

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. – Psalm 23:4

A few years ago, I had the tremendous privilege of traveling to Israel and Palestine on a pilgrimage trip of the Holy Land. The pastor organizing the trip told us before we went that two things would happen: “You will never read the Bible again the same way, and you’ll never read the newspaper again the same way.” I found both of those things to be accurate.

For example, it is difficult for me to read the 23rd Psalm now without thinking of standing at the top of a mountain in the Judean hills overlooking the *Wadi Qelt*, the valley that many scholars believe inspired David to write about the “valley of the shadow of death.” This is a valley that, throughout history, has had quite the troubled reputation. It is full of rocky outcroppings, caves, and blind turns that makes it a great place for highwaymen to lay in wait for travelers and attack them on their way.

It was a dangerous valley in the time of David, and it continued to be dangerous even until the time of Jesus who uses the very same valley as the setting for his story of the Good Samaritan. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho lies along the bottom of the valley, and most people wouldn’t dare travel it alone or at night. In the 5th century Christians built St. George’s Monastery into the cliffside of the valley as a place where travelers could stop and rest for the night so as not to be caught out on the road after dark. For a thousand years this valley was an incredibly fearsome place.

I think about what it must have been like for someone traveling down that road. To not know if danger in the form of a wild animal or a wild human being might be lurking around every corner. To look suspiciously at every cave opening and every rock and wonder if you will make it past. This is the valley, where danger waits around every nook and cranny, where David says, “I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.”

Today we walk a dangerous road. Today our enemy remains unseen but waits around every corner: isolation, anxiety, grief, and of course “the virus.” As we walk down this dangerous road, let us remember (as David did) that God is with us. It is for this reason that we do not need to live in fear.

It’s not that the danger isn’t real (it is) and it’s not that we don’t have to walk the road to Jerusalem (we do). Our strength is in the Lord who walks with us. So, while we must all walk this dangerous path today, we trust that we do not walk it alone. And if God is for us, who can be against us?



KidZone News



To Our Kidzone Kids

We hope that you all had a Merry Christmas. It was good to see you when you came and picked up your Christmas stockings. We are sure that you all enjoyed your time off from school. Now that you are back in school- be sure to wash your hands and wear your masks. Our hope is that we can soon meet together once again for Kidzone. We miss seeing all of you and remember that Jesus loves you and He is always there for you.

Love & Prayers

Ms. Debbie & Ms. Marty

TITHES & OFFERINGS...

Mail your checks to SSUMC, 319 N. Main St., Sand Springs, OK 74063 or give online at:

<https://sandspringsumc.org/>

Click on the "Giving" link in the top right hand corner and fill out the information and click "Continue."

You can donate to several funds online including Robyn Coney's mission.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship is streamed live on Facebook every Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. After the live stream, it is uploaded to YouTube.

We hope you are making every effort to join in worship one way or the other. It is important that we are spiritually fed even though we are not physically in the church building!

Also, worship is a source for strength and comfort when things are so uncertain.

OFFICES ARE STILL CLOSED

Don't be surprised when your phone call is answered when you thought the office was closed. It is still closed. When you call the

"The Prayer Box"

Maureen Gibson, Sylvia Johnson, Wava Burt, Ralph Rand, Betty & Linda Lund, Suzanne and Valerie Jones, Ralph Ward, Gordonna Fisher, Raymond Mason, James Wright, Harry Alford, Vi McAllister, Barbara McClintock, Montie & Betty Box, Bruce Warren,
Prayer Chains And Unspoken Requests

church, it rings to Tracey's cell phone at home (Mon.-Thurs., 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

Aren't we lucky to have people in our church who are not electronically challenged?!?

Thank you to everyone involved in making the *work at home* transition seamless. Thank you to everyone involved in making worship available on line and thank you to our congregation for being so supportive and responsive to the changes.

Continue to do your part by wearing your masks, social distancing and respecting each other during this pandemic. This too shall pass!

CUT AND SAVE FOR ONLINE WORSHIP

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic** church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.*

Amen.

***universal*