

3/25/20

Responding to COVID-19  
Message to the Congregation #4

Dear Faith Family,

Does anyone else feel like they're riding on a roller coaster right now? Every time you think you've got a handle on things and are getting adjusted to the new normal, a new directive comes out. It's a lot to handle!

Still, I'm encouraged by the good that is coming out of this as well. Probably you've heard about people seeing birds in Wuhan for the first time in ages; or about the people singing to each other across the balconies of Italy; a decrease in pollution (and traffic); neighbors taking care of each other and doing grocery runs for each other, etc. And while we're not out of the woods yet, and things may get worse before they get better, there is confidence God will get us through this. He is sovereign and He is faithful. He will take us through to the other side!

In the meantime, let me take this opportunity to inform you of a few things. First, as you know, we will continue to offer our services online. We had a lot of great feedback from last week's service, and hope this will continue to be a place of encouragement and strengthening for our body. I want to thank Paul Shaw and John Faley for all their hard work in making this happen; they are putting in a lot of extra time and energy to provide us with a quality product. Please reach out to them and offer them your personal words of gratitude as well.

Second, this coming Monday our consistory will be discussing what we will be doing as far as Easter weekend is concerned (Good Friday and Easter Sunday). While it seems unlikely we will be able to meet in person, our hope is to provide you with something extra special to celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior. Stay tuned for more details.

Third, I have asked our leadership to begin contacting people on our church directory as a way to draw us closer together in this time of social distancing. Don't be surprised if you get a call or email from one or two of our consistory members. Our desire is to check-in and see how everyone is doing, ask how we can be praying for you, and offer some friendly conversation. If you haven't gotten a call

within two to three weeks and are feeling left out, please let me know and I'll be sure to update our directory and make sure someone contacts you asap.

This brings me to my next point, if you or someone from our body you know is feeling particularly lonely, depressed, or afraid, please reach out to us. There is no shame in admitting our need for help, and that is what we are here for. While I can no longer promise I'll be in the office during the week (the directives keep getting tighter and tighter), I am happy to talk over the phone, via face-time or zoom, or, if necessary, schedule a face-to-face meeting (with safe distancing in place). I know many in our congregation would do the same, we just need to know. So don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it.

Finally, please continue to keep up with your tithes and offerings. During January and February we saw a slight hit to our budget, and we expect this will be even more significant for March. Last week the consistory committed itself to continue paying all our employees, regardless of the fact that we aren't using the building and some of their services have been reduced or eliminated, but this means we need our congregation to keep their pledge to help us meet our monthly budget. While it is more difficult to remember to do this since you aren't present in the building, you are still welcome to mail checks in to the office. Most banks also provide direct payment services that you can set up online through the billing functions. Lastly, we are currently looking at implementing an online giving system that will be available on our website. The short of it is, if you are able, please continue to give.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for hanging in there with us during this difficult time. Many of us are being stretched and grown in ways we could never have imagined, but God is faithful. As Paul says to the Philippians, "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Trust in Him. He's got this!

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Andrew