

It has been one year ago since I wrote the following devotional. How have we grown? Are we still caring for each other? Have we kept church going? Are we better? We have developed our online efforts. We have worshipped in the Parking Lot; we are now back inside. It has been a year of change and adjustment, a year of sorrow as we lost loved ones, a year of joy when we have been able to come back together. A year ago, we thought it would be 3 weeks and it turned into much more without our usual and unique celebrations, Christmas was especially hard, but we did what we had to do to make it better for everyone. We are closer to normal than we were last year when we could not fathom a year of loss and change. Thanks be to God we are here, and we are together.

CHURCH CANCELLED?

Church has been cancelled for 3 weeks. How can this be? Just when we think we have seen it all, we are hit with another blow. How can church be cancelled? Truth is, it cannot. We are the church! Remember the words from the hymn? "We are the church, we are the church together, all who follow Jesus, all around the world, we are the church together." How do we do church when we are not meeting in our designated building? We call each other, we look out for each other, we care for each other. We can do this! We remember the food pantry, we remember our pledges, we remember the classes we are taking, we remember our fellowship and we continue to connect. For some of us this is a natural thing, when people are missing from church, we check on them. I am not good at this, but I try. We just have to try harder. We can pray for each other and stay connected with each other. We can not only say we are a church family, but we can be a family. In the midst of this relatively minor inconvenience, we can grow together, we can show each other that we care, not just on Sunday's but every day. God has planned for this never doubt this. He is in control and he walks this path with us. When you think of someone that you are missing from church maybe that is God giving you a nudge that you should check on them. We are here to be the hands and feet of Jesus, let us do our task and remain connected with those we know and love from that building we call the church. [Soon we will be back into our routine and meeting at 9:30 and 11 and we will have an increased appreciation for those around us and for that gathering place called the church.](#) Meanwhile, follow the rules, wash your hands, listen for updates from our Pastor (and no this is not his vacation, far from it, he will still be reaching out to us with messages and changes and staying connected with the Bishop and others. He too, will be thinking of new ways to do church), stay connected with those who have sat by you in the pews and remember who we are, children of God prepared to carry on his work no matter the circumstances. This is a stumbling stone but sometimes stumbling stones lead us to a new path and help us grow.

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God which he bought with his own blood.

Lord be with us as we face new circumstances. Help us to care for each other, may we remember our mission to do your work. Be with those who are ill, those who are frightened, those who are grieving, may they be comforted. Help us find new ways to be the church. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and be with his family, be with our staff and leaders, give them comfort and guidance. In Jesus name, Amen.

Grace Epperson