

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

December 10, 2020

News & Updates

News

We will be meeting outside on Sunday, rain or shine, under a tent, in three services at **9:30, 10:30 and 11:30**.

Let's remember to keep the **Scott and the McAdams families** in your prayers. It's always difficult, of course, to lose a loved one, but it must be particularly difficult during this time of unprecedented isolation.

Pray for our **health workers**, especially those who are working in hospitals. Right now, there are more people in hospitals due to Covid than at any time during the pandemic and that's likely taking a huge toll on these front-line professionals.

The “Stay-at-Home Order”

You've probably heard that when ICU bed capacity falls under 15% in a county, that triggers the health department's stay-at-home order. Greater Sacramento County, unfortunately, has fallen into that category and the order goes into effect at midnight tonight. That means no more outdoor dining, for one thing. But what does it mean for churches? Many assume that it takes us back to March lockdowns, when we were not allowed to meet and were stuck at home, perhaps Zooming with a few members or live-streaming a service from somewhere.

But that's not the case. There is a change in how California is treating churches that's easy to miss and hasn't been publicized, as far as I know. Even under the stay-at-home order, churches are allowed to meet outdoors, as we did for several weeks during the summer. What's really interesting is that churches and “political expression” (*protests*) are in the same category and share the same exception. Both can assemble, outside.

This is great news. We have been critical of orders that treat churches differently than protests (among other things). Politicians are unwilling to issue orders against protests (especially of a certain type) but they know that if they allow unfettered “political expression” they must also allow the free exercise of religion. Undoubtedly, too, they know their days of over-regulating churches are numbered. With a more conservative Supreme Court now, any law or order that appears to discriminate against churches is likely to be struck down.

Other governors in other states are getting that message, even those who are not religiously conservative. I just heard that the governor of Colorado declared churches “essential,” which exempts them from lockouts.

Legal Issues

As I discussed at some length last Sunday, I believe that we must obey governmental authorities (I Peter 2:13ff; Romans 13:1ff) unless their orders directly conflict with clear Bible commands

(see Acts 4:19; 5:29). As of now, we have not been forbidden to teach, preach or assemble, although some of the rules make it more difficult. I remain committed to the proposition that we can meet together and keep people safe from Covid and *those are not mutually exclusive goals*. But there are restrictions, such as the order against meeting inside our building. Some of these are on their last legs, I feel. I enjoy looking at the legal issues, but I won't bore you with all that is going on right now. But here's a short summary of recent developments, from news reports:

On Nov. 26, the Supreme Court barred New York from enforcing certain limits on attendance at churches and synagogues in areas designated as hard hit by the virus.

On Dec. 3, the high court ordered a lower federal court to reexamine California restrictions on indoor religious services in light of the New York ruling. The state's new stay-at-home order permits outdoor religious services and protests because they're constitutionally protected.

Suffice to say that there are several cases pending that are likely to restore our religious freedom and clear the way for us to meet inside our building before too long.

Meanwhile, the words “*Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds*” have long been associated with the American postal worker. Now, we can apply them to those of us who will brave the weather to meet with each other on Sunday morning.

The Occasional View

The *View* is hardly “daily” anymore. It's not because I've run out of material — I've probably got 25 articles sitting in files that I have never used. There are two reasons I've decided to cut back. Number 1, getting a publication in your inbox every day may be kind of nice at first, when we were all locked down, cut off from each other and uncertain about where things were headed. Eventually, though, getting something — *anything* — in your inbox every day gets tiring, even annoying. I know because I can't count the number of emails I receive from the same organizations or businesses every day. I automatically send many of them to my junk mail folder.

Even with Covid still raging on, most of us are still busy and our inboxes are full — maybe even more so during a pandemic. While I feel these issues may have helped early on, I don't think a daily dose of them is serving any helpful purpose right now, unless, like today, we have some news to report.

Having said that, I'm going to continue to write these occasionally because I know some of you find them helpful. However, I'm going to be a little less annoying in terms of how often they show up in your inbox (or junk mail, if you have used that option).

*Unless otherwise indicated the opinions expressed in this publication and images used are solely those of David Posey.
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