March 23, 2020

Dear church family,

 May the peace of Christ be with you!

You are always on my heart and in my prayers, but especially this past week I have been wondering how you are doing with this uncertainty that we have been facing. I wanted to bring you some encouragement in the Lord because no matter how much things change around us we can trust God, our Rock, our Redeemer, our refuge from the storm.

I sat down on Friday to write a sermon based on the lectionary texts like I normally do, but after a first draft and more prayer it seemed like that was not what I was supposed to be doing. You see, in our Reformed theological understanding, the Word of God preached only happens in that moment we meet together as the Holy Spirit speaks to and through us in worship as the Body of Christ. So, after reading my evening devotion, the Lord laid on my heart to write you this pastoral letter and share some things with you.

You know that I frequently speak about spending more time with the Lord in prayer and scripture reading in our busy lives. Well, I hope you are able to do some of that now as we are supporting one another and loving our neighbor by sheltering in place. I am always reading through the Psalter and it has been especially comforting this past week.

Psalm 46

**1**God is our refuge and strength,
    a very present help in trouble.
**2**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
    though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
**3**though its waters roar and foam,
    though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

**4**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
    the holy habitation of the Most High.
**5**God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
    God will help it when the morning dawns.
**6**The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
    he utters his voice, the earth melts.
**7**The Lord of hosts is with us;
    the God of Jacob is our refuge.

**8**Come, behold the works of the Lord;
    see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
**9**He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
    he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
    he burns the shields with fire.
**10**“Be still, and know that I am God!
    I am exalted among the nations,
    I am exalted in the earth.”
**11**The Lord of hosts is with us;
    the God of Jacob is our refuge.

As things continue to happen to remind us that we are not in ultimate control of things, we can rest assured that our God is a sure refuge even as he calls us to turn back to him and give him the glory that is only due his name. Be still and know that God is God, nothing, no one else, this God who loves us so much he created everything and then sent his son to walk with us, to save us, to call us back to right relationship with him. This is the God who spoke all the stars into existence and who said to the storm, Peace, be still.

The most important thing we can do now is sit silently in prayer before this holy God and remember his love and that he is the healer. Beseech the Lord to heal the whole world from this virus.

Please continue to reach out to one another and if you hear of any needs, please let me know. The deacons have been calling to check on folks, and so have I. I will continue to do so. Please continue to pray for Mel, Maeve (who is cutting teeth now!) and me as well.

Kyle