

The Robelen Report

July 23, 2020

Dear prayer partners and supporting churches,

Much has been happening, and time to update y'all is hard to find. The Devil's attacks have not let up, and all I can manage is a much more concise update than usual. There is, though much that y'all really should know to pray for us most effectively.

The church building seems to have been affected by some kind of fumes. We have not been able to identify them, and they have no smell, but people who are in the building for a sustained period experience symptoms ranging from disorientation and drowsiness to headaches and irritability. As best we can tell, the fumes originate with a storm drain behind the church. Their effects are severe enough that we are currently limited to only one brief service on Sunday and a brief service on Wednesday night. Please pray that they will abate or that God will provide some other means for us to have full use of our building.

The limited meetings, scary effects of the fumes, and the challenge this presents to outreach combined with the effects of the coronavirus scare have left church finances in very rough shape as well. Please pray that God will provide for us to pay our bills in good time.

Our housing has been in limbo since the fumes first showed up in February, but God has recently provided something better than we had before. A family we know has had a cottage set up that we are welcome to use as long as we need it. We are still helping put the finishing touches on it and getting moved in gradually, but we are already more comfortable in our housing than we have been for some time. Praise God for the provision, and please pray that He will guide and provide for the soon completion of the place.

Much progress has been made on my teeth; almost all of the bad teeth have been pulled (a dozen so far), and a plan is coming together to put in a partial denture to provide good use of my mouth. Things are briefly on hold as we cope with other crises, but Lord-willing, we'll be able to finish the job soon. Please pray that the plan will work out, the expected provision will come through, and my mouth will be reliable again soon.

We had previously told you that we were expecting a baby around September 6, but God had different plans, and Abigail Michele was born by emergency c-section early Tuesday morning. Since she was only 33 weeks along, she is preemie, and will need some time in the NICU before she can come home. She is doing well for her age, though. Praise God that Betsy and Abigail are both safe and recovering, and Betsy is supposed to be released tomorrow; please pray that they will recover quickly and be able to come home soon.

Throughout these harsh trials, we still see God working and helping His people. When the governor of Virginia forbid churches to assemble and we continued gathering, we saw great faithfulness and resolve among the core of the church; the first Sunday following the governor's shutdown order, the police visited our church and threatened that they might arrest me or others if we continued to meet. The following Wednesday, after a second visit from the police, a number of our people declared their willingness to go to jail for church if need be. Our faithful core has held strong throughout the whole time, fumes and shutdown orders notwithstanding. We have also had several new people stick and become regulars, and this Wednesday, we even had another first time visitor!

Coping with these crises, though, takes much of our strength and time, and we are unable to do much that we want to do to reach new people and disciple those we have reached. Please pray that these many emergencies will come to an end and we will be able to go on the offensive again in our spiritual war.

We thank God for His strength and help in trying times. Throughout our battles, He gives us the strength to withstand these vicious assaults and others. He helps us endure, and we trust that He will help us conquer. Please pray with us that we will soon see victory greater than the pains and losses we endure as we fight for it.

In Christ,

Pastor Paul Robelen

Praises:

Teeth being worked on
Housing provision
Healthy baby
Faithfulness of core members

Prayer Requests:

Salvation of Joe and Mr. Martin
Church finances
Abigail to get stronger and come home soon
Betsy's recovery
Help finishing the cottage
Removal of the fumes and their effects