

President's Note for May 2020

What's the old saying about absence making the heart grow fonder? I know I look back with fondness at all the times we have gathered in the name of the Lord in our little sanctuary here at 59th and Broadway. And I look forward to the time we will be able to safely gather again in worship, partaking of the Sacraments and enjoying fellowship. And that is the key, safely. While we've been fortunate not to be as severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic here in California as in other parts of our nation and world we must still remain cautious and abide by the guidelines put in place by our County and State health directors, epidemiologists and the CDC. Yes, I'm getting cabin fever like the rest of you and would love to go out for a meal or a concert or to the theater and particularly yearn to be with fellow believers in the Lord's house on the Lord's day. Yet, I understand and accept that, for now at least, these things are not to be. We are a nation founded on rights and freedoms, but sometimes the wise and kind decision is to refrain from exercising those rights out of concern, out of love, for others. While we've escaped having a big spike in hospitalization, illness and death here, a disproportionate number of those who have become ill and who have died in our area have been attendees of local congregations who have been slow to distance themselves and worship online or by telephone rather than gathering together. Having an open ended time table for when we can return to at least somewhat normal lives and routines, including church attendance, is difficult and will likely require a gradual, transitional period. I've been watching some old films while semi-housebound including the old Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce Sherlock Holmes movies. In *A Passage to Algiers* one of Holmes adversaries tells a too eager comrade, "You must learn to cultivate patience my dear Mirko." Pastor Townsend spoke of the Five Virtues in a recent sermon, including on that at times difficult to maintain virtue of patience. Lord grant us patience.

For now we will continue to have our options of joint teleconference worship with Lutheran Church of the Cross and Atonement Lutheran Church and with video on our own new YouTube channel. Pastors Brad Carpenter, Daniel Yoon and Administrator Kris Glass of Grace Presbyterian continue to help us in many ways, like with setting up our new YouTube Channel and video worship. Together with Grace we hope to have a banner up on campus in the not too distant future

advertising both congregations new worship options. At some point we will return to some of the things we so sorely miss, like communal worship and the Sacrament of Communion itself. Initially we will likely need to gather in small groups with proper and cautious spacing. Communion may require the use of the host only; remember Luther teaches partaking of either element imparts the full benefit of having both elements. Those receiving the host may come to the altar rail one at a time and return to their pew by a side aisle in a way similar to how we do now when we practice intinction, only without the wine and with greater spacing. All of these things are on the horizon and merely a heads up of how worship may take place when we are able to return. In the meantime, continue to pray, read scripture, worship privately or as a couple or family at home, check on and help your friends and neighbors where you safely can and continue to join us on Sundays for Teleconference Worship, YouTube Worship or both. If you have a spiritual need or simply have a question contact our church office by phone or e-mail and leave a message or contact me or Pastor Townsend. Remember we have a link on our website for prayer requests too. At the end of this newsletter you'll find an updated list of resources and worship options.

Thanks and prayers to all the workers who continue to serve our community and world be it in the medical community, grocery stores and pharmacies, warehouses, in the fields, in transportation, in cleaning or anywhere else. May God watch over them and all of us. May God, and those of us who are able, also watch over those who are now out of work and struggling to get by. Let us also continue to give thanks for the blessings we still do enjoy. Continue to pray for all on our prayer list and always remember that we do indeed remain the body of Christ even while physically apart. As our church namesake St. Paul states:

"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." 1Cor. 12:27 NRSV

Peace, blessings and good health,

Chuck Prewett

Council President