

March 26, 2020

Dear SPC Family,

Greetings from your church family, staff and leadership! As we continue to navigate these next few weeks of COVID-19 and the changes it brings to our daily lives, we are mailing you a real paper letter via the USPS, because we want you to know the various ways your church family is hoping to provide you with support, encouragement, and spiritual nurture as we walk together into an unknown future.

In some ways the present days are not so unlike the early days of the new church. For several hundred years after Jesus' death, believers couldn't gather in synagogues or church buildings, lest they be identified and ostracized, targeted or worse. So, they met in family groups, getting the word out in ways that Rome wouldn't notice or consider a threat. With Jesus' life as their example, new Christians moved about their society in unexpected ways. Early on, serving the poor, encouraging the elderly and sick, and feeding the hungry became acts that identified one as a follower of "the Way," and disciples of Jesus.

Many of you have already made offers of help. You are writing notes to each other, making phone calls, and jumping in to support our greater community in this unique time of crisis. That old song we learned in Sunday School, "*The church isn't a building, the church isn't a steeple, the church isn't a resting place, the church is the people!*" is exactly what we are living out.

As **Holy Week** is around the corner, we are planning some meaningful ways to worship together, and there are some things we want you to know about. There are also **specific ways you can help** meet some immediate needs in our community – for our first responders and for the hungry. Finally, we want to make sure you are able to **access our worship services and the website**.

First, **Holy Week** is almost here! Here's what you can expect, and how we hope you will journey through this week as one people. Each service will be available live on our SPC website ([www.spconline.org](http://www.spconline.org)) and also on Facebook Live at the times listed below.

**Palm Sunday, 10am; Palms Processional (Online)- Join Us!**

It's easy and everyone's invited! Usually, our kids walk the aisles waving palm branches. This year, we are asking for a photo from each family/individual to populate a slide show instead. Take a picture of everyone in your house (pets included) – with palm branches (you can create a palm branch from the template that is available on our website, or draw your own, or stand with branches in your yard) to honor this day. Send to [communications@spconline.org](mailto:communications@spconline.org) by April 1<sup>st</sup>. We will compile all photos in a virtual Palm Processional, as we celebrate the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week.

**Maundy Thursday, 7pm**

During our Maundy Thursday service, in which we will walk through the Stations of the Cross, Pastor Jeff will preside over the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and invite you to join from home. In preparation, we encourage you to have bread available (maybe even make some!), as well as juice or wine. We realize this is a unique way to celebrate the Sacrament, but the early church made room for many unique circumstances in the service of Christ's table. We believe that through Christ's table and the Holy Spirit, God unites us with each other and himself. In the midst of our physical isolation, we can experience God's love and grace through the sacred mystery of this holy and communal meal.

### **Good Friday, 7pm**

The hallmark of Good Friday is the space of darkness we hold, both to honor and remember the horror of Christ's death, and to acknowledge the darkness with which we live, as children not of this world. With scripture, music and the Word, we will tell this story and pause to consider what the cross means for us.

### **Easter Sunday, 10am**

This special service is truly the beginning of the church year, and represents all that is hopeful and true, redemptive and miraculous and reborn – in us and in the world – through Christ's resurrection. Encourage neighbors and friends to join us online for this service, which is usually one of our largest worship services of the year!

Secondly, **SPC has two important ways to reach out** and help those in need:

#### **Feed Swedish ER and ICU Staff**

Join SPC member Michelle Enebo in supporting those on the front lines of the COVID-19 fight, right here in our community. The ER and ICU staff at Swedish Issaquah are working double shifts and putting themselves at risk to save lives. We are currently providing food for them on the job. Your donation to Michelle's Go Fund Me page will pay for a meal from a local restaurant, delivered directly to the staff at Swedish. This supports our local restaurants too! To help out, go to the web: <https://bit.ly/feedswedish>

#### **“Lunch for the Break” Boxes & Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank**

SPC Mission partner, the Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank (IFCB), is providing critical care for families in need during this crisis. We can join them by supporting their *Lunch for the Break* program. This program feeds children in Issaquah School District who don't have access to meals when school is not in session. A \$50 donation provides a week's worth of groceries to each child in a family. Buy a box here: <https://supplyallkids.com/#/donate/ifcb>. IFCB is also meeting other substantial emergency needs. A list of essential items, including easy to access an Amazon Wish List, can be found here: <https://www.issaquahfoodbank.org/emergency-needs-list>. Questions? Please email Heather Choco: [hchoco@comcast.net](mailto:hchoco@comcast.net).

Finally, as we have seen everyone and everything try to “go online” while we are all practicing social distancing and following “stay at home” orders, we recognize that not everyone wants to or can get online. If you have had trouble accessing SPC's worship services on Sundays, please contact Amira Bestauros (425.553.1393 or [abestauros@spconline.org](mailto:abestauros@spconline.org)) to let us know how we can help. That said, we recognize the drive to be online isn't always a healthy or safe one. This is also a good time to practice living in the moment, and inviting God into our present circumstances.

We know this, too, will pass, and we will be able to come together as a family of faith again, having learned some good lessons and grown in our faith. We continue to pray for you and look for ways to connect with you, outside of the requirements right now. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can be serving you in any way.

We give thanks to God for you!

Faithfully,



Kelly Hostetler  
Pastor of Care & Families



Jeff Lincicome  
Senior Pastor