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St. John's Family News: Vol. 78 Issue 23 for the Week of June 8-14, 2020

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## Mid-Week Moments for June 11, 2020

This week's Mid-Week Moments are available now:

**Website:** <https://stjohnsbaptistchurch.org/2020/06/11/mid-week-moments-for-june-11-2020/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/sjbccharlotte/videos/616745799200298/>

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## A FEW THOUGHTS FROM DENNIS

Do you ever wonder if you are making a difference? In our world where ungodliness (evil) presents itself as systemic racism, hatred, malice, mean-spiritedness, greed, manipulative power, brutality, violence, etc., we can question whether all the godly actions we initiate make a difference. The answer is YES, YOUR EFFORTS, INITIATIVES AND COLLABORATIONS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO A BETTER WORLD!

We should remember how, in the first century, those first disciples of The Way of Jesus carried his message forward into a world of conflict, abuse, persecution, manipulative power, violence, racism, etc. This world has been changing throughout the evolving creation of order. Through cultural shifts, discoveries, wars, peace-building, economies of trade, increased understanding, travels, knowledge, scientific inquiry, trial and error, etc., change is permanent. Yet, there is nothing that has transformed humanity more than the Good News (Gospel) of God, revealed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we do not lose heart. As Paul wrote to the Center City Church in Corinth: *"...it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry. We do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God...For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord...But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in our bodies the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies...SO WE DO NOT LOSE HEART. EVEN THOUGH OUR OUTER NATURE IS WASTING AWAY, OUR INNER NATURE IS BEING*

RENEWED DAY BY DAY. FOR THIS SLIGHT MOMENTARY AFFLICTION IS PREPARING US FOR AN ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY BEYOND ALL MEASURE, BECAUSE WE LOOK NOT AT WHAT CAN BE SEEN BUT AT WHAT CANNOT BE SEEN; FOR WHAT CAN BE SEEN IS TEMPORARY, BUT WHAT CANNOT BE SEEN IS ETERNAL.” (2 Corinthians 4)

Beloved, each week, as I study, write and then record the videos of Midweek Moments and Sunday Messages, I pray for you. I pray for your persevering spirit and encouragement. I pray for my thoughts to be used by The Living God to equip you for works of ministry.

During these months of pandemic, physical distancing and convulsing junctures of societal awakening to a better world, we are continuing to discern God’s Voice among all the voices clamoring for our attention and making choices to collaborate and serve in The Way of Jesus. It will take more than words, protests and legislation to move us past centuries of lies, deception and evil which bring us to these times. The systemic racism and injustices that feed today’s violence can only be changed by changed human spirits listening to God’s Spirit Voice and making choices to live together in the ways of God revealed to us in Jesus. I ask you to join me in the following three commitments:

Let us show this city how a servant church learns more and more how to follow Jesus. Let us move beyond the need of getting other people to agree with us and work harder at trying to understand how and why the other person has a different perspective.

Let us recommit ourselves, individually and congregationally, to doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with God by sincerely loving one another, our neighbors and our enemies.

Thank you for the blessing and privilege of serving as your senior minister. Please continue to pray with and for one another, for our church leadership and our church staff as we continue our ‘ministry in clay jars’ showing the power of God’s compassionate love.

**Shalom,  
Dennis**

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## CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020!

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Click Here for a Listing of This Year's Graduates



## Mission Resource Team Responds to COVID-19

Over the past few weeks we have given you information about how some of the agencies with which we partner are rearranging the way they deliver services in order to provide needed relief to those in our community especially impacted by COVID-19 and the resulting restrictions. These are agencies where we regularly send financial resources and in some cases provide volunteer services. We are continuing to honor our financial commitment to these agencies, and where we can, we continue to provide “no contact” direct services.

**Friendship Trays** is, during the pandemic crisis, delivering nourishing meals to 200 of the most vulnerable and needy of their 500 regular recipients. They maintain telephone contact with all their regular patrons and arrange for neighbors or family to step in as needed. Charlotte Mecklenburg Police officers assist with delivery in their assigned areas. The plan is to add more to the list of deliveries, using a “no contact” delivery method.

For more information: <https://friendshiptrays.org/>

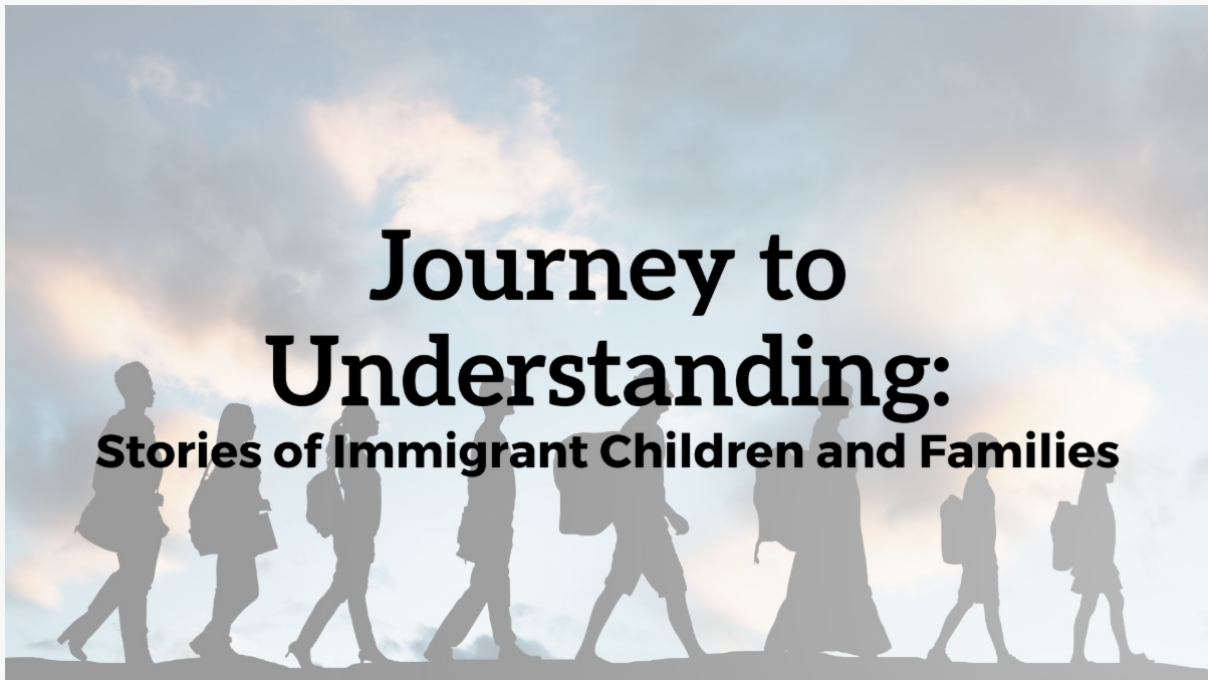
**QC Family Tree** staff continues to find creative ways to serve the people of Enderly Park, including

- Delivering 30 care boxes once a week with snacks, children’s activities, cleaning

- supplies and nonperishable food items. (100 people)
- Compensating for the loss of the usual summer Freedom School reading program by facilitating individual art and enrichment projects with children and youth.
- Providing “know your rights” information and other support for families at risk of eviction.

For more information: <http://www.qcfamilytree.org/get-involved/contribute>

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## **Welcoming the Stranger: A St. John's Legacy**

**WRITTEN BY BEVERLY HESTER AND NINA PHILLIPS**

Tom's phone rang on the morning of April 16. We were already in the midst of lockdown and social distancing in Charlotte. It was his new friend from Burma, whom he had met at Refugee Support Services on Central Ave. His friend was asking for help in filing an application for unemployment. Because of the widespread closure of businesses due to the pandemic he had just been laid off from his job. Tom had never filed for unemployment as he had never lost a job, so this was a new experience. However, he figured his proficiency in English gave him a decided advantage, so he ventured into this new experience with his new friend.

So has gone the experience of the people of St. John's as we have responded with compassion to immigrants in our midst. We moved out of our comfort zones with a family from Latvia after WWII, we welcomed refugees from Cuba in the mid to late 1960s, in 2001 we "adopted" 40 Lost Boys of Sudan, and we have developed close friendships with two men from Vietnam. We now share worship space with congregations from Liberia and Sierra Leone and with our friends from South Sudan.

With immigrants from around the world continuing to come to Charlotte in search of better lives, in the fall of 2019 the Immigrant Support Study Group was formed at St. John's, with the endorsement of the Mission Resource Team. The team's purpose is to explore the needs of those who are a part of the immigrant community in Charlotte and ways in which St. John's might become involved in welcoming them, building upon our rich history of welcoming the stranger. This exploration has led us into conversations with several organizations in Charlotte that are integrally involved in working with the immigrant community. One of these is ourBridge for Kids, located on the campus of Aldersgate in east Charlotte. OurBridge serves 150 immigrant and refugee children from kindergarten through 7th grade and their families by providing after school and summer activities, offering love, acceptance, education, and respect to each child and family with whom they work. Working with other community organizations and honoring the coronavirus restrictions, ourBridge staff and volunteers are delivering nearly 9,000 meals each week, along with educational and self-care packages, to students and their families in addition to providing virtual tutoring.

During January our group began planning for an exciting educational event to be held “in the round” in Broach Hall in mid-May. After weeks of planning, we realized in late March that this event would have to be postponed due to the coronavirus. While we look forward to re-scheduling “Journey to Understanding: Stories of Immigrant Children and Families” when it’s safe to do so, we’re planning other ways to share information. This dialogue will still happen at a date and a time to be determined. Stay tuned for details on that and check out this flier to learn more.

**Beginning next Monday, through brief video conversations, we’ll introduce several people who are either immigrants themselves or who represent immigrant-serving organizations. Through their stories, we’ll hear about the resilience of people who come to this country as immigrants and the contributions they are making to our community as well as some of the challenges they face. These videos will be posted on St. John’s website and Facebook page. We’ll also post articles about immigrants’ experiences and contributions to our community, including more information about the work of ourBridge for Kids and other organizations that serve immigrant and refugee individuals and families.**

We hope that you will join us on this journey toward a greater understanding of what God is calling us to do in relating to our immigrant neighbors.

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## **FRIDAY, JUNE 12<sup>th</sup> IS VIRGINIA ALLEN DAY**

Whereas on this date, Friday, June 12, 2020, our sister in Christ, Virginia Allen celebrates her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. As Senior Minister of St. John’s Baptist Church of Charlotte, North Carolina, I proclaim this day to be Virginia Allen Day in the life of our congregation. On this day, each member of St. John’s is asked to pray with thanksgiving for Virginia’s life, ministry, impact, influence and continuing expressions of compassion. Her smile, persevering spirit and desire to be a blessing enrich our experience as a faith community.

**Happy Birthday, Virginia!**

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### **Prayer Concerns, Thanks, and Sympathy**

Andrew Adair, Emily Batts, Byron Bullard, Mary Chilton (mother of Amy Chilton), Carol Drye, Don Furr, Camille Green, Polly Hull, Maddie and Domhnall Minogue and baby Cian, Gene Poole, Elma Thomas, Alison Zieglmeier (daughter of Ken and Donna Scott); Parker Jackson, military; Chip Wilson, assigned to the Pentagon for COVID-19 response

Congratulations to the 2020 High School Graduates!

*"It is with deepest gratitude that I thank you for the many prayers, cards, food, visits, transportation, and other tasks that you provided me since late January. It 'took a village' to help me recover from three broken bones and my St. John's family provided for me in so many ways. Thank you and God bless you, everyone." -Teri Franklin*

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### **Financial Ministry Plan Report**

Week of June 2-9: \$14,994

Income through June 9: \$533,818

Annual 2020 Ministry Plan Budget Goal: \$1,175,000

*Thank you for your continued financial faithfulness!*

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Give Online!

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### Contact the Staff

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