

Grace Reformed Church Newsletter

April 6, 2020

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior. I just realized that this will be third Maundy Thursday Communion Service and Easter with you as a church community! Wow! Where does the time go by! Each year most certainly has been a different experience from the year before and this year is no different. Never in my wildest imaginations did I ever see leading a church in times like these through virtual and video worship services! Thanks for being so patient and understanding as I have been on a new learning curve the past 3 weeks.

What I have personally witnessed over the past months and years with you as a church community is an amazing capacity to adapt and adjust in order to more fully live into and carry out the mission and core values we believe God has given to us. However, I also realize that with growth in the areas of adapting and adjusting there is also for several of us a feeling of loss and sadness in that the church we are becoming is different from the church we once were. I cannot make any accurate predictions as to what impact this raging coronavirus will have on the way we do church together in the future once the social distancing order is lifted. What I can say with a high degree of confidence is that due to the tremendous upheaval of this out-of-control virus in our culture and neighborhood, we will have to find a ways to adapt and adjust even more as to how we do church together and fulfill our God-given mission. The only alternative I see is facing the inevitable consequence of becoming irrelevant.

I have already forwarded some documents from other highly respected church leaders to the Consistory and Staff members. These documents seek to anticipate and advocate what challenges every church community will inevitably need to address as we move forward in history. Discussion and Dialogue will most certainly need to take place with respect to these documents as well as answering the question, "When Grace Reformed Church has a Grand Re-Opening as the social distancing order is lifted, what kind of church will we need to be in order to connect or reconnect with those in our neighborhood and community as we share the good news of Jesus and His gospel?" How we respond to a question like this both as leaders and members of this church community will be extremely important for our future influence in our community for the sake of Jesus.

We live in unprecedented times with no proven guidebook as to how we can successfully navigate ourselves as a church community. What we do have, however, is faith in a God who promises to provide for us, guide us, and protect us. I have full confidence that with the high quality of Consistory and Staff leadership God has provided Grace Reformed Church as well as several highly committed members, we will come through this time and emerge as a stronger, more effective church than we could ever imagine. I can't wait to see what God is about to do through us in the Wyoming area and beyond. How about you?

Pastor Jack

This week's verses to reflect on:
**“The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble.
He cares for those who trust in him.” Nahum 1:7**

HOLY WEEK

Maundy Thursday at 7:00 pm live on Facebook (**Grace Reformed Church - Wyoming, MI**)! Included in this packet is the manuscript of Pastor Jack's message. You can prepare ahead of this service by having juice/beverage and a piece of bread/cracker on hand as we will share communion together. If you are not able to watch on FB, Pastor Jack or Pastor Heather will call you on the phone and lead you through the taking of elements. Please call Pastor Jack (616-460-1155) or Pastor Heather (616-450-0302) and a time will be set up for you to join together by phone call.

We will celebrate the Risen Savior on **Easter Sunday**. Pastor Jack will go live on Facebook at 10:00 am. Sarah will post music for you to listen to in advance and prepare your hearts to celebrate Easter morning. In this packet you will find a luminary and candle. Let's all join together at dusk and light your luminary celebrating our Risen Lord! We would love to see your luminaries, if able send a picture to Pastor Heather via text message or email.

Remember if you can't watch Facebook live, they will continue to be posted on FB and you can tune in anytime. In addition they are posted on our web page www.gracewyoming.org and youtube under gracewyoming.

PRAYERS & PRAISE

Pastor Jack would like to express his thanks for the many cards and prayers. It means so much to him to be on the receiving end of your thoughts and prayers! Your kindness is very much appreciated!

Willie Hiemstra is feeling better, but they have decided to stay in AZ and wait things out in the safety of their Arizona home.

Marge Veldheer will be having a biopsy of her thyroid on the 13th. Please keep her in your prayers.

We express our sympathies to Marionnell (Mary) and Brian Neal in the passing of their sister in law Cindy Lou after a recent battle with cancer.

Please contact us if you have any needs, prayer requests, or for any reason at all!

OTHER NEWS

If you would like to give your tithes and offerings online, please go to our web site at www.gracewyoming.org. You can give safely through this site. You are also welcome to send it in the mail directly to church (3330 Burlingame Ave SW., Wyoming 4509). If you already are an online giver, no change is necessary.

We will be putting together Family Groups. This will promote care and concern among our church family. More information on this coming up next week.