



A NOTE FROM THE PASTORS' OFFICE

What Remains the Same

BY PASTOR JOEL SMIT

I hope this month's edition of the *Presbyview* finds you well as you continue to shelter in place and have limited exposure to the outside world. The last two months have had their challenges, but for me personally, being away from one another as a church has been one of the most hardest parts of dealing with this entire pandemic. Not being able to see each other, talk with one another, and worship together has been difficult. We, as the leadership, are beginning to talk about what it would look like to be able to worship together and when this would take place. We want to ensure as much safety as we can provide without limiting our need to gather together. Please continue to pray for us.

During this time, we have heard and used words like "unprecedented," "historic," and "unlike anything we have ever seen." We talk about how different things are as a result, and all the things that have changed. All of which is very true. Much is different and will result in much change for a long time, if not permanently, as a result. But in the midst of the swirling currents of change, I thought it would be wise for us to dwell on that which has not changed. To set our minds on what is constant and can be relied upon no matter the circumstances. Let me give you several constants that remain unchanged:

The Lord God

The first and most fundamental constant in our life is the Lord Himself. Because He never changes, nor needs not change because he

perfect in all His ways, He is the bedrock of our faith and trust. The ancient philosophers, like Aristotle and others, coined the originator of creation as being the "Unmoved Mover" of heaven and earth. He that moves everything without being moved—the primary cause of all that takes place. We know this philosophical concept to be none other than God Himself. He is the one who by His providence upholds, cares, and directs all that takes place, yet He is not affected by any of it. He is the one who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb.13:8). I love how the Psalmist in the midst of the turmoil of his circumstances makes a strong confession of faith in the Lord, by stating, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (Ps.18:2). Notice how many of those metaphors have the idea of the unchanging nature of the Lord and how the Psalmist finds his strength in that characteristic of the Lord. Surely, we should find the same strength in the Lord who remains forever our rock and fortress.

The Truth

The second constant during uncertain times is the truth, which is derived from the very nature of God himself. He is true and has made His truth known in His revelation of creation and the word. During days of uncertainty, it is all the more important that we do not let our fears and anxieties of our circumstances cloud our thoughts of what it taking place around us but rather have our hearts and minds dwell and

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meditate upon the Word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Having daily intake of Scriptural truth is so necessary and needed at all times but especially this one. Private and family devotions, along with the readily available teaching resources of our church and other trusted ministries is a helpful aid to, “set our mind on things on things above and not on earthly things” (Col.3:2).

Our Mission

It may seem that everything has been affected by this pandemic, but that is not entirely true. Our mission remains the same. “What is that?” you may ask. Well our mission is to glorify God—to KNOW Christ, GROW in Christ, and SHOW forth the love of Christ. Let me focus on the love that we are to show (see the paragraphs above on how to know and grow). This time has given us multiple opportunities to love others. Being quarantined with our families has its stressful moments, but it also has ample opportunities to share time and experiences with one another—to demonstrate our love to each other. Our world in general, and our neighbors in particular, are going through much heartache and pain through the loss of loved ones, jobs, and income. Stress is

at an all-time high. What are practical ways that we can help and bring the peace of Christ into a chaotic world? How can our faith and certainty be passed along to those who need some stabilizing? Who can you call or write a letter to encourage or tell them that you are praying for them and love them? Though our normal operations of life and ministry have been drastically affected, our goal and mission for Christ remains the same. Let’s continue to pursue it with determination. Our world is longing for love, and we have the love of Christ to share. Let’s give it amply!

Our world is in flux but isn’t it a great comfort in knowing that God and His ultimate purposes are not. Can’t we derive much strength in knowing that He is indeed our “rock,” “fortress,” and “deliverer”? These foundational truths are always the norm for the Christian no matter what may come our way. So do not let this time unsettle your spirit—the same Lord of the Universe before all this took place is the same Lord today and will be for all our days. We remain unshaken because of who He is.

God bless you all and hope to see you as soon as we can practically and safely do so!

Wednesday Night Online Devotion & Prayer

Smyrna Pres is temporarily taking its Wednesday night devotion & prayer time online. Pastor Joel is hosting weekly Zoom calls in an effort to connect the church body while we are apart. The online gatherings started a few weeks ago, and will continue on Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. until further notice.

Last Wednesday, Rev. Dr. Kevin Bidwell joined in, offering words of worship and prayer along with several others. Rev. Bidwell is a church planter who founded Sheffield Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England. He was previously scheduled to visit Smyrna Pres, but could not due to the current circumstances. During the prayer meeting, he called for fellow Christians to have hope in the Lord and a vision of Heaven during these times rather than the things of this world.

Details and reminders for the meeting are sent by email. If you know anyone who would like to be added to that list, they should let us know at info@smyrnapres.org.



CHURCH NEWS

Tentative Date Set For Church Re-opening

Church leadership has set a tentative date to re-open the church to the public for morning worship. Pastor Joel says that date will be Sunday, May 17. More information on how that will be done in accordance with the current safety measures will be forthcoming.

For the last month or so, the 11 a. m. worship service has been livestream only and all other activities have been canceled or postponed. While plans are in the works for the first in-person service, all other cancellations will continue until further notice.

Church Celebrates Stefanie Smit's Return Home



Several church members loaded up their cars with handmade signs and streamers on April 11 for a surprise drive-by parade to welcome Pastor Joel's wife, Stefanie, home. A caravan of vehicles made its way through the Smits' neighborhood, with the King family leading the way. "Celebration" by Kool and the Gang" blared from their speakers. Meg King organized the event.

Stefanie has been seriously battling Lyme Disease for the last few years and returned home after spending five weeks at a retreat in West Virginia to help treat the condition.

Please continue to pray for Stefanie's healing as she works to regain her strength.

Smyrna Pres Welcomes New Members

Even in the midst of separation, Smyrna Pres is welcoming new members. Earle Harrison officially became a member earlier this month. He met with the Session virtually and Pastor Joel announced his membership during the livestream service on Resurrection Sunday.

You may remember the Johnston family also joined the church at the start of all the social distancing, just before the last in-person service in mid-March. That Sunday, Pastor Joel announced their membership and baptized their daughter Ginny.

If you haven't already, please join us in welcoming these new members by email until we are able to fully extend them right hand of fellowship.



Earle Harrison



Hill, Virginia, and Ginny Johnston

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.

We can connect you with a volunteer shopper, so you can let them know your grocery needs. All you have to do is call Caroline Wesley at 205-601-8818 or send her an [email](mailto:caroline.n.wesley@gmail.com) (caroline.n.wesley@gmail.com). Please have cash or check to reimburse your volunteer for your groceries once they deliver them.

MAY 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 11:00 a.m. Livestream Worship Service	4	5 Cinco de Mayo	6	7	8	9
10 Mother's Day 11:00 a.m. Livestream Worship Service	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 11:00 a.m. Livestream and tentative in-person Worship Service	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 11:00 a.m. Livestream and tentative in-person Worship Service	25 Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	30
31					<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px;"> <p>NOTE: All events and activities outside of 11:00 a.m. worship will be canceled/postponed until further notice.</p> </div>	

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Tori Hines
- 2 Bob Snelson
- 2 Julie Ramsey
- 5 Amanda Levis
- 5 Jack Boyd
- 13 Beverly Schmidt
- 15 Catherine Nyemeck
- 17 Braxton Bohannon
- 20 Jonathan Funk
- 20 Martha Shirley
- 24 Bill Pettas
- 24 Penny DeHaas
- 26 Julien Nyemeck
- 27 Jason Veal
- 31 Donna Hall
- 31 Evelyn Canup

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED