

Reflection on the COVID-19 Pandemic #REL101

I remember getting a call at 9 am in the morning; my mother was frantic, and I could hear it in her voice that whatever it was it would be upsetting. She said, “your cousin Ian has committed suicide.” My stomach dropped and I immediately started screaming and crying. I did not realize that I was screaming as loud as I was until my husband grabbed ahold of me and my 10-year-old son came into my room asking me what I was screaming about. In the other room I hear the news on announcing that the COVID-19 virus has spread in drastic numbers in the United States and hundreds of cases have been reported. The day was March 17, 2020. All I could remember was my head spinning, my heart racing, and how traumatizing this would be for my aunt and uncle, and our entire family. My cousin Ian was a bright and talented young man and close to graduating high school and attending college. He was talented in so many ways and loved by many. I could not wrap my mind around why he would do something like this. This is when reality set in, and my world seemed very dark. People were sick, in panic, and anxiety was getting the best of everyone. All I could ask was, “God, why is this happening now, why is everything falling apart.” This must be the end times that so many talk about. Is this what happens when the world faces sickness, disease, and complete chaos all at once?

Hospitals were in a frenzy not knowing how to treat those infected by this virus. There were no vaccines that could stop it or slow the spread at the time, and no medication to minimize the severity of the symptoms associated with the virus. The world was in a panic, and everyone was fearful of a sneeze or cough due to the fear of infection. The world began to realize more than ever the bravery of those in the medical professions, who were at the front line of this disease.



Religious groups

began to find ways to keep their structure and members engaged by turning to social media to stream services, create community forums, and took advantage of the utilization of church apps to keep people engaged, encouraged, and informed. Masks were mandated across the country and businesses and big labels started to take advantage of this new venture by creating face masks designs of assorted designs, colors, and materials. Everywhere you turned there was a face mask design for every season and occasion. There were even tutorials on D.I.Y. facemasks.



The three months following the start of the pandemic life was so different, and a new normal was in full effect. Like most people we knew, my husband and I were working from home, and our three children had been attending school virtually. Our family went from a busy life of daily commuting, sporting events, family gatherings, to staying indoors, becoming stay at home parents, and taking on the role of teaching our children a set curriculum. Not to mention the shock of our recent family death, and close friends and other acquaintances passing away from COVID. It was a time of true difficulties because we had to learn how to stay in touch with loved ones without being able to physically be there and do the things we did prior to the pandemic. Becoming creative with our time is an understatement and organizing our home and our schedules, along with the opportunity to have some valuable family time in our home was a true life saver and blessing. My family are church members, and we attend a Christian church in Arlington, TX. Streaming services were nice but the community we missed by being at church was a tremendous

change, but as time went on, we learned to get used to it. All ministry activity came to a cease and hanging out with friends was a thing of the past for many months.

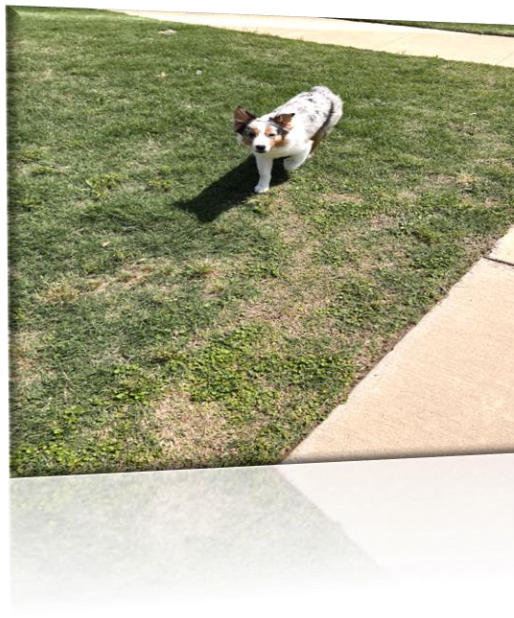
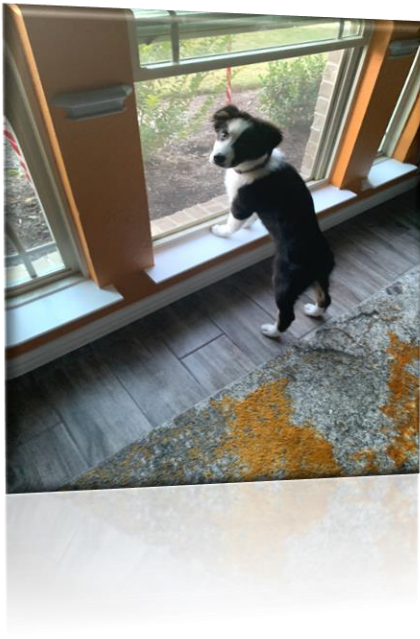
On a brighter note the pandemic allowed us an opportunity to wine down, think about things differently, reflect on what is important, and most importantly be present with one another more inventively. I will say that my marriage got stronger, and as parents my husband and I developed a stronger bond with our children. We were able to do a lot of organizing and cleaning around the house (cleaning out closets, the garage, etc.), and we got to do tons of yard work. The kids loved how we were able to be more engaged with them, and we even started doing Bible study as a family once a week. Looking back, I will say that the beginning of the pandemic was a dark cloud but moving forward things started to look better and the sun began to shine brighter. Below is a picture of my youngest daughter preparing to plant some flowers in our flower bed.



My mother who lives not too far from us got creative and we held Halloween 2020 at her house and made candy apples, let the kids dress up, and made Halloween masks.



We gained two new members of our family named Arlo and Athena who are Australian Shepards (Aussies). They were both an exciting new addition. Arlo is the black and white Aussie who is now a year and a half and Athena is the tan, white and grey one, who is about six months old. My family and I could not imagine life without them. Below are a couple of pictures of them.



So overall the COVID-19 Pandemic created a whole new way of life for many months. The

governments of the world worked together to stop the spread, medical professions showed immense bravery and resilience, religious groups held strong and dedicated to their members and communities. At the start of 2022 the world began to slowly come out of this overwhelming pandemic, with the virus now controlled and vaccines created and administered successfully, the world began to return to normality. Post the COVID-19 pandemic, people began to value life and the importance of community and family, and individuals have also become more aware of their overall health. COVID-19 may have come with its sorrows and downfalls but coming out of this pandemic has released a new wave of an appreciation for life.

