

DEAR FRIENDS,

THIS PAST WEEK OUR NATION OBSERVED PASSING THE HALF MILLION MARK IN TERMS OF PEOPLE DYING FROM THE CORONA VIRUS. WHILE THE NUMBER OF CASES OF COVID ARE ON THE DECLINE, SCIENTISTS WHO WORK IN THE ARE OF DEVELOPING VACCINES TO KEEP US SAFE FROM THE VIRUS, ARE FINDING THAT THEY ARE IN A RACE TO DEVELOP A VACCINE THAT CAN WIPE OUT ALL OF THE VARIANTS OF THE VIRUS OUR COUNTRY IS BEGINNING TO EXPERIENCE. ON A POSITIVE NOTE, SCIENTISTS ARE EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE THAT THEY WILL WIN THIS RACE.

IT HAS BEEN A MOST TRYING YEAR. I KNOW I SPEAK FOR ALL WHEN I SAY THAT I CANNOT WAIT FOR LIFE TO GET BACK TO SOME SENSE OF NORMALACY. I LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN WE CAN GATHER TOGETHER FOR WORSHIP, HAVE FAMILY GATHERINGS WITHOUT FEARS THAT SOMEONE WILL UNINTENTIONALLY CARRY THE VIRUS TO THAT GET-TOGETHER AND BE ABLE TO ENJOY LIFE MORE FULLY ONCE MORE.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THAT DAY APPEARS TO BE ON THE HORIZON. THE CHALLENGE IS NOT TO GET EMOTIONALLY BOGGED DOWN IN THE MAIN TIME. AND TO DO THAT WE ARE BLESSED TO KNOW THE LIGHT OF THE CRUCIFIED AND RISEN CHRIST WHO WALKS WITH EACH OF US AND WHO CAN EMPOWER US TO FOCUS MORE ON HOW FAR WE HAVE COME IN THIS BATTLE AND NOT HOW FAR WE HAVE TO GO. WITH PREDICTIONS THAT BY LATE SUMMER MANY OF US WILL HAVE HAD OUR VACCINATIONS, MANY SCIENTISTS LIKE DR. ANTHONY FAUCCI, WHO IS LEADING OUR BATTLE AGAINST THE VIRUS, IS BASICALLY SAYING, "WE ARE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET, BUT THERE APPEARS TO BE REASON TO BE OPTIMISTIC THAT BY SUMMER THIS LONG SEIGE WILL, AT LAST, BE OVER."

OUR LENTEN THEME THIS YEAR IS "REJOICING IN THE SEASON OF LENT." AS I SAID IN MY ASH WEDNESDAY SERMON, INSTEAD OF FOCUSING SOLELY ON THE THEME OF REPENTANCE, I BELIEVE THAT LENT IS ALSO A TIME FOR US TO REMEMBER THE JOY WE EXPERIENCE WHEN CONTEMPLATING THE MINISTRY AND COMPASSION OF JESUS. IT IS BECAUSE JESUS BORE OUR SINS ON THE CROSS AND WAS RAISED FROM DEATH THAT LENT NEEDS TO BE A TIME WHEN WE REMEMBER WITH JOY WHAT GOD HAS DONE ON OUR BEHALF.

HAVING SAID THAT, I AM IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING SERMONS FOR EACH MIDWEEK WORSHIP SERVICE WHICH WILL BE SHOWN ON-LINE. THEY WILL BE AS FOLLOWS: FEBRUARY 24TH: REMEMBERING THE JOY OF THE INCARNATION, MARCH 3RD: REMEMBERING THAT WE ARE THE BELOVED OF GOD, MARCH 10TH: REMEMBERING THE JOY OF BEING CALLED INTO A COMMUNITY OF FAITH, MARCH 17TH: REMEMBERING THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS, AND MARCH 24TH: REMEMBERING THE JOY OF SERVANTHOOD. THESE WORSHIP SERVICES WILL BE AVAILABLE TO YOU EACH WEDNESDAY AT 7:00 AND YOU CAN EASILY ACCESS THEM IF YOU CHOOSE TO WATCH AT ANOTHER TIME. I SAY THIS BECAUSE I AM HOPING THAT, IF POSSIBLE, YOU MIGHT ATTEND THE MIDWEEK SERVICE AT MOORETON LUTHERAN WHERE EACH WEDNESDAY I WILL BE PRESENTING A WORSHIP/EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR ON THE APOSTLE'S CREED. I THINK IT WILL OFFER A TIME WHEN WE CAN ALL BE ENRICHED BY REVISITING THE HISTORY THAT LIES BEHIND OUR CREDAL STATEMENTS AND THE MEANING OF THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD ARTICLES OF OUR FAITH. THE MOORETON

COUNCIL EMPHASISED THEIR HOPES THAT PEOPLE FROM BOTH OF OUR CONGREGATIONS MIGHT COME. WE WILL OBSERVE WEARING MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING.

**HAVE A BLESSED LENT,
LOVE IN CHRIST,
PASTOR GORDY**