

Order of Service – March 15, 2020
Facebook Live – John Knox Presbyterian Church

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship (sentences of scripture)

Hymn #12 – “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”

Prayer of the Day

Scripture – Psalm 46

Message

Hymn #329 – “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength”

Affirmation of Faith – (Romans 8)

Joys and Concerns / Prayers of the People / Lord’s Prayer

Offering

Hymn #687 – “Our God, Our Help in Ages Past”

Benediction and Blessing

Message:

- How would you describe this past week?
- What are you feeling/what have you felt in the midst of this crisis?
- How have you seen God present in this chaotic time?

For our message today, we asked people to reflect on these three questions. Following is a small number of the many responses we received. We would invite you to consider the message of Psalm 46 as you navigate these difficult times:

“God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in times of trouble.”

May you know that presence and peace in all that we do as a community of faith!

Frank and Lisa

How would you describe this past week?

This week has been mentally exhausting. So many changes being thrown at you all at once. Trying to digest it and roll with all the changes. Dealing with a kid who is disappointed with how this affects her education.

I think this past week has been frantic and unsettling in many ways and has made me realize that so many things in our daily life that we think we can plan are out of our control.

Uncertainty

Challenging decisions

Chaos

“What if . . .?”

Anxiety

Like a train leaving the station – leaving slowly but picking up steam.

What have you felt/what are you feeling in the midst of this crisis?

I am feeling confused, misinformed, fearful, skeptical, loved, hopeful, optimistic.

This past week has brought back memories of 9/11 to me. A time of not knowing what the next few weeks will be looking like. A change the country has never experience. Again a feeling of unsettling. I refuse to panic in the midst of it because I know this will run its course, there will still be men and women left on the planet when this is over, and we will have learned life lessons on this journey. Maybe this is God just making a “correction” with us , the same way the stock market makes a correction when things get out of whack.

I'm more than a little aggravated. The media has made such a stir that people are panicking and along with that comes selfishness and greed. When people start hoarding food and toilet paper it leaves many who depend on going to the store and being able to buy what they need with the little money they have out of luck. What

happened to loving your neighbor and caring for those less fortunate? This whole thing just shows how it is for most people. Every man for himself. Lord help us.

Anxiety from so much "noise". The spread of "information" feels more dangerous than the spread of the virus itself.

We lost a seal team in Afghanistan, not one word said. That "information" needs to be spread.

After watching my local hospital leadership handle our first case --- I feel peace. A dichotomy of emotion- the health care problem solving mode-trying to process the vast amounts of information- sorting what's important, what's not, what needs to be addressed, what can be filed in the back of my brain and then conveying a consistent message calmly and directly all the while trying to keep in check that underlying fear of the unknown with concern for the elderly, family members and friends from potential illness, loss of work time and the uncertain economic times ahead. I can honestly say that I've never had a week like last week. If I couldn't retreat a bit, sit in a dark room and listen for that still small voice, I don't know how I'd manage. I pray for others who don't have the Comforter to walk with them.

Unexpected responsibility like I've never quite felt before, along with a complete sense of inadequacy... connecting with my 50 college students who I will teach remotely starting in a few days (which I am unprepared to do), supervising four other teachers in the same boat, in the midst of the chaos and fear that these young people are experiencing, and then there's my own college kid still stuck in until Friday. It's a good feeling of community. But I don't know what I'm doing.

I'm just feeling out of control. I'm not confident I'm understanding the virus in its entirety. And I want to keep my family safe but also give them normalcy.

My daughter has type 1 and I'm more nervous for her than she is. She a restaurant server and gas to work to get by. Immune system already compromised by that. Now this!! She's always telling me she fine. Anxiety through the roof.

It brings about a time to reflect on the blessings we have, and how we can adjust our routines to deal with the unknown. If it means spending more time at home, we can enjoy the healing benefits of fresh air and sunshine, with walks or yard work. It is a challenge not to panic.

I am grateful for close supervision via a call and texts from my kind neighbor and loving kids. But I dislike being fussed over due to being old and thus potentially more at risk.

How have you seen God present in this chaotic time?

I have seen God in so many ways. On our parents' board at Xavier, the way out administration is dealing with this situation, the parents of the students and the students themselves that have offered up to help in any way possible...offers to help ship things to students far away, clearing out someone's room and storing it for them,

places to stay, local families offering to feed kids in their homes who can't get home.

Companies, small businesses adjusting policies to help those who could use their services.

I believe the fact that this virus does not seem to affect the very young is clearly a sign of God's presence. How much more horrific the impact of this virus would be, if thousands of children were dying?

I've seen/witnessed a lot of graciousness among people over the past couple weeks as this virus is growing. I've seen God's presence in care givers, education leaders making important decisions as well as acts of kindness-on the news yesterday they talked of a young woman walking into a grocery store who helped a frightened elderly couple who were in their car, but were afraid to go in the store with all the people and risk of infection, so they asked the young woman if she would get them what's on their list and gave her money for the purchase, which she obliged to with no issue.

I have seen God's presents by being in contact with friends. Receiving calls from friends asking if we need anything. Telling me to call if I need help or anything from Grocery. Also, have received calls from all of Mother's service providers, CICOA, Comforcare, Meals on Wheels advising that all her services will continue as long as they meet the State Mandate. That was a comfort. I see God in checking on our friends and neighbors and caring for those in need.

When the news went out that our schools would be out for the two weeks running up to spring break, the community chatter boards lit up with offers of both child care and folks willing to provide meals for kids who were counting on school breakfast and lunch.

I also think that God's hand is in the fact that so many professional athletes are offering to pay wages for arena staff that are losing income due to game cancellations.

Saw this message of FB today. "We are going to stand far from each other now so we can embrace each other later."

God loves us, and will take care of us. These times can bring out the best in people.

In [Patty McKinnon's](#) kindness in giving Karl and I toilet paper and groceries. And Italian neighbors singing in their homes while quarantined.

God's call for us to come together and rally around and beside each other with a web of support. Don't wait to be asked for help....just do it.