

# THE

Christ the King Anacortes  
January - March 2026  
Quarterly Issue 7

# COLLECTIVE



Worship  
Community  
Story

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Information about upcoming events can be found on the back cover!



# Welcome!

Whether this is your first time reading our publication or you've been attending CTK for years, there's something for everyone within these pages.

But if you are new, here's a little bit of context to our church:

Christ The King is a community of disciples seeking to love Jesus, become like Him, and do what He did. Together on Sunday mornings and in small community groups throughout the week, we set the table where individuals can encounter Jesus. In everything, we desire to glorify God as we seek to be Entirely His, being formed by His Spirit into people of love for the sake of others. Everyone is welcome to the table.

If this sounds interesting to you, we encourage you to keep reading! The stories, thoughts, and information within these pages will give you greater context to community and our beliefs.

If you'd like to inquire more about our church, we encourage you to visit us online at [ctkanacortes.com](http://ctkanacortes.com) or visit us in person on Sunday morning.

Where: 916 8<sup>th</sup> St  
Anacortes, WA  
When: Sundays  
9 & 10:45 AM

# Editor's Commentary

Now that Lent and Easter have come and gone, it's worth asking a simple but important question: What did God do in us—and what does it mean for what comes next?

Lent invited us into a slower, more intentional rhythm. For many of us, it meant creating space through prayer, fasting, Scripture, or quiet reflection, in order to pay closer attention to God's voice. It was a season of honesty, where we were reminded of our need for grace and invited to lay things down at the feet of Jesus. I know a highlight for me was our Soup and Bread Wednesday evening meals together as a family! Not just because of the ever-increasing quality and quantity of food that we shared, but because of the important spiritual conversations we had around the tables.

And then came Holy Week. Together, we remembered the weight of Good Friday - the cost of love displayed on the cross. As you walked through the Passion Art Experience, I hope that you found a moment to sit in the tension, resisting the urge to rush ahead, allowing the reality of Jesus' sacrifice to sink in more deeply.

And then, Easter. What a joy it was to gather and celebrate the resurrection! To sing along with our Easter worship choir, to worship in community, to proclaim again that Jesus is alive and that death is defeated! Our hope is not wishful thinking, but a living reality grounded in the risen Christ.

But, as Pastor Ben reminded us, Easter is not the end of the story but the beginning of a new way of living. Remember the words of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea." The invitation of this season is not just to remember what God has done, but to live in light of it. As it says in Ephesians 1:19, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us! That means new life isn't just a theological idea but something we are designed to experience day by day.

So as we move forward, may we carry these questions with us: What did God surface in me during Lent that I don't want to forget? What did I lay down that I'm tempted to pick back up? Where is the resurrection inviting me into new life, new obedience, or new trust?

Church family, don't leave these moments behind. Instead, take the opportunity to build on them. I'm praying that what began in this season would continue to take root, that rhythms of prayer would deepen, that repentance would lead to real freedom. I'm praying that the hope of Easter would shape our homes, our relationships, our work, and our witness in this community.

Christ the King, I'm grateful to have journeyed through this season together. Let's keep walking forward together in the hope of the resurrection.

- Rick Thompson



# A Room Full of Prayer

A 24-7 prayer room is a creative space that enables a chain of unbroken day-and-night prayer, bringing friends, communities, and churches together to seek the presence of God. Did you know that both the high school and middle school students recently experimented with a prayer room set up in the sanctuary during their Winter Lock-In? They used structured prompts for experiencing prayer through:

1. Worship
2. Contemplation
3. Surrender
4. Forgiveness
5. Intercession, and
6. Gratitude.

They were able to engage in prayer through scripture and Lectio Divina, art, journaling, and hands-on object lessons on the topic of forgiveness and confession. I had the good fortune of witnessing the middle school experience, and here's what I saw:

There were four tables spread around the room, some with paper and colored markers for drawing, others with index cards and pens for writing, and one table with mason jars full of water and a pile of off-brand seltzer tablets (used in a contemplative exercise). Each table included

prompts for engaging in prayer for the different topics mentioned above. In one corner of the building, one of the students, using stacks of chairs, constructed a space specifically for the experience of silence and solitude.



I stayed in that space for about an hour, both praying and watching in awe as those middle schoolers lost themselves in prayer. They were still engaged when I left the building.

I went back to both groups on a recent Wednesday night to ask the kids about their experience. Some middle schoolers said doing it together made it fun. One student appreciated the forgiveness exercise, another the Lectio stations, and another loved creating the space for the silence and solitude experience. Others found the experience quieting, relaxing and peaceful.

One high schooler described the prayer room as powerful. Another shared how initially frustrating it was trying to focus and clear her mind to hear from Jesus, to finally rest and come face to face with the meaning of "faith." Another clearly articulated how important the structure was to making it a meaningful experience. That same student described the experience as 15% speaking and

85% listening. One student appreciated the forgiveness exercise, another the Lectio stations, and another loved creating the space for the silence and solitude experience. Others found the experience quieting, relaxing and peaceful.

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- Jim Pemberton

If you're curious about what setting up a prayer room looks like, or you want to discover more ways to experience the Holy Spirit through prayer, we'd like to encourage you to check out the organization 24-7 Prayer International. On their website, you can find valuable resources to guide your journey of prayer and contemplation (many of which our youth used to set up their prayer room).

24-7 Prayer International Website:





# More Than Just A Chat

For over a year now, our Women's Book Chat has been meeting regularly. Hear from a few ladies participating in our Book Chat about their thoughts and experiences as they answered the following question:

What does this group mean to you?

*"This has been a wonderful opportunity to enjoy fellowship with other Christian women as we study a book and search the Bible for answers. We laugh at ourselves, and with each other. We are all seeking a closer walk with Jesus."*

*"Our book chat is a blessing. Alba and Mary do a great job leading us into a relationship as we focus on specific subjects in the written Word."*

*"It is such a warm, comforting feeling to get to share in these ladies' lives as we share each other's burdens. Each of these ladies has a rich life with so much valuable experience in their Christian walk."*

*"A year ago, I saw that the Book Chat was presenting a book about the Holy Spirit called 'Jesus In Me.' I thought this would be a good place to start, as I also wanted to grow closer to the Lord."*

*"I lost my husband recently, and I knew I needed community with women. I have continued to grow in my relationship with Jesus, built relationships with women who encourage me, share their stories, humor, wisdom, and how God has and is working in their lives."*

*"I appreciate the weekly 'homework' needed to prepare for our group discussion. I usually find a new spiritual insight to understand. Then the conversation is enjoyable."*

*"It is a time of growth in my relationship with the Lord and understanding of who He is, just by seeing how other sisters reacted to situations in their lives. As we pray for others or seek prayer for ourselves or loved ones, we automatically become closer to each other."*

If you would like to join our Women's Book Chat, feel free to talk to our Community Director, Mary, or send her an email at [mary@ctkanacortes.com](mailto:mary@ctkanacortes.com).



Photos from our Easter Sunday Service



# The Table, The Porch, & The Small Working Model Of God's Kingdom

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There aren't many places in Anacortes where you can find teenagers whipping up Italian sodas and decaf lattes on any given weeknight. But, if you ever find yourself walking past the little purple house on the east end of 7th street around 6PM on a Wednesday, that's exactly what you'll see.

If you've lived in Anacortes for a fair amount of time, you may remember the little house next to the Eagles Hall as Mary Anne's Kitchen: a great place to grab a coffee and delicious hand-crafted breakfast. A few years ago, Mary Anne decided to sell the spot, and in came Sugar Mama's: a dessert cafe/wine bar, complete with a new coat of unmistakable purple paint. During this past summer, Sugar Mama's decided to close their doors. While we hate to see a local business disappear, we jumped at the opportunity to expand our church's footprint. Hence why we purchased the space last November. To our

surprise, the previous owners decided to sell the building to us as-is, including all of the building's restaurant supplies in the deal. Now, we not only have a spacious new gathering spot, we also have a fully functional commercial kitchen, opening up the door for endless possibilities.

Instantly, we as a staff set about fantasizing on how this new space could take shape. Questions quickly arose: Can my community group start meeting here? Are we going to keep the espresso machine? Should we knock down one wall or put up another? What colors are we going to paint the place? But as we pondered all these possibilities, the cart quickly began to jump in front of the horse. We began putting the "what" before the "why". Don't get me wrong, both are important, but without a defined "why", the "what" often seems to fall short. So we decided to pump the brakes. We opted to let the Spirit guide our opinions rather than let the physical get in the way. Sure, we slowed things down, and that may have frustrated or confused you, but by patiently letting things go, we began to see the Spirit work in our midst. This is where our youth group stepped in.



Since we purchased the building, our youth groups have been meeting in the space on a weekly basis. Every Wednesday, you'll find a similar situation: Things start around 5:30 when middle schoolers start trickling in, concocting Italian sodas and decaf lattes. Next comes a meal; pulled pork sandwiches, spaghetti, and tacos have all been on the menu in the past. But the real joy comes as these kids join each other around the table, or in this case, five very small tables smushed together. Dinner is followed by discussion, prayer, and cookies - lots and lots of cookies. After 7pm, the middle schoolers disappear, and in come the high schoolers to repeat the process: a meal, fellowship, and decaf lattes (trust me when I say that these high schoolers can make latte art just as good as your favorite barista). The itinerary isn't always the same. Sometimes there's student-led worship, or an occasional game of one-man dodgeball, but the motives are always consistent.

Seeing a group of individuals sit around a table, share a meal, and have genuine conversations is, as Ben likes to say, "A small working model of the kingdom". This model guides our vision for this new space; It's a model that's simple, relational, and effective. It's participatory rather than consumeristic. And ultimately, it fosters a greater sense of community: a concept which is extremely vital in today's ephemeral culture. Here we see the practices of Jesus being lived out amongst ourselves, most notably exemplifying the practices of community, hospitality, witness, and prayer. We want you to be a part of this community! No matter your age, you are welcome here, and you can participate in these practices. This space isn't just for youth; it's for



anyone who wants to have a seat at the table. Our goal at CTK is to set that table, literally and figuratively, and that's exactly what we want to achieve with this building. We want to fill these walls with conversation, fellowship, prayer, and reflection (and maybe a vanilla latte every now and then). As we slowly open up this space to our congregation, we hope to see people of all ages doing the same. Take for instance, Jennie's new Coffee Talk: a mid-afternoon group that meets every Tuesday in the space to share a cup of joe and communal conversation. Or our women's book chat, which you heard about earlier in these pages. These groups and many more like them open the door to our community. But moreover, they steward individuals along the journey of Christ-like formation.

With these concepts in mind, we've chosen a new name for the place! We've decided to call this new space "Table & Porch". If you've been with us in our sermon series going through Acts, this language may be familiar to you, but let's break it down anyway:

It begins with the porch: a friendly greeting, a cookie, a coffee, and a warm welcome to anyone who wishes to cross our path. Or, as Ben

put it, it's "Where private life meets public community - a welcoming communal and public space which fosters connection, trust, and mutual care." The porch is an invitation: an invitation that is open to all. It's where we greet our community with open arms, engaging those around us no matter their wants or beliefs. But the table is where the formation truly begins. It's where we invite those to move from outward to inward, to be welcomed into the family, and to open themselves to the work of transformation



through the Holy Spirit. As we invite those to our table, to share a meal, share stories, or share how God is working in and through our lives. We too invite them to take a step into the Kingdom with us. Thus begins the process of spiritual transformation: a journey that is by no means instantaneous, but is most assuredly fruitful beyond comprehension.

Ultimately, we are creating a space that is welcoming to all and enticing to those seeking renewal. There are a lot of words to describe this concept, but at the end of the day, the Spirit charts our course, and we get to steer the ship.

As we move forward, you'll see more and more events and groups fill the Table & Porch calendar. Currently, we're workshopping the idea of implementing a weekly prayer rhythm into our routine: one hour a week where we open the space to anyone who wants to participate in communal prayer, as we live out these spiritual

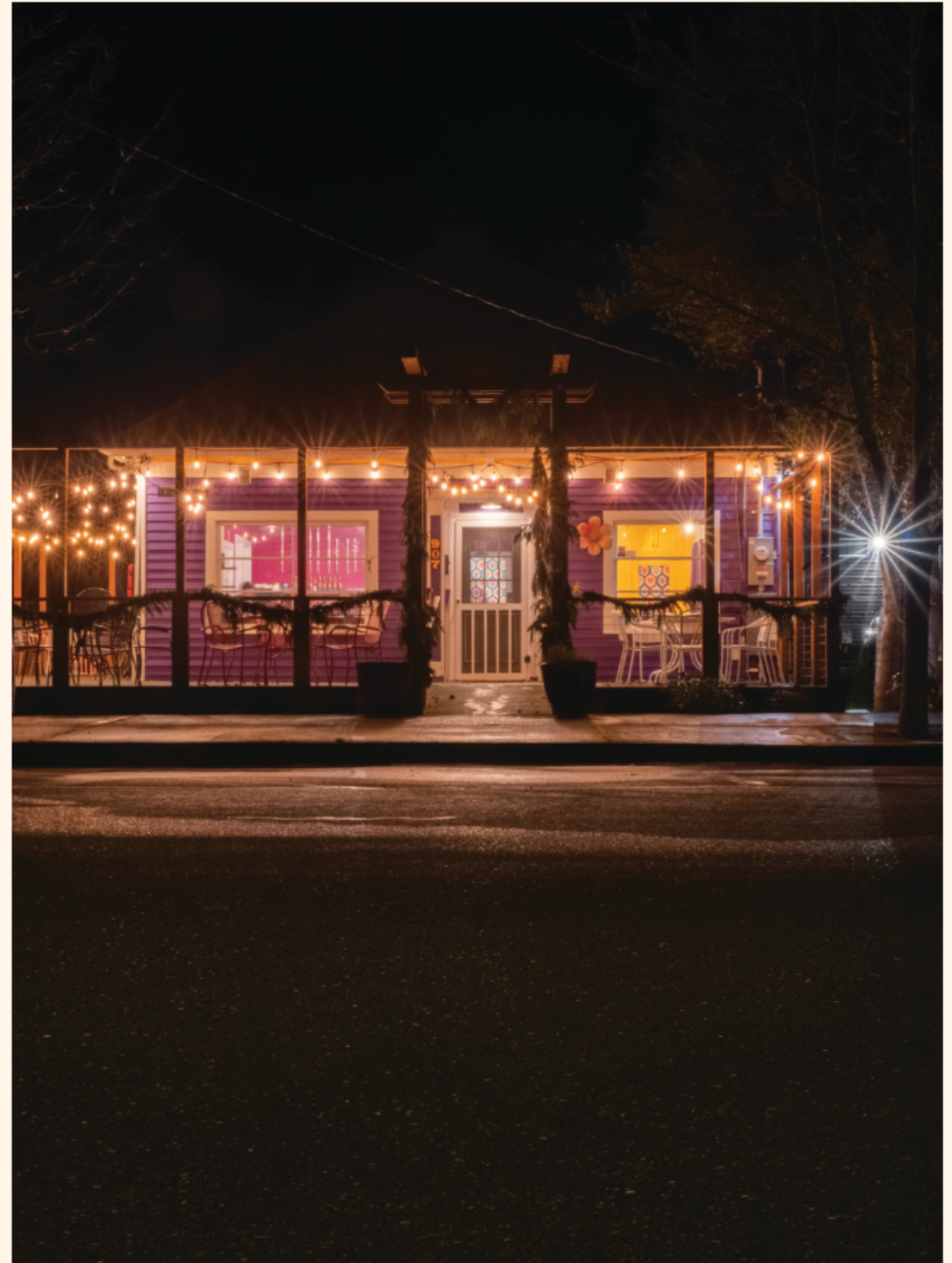
practices within this space. You may also see the physical space slowly start to change. The walls might get a new coat of paint, photos of our ministries may pop up, and there might be some new furniture here or there. However, these physical changes don't change our mission. This space will always be for our community, and the color of the walls will never change that.

This space also isn't the only place where formation takes place. Far from it in fact. We want everyone to be able to experience these same concepts in their homes, in their communities, and throughout their life. Just as the Church is not solely a building, so too does formation not solely take shape within a single place. In doing so, we can all experience this "small working model of the kingdom" in all places, together.

- *Jacob Hoxie*

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:46-47



# Joel's Story

Last December, just before what would have been my daughter Kendra's birthday, I asked my son Joel if he would put in writing a story he shared with our family on the second Thanksgiving after her passing. He did, and I thought his experience was worth sharing.

- Jim Pemberton



The day my sister passed away was a blur to me. I got a call at 8AM from my dad, who could barely speak. I was at our home in northern Montana, sitting alone in our living room, drinking coffee and doing devotions.

We went to church that morning anyway. It was Easter Sunday, 2021. The day after my dad's birthday. At church that morning, there were tears, numbness, and shock. I felt far away. We sat next to some friends, but I didn't really even talk to them; I was really zoned out. A song was being sung about how Jesus sets us free. I had a moment of clarity, and I couldn't sing it. I just kept thinking, "No, He doesn't! He didn't set Kendra free, and she tried, and prayed, and so did all of us for her... but He never set her free!"

Afterwards, my wife Chantel and our girls were serving in our children's church, so I drove up to Lonesome Park, looking over Kalispell. It was a beautiful morning for early April in Montana. I walked along the trail overlooking the city, praying... mostly asking, "Why?" I remember also asking what I was supposed to do. There were tears, and anger... lots of anger. In the midst of the peaceful, beautiful Easter morning, I was so mad. Sad too, but with madness. I really felt the anger.

Chantel and I decided to fly to Anacortes to be with the family for that week, and to try to help Mom, Dad, and Harleigh (Kendra's daughter) with whatever needed to be done. We stayed busy. Had a list of to-dos. Chantel was my rock. She was so grounded and clear-thinking. I couldn't have done it without her; I don't think that any of us could have. We got a lot done. We took care of all the details, including some really hard stuff that I will never forget, like cleaning out Kendra's car at some dude's trailer house in the woods near Alger. It was his car. Who he was, I'll never know. Seemed like an ally, but was he her source? Did he protect her and help her, or exploit and take advantage of her? I don't know. The whole thing was sketchy, but thanks to Chantel, we managed to get the job done.

After that week in Anacortes, we went back home and just plain moved on in life. I worked hard. I played hard. In hindsight, my work and play were a distraction from grief. I had the best year of business that I had ever had. In fact, to this day, I have yet to have a month as great as July 2021, with October 2021 being the second best. It was great. It was working. The distraction of a busy life - working hard and playing hard - was just right for me. I didn't have to think or feel... that is, until it wasn't "working" anymore...

I'm not really clear on timelines, but I think it was the ski season of 21/22 - late in the year, so spring of 22 - when I noticed (as did my family) that I was really short-tempered, and a roller coaster of emotional highs and lows. I was losing my ability to hold in tears and emotions. I would literally break down with tears in front of clients for no apparent reason. I also lost my cool randomly: I remember being tailgated by an orange jeep while driving down the mountain after skiing one day and completely losing my temper - yelling, cussing, flipping off that driver... I was a total nut case. It was that moment that I realized that I needed help. So I sought out a therapist/counselor.

It was the best thing that I could have done. My therapist was amazing. He loved God and seemed to understand my grief journey and what I was going through. He explained to me that my emotional "muscle" had atrophied because I wasn't using it. I was ignoring the emotion, stuffing and distracting. If I was feeling something, my cover was to go do something awesome in business, or in hobbies like skiing or snowboarding. So, it was due to my atrophied emotional tolerance that when I was faced with any reminder of Kendra, or any loss, or anything even remotely sad, happy or angering, I would not be able to control the emotion that would ensue and it would just come out in very awkward settings. He was right. It made perfect sense to me. So, what do I do about it? His prescription was to lean into it. When an emotion begins to bubble up, invite it and embrace it. To cry, to laugh, to get angry... Especially to cry.



Well, I couldn't do it. Not in front of clients. Not in public.... that's when this stuff would hit me. So I made a deal with my therapist to set aside time to go somewhere alone and meet with God and deal with it on my time.

So, the time came. I set aside a few hours one Saturday to take the dogs out on a snowy wintery trail where no one would be this time of year. I got to the parking lot and to my surprise, there was a

car there. I was a bit bummed by that, but figured that no doubt that person was going to be on a different trail than me anyways. So the dogs and I got out and started making our way. As we passed the other car, a dog inside of it started to bark, and I realized that the person wasn't yet on the trail. That gave me motivation to walk fast so they wouldn't catch us. I began the walk on the trail with a prayer of, "Here I am Lord, let's work through this." I prayed and sang and tried to find my emotion to engage. Nothing. We got about a half mile down the trail when a dog appeared, running up to us from behind. A beautiful, white, fluffy thing. Then came the owner, running the trail.

After we said hi and met each other's dogs, she ran on, and I figured I wouldn't see her again. But two minutes later, she came running back because her dog had pooped and she wanted to clean it up. We chatted a minute longer, and then she took off again. When I got to the fork in the trail, I chose to take the left trail to a lesser-known lake - a way less-traveled trail. I kept praying and trying to stay focused and find this emotion that I needed to wrestle with and work through. Upon arrival at the lake, I was all alone, and it was beautiful... then she showed up again. She came over to chat with me again. I talked with her for a minute, then traveled down the trail to another part of the lake. She followed me a few minutes later and wanted to chat yet again!! just couldn't seem to get away from her!



Anyway, the day was a bust. I never even got close to working through this underlying pain and emotion that I hadn't dealt with. In my next appointment, I told my therapist all about it, and he just laughed his head off. Told me that it would happen soon enough, but maybe not on MY schedule.

During this time of trying to find healing, I knew the answer was in connecting with Jesus. So, one of the ways that I tried to do that was by listening to worship music in the mornings as an extension of my devotional time, to really plant a "Jesus focus" into my brain at the start of the day. One day, my JBL was pumping worship music, and I was in the shower! was soaping my head, eyes closed, when the worship song said something to the effect of "He will break every chain." When I heard it, just like every time I had heard about God setting us free or breaking chains or anything like that since Kendra died, I tensed up, jaw clenched, and immediately angry, thinking,

# No He Doesn't!

In that very moment, with my eyes still closed, hands on my head, I saw Kendra, clear as can be. She was on her knees, in front of Jesus, with a huge smile. She looked beautiful. I couldn't see the face of Jesus, but it was Him whom she was kneeling before. And I heard Him say, "Joel, I did set her free. I just did it when I could."

That was it. In an instant, I was balling uncontrollably, like a fountain of emotions busting out. I cried loudly, falling to the ground in the shower, crying for some time. It was pure emotion, filled with everything: the sorrow of her loss, the realization and evidence of where she is, the joy that she is happy, loved, and more than anything FREE. I thought I was pulling myself together and began to towel off, stepped out of the shower, and began to weep again, loudly and uncontrollably, falling to the bathroom floor.

After a few minutes of that, I got up and made my way to the closet, only to fall a third time to the closet floor, uncontrollably bawling. This time, my tears and cries turned into prayer with JOY, praise, and laughter. I was now free, too. Free of my anger and mistrust of God. Free of the inner torment of built-up emotions leaking out at all the wrong times. I felt so much peace about Kendra, and about His loving hands and heart for us.

So, that's it? Am I all better? Well, yes and no. I am still carrying so much freedom and peace about Kendra from that experience. Seeing that vision from God and His voice was so comforting and real. I remember it when I feel discouraged or sad. That doesn't mean that I don't grieve her loss still, or that I don't doubt His presence from time to time. I do. But I have that experience to turn to, along with His Word, which I try to be in daily.

I love Kendra and miss her, but I know that she is free at the feet of Jesus with a big, beautiful smile.

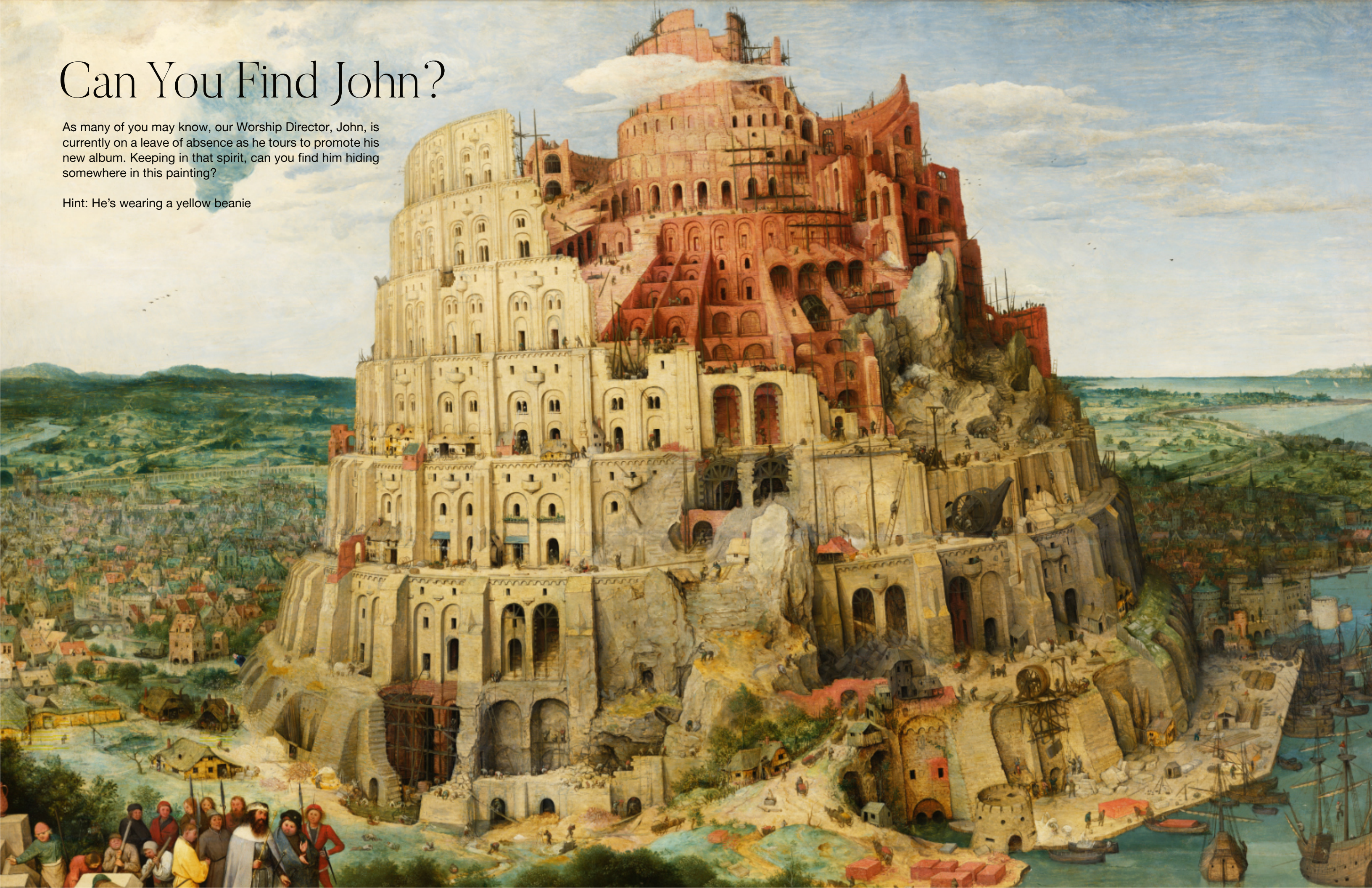
- Joel Pemberton



# Can You Find John?

As many of you may know, our Worship Director, John, is currently on a leave of absence as he tours to promote his new album. Keeping in that spirit, can you find him hiding somewhere in this painting?

Hint: He's wearing a yellow beanie



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### Kyle Rash

Council Member

### Mike Pearia

Council Member

### Pattie Rosson

Council Member

### Jake Verschuyt

Council Member

### Heidi Harris

Council Member

### Frank Jeretzky

Council Member

### Sarah Dziuk

Council Member

We hope you enjoyed this issue of The Collective. We're here at Christ the King love the opportunity to highlight how God is working in the lives of those we love, and we hope you do as well!

## Editors

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**Courtney Remmenga**  
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**Susan Miller**  
Associate Editor

**Rick Thompson**  
Associate Editor

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**Jim Pemberton**  
**Sarah Dziuk**  
**Heidi Harris**  
Ladies from our  
Women's Book Chat  
**Jacob Hoxie**  
**Joel Pemberton**

# Thank You For Reading!

Do you or someone you know have a story you would like to share? Would you like to be highlighted in our next issue? Let us know! We would love to hear from you. Feel free to visit our website at [www.ctkanacortes.com/connect](http://www.ctkanacortes.com/connect) to fill out a connection card or email [jacob@ctkanacortes.com](mailto:jacob@ctkanacortes.com) so that we can learn more about what you have to share.



If you haven't already, please subscribe to our mailing list via the QR code so that you automatically receive a digital copy of this publication when it's released each quarter. Our next issue will be published in July 2026.



# Upcoming Events

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## June

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### **Volunteer Appreciation Night 8th** 5:30 PM | CTK Building

An evening of a meal and fellowship as a way to say thank you to anyone who volunteers in any capacity here at CTK.  
\* Please RSVP online.

### **Soup Group 14th** 1:00 PM | 907 7th

For all of those new to our church and want to learn more, join us for a meal of soup, a time to answer questions, and meet new people.

There's always something happening here at CTK, and we want you to be a part of it! If you have any questions or would like to RSVP for any of the events listed here, please visit [www.ctkanacortes.com](http://www.ctkanacortes.com).

**Please note all dates and times are subject to change.**

**\*Online RSVP may not currently be available for some events, but will be updated in a timely fashion.**

## April

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### **29th** **Worship Night** 6:30 PM | CTK Main Building

Join us for an evening of intimate worship and prayerful reflection.

## May

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### **9th** **Called to Make** 10 AM | CTK Main Building

Women, join us for a morning of crafting, fellowship, and learning something new. Open to women of all ages!  
\* Please RSVP at [ctkanacortes.com](http://ctkanacortes.com).

### **17th** **Baptism Sunday** 9 and 10:45 AM | CTK Building

If you or someone you know would like to be baptised in our Church, now is the time! If you're interested, please email [rick@ctkanacortes.com](mailto:rick@ctkanacortes.com)

### **17th** **Soup Group** 1:00 PM | 907 7th

For all of those new to our church and want to learn more, join us for a meal of soup, a time to answer questions, and meet new people.

## July

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### **28th** **King's Kids** **29th** **Summer Fun Days** **30th** **9:30 AM | Wisteria Gardens**

Calling all kids! Join us at Wisteria Gardens for a three-day extravaganza, complete with lots of great activities and plenty of fun.  
\* Register online at [ctkanacortes.com](http://ctkanacortes.com)