



March 12, 2020

Dear members and friends of Queen Anne Baptist Church,

Lent is the six weeks before Easter, or forty days (not counting Sundays), from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday. This season mirrors the time Jesus spent in the wilderness with the wild beasts, facing temptation, and the angels waited on him (Mark 1:13).

We are in the midst of Lent, with the novel coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak. We are in the wilderness. As I write this letter, schools were closed today for six weeks in King, Snohomish, and Pierce Counties. All gatherings over 250 people are banned through March 31st. There are strict guidelines for those gathering under 250 people in King County. The governor has restricted visitors to assisted living facilities and several hospitals are now instituting those protocols. This is all in response to the alarming rise of cases of COVID-19 and the seriousness of how fatal this is for those with underlying health concerns.

Out of an abundance of caution and in consultation with the Leadership Council, we made the difficult decision to move to online worship for the remainder of March 2020, and we will revisit this decision after our March 29th service. We will have worship on Sundays at 11 a.m. on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/qabaptist. You do not have to have a Facebook account to join us. If you do not have access to a computer or smart phone, you might consider joining in small groups to view with someone who does have that capability. The order of worship will be posted on our website, www.queenannebaptist.org.

However, I know that is not possible for some of you, and it grieves me that we had to make this decision. My hope is that we might use some old-fashioned technology: picking up the phone and calling each other, and sending cards to one another. If you need a new directory, just call our office at 206-282-7744 and we would be happy to put one in the mail to you.

In the meantime, we are in Lent, we are in the wilderness of COVID-19, and there is a good chance we will lose someone we know in all of this. There is a good chance we will be planning a memorial service when we can gather again. There will be loss of jobs, income, perhaps housing, services for folks experiencing homelessness, and much more. There will be grief. It will be hard.

My hope is that we turn, at the same time, both inward and outward: inward to each other, to connect with each other more deeply through whatever means are possible. I also hope we turn outward, to our neighbors, especially those in need around us, to those who are lonely, to those who are struggling. I hope we can be encouragers of each other in this time.

And through all of this, we pray to God. We pray for those who are sick, for those who are grieving the loss of loved ones. We pray for those who are afraid. We pray for first responders and medical professionals, who will not have any time off. We pray for doctors and researchers who are working to find a vaccine.

We are in the Lenten wilderness. But Easter is coming. Hopefully we will celebrate Easter together on April 12th, but it may be that our Easter celebration is a bit delayed this year. Easter is the celebration of Christ's resurrection, and in the Christian tradition, it lasts seven weeks, or forty-nine days. It is greater than Lent! We proclaim loudly in the face of illness and death that Life Wins! Love Wins! The tomb was found empty! We are going to have an amazing resurrection party when we gather again in person. We will celebrate the new life in Christ and all around us.

I leave you with 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

“So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.”

With you in this Lenten wilderness as we anticipate the Easter resurrection,

Pastor Mindi