



A NOTE FROM THE PASTORS' OFFICE

Our Help in Ages Past, Our Hope for Years to Come

BY PASTOR JOEL SMIT

Happy April everyone and welcome to Spring! Hopefully you have been enjoying the flourishing beauty of nature and new life all around. I'm thankful for the consistent seasons that the Lord brings that demonstrates that He is indeed Lord of all creation. That reminder is especially needed as we continue to face unprecedented change in our world. Each day is filled with new surprises and challenges – but glad that we trust in a Lord that never changes nor is surprised with what is taking place in our world. He is the constant Rock that we need to rely upon more than ever.

I'm grateful for how our church has adapted to the changing nature of ministry in the last few weeks. If someone would have told me just a month ago that all activities would be canceled and that we would be offering only an online worship service, I would have thought they were crazy (we all would!). Yet that is the place that we find ourselves. I am grateful, however, that we can still offer worship services, various ministries, and ways to connect through technology. While not ideal, it helps us to bridge the gap of this time and, Lord willing, we will be able to be back together in 6-8 weeks(???).

Our current circumstance requires us to not meet together for our Easter Week Celebrations. This is very difficult to accept because these are some of my favorite worship services of the year and not being together will be a real disappointment. Again, we will have to adapt and make do. We will still be offering a Maundy Thursday service that will not be livestreamed

but will be available for you to worship along at your convenience prior to Easter morn. Our Easter celebration will take place during our normal worship time/livestream at 11 a.m. on April 12. Please encourage others to “tune in” and be a part of these meaningful worship services.

As always, your pastoral staff, elders, deacons, and ministry leaders are here for you. We especially need each other during this time. Please do not hesitate to reach out with a call or an email. We will be sure to do the same. It really is a joy to connect with you all during this time apart. Hopefully, we will learn during this time not to take our gatherings for granted as we have in the past.

One of the joys during this time is having my parents with me to help care for the kids. Only the Lord knew that when we planned this several months ago how much I would need them. They have been especially helpful as we as a family keep them very busy! As many of you know my father is a retired pastor. He continues to work part-time as a pastor at a local congregation in Sioux Center, Iowa where he and my mother live. He recently wrote an article for his church, and I have asked him if I could share it with you all. I believe it expresses a lot of what we are experiencing at this time. You can read it on the next page.

Well until we meet again face to face – may the grace and peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. God bless you!

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An Encouraging Note

Dear Brothers & Sisters, where does our help come from? “Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:1). Our help is in Jesus Christ, the One who is the same, totally dependable, yesterday, today and forever.

In the days and weeks that have gone by, there is a growing feeling of dissatisfaction and discomfort. There has been so much and so many changes in our lives, and all that has happened so quickly. Often the way we handle such feelings of discomfort and uneasiness is to push them aside. We hope things will change sometime soon.

But I want to encourage you to put a name on those feelings. Let’s call them grief. We are grieving. We are grieving that we are called to “shelter in place.” I grieve all the parks are closed so we must “stay put” with our four full of energy grandchildren. We are grieving that our weekly groups are not able to gather to study God’s Word and have fellowship. I am grieving not being able to sing joyfully with our congregation. We grieve for the engaged couples who were planning to celebrate their love and commitment to God and to each other with family and friends

It’s important to name our grief for what it is. That’s not only healthy but helpful. When Israel’s world was turned upside down, they named their grief to God. They cried out to the Lord, “By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept when we remembered Zion” (Psalm 137:1).

When we bring our grief and lament to God, we realize we are not alone. I am not alone! You are not alone! We are not alone! Remember what Jesus said when the disciples were bewildered and grieving. “Be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

In the midst of our sadness of the things we treasured and really valued, now taken away, we need to see the big picture, God is at work. HE IS OUR HELP!

The Lord has provided in the past, will now and forever more.

- Rev. David L. Smit (March 2020)

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the cancellation of many church events, and calls to stay home, you may be wondering what can you do to help, especially as members of our church family. Here are some of those things:

PRAY

As you pray for loved ones and those affected by this pandemic all over the world, please pray for our church leaders to have wisdom in how to handle these new situations. Also, pray for their health, the health of our staff, the health of our volunteers, and the health of their families.

GIVE

During this time of uncertainty, your cheerful giving can help others. There may be several mercy needs in the next several weeks coming from our congregation (and beyond), and we want to be prepared to meet them, if need be. We encourage you to continue to give to your church regularly during this time of absence. You can even designate that certain gifts go toward some of our funds that help those in need directly, like the Deacons’ Fund and Norton Park.

VOLUNTEER

If you are healthy and able to help meet some practical needs of those around you, make it known to them. One way we are doing this is by offering grocery help to those in our church community who are high risk. If you would like to offer help for this or in any other capacity, contact Caroline Wesley at caroline.n.wesley@gmail.com.

STAY CONNECTED

Even though we all cannot gather in-person, we should never forsake an opportunity to assemble or connect with each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us worship online together in “home groups”, prioritize the virtual teachings offered through the “Strength to Strength” weekly devotional to supplement our Christian Education/Discipleship, and engage with each other in any way we can. Engaging with the body of Christ—whether it’s through a phone call, a video call, a text, an online message, an email or with those in your home, could go a long way to make this isolation feel less lonely and show the love of Christ.

CHURCH NEWS

Smyrna Pres Welcomes New Administrative Assistant



After four month long search, Smyrna Presbyterian Church has a new Administrative Assistant. Alycia Schulz started training for her new role at the end of March.

Alycia comes to Smyrna Pres after spending several years in private consulting. Early in her career, she traveled extensively in North America and Europe, helping international firms develop and execute marketing, sales and new business development strategies. She is also a former ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher. She graduated with a BSBA from Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina.

She has one daughter, Nina-Nicole, who will graduate from Atlanta International School in May and will attend UGA in the fall. Alycia enjoys languages, literature, music, and nature.

Alycia replaces Denise Jackson, who was the church Administrative Assistant for 12 years. She left the position in mid-December to take a new job in Washington, DC. During her absence, Linda Koppany took over the office duties, while Claresa Smith worked on communications and media material remotely.

Grocery Help

If you or a member of our church community that you know is more at risk of sickness and needs someone to shop and deliver groceries for them, we'd like to help.

All you have to do is call Caroline Wesley at 205-601-8818 or send her an email at caroline.n.wesley@gmail.com. From there, she will connect you with a volunteer shopper, so you can let them know your grocery needs.

Please be prepared with cash or check to reimburse your volunteer for your groceries once they deliver them.

Smyrna Pres Welcomes New Covenant Child

Smyrna Pres members Max and Allie Thelen welcomed daughter, Piper Grace Thelen, on March 28.

Piper is the fifth child for the Thelens. They also have Ben (10), David (8), Ellie (6), and Paul (3).

The Thelens regularly serve the church by volunteering in the nursery and hosting events in their home, among other things.



APRIL 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5 PALM SUNDAY 11:00 a.m. Livestream Worship Service	6	7	8	9	10 GOOD FRIDAY	11
HOLY WEEK						
12 EASTER 11:00 a.m. Livestream Worship Service	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 11:00 a.m. Livestream Worship Service	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 11:00 a.m. Livestream Worship Service	27	28	29	30	NOTE: All events and activities outside of 11:00 a.m. worship will be canceled/postponed until further notice.	

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 3 David Stallings
- 4 Paton Myers
- 5 Gail Stallings
- 5 Smadja Hart
- 7 Yetunde Fogarty
- 9 Denise Phan
- 9 Mazie Ruth Thomas
- 10 Reese Nyemeck
- 12 Liam Myers
- 13 Mary Stevenson
- 15 Caleb Mick
- 16 Jared Kee
- 17 Jason Whitaker
- 20 Kendra Bediam
- 21 Gay Oltjenbruns
- 21 Jamie Hughes
- 24 Taylor Whitaker
- 26 Maxine Miller
- 29 Lily Becker

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Find us on social media!

