

INTRODUCTION

Week One

Have the past 15 or so months been rough or what?

We may be feeling safe now, especially here, and do not want to talk about it.

Almost out of sight.

Almost out of mind.

I am ready – spent a lot of the pandemic season with people in various stages of distress.

Saw bad things.

Heard sad things.

I am O.K. to “rear-view” mirror the whole pandemic.

But I can't – the pandemic wreaked so much damage.

And there is so much trauma still in play.

We, the people of God, have an amazing opportunity to bring the healing reality of Jesus to people who are in a position to listen to us – maybe for the first time.

Let us look at some sobering statistics:

Calls to Mental Health Crisis lines were up by 1,000% in some cities.

Alcohol sales went from \$3 billion to \$5.6 billion from December 2019 – December 2020.

34% of Americans reported binge drinking in order to cope.

There was a 93% increase in anxiety screenings; 62% increase in depression screenings in 2020.

34% increase in E.R. mental visits for children.

Intentional self-harm was up 334% in children-teens.

Senior adults saw anxiety and depression issues in record numbers and the loss of connection and community took lives.

The world has changed – and so have we, and the re-launched, post-pandemic church must change as well.

We are going to talk about the needs we face – the opportunities we face and the possibilities for impacting a damaged world with the reality of Jesus.

We will discuss whole wellness for believers; getting back into a spiritual routine.

We will deal with the renewed question of where was God during the pandemic?

We will discuss how we can plug into the Kingdom's work, as well as seek new ways to look at connection and community and sharing our faith in new and better ways.