

Tuesday in Holy Week  
April 7, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ:

As you know, the coronavirus pandemic has forced us to close our worship services to the public and to limit our personal interaction with one another. I am very grateful for modern computer technology that has allowed us to broadcast our worship services on Facebook and to hold meetings and Bible classes via Zoom videoconferencing. This crisis has forced us to consider and implement new ways of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people outside our physical church walls. I believe this will be one of the enduring blessings resulting from this otherwise very difficult time.

Technology is wonderful, but I am also mindful that not all our church members have access to a computer or smartphone. So, I decided to supplement these more modern ways of communication with an old-fashioned letter to you, our dear members of Grace. I don't want anyone to feel alone or left out if they don't have a computer. Social distancing already makes us feel isolated enough.

I miss seeing you. Church is just not the same when very few people are here. (I also miss visiting our homebound members.) I am glad that we are still conducting our worship services and that they can be viewed on Facebook. However, preaching in a nearly empty church is not something I like, nor will I ever get used to it. This will be especially true this coming week when we conduct our closed Holy Week and Easter services.

I don't know when our public worship services can resume. The governor's "Safer at Home" order doesn't expire until Friday, April 24, so the earliest we can hold public worship services again is Sunday, April 26. However, it's possible, if not probable, that the order will be extended into May. We will just have to wait and see.

Until then, in addition to our online worship services, we are offering small-group Holy Communion services at church. They are about 20-25 minutes in length. In compliance with the "Safer at Home" order, these services are limited to nine people (including me), and we observe social distancing requirements as much as possible.

Effective Monday, April 13, the schedule for these services will be as follows:

- Tuesday and Thursday at 1:30 pm
- Tuesday at 6:30 pm
- Sunday at 1:00 pm

Please call the church office if you would like to reserve a spot in one of these services. If these days and times will not work for you, please let me know, and I will be happy to make alternate arrangements. Also, please do not feel any pressure or obligation from me to attend them, especially if you believe it is best and necessary for you to stay at home right now. While Holy Communion is a wonderful gift and blessing from Jesus, He is with you also as you read and hear His Word.

I pray that everything is going well for you and your family. As of this writing, I am healthy. My family is doing well, too. We deeply appreciate your prayers. Like all of us, I am eager for this crisis to be over and for life to return to normal. May God bring a quick end to this pandemic, and may He watch over and protect our medical, law enforcement, military, and other personnel who are working so hard to protect and defend us.

Thank you also for your continued generous financial support of our congregation. It is so encouraging to see your offerings mailed to church or dropped off in person. God has indeed blessed us with a caring, faithful, and loving church family!

I look forward to seeing you in regular Sunday morning worship or visiting you in your home when it is safe and permitted for us to do so again. Until then, please feel free to call me or stop by the church office to say hello. And, if there is anything that I can do for you, please let me know.

Although our Holy Week and Easter observances will be very different this year, the truth of Easter remains the same. Jesus lives! The victory's won! Technically, we are not supposed to say this until Easter Sunday, but I can't refrain from saying it now: Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

God's richest blessings to you and your family this Easter and always!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Brian Crane