

Friday, March 13, 2020

Hello friends,

First and foremost—how are you? Overwhelmed? Frustrated? Confused? Sad? Anxious? Me, too.

I know Spring Break travel plans have disappeared in the last 2 days.  
I know parents are scrambling to figure out options should/when schools close.  
I know the market's volatility has been hard to ignore if you're retired.  
I know empty toilet paper aisles are simultaneously ridiculous and scary.  
I know all of New Life is beyond disappointed that the 50<sup>th</sup> kickoff was postponed.

What are your words for these hours and days? Say them out loud.

And then remember your faith is a gift, to be used precisely when words like "shortages" and "cancelled" and "overwhelmed health care system" stir up fear, anxiety, frustration, and helplessness.

Remember faith is a gift, to be used, leaned on, held on to, and practiced. Keep praying. Keep reading your Bible. Play your favorite hymns and songs on Youtube. Keep the calming words of Jesus in your mind as much as the other words. It will help.

*Do not be afraid.*

*Remember, I am with you always.*

*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.*

*Peace be with you.*

As we learn how to be church through something none of us have been through before, count on this:

- 1) Your pastor is praying for you. Join me in lifting up this congregation with prayers of health, safety, wisdom, and a swift reunion.
- 2) The congregation cares for you. Be in touch with needs. If you know you will be self-isolating—please call the church or me. If hardships start to bubble up in your life—please call the church or me. I know this congregation will step up to make sure everyone is feeling as connected as possible, as supported as possible, as whole as possible.
- 3) We will continue to figure out a way to worship. This might take different forms but it will be delivered online in some capacity. Please watch/tune in. It's important.

- 4) We'll keep communicating. When we have firm information or a firm decision, we will let you know. We will number the updates so you can track the information, as everything seems to be evolving day by day.

We will absolutely reschedule our 50<sup>th</sup> Kickoff. It may be delayed, but we will certainly not let the opportunity to celebrate the start of our Jubilee year slide away. We still have so much to be grateful for and when the time is right, we will gather, together, in person, with food, and have a lot of fun. Count on that, too!

I'm with you every step of the way—even when we're not sure what direction we're heading. There is no worry about getting lost, because Jesus has already found us. Thanks be to God.

Pastor Rakel