

Message November 1, 2020
“God’s Still in Charge”

Pastor Joe was under the weather today. We pray he will be better next Sunday.

In Pastor Joe's absence this morning, Donna Klaeyesen shared a few thoughts about God's care. She began with Psalm 23. This is often read at memorial services, but it is a song filled with the knowledge of God's provision and care for His people.

2020 has been a year! Whether we choose to remember it with any fondness, is something we will each need to decide. Certainly it began normally. We made plans to do many things this year. But March came in, not with the roar of a lion as the weather refers, but as a dragon breathing fire. Covid-19 and pandemic became words we all knew. Schools, churches, businesses closed. Stores suddenly had shortages of toilet paper, paper towels and cleansers. We learned to wear masks, socially distance ourselves and stay home. Children had to be in school on line. Moms and Dads, and others had to work from home. Some people found them selves unemployed.

Yet the world did not end. It certainly seemed upside down and sideways, but God did not leave us. Through all the challenges, He has been with us, loving us, guiding us. While we did not meet for many Sundays, we did have messages from Pastor Joe, sent either by email or snail mail. We called each other, texted, sent cards. Eventually, the world began to open up, slowly, so we could stay safe while emerging from our unexpected hibernation. Our church was able to meet in the side yard, under the tall trees that grow next to the church. We could not sing, but we could hear music that praised God and reminded us who He is and Whose we are. We could still share our joys, our fears and our sorrows. We could - and can - still share God's love.

Still slowly, things opened more. We were able to bring worship back inside. Businesses could open. All with restrictions, meant to keep us safe.

For our church family, we suffered another great loss when our dear friend and brother in Christ, Eric McKee, was called home. Too young, too soon. But we hold up his wife, Lesa, and the family in prayer, and in our hearts. We call, text, send cards to let them know we love and support them. We know Eric is with God, that God has not left anyone alone.

November is a time when we turn our minds to Thanksgiving. Not just the meal, but to the reality of thankfulness that comes from recognizing what God has done and is doing for us. His love has not changed - not one subatomic particle's worth. God is the same today as He was yesterday and as He will be tomorrow. His love for His people is everlasting. He blessed us with sunshine in the summer and with another beautiful fall. The leaves have shown that His artist's palette is still the best. It's a matter of perspective. We are still packing shoe boxes that will enable children all over the world to hear the Good News of His love. They will know that Jesus died on the cross for them as He did for all. They will have the opportunity to make Him their Savior, as He is ours. We will give food to a Hope family. Might have to do some things differently, but we are still children of God and as His disciples, we still have the responsibility to share His love with the world around us.

We continue to praise God and to be thankful for what we have. The Bible tells us that there is a season for everything. (Ecc 3:1) This season will pass. In the meantime, God is with us, and we need to use this time to draw close. We use our faith, not our fear, to move forward.

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.