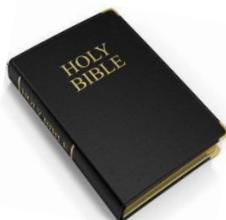


Linway Church In Touch

Staying In Touch Without Touch

March 26, 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR



Dear Friends,

Greetings! We are now in our second week of separation due to the Corona Virus. How are you doing? Last Sunday seemed so strange not being able to gather for worship in the Sanctuary. Nevertheless, I hope you took the opportunity to have devotions in your home. Margaret, Andrew, and I spent time in our living room reading Scripture, praying, and sharing thoughts from the readings.

As we look forward to this coming Lord's Day, March 29th, an abundance of caution again has required us to **not** gather for holy worship until the pandemic has subsided. There are some encouraging signs in the treatments of this virus, but it is too soon to signal the all clear. That being said, I am asking once again that you take time, find time, and make time, for your own private, or family devotional worship. It is the best we can do under the circumstance.

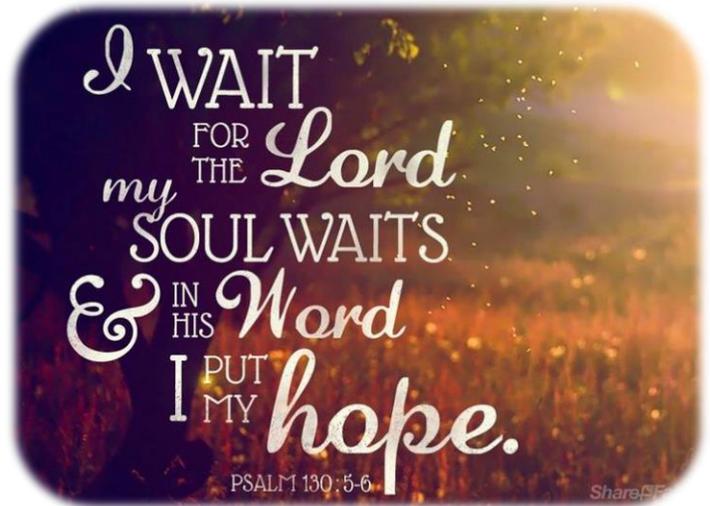
In an effort to assist you, let me first share with you the Scripture readings designated for this coming Sunday, March 29th, the Fifth Sunday in Lent:

- Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14
- Psalm 130
- Epistle: Romans 8: 6-11
- Gospel: John 11:1-45

As before, I encourage you to read one or all of the Scripture texts. I was planning on giving a message based on the Old Testament lesson of Psalm 130. Perhaps it is only me, but I find this Psalm most timely considering the circumstance that surrounds us. We are reminded that God not only loves us, but listens. He not only hears what is on our heart, but claims us with a love that will not let us go.

Psalm 130 opens with a cry and a plea to God to "Listen." The psalmist calls out for divine attention and then immediately praises God *more than watchman for the morning* (verse 6). This is nothing less than hopeful expectation, just as anyone who has been ill at night looks hopefully and expectantly for the dawn. How many times when we were growing up did our parents say to us, *you will feel better in the morning?* It was not only a reassurance to us, but it was the expression of sincere, positive, hope.

The psalmist calls out to God from the depth of human anguish with the definite expectation that God hears, and that God cares because of who God is. The psalmist's cry does not arise from fear or a sense of abandonment, but from confidence and trust that God listens and knows what we are going through. And in knowing, God will not abandon his people.



This psalm is a statement of human vulnerability and anguish, but it is much more than that. It is an affirmation of God's character. It is God's nature to hear, to care, to not count our iniquities against us, and most importantly, to forgive. The Psalm is not so much a statement about the plight of human beings, but of God's abiding care.

Some ask, if God does care about us, why do we have to endure such difficulties as this Corona Virus Pandemic? How or even why did this virus come to be? I do not know. It is part of the natural world. What I know is that God is aware of what has and is taking place. What I know is what our faith tells us: *We believe there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus: and we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. We are sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 8:38-39)

Once again, I am asking you to intentionally read one or more of the above Scripture texts, to think of its meaning in and for your life. I also ask you to pray for the sick, the poor, and those in need. Expand your prayer to include those providing medical assistance to all whose health is impaired and not just those afflicted by this pandemic. Pray for our elected leaders at all levels of government that their decisions will aid our community, state, and country in providing assistance to those in need, not only medically but economically. There are people cut off from income due to no fault except they serve others who are now required to **not** participate in their normal activities.

Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. I will be writing to you again next week. In the meantime, keep the faith. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and forever more. Amen.

Grace and Peace to You and Yours,

Eric E. Dennis, Pastor

Notes from the Church Office:

Office Hours – Rev. Dennis, Leanne Cornell, and Christine Stewart are spending minimal time at the church and are able to work from home. Messages on the church answering machine are being checked daily. They are also able to retrieve email messages and phone messages from home.

Mail – is being retrieved from the church mailbox daily. For those who would like to use electronic giving, information is enclosed.

Email Address – If you have email and have received this letter through the US Mail, please email the church office at contact@linwaychurch.org and share your email with us.

Weekly In Touch Letter or Newsletter – If you wish to stop receiving this weekly letter or the Linway Newsletter, please contact the church office.

Easter Flowers – We are sorry, but we are unable to provide Easter Flowers this year. For those who have placed orders, we will be contacting you on whether you wish to have your payment returned or given to the General Fund.

Soup Fundraiser – If you placed an order for soup, you will be contacted regarding your order. We are sorry we are not able to prepare soup at this time.

Texas Roadhouse Rolls Deacon Fundraiser – Unfortunately, Texas Roadhouse is not able to fulfill our fundraiser order and is instead issuing vouchers for our orders. We will have updates in future In Touch letters as to when the vouchers are being mailed.



Daily Quarantine Questions:

1. What am I grateful for today?
2. Who am I checking on or connecting with today?
3. What expectations of “normal” am I letting go of today?
4. How am I getting outside today?
5. How am I moving my body today?
6. What beauty am I either creating, cultivating, or inviting in today?

Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips remember those that have no place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home remember those who have no home.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.

Amen.

This prayer was shared by Fr. Larry Tensi, and is used with permission. It was written by a member of the Interfaith Hospitality Network in the Cincinnati area.

Cares Chorus

I cast all my cares upon you,
I lay all of my burdens, down at your feet,
Any time I don't know what to do,
I will cast all my cares upon you.

"Cast all your cares upon Him,
for he cares for you."

-1 Peter 5: 7

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