From the desk of Pastor Steve...

"My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you." (Proverbs 4:20-25)

As I write this, news reports about the coronavirus are everywhere. My newsfeed has headlines like: "Spanish hotel placed on lockdown after one Italian guest test positive for coronavirus." "1,000 tourists in Tenerife quarantined after coronavirus diagnosis" "Korean Air cabin crew worker tests positive for coronavirus, report says" and "Coronavirus: World must prepare for pandemic, says World Health Organization."

Worldwide, people are going to great extremes to protect themselves. There is currently a shortage of surgical masks in several countries. Entire cruise ships are being quarantined. People are being tested for the virus as they enter our country. I recently had my annual checkup at the doctor's office. Before the doctor would even see me, I was asked whether or not I had traveled out of the country, and if I was experiencing any kind of flu symptoms. The threat seems real, and both countries and individuals are rightly taking steps to protect themselves.

In the passage I have chosen to share this month, Solomon advises us to guard our heart above all else. In light of the headlines we are seeing in the news today, I would suggest the following interpretation of that passage. "Above all else, guard your heart in the same way you would protect yourself from the coronavirus." Solomon is telling us that guarding our heart from things that destroy, is of absolute importance. If you or I had any idea that we were going to be exposed to the coronavirus, we would go to great measures to protect ourselves. I wonder if we take the same precautions when it comes to guarding our heart.

When I browse my social media feed, do I make sure to guard my heart from hatred, indignation, and divisiveness? My friend Ed Stetzer says, "Generations of people are being discipled by their cable news choices and spiritually shaped by their social media feed." When I see all of the negative political posts that purposely attempt to get people angry and often misrepresent the truth, do I guard my heart in the same way I would protect myself from the coronavirus? Do I pass the disease on by sharing the post?

Do I guard my heart with my entertainment choices? Do I pay attention to the messages behind the songs that I listen to? Am I careful with the TV shows that I binge watch? Do the books that I read or movies that I watch send my heart the right messages?

Do I guard my heart when somebody offends me? Do I make sure that bitterness and unforgiveness do not take root in my spirit? Do I harbor grudges? Do I become overly critical of others? Do I try to see the best in people, or the worst?

How do you guard your heart in today's world? Solomon gives us the answer in verses 24 and 25 of our passage. He tells us to keep our mouth free of perversity, to keep our eyes looking straight ahead, and to fix our gaze on what is important. He is telling us that in a world full of destructive distractions, we must choose to focus on the right things. We must choose to avoid those things that would bring destructive attitudes into our heart as carefully as we would avoid the coronavirus.

Pastor Steve

LWC Events

The LWC YOUTH GROUP is for HIRE!
LWC Youth Group is beginning to raise funds to help send kids to youth camp this summer. As part of their fundraising, they will be seeking out jobs they can do for a donation toward camp expenses.
If you have a job that needs done, and would like to hire the youth to complete it for you, please sign up online, contact Sarah Luthi at the church office, or Jabin Umfleet, Youth Pastor, by March 8th.

Sunday, March 22nd @ 6pm -
Prayer Gathering at LWC
This will be the first of four prayer gatherings throughout the next couple months. We ask you to come gather with us as we seek guidance and vision for the future of LWC.

IF:Gathering Lamont, is only 4 weeks away!
The event will be held March 27th & 28th, and will feature national speakers and live local worship that could have a lasting impact on hearts, as faith in Jesus is encouraged. Ladies of all ages are welcome - TEENS included. This will be a Friday evening and Saturday conference held at the Lamont Wesleyan Church.
Gift a registration by signing your friend(s) up for the IF: Local conference, or register yourself for this amazing event. The cost is $15 per person.
Go to https://local.ifgathering.com/lamont/

Attention LWC Youth Group and parents, NTS Camp registration is open! The cost is $150 to register, and you want to get your camper registered before May 1st to receive the earlybird price.
Camp will be held JUNE 28TH - JULY 2ND @ OKWU.
For more information please contact: Jabin Umfleet, Youth Pastor or go to www.ntscamp.com

NTS CAMP
REGISTER NOW AT NTSCAMP.COM

This Month @ LWC

March 1-7

Sunday 3/1
9:30am Sunday School
11:00am Worship Service
11:00am Communion Service
5:00pm Youth Group
Happy Birthday Cassidy Isch and Lisa Bullock!
Monday 3/2
Happy Birthday Cooper Luthi and Yvonne Lutz!
Tuesday 3/3
Happy Birthday Reese Hurlburt!
Wednesday 3/4
6:30 Women's Bible Study
Happy Birthday Rodney Johnson
Thursday 3/5
Ladies Luncheon 12pm El Lorito
Happy Birthday Mark Ott!
Friday 3/6
Saturday 3/7
Happy Birthday Jola Casey, Zander Suggs, and Maelee Shankie!

March 8-14

Sunday 3/8
12:00am Daylight Savings Time
9:30am Sunday School
11:00am Communion Service
11:00am Worship Service
5:00pm Youth Group
Happy Birthday Lindsey Fankhauser!
Monday 3/9
Happy Birthday Jameson Kingery!
Tuesday 3/10
Wednesday 3/11
6:30 Women's Bible Study
Thursday 3/12
Happy Birthday Ryan Watts!
Friday 3/13
Happy Birthday Lylah Smith!
Happy Anniversary William and Linda Wolcott!
Saturday 3/14
Happy Birthday Bodie Ecton, Earl Murphy, and Isaac Knight!

March 15-21

Sunday 3/15
9:30am Sunday School
11:00am Worship Service
5:00pm Youth Group
Monday 3/16
7:00pm Board Meeting
Happy Birthday Kim Schmidt and Lori Johnson!
Tuesday 3/17
6:30pm Barns, Bibles and Jesus
Happy Anniversary Lynn and David Morgan!
Wednesday 3/18
6:30pm Women's Bible Study
Thursday 3/19
Happy Birthday Chris Grames!
Friday 3/20
Happy Anniversary Sarah and Dallas Luthi & Jamie and Scott Thomsen
Saturday 3/21
Happy Birthday Gina Erwin!
Happy Anniversary Gina and Larry Erwin!

March 22-28

Sunday 3/22
9:30am Sunday School
11:00am Worship Service
5:00pm Youth Group
Happy Birthday Harvey Lingenfelter!
Monday 3/23
Tuesday 3/24
6:00pm Linc Meal
6:30pm Barns, Bibles and Jesus
Happy Birthday Sandy Justice!
Wednesday 3/25
6:30pm Women's Bible Study
Happy Birthday Brooklyn Clark and Erica Meyer!
Thursday 3/26
6:30pm Decorating for IF: Gathering
Friday 3/27
IF: Gathering 2020 6pm-9pm
Happy Birthday Scott Blubaugh
Saturday 3/28
IF: Gathering 2020 9am-3pm
Happy Birthday Ava Foltz!

March 29-31

Sunday 3/29
9:30am Sunday School
11:00am Worship Service
5:00pm Youth Group
Monday 3/30
Happy Birthday Gary Edwards!
Happy Anniversary Sheila and Steve Raaf!
Tuesday 3/31
6:30pm Barns, Bibles and Jesus
Happy Birthday Dianna Ramirez, Heather Harrel, and Ryan Redding!
Happy Anniversary Melissa and Brian Landis!

Ushers & Greeters

<u>Greeters</u>

Briand and Melissa Landis

<u>Ushers</u>

Dan Kraft, Dan Johnston

Tom Long, Craig Schreiner

Harvey Lingenfelter, Jeremy Raaf

Church News and Updates

IF: Lamont 2020 Pastor Kara

Registration is open and spots are filling up for our If:Lamont gathering scheduled for Friday, March 27th (6:00 – 9:00pm) and Saturday, March 28th (9:00 am – 3:00pm).

Recently, the leadership team for LWC's second IF:Gathering met with ladies from our various discipleship groups for a time of prayer and planning for the event coming up at the end of March. Already a sweet spirit of expectation is present, and we are anticipating meeting with Jesus and encouraging one another in our faith. As a part of the planning, teams are being assembled to help with details such as hospitality, prayer, and registration. If you or someone you know are interested in being a part of volunteering for IF, please contact the church office. We would love to have you join the team! Additional times of prayer and preparation will be held at LWC the evening of March 4th (6:30pm) and again closer to the event date.

If you have not had a chance to register or need help signing up, there's still time. Registration can be completed by going to https://local.ifgathering.com/lamont/ . Registration questions can be directed to Pastor Kara at kara@lamontchurch.com or by contacting

Other Monthly Events:

March 5th 12pm - Ladies Luncheon, El Lorito in Emporia

March 24th 6pm - Community LinC Meal

March 26th 6:30pm - IF: Gathering Set Up and Decoration

Why Prayer Gatherings? Pastor Andrew

In some ways I struggle whenever I use this verse because it is one of the verses most taken out of context in the whole Bible. However, in this circumstance I think it is good, and I just want to use the first part of it. The verse is Jeremiah 29:11, and the first part says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord." I don't think this verse needs a lot of explaining on what that means. It simply means he knew the plans he had for Jeremiah's life. I also know he knows the plans he has for my life, as well as the plans he has for your life. I think we also believe he knows the plans he has for our church. So, if he knows them, and we want them, there is one way to get them. To go to him and talk to him about it.

That is the "why" behind these prayer gatherings we have planned starting on March 22nd and going every other Sunday evening until May 3rd. We want to seek the Lord about what he has in store for us. We know we have options building wise and we want to know what he says about it. We know there are other things in our future that he is leading us too as well, and we do not want to miss it. We want to take time to get close to him. We want to ask him for guidance and wisdom, and then we want to quiet ourselves before him until we hear him speak. Then we want to be obedient. Plain and simple, we know the Lord has plans for us, and we want to know what they are. We believe the only way we can do that is through prayer. Please join us as we do just that.

GOD IS AT WORK IN RURAL AMERICA

God is up to something in rural America! I see evidence of this all the time. One shining example is Codell Community Church (CCC) in northwest Kansas. Codell is a small town, about the same size as Lamont. 35 people live there. The church serves several small communities, including Natoma, a town of around 400 that is eight miles to the east.

Historically, the church has been small. Over the last ten years it has seen a number of transitions. They became an independent church. They were established as a satellite location of a larger church, only to have that arrangement fall through. They then called a pastor who stayed less than six months. At that point the church faced a pretty stark reality.

God intervened! Pastor Thayne Spark, who was finishing up his seminary degree at Denver Seminary, agreed to become their pastor. He and his wife Janene have watched God bring the congregation to life over the last four years. Today Codell has close to 100 people attending on Sundays, many of whom are young families. God is bringing new life to this out-of-the-way place.

In all of my travels I have never been in a church that felt so much like Lamont. So much so, that I have asked Thayne to write an article about their story. Watch for that in next month's newsletter. It truly felt like home.

Just like Lamont back in 2003, CCC has several decisions to make. They are busting at the seams. People are driving from far and wide to be a part of the church. Do they build a new building? Do they go to two services? Do they start new churches? How do they continue to experience God's blessing?

Because of the faithfulness of DRN's supporters, I was able to spend the weekend with the CCC leadership team. I shared the story of Lamont, including our emphasis and following God's direction in prayer. I also gave some practical teaching on leading rural congregations. There was a definite sense of God's presence in this time. Everyone there had goosebumps as they began to see a bigger vision of what God can do through a rural church that allows HIM to do His thing.

On Sunday morning I had the honor of sharing the message. You can check that out here: https://comegrowtogether.com/media/rural-mission-field I then had lunch with the leadership team to recap the weekend.

There is no doubt that we will have a long-term relationship with CCC. God has an amazing plan for them, and I am excited that we get to be a small part of it. Pastor Steve

March 2020 www.lamontchurch.com

Inside LWC

What's Inside

From the desk of Pastor Steve

IF: Gathering 2020

Why Prayer Gatherings?

God Is At Work In Rural America

The Lamont Wesleyan Church newsletter, "Inside LWC", is published each month as a communications aid for our church family and friends. We hope you find this newsletter informative and useful. For more information about these events and service opportunities, go to nextsteps.lamontchurch.com.

If you have moved, please let us know your new address if you would like to continue to receive this newsletter. Also, please check the calendar each month and notify us as soon as possible if we have missed your birthday or anniversary. It is our sincere desire to recognizes those important dates in the lives of our LWC church family.

If you have any information to submit, please contact the church office by email at office@lamontchurch.com or by phone at 620-427-4010. Submissions for "Inside LWC" need to be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on the 2nd to last Sunday of each month.

2726 349th St. in Lamont
620-427-4010
Sunday Service 11:00 a.m.

Lamont Wesleyan CHURCH

P.O. Box 593
Lamont, KS 66855-0593

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED