

## PASTOR'S REFLECTION

by Rev. Glenn A. Brumbaugh



Greetings church family!

It has been a while since we've gathered together. I wanted to reach out to you today to check-in, and to give you an update on what's been going on with your congregation.

This has certainly been a time of adjustment for us all. In a very short period of time, it seems that our lives have been turned upside down. Much of the normal routines we have become accustomed to have drastically changed, or have altogether ceased to exist. We now find ourselves isolated from the many face-to-face social interactions that were such an important part of our lives, such as our weekly gatherings in our church sanctuary. The times in which we live have required us to find new ways of being normal: new ways of grocery shopping, different methods of having doctor visits, and new wardrobe styles, and fashion accessories like the "oh so chic" face mask we now wear when we have the need to be out and about.

Likewise, the church has had to figure out a new way of being in this new reality. As you are aware, we have found ourselves in a brave new world of how to do church online, and having to negotiate new technology and software to be able to provide a meaningful worship experience from the screen of your phone, tablet, computer or TV. I have been working diligently to try to craft something each week, learning as I go. For those of you who have been able to watch the service on YouTube each week, I hope that you have found value in the services produced from my living room. As always, I

*continued on back page*

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

The New Olympian  
Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren  
425 NE 95th Street  
Seattle WA 98115

would encourage you to share any suggestions you may have to make those times more meaningful for you. We continue to be blessed with the contributions of Annie Center, our church musician. I have greatly appreciated her willingness to explore new technology with me to be able to continue to share her talents with us.

But our church isn't just about worship, it's about fellowship too. I have tried to reach out to most of you a couple of times a month to check-in, and some of you have been checking in on each other, which is wonderful! I'd encourage you all to reach out to each other. If there's someone you are thinking about, but don't have the contact number for, please don't hesitate to call me on my cell phone, (206) 889-9953. I'm glad to track that information down for you. We've also thought about using Zoom technology to have a video coffee chat, which people could join by phone or computer. If you think that might be something you'd enjoy, contact me on my cell or by email, and I'll set something up. Zoom is a video conferencing application for computers, phones, and tablets. We've been using Zoom to continue our Bible Study and Book Club online, providing additional opportunities to connect with each other.

Yet we all miss our gathered times together, and would love to be able to resume our Sunday worship and fellowship together. Unfortunately, it may yet be some time before that can happen. While restrictions may be relaxed to the point that we can meet in some fashion, that doesn't mean that we should meet. There is still much to learn about this virus, but one thing is very clear. Church gatherings are particularly vulnerable to spreading the virus. Our church board has continued to follow the facts about the current state of the virus in our area, and we are committed to not putting anyone at risk unnecessarily. When it is clear that we can gather again safely, we will make the decision to resume services at the church.

But it is also important to realize that we can't just go back to the same old routine of worship and safely gather. We will need to sit apart from each other and wear masks. Symptom checks and temperature taking may be part of entering the building. Sadly, singing is one of the activities that makes churches such hotbeds of transmitting the virus, so music will probably have to take a different form. Our normal mode of coffee fellowship is highly risky as well. Church leadership has begun to discuss what measures we will need to

take when we are able to meet again. We will keep you informed as more details become available.

The current situation has also had a significant impact on our tenants as well. Sunny Language Academy had greatly reduced attendance for several weeks, before closing entirely for several weeks. They are now open again, but the number of students is much less than prior to the crisis. The other churches that use our facility also have not been able to meet either. As the body of Christ, we felt our place was to extend the grace we have been blessed with to our tenants, and we have been lenient concerning their lease obligations during the closure.

This, of course, has greatly impacted the revenue on which we depend to maintain our own budget. But thanks to the faithful generosity of our members, and some assistance from the CARE act passed to help small businesses, we have been able to meet our obligations. I am so grateful to serve such a faith-full congregation, and I would urge you to continue your giving to ensure we can continue our ministry and mission.

These are certainly trying times for all of us. We are learning and adjusting to a new way of being, not only in our personal lives, but in our communal lives of faith as well. While this crisis has been stressful, it also presents us with an opportunity to pause and evaluate what is really important in our lives and in our faith walk together. It pushes us to grow and find new ways of being church together. Perhaps with the Spirit's leading, we will emerge from this trial as a church:

- Focused on being the truly Good News of a loving community of faith
- Committed to being a light of hope and compassion in this troubled world
- Connecting with others in ways we never would have considered before

May God continue guide us and give us the strength and direction to truly be the body of Christ!

In Christ's peace,

Pastor Glenn