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SPRINTING ONTO THE BASEBALL DIAMOND

Sprinting onto the baseball diamond as a youngster was a source of childhood delight. In my selective memory I recall sunny warm mornings with the occassional spring dew blanketing the field. Those were good moments. Simple and fun. As my knowledge of the sport grew I found myself intrigued by the heightening tension in anticipation of the pitch. This tension reflected the standoff between prospective protagonists. Where would the pitcher place the ball? How would the pitcher change things up? What did the pitcher know about his opponent and how would this inform the choice of pitch? The appropriately timed, placed, and strike-resulting curveball in particular caught my attention, and resolve. Conversely for the batter, this moment often found expression in frustration, baseless disappointment, and a steeled practice commitment to outsmart the next pitch(er).

As I got older, interest in baseball waned. My sense of marvel gravitated more to the experiential curveballs that at one time or another cross the home plate of our field of dreams. Loss, relational distress, betrayal, health concerns, personal failure, and lack of awareness, can introduce disorientation, disillusionment, and even despair into the ongoing story of our lives.

Reflecting on the Easter story, the crucifixion of Christ has to be one of the all-time Hall of Fame-worthy curveballs. Allow yourself, for the moment, the luxury of entering into the pre-resurrection awareness of Mary, of the disciples, of Peter.

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Personally, the despair articulated by Emmaus road travellers, "We had hope . . .," is palpable. These are difficult moments. Complex and disheartening. Life is like that at times. Collectively, and individually, our present-day Emmaus Road experience is gloomy grey with wearying restrictions and pivotal uncertainty.

What the travellers were unaware of during that first passion week, was quite literally unfolding before their very eyes. Their earth-limited perspectives were about to give way to the greatest home run in the history of the Kingdom. God was at work in history, through Christ, orchestrating his divine purposes through the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. Death no longer has the final say. Forgiveness and reconciliation have been secured and extended. In this pandemic season there continues to be loss and hardship. Each of us knows something of the groaning that underlies the longing for the post-pandemic sunrise. As we wait, may I offer a few suggestions . . .

Be faithful. The greatest and foundational commandment of all of Jesus' teaching is "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Elsewhere, Jesus comments, "Do this and you shall live." The spiritually significant connection here between love and life finds expression in the sometimes ordinary and tangible of the day to day. How might life-giving faithfulness look in your family and the relational communities you are part of today?

Be curious. Our finite understandings, assumptions, personal biases, and need to know can rob us of the capacity to be curious in seasons of ambiguity. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9). He is faithful. Rest in the assurance that he is at work choreographing his redemptive plan. Let's adopt a posture of seeking to catch a glimpse of "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived, the things God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Be creative. Change is challenging at the best of times. Change outside of our comfortable norms can be disruptive. It is easy to hunker down, try harder, and refortify in seasons that defy understanding. May I encourage us to resist this tendency and instead intentionally embrace creative ways of reflecting the transformative Light of the Gospel.

VIRTUAL SPRING UPDATE

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS DR. CHARLES AND COLLEEN SHEPSON

Continuous improvement is a concept not new to most of us. Continuous pivoting, despite the new opportunities we are discovering, heightens our longing for stability.

Hitting the road and connecting personally with you during the annual Fairhaven Spring Tour is a longing that will go unmet this year. Gwen and I are however excited to invite you to join with us on **Sunday April 25th at 3:00PM PST via ZOOM.**

Though we will not be gathering around tables and sharing a meal, this will be an opportunity for the extended Fairhaven family to come together virtually to celebrate God's faithfulness through the ministry this past year.

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We are absolutely thrilled to announce that Dr. Charles and Colleen Shepson will be joining us LIVE from Shell Point Retirement Community outside Fort Myers, FL.

In anticipation of our time together I will also be sitting down with well-known author, speaker, and Ambrose University professor, ***Mark Buchanan*** to reflect on the experience of pastors and leaders serving on the 'spiritual frontlines' as they navigate their respective ministries through this pandemic. In this pre-recorded interview, Mark will share some thougts on flourishing as a leader and what this might look like in our ever-shifting contemporary ministry context.

Join us for a time of connecting, reminiscing,of encouragement, and where we will be sharing an update from the ministry,and inspiration toward ongoing participation in the mission of Fairhaven.

Please feel free to pass this invite along to others who might wish to participate and visit with the Shepsons. As restrictions permit, perhaps consider hosting a watch party in your home. If you need assistance with setting up Zoom, let us know in advance. Until then . . .

This event will be hosted using Zoom Meetings. Once you RSVP, you will receive a confirmation email, with a Zoom link for the meeting.

RSVP by clicking here

We look forward to sharing this time with you!

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVERS
A RETREAT PARTNERSHIP

As the summer sun was setting and the transition to fall began, reintroduced flattening-the-curve restrictions added a new level of weariness for pastors and ministry leaders. Firmly anchored in the belief that local congregations are in the best position to care for their caregivers, we reached out to churches and church boards with a promotional partnership; encouraging congregations to bless those who labour among them with the gift of unplugged silence and solitude here at Fairhaven. Many pastors, senior leaders and ministry staff were blessed through the care and generosity expressed by the congregations who responded. Building on this success, Fairhaven will again this fall launch a similar initiative, targeted specifically to partnering with the local church to extend their care for their caregivers with the gift of rest and renewal. Stay tuned!

REVISED RESERVATION PROCESS AND FEE SCHEDULE

Inquiring guests will now experience a more interactive registration process. The reservation portal (**http://www.fairhavencanada.com/reservation**) has been redesigned to interact with guest information to determine any further subsidies that may apply to our already subsidized retreat fees.
The revised fee schedule continues to reflect provision for those who might not otherwise be able to afford time at Fairhaven. The qualifying criteria for the additional retreat subsidy has been modified, and an increase of **$10.00/night** has been incorporated for reservation dates beginning **April 1st, 2021**.

MIRACLE ON THE MOUNTAIN
20 YEARS OF SERVING CHRISTIAN LEADERS

2023 will represent 20 years since the first cottages opened on the Fairhaven site; twenty years of God's faithfulness and dedicated mission-focused service encouraging the health and renewal of Christian leaders. That we are excited to begin planning the anniversary celebrations is an understatement. As preparations come together we will be sure to keep you up to date!

One way that you can partner with us in this initial stage is through the submission of historical memories. Hosted guests, volunteers of all kinds, partnering organizations, former staff, we invite you to submit your memories through the Contact page on our website: **http://www.fairhavencanada.com/contact**.
We look forward to hearing from you and reminiscing with you!

CURIOUS EYES AND TRUSTING HEARTS

As we progress through the Lenten season toward the celebrations of Easter, may we, with curious eyes and trusting hearts, creatively experience afresh and anew, the crucified and risen Christ.

Blessings,

Tony Schnare, Executive Director

Donations are welcomed through e-transfer to donation@fairhavencanada.com
For additional giving options, please visit our website at fairhavencanada.com/donate

TESTIMONIALS

"Your scripture prayer over me and Psalm 121 led me to John Eldridge's book Beautiful Outlaw in your library, aligning with my book One Thousand Gifts by Anne Voskamp, and the story of Jacob wrestling with God all night. I am taking home much to meditate over and a sense that there has been both truth and reconciliation between God and I this weekend. I am blessed by your prayers."

"It was a remarkable trip and I'm so glad that it worked out the way it did. In a year full of extra chaos and difficult planning, it felt like God's incredible provision for us. It also sparked an interest in continued relationship and I look forward to future connection with Fairhaven. Thanks for your team's hospitality, generosity, and openness!"

WE'RE ONLINE

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