

Audubon Baptist, *a Church in the Park*

SO WE, THOUGH MANY, ARE ONE BODY OF CHRIST

1046 Hess Lane, Louisville, KY 40217, (502) 635-2100, www.achurchinthepark.org

May 2020

Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases. Psalm 115:3

I wrote the Newsletter for April some five weeks ago and titled it, "Life Comes at You Fast". My, oh, my; I had no idea. In the span of time since I wrote those words, most everything I once considered normal has been turned topsy turvy by a virus named Corona. Phrases like "Social Distancing" have exploded forth in my vernacular and are universally understood among the nations. I struggle to regain my footing each day, wondering when, and if, things might return to my familiar and comfortable routine. Perhaps, you understand?

Increasingly, I hear some ponder whether God is correcting His people in this moment, whether this is a "getting of our attention." Certainly, such voices find home within the Scriptures, for in times throughout history, God utilized similar pandemic-like moments to shake His people. Yet, concerning this time, how are we to truly know? And a better question, should knowing even matter to us?

While we strain to understand our circumstances, we can be sure of several Biblical truths. We can know them with clairvoyant certainty. First, **Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases (Psalm 115:3)**. Nothing concerning the Corona virus catches God the Father off-guard. None of it is without reason, even if we do not understand. Maybe we shall understand in time, perhaps not. It does not matter. Our obedience to God, and our full trust in Him, must be untethered to our understanding. Not just in this moment, but always.

If we are not attentive, we may find ourselves begrudging the beauty of our days, questioning the

Sovereignty of our Creator, wondering if everything is being worked together for our good, for we called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Thinking in these ways not only proves unhelpful in walking joyfully day by day, such places us squarely in intellectual and emotional opposition to the very character of God. We must remain vigilant and guard against our fallen humanness in our ponderings.

If questioning God and His sovereignty is so very off-track, what then should we do during this time of reflection? John records in the Book of Revelation Jesus' continual observation of, and guiding of, and correction of too, the churches prominent during John's writing. I have been drawn recently to Revelation Chapter 2, where Jesus speaks to the angel of the church at Ephesus. Among other things, Jesus confronts the angel; they have *abandoned* their first love, they have been busy and *left* that love.

Leaving here rightly announces a conscience choice to go after something different, and if I may, a lusting after imitation. Some imitations can indeed appear incredibly good, so enticing, so dividing of our attention and love. The church at Ephesus did many good and wonderful things. Yet, they veered from their first love, a love that was pure and lifegiving, a genuine love for Christ and one another.

Churches across America do wonderful things too. Right alongside the church at Ephesus, many do amazing work within their communities, toil to the utmost, renounce evil, and faithfully test teachings against the Word of God. Yet, do they love Jesus as they did at first? Even more than the good works and the busyness and the community prominence and recognition?

It is easy for me us to stare and evaluate others and their ministries – to judge others as the Bible rightly alleges. Again, Jesus’ words to the church at Ephesus provide insight and leave no ambiguity; the words stop me. Jesus speaks directly to the angel of Ephesus, and to us by extension, and ask us to keep our nose in the Book and our eyes upon our business alone.

Which has me back to the beginning. What exactly is God up with COVID-19? Not globally or even within other church houses, but within A CHURCH IN THE PARK? As I typed the calendar for this month, I was struck by how simple, and focused, our church has become in this moment. Is it possible that our foundations have been shaken to refocus upon, and delight in, our *first love*? I cannot know. But this I do; we are called upon in Scripture to precisely do that.

Corona has created a beauty in our worship, a togetherness in our voices, a longing to be face to face, that I am unsure would have occurred without our slowing down, without this moment. And for that, i live today with wondrous thanksgiving.

God will show His works, and His faithful church will be changed. Praise God, He is with us. Praise God, He gives us our daily bread and fuels us with the encouragement to keep going. For your joy, I want to share with you “The Things I Hear” from Audubon. Each is beautiful. Each is encouraging.

All glory to the King of Kings,



MAY BIRTHDAYS

01 Carolyn Dawson
03 AmyJo Akin
15 Jo Ann Hatfield
24 Lisa Staton

CHURCH EMAIL

Please send a note to audubonpastorjeff@gmail.com if you would like to be added to the list.

THE THINGS I HEAR

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you. Phil. 1:3

- I hear the clicks, one by one, arriving on Sunday morning for Worship.
- I hear voices eager to greet one another in the name of our Lord and Savior.
- I hear the testimonies of those eager to be in physical presence, face to face.
- I hear the voices of some who can worship with us on the phone calls who most usually are unable to during “normal” services.
- I hear voices from the toddler ages all the way into the nineties, worshipping as One Body.
- I hear of visitors that have dialed in and worshipped God alongside us.
- I hear parenting occurring in the background, gentle corrections to the little ones.
- I hear the prayers of my brothers and sisters, so beautiful and founded in Scripture.
- I hear proclamations of Truth.
- I hear Abby and her 170-year-old violin.
- I hear testimonies of God’s faithfulness.
- I hear testimonies of our faithfulness to continue in tithes and offerings.
- I hear of meals being cooked for one another.
- I hear news that a sister has sewn over 100 masks to be shared with the community.
- I hear that one of my brothers has been blessed with a new job.
- I hear reports of continued health and well-being.
- I hear of the many hand-written notes going back and forth across our congregation.
- I hear increased thankfulness for the little things we often overlook.
- I hear of some returning to prayer.
- I hear testimonies of how God’s Word is alive!
- I hear more and more first love, for Christ and one another too.

For these and so many more... I am so very thankful, *Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases. Psalm 115:3*