they fought the foe. All along smelling the death and the futility of the conflict.

Then one day after making some progress pushing back the enemy, after experiencing what they thought was as bad as it could get, the gas came!

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Our churches have been fighting a foe for quite some time now. That foe has been ourselves. We keep sending our troops into battle ill prepared to lead in a time when our world has changed. We are looking around at our sanctuaries asking where did everybody go? Did we say something wrong? Did we offend someone? The answer is no! We just did not observe and listen to the people.

The question is , how do we take the good news to the people in a time of extremely difficult circumstances. COVID is another challenge we did not anticipate. But it has given us a great gift. The opportunity to change direction and our game plan is upon us. If indeed we are the leaders of disciples that we claim to be, this is our hour to shine. It never fails that crisis creates opportunity.

Now for some information about my church and my church family. We number about fifty people who regularly attend. In the seventies we were about two hundred. Yes, I do realize the seventies were fifty years ago, but we need context to see the forest from the trees. What remains of a once vibrant group of family church goers are retirees who are slowly dying off as time takes it's toll. We represent a full mixture today of all walks of life and from all types of diversity in the make up of our church family.

Our pastor just started her sixth year of appointment. Prior to her appointment we were told by the previous pastor that we would be closed within a year or so. He is no longer the pastor.

Dr. Ken Callahan once told me to stop counting the people in the seats and start counting the lives we touch in ministry. The mission field is where the disciples lay. The sheep are in the field waiting to be led to the water to be nourished.

Last year we touched the lives of over three thousand people. We did that with those fifty or so church members, of which about half took an active daily part in it's outreach. Our missions are many. Examples are.

1. We are building low income housing of fifty units on our dirt parking lot
2. We provide housing for Family Promise families
3. We feed every week at multiple shelters
4. We stock a clothing and supply room for any in need
5. We provide showers and health screenings for the homeless every month
6. We travel to India every year to teach self worth to abandoned girls
7. We conduct a Christmas program for three hundred kids of lesser means every year

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All of these missional projects have been successful because of good leadership and the ability to empower our members to take on the challenges. But we are only getting started.

And then the gas came.

With the challenge of COVID in our lives, how do we keep the fires burning and the morale of the troops invigorated?

As we all have resorted to technology to keep our churches alive, a great deal of ministerial work needs to be done. I have noticed that as services have been conducted on line we have lost some participants as time has gone by. Phone contact and sending notes of encouragement help but I am concerned about the spiritual morale of the people especially the ones who are living on the edges of financial security as well as physical needs. Outreach and support for all is a constant need. Technology has been a great help in these times, but it is the personal loss of so many that has a debilitating effect on everyone.

My challenge is how can I be the leader of the team when the clock is running, and we need some new plays to turn the game in our favor.

It is time for us to embrace the opponent and get to know him and learn from the experience not run away from it. I ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE!



This is from Bill Roberson: My granddaughter Eloise Thevenet just graduated "summa cum laude" from University of London. She will celebrate her 21st Birthday on August 25th. On Sept. 1st, she begins employment with Sanofi, the French pharmaceutical company in their management training program. Some of SPUMC's more senior folks may remember that Eloise lit the Advent Candle and bidall a very "joyeux noel" during a visit here ten years ago. [Her name, Eloise is the French version of Elsie, her great grandmother --- and my Mom. Elsie Roberson was a long-time member of SPUMC and Grandview.] Thanks to Covid-19, Univ. of London dispensed with the usual 'pomp & glory' graduation ceremony, and simply mailed the Certificate to her.

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Please pray for Pam and Ken Haas. This past week Pam's 90 year old Aunt died in Iowa and Ken has to have a bone marrow test to identify why his platelets are low.

Kurt Weston who is undergoing treatment for cancer. Please pray for Joy Weston and her daughter Kimberly who is caretaking for the family.

Lori Castagnola, our church secretary is home recovery

Belinda Brodin whose father is ill.

Prayers for the family of Eugen Elhers, who recently passed away.

John Stephenson's friend, Bill Levine and Christie's stepsister Rebecca who is undergoing chemo and radiation.

Pravaham outreach minister and teacher, Mary Latha who passed away. Prayers for her family.

Diane Ellis whose puppy dog passed away in early July. Also, Gary and Donna's Beagle passed away in July, as well as Richard's dog Shadow.

Marilyn Kloock is recovering well. Continued prayers please for Cousin Brenda who will still need two more surgeries; Jake Trolan is in the hospital and his mom Jan has been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Continued prayers for the Sutherland family.

Carol's friends: Angel and her daughter Sydney who is struggling with an eating disorder and Heidi, whose brother is in critical condition, also, Danielle, Carol's friend whose father, Dale passed away.

Prayers for Julie, Andrew and Mckayla, and Vickie. Also, Andrea whose family is struggling with health issues.

Prayers for our kids and teachers who are embarking on a new school year with much uncertainty.

Grace & peace,  
Pastor Lisa