

The Connections Newsletter

March 21st, 2020 Issue

This is going to be a different Connections!

It will start off with a letter by Pastor Doug Duy announcing some very important news on how Ascension is moving forward for now with the pandemic situation.

Then instead of our usual calendar of events going on at Ascension I have written an article for this time in our church life.

Pastor Doug Duy

Once again, we turn to our God's promise in Isaiah 41:10—*"Fear not, for I am with you always. Be not dismayed, I am your God. I will help you, strengthen you and uphold you with My righteous right hand!"*

We have complete confidence in our God and trust him to be with us at all times and in all circumstances. That means, that during this uncertain time with the coronavirus, we firmly put our trust in God and will always be prudent in making decisions.

To that end, we have made the following decisions concerning services at Ascension:

- 1. We are suspending regular Sunday Services at Ascension for the next two weeks (through March 29th). We will continue to evaluate the status of future services and share those decisions with you.**
- 2. We are also suspending Wednesday Lenten suppers and services for the next two weeks.**
- 3. We will live stream a Sunday Service beginning at 8:45am. The link to reach our YouTube channel is on the church website at www.AscensionTucson.org.**
- 4. Beginning on Thursday, March 19th, at 10:00am, we will live stream a daily devotion to the congregation for the duration of this shutdown.**

Suspending services is one of the most difficult decisions I've made in my life. Ascension has a responsibility for your spiritual well-being, and also a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy worship environment for you. There are now confirmed cases of the coronavirus locally and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports this disease is particularly dangerous to older populations. Our congregation has a large number of people who fit into this category. In addition, health officials are discouraging the gatherings of over 10 people.

We are being told by infectious disease experts that we have a very strong opportunity to play a significant role in limiting the spread of this virus. We do this by taking sensible precautions and avoiding public gatherings. By suspending our public worship services, Ascension is exercising good community citizenship.

I also want you to know that, at the recommendation of the Arizona governor, all schools (including Ascension Lutheran School) have suspended operation as well. This shut down will last until the end of March and be reevaluated at that time.

I'll be at the church daily, along with the rest of the church staff. If you need to talk, please feel free to call.

Almighty God, merciful Father, Your thoughts are not our thoughts, Your ways are not our ways. We ask you to deliver us from this disease that is present in our world today. Above all, we implore You, do not let the hearts of Your people despair nor our faith fail, but always sustain and comfort us. Direct all the efforts to attend the sick, protect the helpless, and comfort the dying. Bring hope and healing that we may find relief and restoration of health; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN!

The Lord Protects Derek Barolet

As I sit in the office in a very quiet church today thinking about what article to put in Connections, my mind fell on Psalm 91. This Psalm means a lot to me personally, it is called the “Soldier’s Psalm.” When I was deployed the Chaplain handed out bandanas with 91 written on it, I even have verse 7 tattooed on my back. In the weeks to come maybe it will also bring comfort to you as well.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust! For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day; Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. A thousand may fall at your side And ten thousand at your right hand, But it shall not approach you. You will only look on with your eyes And see the recompense of the wicked. For you have made the Lord, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you, Nor will any plague come near your tent. For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down. “Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. “He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.”With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation.”

This is a powerful passage. Now on cursory examination one might think that these verses mean we can go play in traffic, or charge into battle, or lick handrails, because we won’t be killed by cars, bullets, or disease! Wouldn’t that be awesome if true! But remember, Satan used this Psalm to tempt Christ into flinging himself off the Temple. (Matthew 4:5-7) Jesus didn’t jump, he says “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”

(continued on next page)

So what do we do with promises like this? We look at the rest of Scripture to find truth. Scripture interprets Scripture.

Deuteronomy 31:8 “He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

Isaiah 43:1 “Don’t fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine.”

Philippians 4:6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

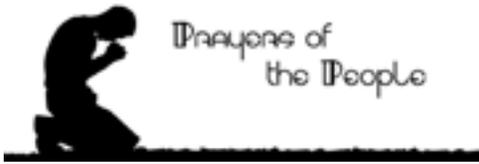
2 Timothy 1:7 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

What we see is that we are told not to fear. To put our trust in the Lord. To be of sound mind. Faith in Scripture is not a blind jump into the air, it is a knowing reliance on our Father. It is knowing that when we fall and scrape our knee, it may hurt, but we have our Father beside us. It is knowing that when we go into battle we have our King leading us. It is knowing that when pestilence and plague spreads, we have the great Healer and Comforter.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in one sermon “Learn to recognize and understand the hour of the storm, when you were perishing. This is the time when God is incredibly close to you, not far away. Right there, when everything else that keeps us safe is breaking and falling down, when one after another all the things our lives depend on are being taken away or destroyed, where we have to learn to give them up, all this is happening because God is coming near to us, because God wants to be our only support and certainty. God lets our lives be broken and fail in every direction, through fate and guilt, and through this very failure God brings us back; we are thrown back upon God alone.”

The Voice that spoke galaxies into being, quiets the storm too. The feet pierced for you, walked on the waves of storm. It is when Peter took his eyes off Christ that he started sinking. Use the times of trial to cuddle in close to the Father, to kneel before the King, to touch the hands and feet of the Son, to listen for the whisper of the Spirit. Take shelter in the shadow of the wings of the Almighty God.

1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.



HEALTH CONCERNS:

Irene Ahl; Sharon Algar; Bill Amspaugh; Linda Bennett; Carroll Boettcher; Mark Boettcher; Maun Boettcher; Angie Breitbarth; Chuck Bristol; Heidi Buchholz; John & Joan Burns; Linda Cirelli; Moose Creighton; Henry Dahl; Larry Dahl; Richard Dahl; Dianne Ewald; Debbie Franklin-Bromley; Alexander Gomez; Bonnie Grant; Gizelle Hayes; Katie Hayes; Carl Heldt; Evelyn Horst; Annette Idso; Christopher Idso; Susan Jerez; Pauline Kienbaum; Bud Koehlinger; Donna Koelling; Wendy Koosmann; Fred Krause; Allyson Lackey; Fran Mayse; Hayley McCain; Donna McCullough; Howard Morrow; Lily Navarro; Tanner Nelson; Wayde Nelson; Glen Pedersen; Helen Perrodin; Ben Petersen; Fred Plebanek; Virginia Potter; Esther Riesen; Eileen Schottel; Joe Wells; Marie Wood; Jim

MILITARY:

Richard Hedin; Isaac Jackson; Tim Mace; Tammy Simmons

CALLED HOME:

We give prayers of sympathy and compassion to the family and friends of Ralph Chambers who was recently called home.

1220 West Magee Road | Tucson, Arizona 85704
520.297.3095
church.office@alcs-az.org
www.facebook.com/ALCStucson