

September 10, 2021

Letter to the Az Branch of City of the Lord, from Az Branch Coordinator, John Hoyt:

Spoiler alert! I'm about to use the "R" word. If you don't want to hear "Re-founding" stop reading now... oops I guess it's too late! About six years ago, the Lord began to speak to us prophetically about a time of community spring cleaning. Prophetic words such as "Renew My City" and "Travel Lightly" called us to examine our life together. We were called to strengthen that which is lifegiving and shed that which was holding us down. In short, we were called to re-found our life; and we did! Our re-founding was not an exercise to complete, and cross off our list. No! Our re-founding was for a purpose, I like to call it "So that...". We re-founded so that... "So that this city shines upon a hilltop as a bright beacon – a beacon of hope, a beacon to follow, a beacon to welcome those lost and those who want to come home" ('Renew My City', 2016). In our re-founding we called it "Vibrant Community Life".

This past weekend some of the young families in our community organized a family camping weekend at Dogtown lake. I don't recall exactly how many years it has been since we've gone as a group to Dogtown, but I know it has been quite a few. We fished, and shared meals. We played games, and ate smores. We inaugurated the Lord's Day, and attended mass together. Young and old alike, as a family of families. The activities of the weekend were the same as years ago, but what was new were the people. This was the third generation of City of the Lord living a vibrant life!

God is bringing forth a new vibrancy in City of the Lord and we are becoming again a beacon of hope to the world. We live in unprecedented times. Ours is a time when Christian understanding is no longer the bedrock of our societies' moral foundation. Never before in our lifetime has spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ, through word and deed, been more necessary. Simply claiming life is better by faith in Jesus is no longer enough. Our society demands evidence. Our vibrant life together is that evidence. Pray that vibrant life and love well up, and flow forth from City of the Lord, and from each of her members!

On a personal note, I love you all! Mary and I continue to be so blessed by the love and support you gave, and continue to give, to us during my time of cancer treatment. The treatment ended just about one year ago. I have been cancer free since January 2021. My next MRI scan this Tuesday, Sep. 14th. Please pray for continued cancer free results! This last year was a very hard year physically for me, but I felt so much love from you and from God that it was actually a great year spiritually for me. The day before my treatment started the Lord led me to Roman 5:1-5 and Romans 15:13. These verses talk about how trials build faith and hope in the Lord. It is so true! Through this very difficult time, I found myself rejoicing in my trials, since the intimacy with God, my wife, and you my brothers and sisters was so deep and present to me! I am grateful to be alive, grateful to be loved by God, grateful to be a member of City of the Lord, and grateful for each of you!

Blessings,

John