

April 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I've decided to send my April newsletter pastor's letter early...
And I've included a few email addresses that are not normally on the list.
I hope that is OK...

These are strange times! We've never lived through anything like this before.
It feels sometimes like a movie or a weird dream.
The Coronavirus has upended almost everything. Almost...

What is still upright and clear is: God loves you and me.
This I know.
If Jesus means anything to us it is that God pitches a tent right in our reality.
Jesus is right there camping out right next to us.

And we are united by our prayers and our faith in ways that nothing can break.
I have been trying to trust that and even be confident about it!
I know it is true, but sometimes my feelings and anxiety get in the way.
I wake up at 3:45am and cannot get back to sleep.
When that happens I try to pray my way back to sleep.
Sometimes it works, and I hope it can work for you too, whenever you are disoriented by this.

Here's what I hope can distract us: prayer.
We need to pray for the world and for each other right now.
And sometimes prayer means doing something too.
Maybe making a phone call or helping someone get the groceries they need.
The world needs us to pray and to care.

Our new website will be the hub of our communication for a while.
Sermons will be posted there each week, both in text form and an audio recording.
I will keep preaching and recording them, and I hope you will listen.
The recordings will include music played by Margaret.
They will also include prayer and a benediction, so they are like a mini worship service.
They will be about ½ hour each and you can listen in your homes.
All you need is a computer or smartphone.
If you don't have one, maybe call someone who does.
If you know someone who does not use a computer or smartphone, maybe call them.
You can listen in together.
Gatherings of less than 10 where you maintain good physical distance are still ok for now.

I have decided to call it "physical distance" instead of "social distance".
I think we need physical distance and social connection, but not face to face connection.
We need to maintain physical distance to be in solidarity with those most at risk.
I hope we can help each other not feel isolated in this time.

Think of your physical isolation as a prayer for those most at risk.
Think of it as an act of hope to slow the spread of the virus.
Think of it as your way of helping this world in this strange time.

At this point the Session still plans to meet, one way or the other, on April 8.
If we meet in person it will be less than 10 people, and we will sit 6 feet apart.
So we will need to use more tables than usual!

Also, please consider mailing your offering check to the church office.
We still need your support during this time to remain the church here.

So this April newsletter is different.
There is not much about upcoming events, because we don't know when we can meet again.
In fact we don't know when we will know when we will know!.
It might happen in April, or May, or June...
If I am on sabbatical when it happens, Pat Berger will lead you well.
Meanwhile, Pat has learned how to use the recorder, so this website resource can keep going.

If and when we resume public gatherings and events you will be notified.
Meanwhile the website calendar is updated.
But for now, nothing is scheduled for sure at the church building in April except the Session meeting on Wednesday, April 8. We may find out good news about Easter Sunday just a few days before Easter on April 12, or we may not. So a monthly newsletter does not work well in the current rapidly changing situation. We will do our best to manage this time, and the reentry into a more normal schedule whenever that occurs. But it will be an ever changing work in progress, so please bear with us!

I'm not sure when we will see one another again face to face.
But until then, we will do our best to keep you up to date, and informed and connected.

Grace and Peace to you all!

Pastor David Hutchinson