

An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike for April 14, 2021

Hello Everyone! – This week is a busy one for me. So much to get done and so little time. The finish line for this week of course is Easter Sunday morning. After that I will probably collapse with exhaustion. The holy holidays are like that, filled with frantic preparation and a sense of urgency. If your preparations this week are like mine please take care to pause in all the busyness to contemplate the events that this week commemorates, the journey of our Lord to the cross, to the grave, through a victory over death won for all, and empty grave and life everlasting. It's a journey we all need to contemplate especially in these times when the reminders of death in the world are all around us. We need to be reminded of where all paths lead, to an empty grave and an end to the darkness. I invite you to observe a holy passion week and joyous Easter.

Directions to the Easter Sunrise Service (6:15 a.m. Easter Day)

- The address where the Sunrise Service will take place is 8231 Bayside Drive.
- From the Church continue east on Mountain Road.
- Continue straight onto Pinehurst Road. (Mountain Road will turn off to the right.)
- Continue on Pinehurst past the entrance to Downs Park – Pinehurst will make a sharp turn to the left.
- Continue on Pinehurst.
- Turn Right onto Oakdale Road (the second street to the right)
- Follow Oakdale Road one block to its end.
- Turn Right onto Bayside Drive
- 8231 Bayside Drive will be immediately to your left. (Address on Mailbox – Gravel drive.)
- Park as orderly as you can on the lawn – otherwise park along the street being careful not to park other driveways.

Holy Week and Easter Services

Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday) – April 14, 2022 – Communion – 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday - April 15, 2022 – Worship Service – 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday – April 17, 2022 - Easter Sunrise Service 6:15 a.m.

8231 Bayside Drive, Pasadena

(Home of Dave Shelton's Sister, Joanne)

Easter Sunday – April 17, 2022 – Easter Celebration Service – 9:30 a.m.

Here's some repeated but important information.

If anyone is interested in volunteering to staff our nursery on Sunday mornings please let me know. We may not be able to staff every Sunday morning but we can let our young families know those Sundays when nursery will be available.

If you have prayer requests, even if you plan to share them at Sunday worship, you may forward them ahead of time to Jen at the church office and she will compile a list to be used on Sunday morning.

Signing On For Zoom Worship Services. As most of you who Zoom our worship services know, I greet Zoom attendees as they sign on, take Zoom attendance, and assign names to phone numbers as phone callers sign

on. I open the Zoom meeting at 9 a.m. in order to give people time to sign on. I encourage you to sign on early to avoid the crush of people signing on at the last minute. The earlier you sign on the easier it is for me to attend to the greeting responsibilities. It also gives us a chance to chat, and share prayer requests

The Announcements and Bulletin for Sunday's service are included as attachments to this encouraging word. Please feel free to print them out and either bring them with you to the service or to use them as your guide as you Zoom the service.

A Word About Giving. As we begin a new year, we face several challenges as a congregation. One of those challenges is financial. Your faithfulness and diligence in giving helped us weather many of those challenges and for that I and the leadership team thank you. However, last year we also had federal help, and assistance from our annual conference, which we will not receive this year. This presents yet another challenge – to meet the financial obligations of our congregation while supporting the mission and ministry needs of our community. Our greatest and perhaps only means of support in meeting this challenge in this coming year will be through your prayerful and faithful giving. You can help in several ways. First by prayerfully considering increasing your weekly or monthly offering. Secondly by enrolling in our E-giving program. Whichever way you choose to support this ministry know that it is deeply appreciated and will enable our continued ministry presence in this community.

An Encouraging Word

"I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." - John 12:46

It's amazing what a little light can do to change our perspective. A week or so ago I was taking some time on our back porch to gather my thoughts. The day was mostly cloudy with massive grey clouds racing across the sky. There were occasional gaps in the clouds through which shafts of sunlight managed to penetrate an otherwise gloomy day. As I looked across the paddock area of the neighboring farm to the woods on the far side, I noticed how barren and lifeless the trees looked. That is until a shaft of sunlight shot through the clouds and illuminated the scene. When that happened the green of budding trees was revealed. I could make out white blossoms hiding in the underbrush and a haze of something lavender as well. With that momentary shaft of light, the whole scene changed. Trees that seemed barren, grey, and lifeless revealed the green of returning life that had been hidden in light's absence.

It struck me in that moment how the light of Christ, in the same way, has the power to illuminate our lives revealing hope and renewing life in the often-barren landscapes that our lives become. From time to time, we all have dark and grey seasons in our lives when it's hard to see hope, find joy, or know relief from the burdens we often have to carry. In those times our days may seem cloudy, grey, and ominous. This is especially so for many now as we continue to worry about a possible new wave of Coronavirus, witness the senseless and wanton destruction of human lives in Ukraine, and struggle to make ends meet in an economy that is increasingly difficult. In dark times like these we need to remember that Christ Jesus has entered the darkness of our world to bring hope-revealing light. In Christ's light we can discern the renewal of life and hope in our world. Jesus declares in John 12:46, "I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness."

This Easter, as with all Easters, we will be reminded of how the stone that sealed Jesus' tomb was rolled away revealing in that Easter morning light an empty tomb. That morning light revealed for us not only an empty grave but also empty fears, empty sorrows, and empty despair. The light of Christ penetrated that dark tomb to reveal the hope of everlasting life. That same light has the power to penetrate the darkness in each of our lives and drive whatever darkness we are experiencing away! It has the power to reveal hope. It has the power to reveal new and renewing life in each of our lives that all too often seem overcome with darkness.

We also need to remember that we have the power to shine that light into the lives of the people around us – especially those who are struggling to find hope or joy. It can be as simple as a warm smile, a comforting word, or a card sent at a critical time in their lives. It may mean coming alongside them and sharing the joy we know in Christ and helping to lift their burdens. Everyone needs a patch of sun-light in their lives from time to time. We have known that need. Now as Easter people, people of the light, we are called, empowered, and enabled to bring the light of Christ's love into the lives of others. When we do, lives that seemed as lifeless and dead as winter trees will be revealed – in Christ's light -to have budding hope and joy.

"For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." - [2 Corinthians 4:6](#) ESV

That's all for today. I'll see you on Sunday either on Zoom or at in-person worship. Until then be well, stay safe, make good decisions in this Coronavirus environment, and in please stay connected to each other and to God.

Blessings & Peace, Mike