



STOTES NOTES

Greg and Linda Stoughton
April 2020



How is the Stoughton Family?

We are physically healthy and well. And in general, doing fine; we are adapting and adjusting well to new rhythms in a season of “new wine.”

Pray that God shield’s Ryan and us. Ryan’s hours at Publix Grocery have doubled during COVID-19 (now 13-17 hours per week).

Pray for Kyle, our extrovert. A millennial, he’s easily transitioned to online meetings. But he sorely misses personal individual and group connects while serving with Cru at the University of Florida. As an item of praise, Kyle has been officially accepted to join Cru as fulltime staff.

“May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.”

Psalm 33:22

COVID-19 & “NEW WINE”



“No, they pour new wine into new wineskins” (Mark 2:22).

Foremost, we sincerely pray that amidst our global pandemic you, your family and friends are healthy and well. Through what mobile numbers and emails we have, we’ve initiated messages of prayer and care to about 80% of you, our beloved ministry partners; we’ve personally heard from about 30%.

We’d love to hear from you: Text Greg at 407.963.0161, or email greg.stoughton@cru.org or linda.stoughton@jesusfilm.com.

If you are struggling, fearful, or just wanting to pray together, we are here for you. Please let us know.

PERSPECTIVE

Our hearts are burdened for those in our nation (and world) who have suffered loss or whose lives are devastated. COVID-19 isn’t pleasant or fun.

But it has moved us to seek perspective. In [The Insanity of God](#), I read about War Lords who killed more than a million Somalians in the 1990s. Added stories speak to believers in Russia and China unjustly beaten and killed. We’ve been inconvenienced and challenged – and could experience even more hardship – but personally we’ve yet to suffer like this.

We find our best perspective in God’s Word.

2 Chronicles 20 The battle belongs to the Lord.

Isaiah 41:10 Do not fear or be dismayed.

Jeremiah 17:7-9 Do not fear when the heat comes.

Psalm 33 God is sovereign, omniscient, faithful.

Mark 4:35-41 Jesus may be napping; He is in the boat!

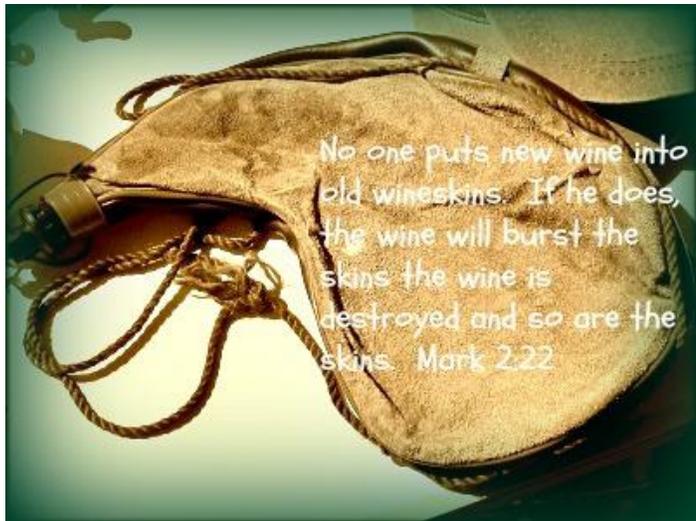
Psalm 25:1 In you Lord my God, I put my trust!

THERE'S "NEW WINE"

Again, no one likes COVID-19. But we are striving to make the best of our circumstances. Here are a few of my favorite new things:

A Slower Pace

I wake up at a reasonable time, yet I now awaken with no alarm about five days per week (versus weekends only). I am feeling more rested and refreshed, and it is taking less time to effectively complete tasks.



Greater God-Intimacy and God-Dependence

I check-in with my direct reports and, in concert with some select small groups, work to advance initiatives. Linda meets weekly with her Jesus Film Mission Trips team. But the 3-5 hours per week that I am no longer commuting to work, fighting traffic (and paying tolls) I can directly invest into my relationship with God. I am depending on God more for situations beyond my control – experiencing Jesus' presence. My devotions aren't rushed. I can "Be still and know that He is God" (Psalm 46:10).

Regular Exercise - Greeting Neighbors

Linda and I are into a healthy walking routine. Is it me, or are more of our neighbors out – and friendlier?

"New Wine" in Ministry - Exploration and Experimentation



[Blesseveryhome.com](https://blesseveryhome.com)

Five minutes after finally taking time to explore this free offering, I identified 33 homes that I could "own" in a strategy of Prayer-Care-Share – perfect for Go2020 in April (pray) and May (care and share). A daily email lets me pray for five neighbors by name. A partnering church of ours is contemplating this for their church Body.

Ministry by Digital Means

- More texts: Prayer and care for others, like Umar (a former neighbor from Pakistan living in L.A.).
- Enrolled in "The Mentor Center" (Cru/Power to Change in Canada <https://tmm.io/>) as a way to guide a few people each week toward Jesus through email/chat.
- Our team tested "Living and Telling," a digital evangelism training resource that uses Zoom. Discernment and its adoption for use are needed, once further refined.
- <https://indigitous.org/> (scroll down slightly to "Ministry from a Distance" and click "Explore") and you will find a boatload of possible "NEW WINE!"