



May 14, 2020

Greetings, Lettered Streets Covenant Church!

It is Thursday, May 14th and we are roughly two months into Coronavirus Quarantine, or lockdown, or whatever you want to call it. In some ways the time has flown by. It's hard to believe that Memorial Day weekend is less than two weeks away! In other ways—in most other ways—the time has passed slowly, sometimes days feeling like they run together.

In times of anxiety, fear, and frustration, our perspective toward time can easily get skewed so that simultaneously feel like it is crawling by *and*, strangely, that there's not enough of it to accomplish what needs to be done. These are dark times for many and at times, for me too.

But I am reminded of Jesus' words as recorded in Matthew 5.14-16—  
*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before people in such a way that they see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

The darker the times, the brighter the light of Jesus shines. It was in the deep darkness of death that Jesus rose and life shone forth over the world. It was in the persecution of Steven that the church began to spread and multiply. It was during the plagues of the second century that the church ministered with grace, compassion, and courage.

During these dark times I have been so encouraged by the church shining brightly in our community. Along the lines of vocation as mission, we have had people from our church on the front lines in hospitals, clinics, in transportation and as first responders, as teachers going above and beyond to ensure their students not only have content, but contact with someone who cares. Small business owners from our congregation have sought the best for their employees and the community often at personal emotional and financial cost. We have parents pressing into creative solutions for this new normal, and we've had students writing cards and seeking to care for others.

Lettered Streets Covenant Church

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I have loved seeing people express themselves with creativity, generosity, and thoughtfulness whether it's creating art to be shared, participating in the worship resources for all to benefit, or in *planting gardens....and seeking the welfare of the city* (Jer 29). In times like these, the audacity to do the usual things of domestic life is an affront to fear and oppression.

As a church we have helped support local families through the family resource center and empowering local school counselors with resources to meet direct needs. We have helped the food insecure through the food bank and we have helped with mental health needs of both congregants and community members. We have supported World Access Project in Mexico and are looking at some exciting new opportunities in the weeks ahead both locally and abroad. Keep an eye out for some new ways to serve in the weekly update as well.

When I read these words of Jesus—*you are the light of the world*—and then hear how so many of you are being a the light of Christ to your friends and neighbors—I am so encouraged. Yes, these are dark times. But the light of Jesus can't be put out—it is bursting forth in transformative power through his church and that includes you and me.

I do realize that however brightly we're able to shine in darkness, there are some things that we just can't recreate virtually—community is one of those things. I miss being with people. I miss gathering and worshiping with the church.

The Leadership Team and staff are paying close attention to the Governor's phased approach to reopening various sectors of public life. While we won't be able to meet anytime soon, I want you to know that we are strategizing ways to implement small house churches and modest sized gatherings once phase 3 begins several weeks or even months from now.

We will be communicating much more with you as we work together to find helpful solutions but I wanted you to know that we are working now so we can be as ready as possible when new opportunities to gather, even in smaller groups, arise.

May the peace of Christ be with you,

Chris