

Counting God's Blessings
By Waiming Wong

This coronavirus pandemic has radically changed and disrupted everyone's lives and routines. Thank God, Anna and I only have to make a few adjustments. We are both retirees and therefore don't have to worry about our jobs. However we gave up our daily afternoon coffee at the mall and time in the gym. We missed our social interactions with our friends with whom we shared our memories of difficult old times in China and Hong Kong and cherished our current blessed moments. Of course we have been grounded, no traveling for now and foreseeable future. Most importantly we could not worship and fellowship in-person at church.

We are home almost 24 by 7 shrouded in fear. Not only we are afraid of contracting the virus, we also do not want to spread the virus inadvertently. Our church activities have moved online; we worship by watching YouTube and fellowship via Zoom. The exciting event suddenly becomes our occasional trips to the grocery stores. We dearly miss our church and in-person contact with our friends. Seniors thrive on social interactions for our physical and mental health. This kind of 'social lockdown' may be good for our physical health but is very hard on our mental health.

Fortunately for Christians we have our God. We can worship and pray to Him anytime and anywhere even during this pandemic. Most importantly, He listens to us, protects us and gives us wisdoms to navigate this difficult time.

I had a recent encounter that can testify to the love of God. In mid August, I received an email from a person claiming to be Pastor Lee and he asked me to buy 5 \$100 eBay gift cards for him to distribute to his staff. Don't know why I never questioned the legitimacy of the email or contacted Pastor Lee to confirm this email. I actually went out in the middle of night and bought these gift cards. Following the instructions I quickly emailed photos of these cards to him.

Almost immediately Pastor Lee contacted and told me that he never asked me to buy these gifts cards. So I was tricked by a phishing scam. I rechecked the email and found out the actual email address was not Pastor Lee's. Then why did Pastor Lee contact me? Thank God I actually sent the photos of these cards to Pastor Lee by a new 'compose', not by the "REPLY" button to the 'fake' Pastor Lee. God was watching over me. I was tricked but did not lose any money. I only exchanged \$500 cash into \$500 gift cards.

We realize that we are really blessed. The newly available stay home time allows us to take care of long neglected tasks. We cleaned up our garage and closets. We noticed that the 30 years old wooden pergola in our backyard was leaning to one side and was about to collapse. With the help of our church brother we rebuilt a new shade cloth pergola in its place. We have time to focus on God and study his Words. We re-connected to many old friends who we have not talked to for years.

Arcadia Chinese Baptist Church - English Congregation



I restarted vegetable gardening and the Lord blessed me with good harvest. To my pleasant surprise one winter melon seed survived in my home-made compost, sprouted and gave me 3 reasonably sized melons. Amazingly all these activities happened in a 15 gallon pot. Proud to show you the picture.

I always love baking and sometimes even dream about owning a bakery. Now I have the time to study the bread making process. Though the basic process is simple, the actual skill to bake a decent bread is quite difficult to master. Anna and I are on a low 'carb' diet and therefore I must find friends who do not mind to take my bread. God gives me friends who are willing to accept my bread and allow me to start my 'bread ministry'. Here are a few types of bread that I have recently made.



WINDSOR BREAD



SOFT DINNER ROLLS



SOUR DOUGH

We continue to pray for the full containment of this pandemic. We pray we can reflect on our sins and repent genuinely before our Lord. We would like to worship Him in person at church again. In the meantime, don't forget to count all God's blessings.

Praise the Lord!