

Daily View

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

May 20, 2020



The Folsom church meeting place. 900 East Natoma.

Daily View: Why?

I realize not everyone reads these everyday and that's perfectly OK. By no means do I read everything that I get in my inbox. However, I plan to continue writing them unless I upset so many people that there's an uprising — or I'm told to hang it up by the other elders.

I started writing these back on March 20th, twelve days after our last assembly (March 8th). Why? Because I feel like I had to do *something*. Like many of you, my personal weekly routine was abruptly upended. I don't think I realized how much my life revolved around in-person classes and the weekly assembly. I won't bore you with my schedule but, typically, each day was taken up with preparation for a class or the sermon and I *love* that.

But things have changed, radically, for all of us. Kids are out of school and at least some of them are not happy with that (one of my grandkids said his prayers were answered, but he may be an exception). Many men and women are required to work from home. Air travel has been curtailed, wrecking vacation plans and all of us have been under a form of house arrest and are getting cabin fever.

So, I'm doing this because I wanted to do something to keep in touch with the church. It helps me feel that, anyway. These are not theological essays, by any stretch,

nor are they written mini-sermons. Typically, they are pithy stories from real life with a spiritual application.

Most people respond to stories better than they respond to propositional statements (as important as those are). Much, if not most, of the Bible is written in a genre that can be categorized, at least generally, under "story." I'm not elevating my personal stories above any others but one of my aims is for my readers to think about their experiences, past or present, and find their own spiritual lesson in them.

I love to preach, but I'm not convinced that preaching in an empty church building and streaming it live is the way to go — at least for me and the church here. True, it creates an impression that we are "attending services" but we're not; it's not the same. We have a wealth of talent here and I know that many are putting that to use in Zoom sessions and home Bible studies within their families. And, if you prefer to hear a sermon, a few of us are preaching every week and there are multiple options online. Ask, if you'd like to know more. Meanwhile, I've got plenty of experiences to share that contain within them at least a small, spiritual lesson. Maybe you'll find some of them helpful.

Update

May 20, 2020

Congregational News

The deacons and elders are trying to stay in touch with everyone, but there may be some who have not been contacted. If that's the case, please check in with the deacon in charge of your group or email or call one of the elders. We have not heard of any specific health issues or job losses that have created hardship; but please let us know if you have any particular needs.

- Keep praying that the Branco family can find comfort in the love of God as they continue to mourn the loss of their daughter, Bo.
- Please be with all of those who are grieving over the loss of loved ones. Just prior to the quarantine, several of our elderly members and family members in other places passed away. They were prevented from holding memorial services, which can be difficult. Pray for them.
- The elders appreciate the fact that the church is continuing to contribute to the work here. As a reminder, there are several options: drop your check in the mail; set up a bill pay account with your bank; slip an envelope with your check through the door at the church building or put it in the lock box outside the building.

When will we meet again?

We all are anxious to get back to the building to meet. Right now, if present trends continue, there is a possibility that we could be back, in some capacity, by early June. From here on, until we are back to "real" normal, I'll send updates at least once-a-week or as the news changes.

We are awaiting word from the governor and Sacramento County about when we can start gathering again at some level. We anticipate a gradual rollout of guidelines that will permit us to assemble in limited numbers, depending on the guidelines that are provided by the health officials. It's anyone's guess as to the number that can gather at one time. We're hoping it's at least 100. If so, we can split into three services at staggered times and continue with that until larger gatherings are permitted.

The elders are committed to the health and safety of each member at Folsom and we will take the necessary precautions to keep everyone safe. Of course, whenever we gather, there is a risk – there always has been. There is a risk going to sports events, movies and theater events, and our kids performances at school. We have all gotten colds and flu – perhaps several times – from our interaction with each other. I'll speak for myself, but I know many will agree – *it's worth the risk*.

Having said that, we know that this particular virus is more contagious and potentially deadly, especially to those who are older and have underlying health conditions. So, until there is at least a therapeutic medicine that knocks the virus out, we will need to be cautious.

An interesting side note: the last time we met, on March 8th, we had about 315 people in attendance – hand-shaking, hugging and all that "greeting one another with a holy kiss" kind of thing. Yet, as far as we know, none of us in the Folsom church contracted the virus or, if we did, we were asymptomatic and, as far as we know, no one got seriously ill or

was hospitalized. We're thankful for that. Meanwhile, we make plans to get back together, something we all want to do.

Most of you are probably familiar with the guidelines that have been mentioned in the press almost daily in the last few months. We have a committee of four men who have expertise in health and safety who will report to the elders with their recommendations. For the time being, here is a summary of a few things we have been discussing:

- Assuming a gathering of around 100, our building is large enough to allow families, couples and individuals to sit at least 6 feet apart.
- At least for a few weeks, depending on the data, we may encourage at-risk members to stay at home or use some other method for keeping them safe. We will definitely encourage anyone who has a fever over 100 or is feeling sick to stay home.
- We are working on live-streaming all of services so those who are homebound can participate at some level. We will continue to do this after this pandemic passes.
- We will have hand sanitizers available throughout the building and will encourage washing hands often.
- We are discussing various options on how to safely distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper.
- By the time we're able to meet, we should have some clarity on whether masks are recommended.
- Unfortunately, it is unlikely that there will be any classes at the building, including children's classes, for some time. There is no way to manage that logistically. I'll work with our children's curriculum people to supply some material for parents to continue to work with their children.

Bible Classes

I'm working on arranging some additional zoom classes for adults. Next week, we'll re-start our Tuesday morning class via Zoom, at 10 AM (topic to be announced). I would also like to resume our "Raising Faithful Kids" class via Zoom, for those who can attend, and may begin another study – simply called "We Would See Jesus" (see John 12:21). I'll have more information about those in a separate email.

Once we are able to meet in the building again, we may assemble in the auditorium for some classes since we'll be able to spread out in a manner required by the appropriate guidelines in effect at that time. We may continue to utilize Zoom to connect with those who can't attend if that's feasible. In many of our classes and services, we've had visitors "Zoom in" from other areas; we would like to continue that, if possible.

From here on out, we'll keep you updated as things develop so you know what's going on. Please feel free to contact any of the elders if you have any questions at all.

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