

04/15/20

Dear Faith Family,

This past weekend we got to celebrate Easter in a most unusual way. I hope you enjoyed our Good Friday and Easter Sunday services online, as well as the various surprises that went with them. A lot of hard work went into putting those together, and I hope you will take the time to personally thank the people who worked so hard to make them possible—John and his family, Paul, Molly and her family, the ladies' Bible study, and even pastor Phil (did you catch his cameo in our service?) were all instrumental in making Easter a memorable event this year. I also hope you were able to be with family (either in person or through phone calls and online gathering spaces) and share the joy of Christ's death and resurrection in a meaningful way.

Just because Easter is now over, however, does not mean we get to stop declaring it, celebrating it, receiving Christ's invitation, and carrying out His commission (all points from my last sermon). Instead, these things are just beginning. Following Easter Sunday, the disciples began a tradition of gathering on Sunday mornings (which was like a Monday for them), to remember Christ's death and resurrection, reaffirm their commitment to Christ, and continue to spread the good news of the gospel. This tradition continues today and is why we have church on Sunday mornings. Each time we gather we are declaring the truths of Easter and affirming our commitment to spreading Christ's love to others.

And now that we are settling into the new shelter-in-place normal, it is even more important to seek out ways you can grow in your faith and be a blessing to others. In terms of personal growth, prayer and Bible reading continue to be the most important tools you have at your disposal. But phone calls and virtual Bible studies are also great tools. If you're not part of a group that meets this way, consider reaching out to a few friends and suggesting if they would be interested in studying a book of the Bible together. Then check in once or twice a week with them and discuss the passages you've selected. A helpful app for this is YouVersion. The teens have been using this, and it can be a fun way to keep each other accountable while facilitating meaningful dialogue around the scriptures.

As far as serving others, and serving the church, one of the best things you can do is to continue checking in with us, sending out an email or making a phone call to people from church. Personally, I have really appreciated those of you who have called or emailed me in the past week; these little connections are a tremendous encouragement to me. Hebrews 10:25 says, “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” This instruction is for the whole body. Let us practice it in celebration of our risen Lord, affirming the truths of Easter for as long as COVID-19 plagues us, and beyond.

Lastly, I want to make you aware that this week we will be having a special guest speaker. Chris Huffines will be bringing our online message. Chris and his wife, Veronica, and their two daughters, Antha and Collene, moved to Washington last year. They immediately got plugged into our church and have been faithful members ever since. Awhile back Chris generously told me that if I ever needed someone to fill in for me, he had a couple sermons in his back pocket that he would be willing to share. One of those had to do with the historical-political realities between Jesus and Pilate. So, long before Coronavirus hit, I had planned to have Chris share with us this message. We’re still moving forward with this plan as I believe it will be a blessing to us all. I hope you’ll tune in and enjoy the service.

With that said, please know I continue to pray for you all, looking forward to the day we are able to meet face to face once again. Even though that day still seems a long ways off—just like waiting for the return of Jesus—we know for a fact it is closer than the day before. Hang in there and keep your eyes on Jesus!

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Andrew