

Announcements

1. Our congregation remains closed for all activities through May 30. We will continue to have worship on live via Facebook Live. We also have a Zoom fellowship meeting after worship. If you have not received the link for the Zoom fellowship time, please send me a message with your email and I'll make sure you start receiving it.
2. This Sunday, Session approved us doing online Communion during Sunday worship. During the time of service, Pastor Andy will prompt you with information. We ask that you have ready something bread like and enough cups with wine/juice for everyone in your family or in the household. You are invited to sit at your dining room table during this time.
3. We thank you for sending in your tithes and offerings. Session and the Finance Team have minimized costs during this time and are continuing to find ways to reduce expenses. Any financial donations help our congregation. We are asking that you please send your tithes and offerings directly to Mickie Ulm, since she makes the deposits for our congregation. Her address is 516 Idlewhile Ct. Farmington, IL 61531.
4. Starting this Friday, each week I will set out the church's grocery cart for the food pantry on the east side of the fellowship hall by the door. It will be out there from 10-4pm. We ask that you prayerful consider donating to the food pantry. The pantry is experiencing a significant increase in demand during this crisis. Any amount of donation would be helpful. If you would like to make a financial donation to the food pantry, please send it directly to Mickie Ulm and she can make sure it gets to the food pantry. Once again, her address is 516 Idlewhile Ct. Farmington, IL 61531.
5. Speaking of the Food Pantry, they will be open twice in May. On Wednesday, May 6, they will be open from 1-2pm. On Wednesday, May 20, they will be open their usual times. There is no need to pre-register to get food. They ask that you remain in your vehicle. Someone will come out with a food box for you and your family.
6. Lastly, I continue to ring the church bell every evening at 7pm for one minute to honor our essential employees. You're invited to come outside and listen for the bell. We give thanks to God for all our essential employees who keep us all safe, fed, and healthy.

Scripture Reading (Psalm 30)

I exalt you, LORD, because you pulled me up; you didn't let my enemies celebrate over me. LORD, my God, I cried out to you for help, and you healed me. LORD, you brought me up from the grave, brought me back to life from among those going down to the pit. You who are faithful to the LORD, sing praises to him; give thanks to his holy name! His anger lasts for only a second, but his favor lasts a lifetime. Weeping may stay all night, but by morning, joy! When I was comfortable, I said, "I will never stumble." Because it pleased you, LORD, you made me a strong mountain. But then you hid your presence. I was terrified. I cried out to you, LORD. I begged my Lord for mercy: "What is to be gained by my spilled blood, by my going down into the pit? Does dust thank you? Does it proclaim your faithfulness? LORD, listen and have mercy on me! LORD, be my helper!" You changed my mourning into dancing. You took off my funeral clothes and dressed

me up in joy so that my whole being might sing praises to you and never stop. LORD, my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

Meditation

I chose to read Psalm 30 this morning because it is a psalm of joy. David's poetry here is magnificent. "Lord, my God, I will give thanks to you forever." "You took off my funeral clothes and dressed me up in joy so that my whole being might sing praises to you and never stop." And my favorite verse of this passage, "Weeping may stay all night, but by morning, joy!" In some English translations, you might know this verse as, "Weeping may last all night, but joy comes in the morning!" These are powerful images of someone who knows what pain is like and what joy is like. Joy coming in the morning is such a tangible feeling. David knows that with God, mourning and pain and sadness, while very real, are temporary. They may last all night, but, as sure as the rising of the sun, God's joy will come in the morning.

This psalm shows us that King David knew what it was like to have a bad night's sleep. I'm sure that many people are not sleeping well right now. Count me as one of them. I imagine there are a lot of you out here who know what a restless night looks like, crying out to God for relief. This is a universal human experience. But this psalm is not a psalm of utter despair and anguish like Psalm 88. There is hope throughout this psalm. David recognizes that our nighttime of despair may last for a long time, but it will end. There will be moments of joy in our lives. Things will change. Our nights of despair will make way for mornings of joy. The sun will rise again. We are going through a season of resurrection and renewal right now, both in the church and in the world. In the Church, we are in the midst of the season of Easter. We are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his conquering of death forever. The despair and weeping of Good Friday made way for the joy of the resurrection morning. We are also in the midst of the season of Spring, when the trees are budding and the grass is greening and flowers are popping back up out of the ground. The long winter of despair has made way for the spring of joy. All life around us is telling us that things do get better: night transforms into day, winter transforms into spring, weeping transforms into joy, death transforms into life.

I don't know how long this pandemic is going to last. I know that anxiety and frustration are growing. We have become such an instantaneous society that we struggle to slow down. We want things to be normal yesterday and we get frustrated when things aren't back to normal. That is not to minimize the real struggle that people are going through. People are sick and dying every day. People are struggling to put food on their tables and pay the bills. And I also know and believe what this Psalmist said, "weeping may last all night, but joy comes in the morning!" We will make it through this together. And when we come out on the other side of this, the joy will be all the better. Amen and amen.

Prayer

We've come now to a time of prayer. I will lead us in prayer and then through the Lord's Prayer. Let us pray...God of the Night and the Morning, we come to you today resting on Your promise that our weeping will be turned into joy. We pray for all those

who are grieving today. Be with them in the nighttime of despair. We ask that you will be with all the healthcare workers, scientist, and people who are working hard to find a cure or vaccine for Covid-19. Give them wisdom and knowledge, patience and perseverance as they strive to find a cure. We thank you for the essential employees who keep us safe, fed, and healthy during this time. Be with them and give them a sense of peace in this time. May their employers help to protect them so they do not get sick as well. We lift all those who are sick and who have died since we last met. Be with their families and comfort them in this time. We give you thanks for all the joys in this world Lord. It may be hard in the midst of all that is going on to see the joy, but joy is there. Guide us, Great Jehovah, to the Promised Land. All this we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord, who taught us to pray together saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen

Benediction

Depart from this place, trusting that God is powerful enough to turn your weeping into joy. And as you go throughout your work and life today, go with the Love of God, the Peace of Christ Jesus, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit this day and every day. Amen.