

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

October 2020

The Stampede for Normalcy

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 1 PETER 5:10

Suffering and the Christian life surely go hand in hand. Such was not explained to me as part of the invitation I accepted so many decades ago, but today, at the age of fifty-four, I can personally attest that it is so for me. I am not alone.

At first blush, suffering and trial seem at odds with the faith we profess. In recent weeks, I have spoken to brothers and sisters in Christ, some in our church family, who are suffering and walking through the dry wilderness. Some are suffering through the loss of a loved one, or while caring for aged parents, others marital crises, employment loss, diagnosis of cancer, loneliness, fear of singleness, COVID weariness, health crises of various natures, acne, and the sufferings we see ongoing in our cherished Louisville. Hurt and suffering are visible in every direction; each and every situation is real and present and painful. How are we to rationalize such suffering juxtaposed against the love of Christ?

The truth is that the Bible not only says that suffering and trial are possible for the Believer, the Bible promises it shall be so for each and every one of us. Yet, God remains *the God of all grace*. While our sufferings may differ, while some trials may appear frequent with waves higher than we can fathom, we can be certain that others face their own struggles. Such perspective undergirds suffering well; my experiences while unique are not all that unusual among fellow Believers.

We can also be confident that others care for us as well. One of the greatest gifts that comes from the fellowship is that we are not alone in suffering – we

suffer together. *If one member suffers, all suffer together (1 COR 12:26a)*

In our church, we suffer together, carrying burdens among many shoulders and committed knees bent in prayer. The ability of the church to be together in these ways surely depends upon the courage and vulnerability and openness of him who suffers. To me, such seems a hallmark of our church and the love we carry for one another and is a vibrant testimony to those who watch. This is how it should be among those faithful in Christ Jesus.

Yet, there is another aspect of suffering and trial that requires attention. In many conversations, almost on cue, the words “I can’t wait to get back to normal” are spoken. If you listen for them when speaking to others concerning trial, you will hear them too – *the stampede for normalcy*.

Few mean anything contrary with such utterances; neither do I. Yet, the spoken words do tell. Such belies a contentment in the moment God has ordained for us. Our desires attest to a soul’s longing for equilibrium, no matter the will of God. We aggressively seek the just right state of “normal”, where the tensions and stresses are low, and our angst and struggles are few. A French poet named Pierre Reverdy in the early 1900s penned, “The point in life is to find equilibrium in what is inherently unstable.” Not much has changed; I feel the emotional pull of his words.

Yet, in my readings of Scripture equilibrium appears contrary to the pathways God most frequently journeys His children. I do not find names listed in Hebrews 11 that avoided trial and suffering. I do not find the Prophets or Apostles commending God’s chosen in the day to hurry past it all, to seek equilibrium and live best lives in the moment. Instead, my mind and soul feast on words like *after you have suffered a little while*, and *many are the afflictions of the righteous*, and

all who live a godly life will be persecuted, and this momentary affliction is preparing us, and yes too – praise God, all things work together for our good.

Audubon family, it is natural and easy to want to wish past our sufferings, to get to the other side and have everything back to normal. Suffering is uncomfortable, often confusing, and knocks us off balance in our relationship with God. Let us take solace and confidence from a frequent sufferer. In the words of the Apostle Peter, written for you and for me,

*After you have **suffered a little while**, the **God of all grace**, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*

Peace to you,



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 01 Kathie Bechtler
- 03 Eddie & Salley Bradley (1980)
- 05 Catie Dyer
- 05 Chris & Kathie Bechtler
- 10 Jeff & AmyJo Akin (1992)
- 15 Dr. Daniel & Menda Sue Hatfield (1977)
- 15 Rick & Marsha Mosley (1977)
- 18 Greg Whitlock
- 22 Rick & Kim Goodlett (1977)
- 25 Shirlene Brenzel
- 27 Mary Miller

CHURCH WORKDAY

The men (and sons) will gather on Saturday, October 10th for round 2 of the parking lot “safety bumper” installation. We’ll begin at 8AM.



TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Thank you for your continued support of Audubon and beyond during this pandemic season. For those unable to participate at “in-person services”, tithes and offerings may be mailed to the church at the following address:

Audubon Baptist Church
c/o Mattie Fentress
1046 Hess Lane
Louisville, KY 40217

CORPORATE PRAYER

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. Jeremiah 33:3

Pastor Jeff leads a corporate prayer gathering during the hour before Sunday worship. The group is currently praying through Ephesians 4 as we seek to build one another up in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is absolutely no pressure to pray aloud, or beyond your comfort. Come learn the Bible as we pray it together! We begin promptly at 9:30AM in the sanctuary and conclude at 10:15AM.

WOMEN’S PRAYER GATHERING

The women of Audubon are invited to join with fellow sisters for prayer and encouragement Saturday mornings (first and third Saturdays) at 8:30AM. Note that these prayer gatherings are conference call only. Call AmyJo, Carol, or Ellen for further information.

CHURCH PICNIC FOLLOWING WORSHIP – 10/11

*And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. **And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.** Exodus 32:6*

Audubon church family, be sure to bring your lawn chairs and a picnic lunch on Sunday, October 11th. We will enjoy fellowship one with another as we eat lunch together following the worship service. And the kids, big and little, will rise up to play!