

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

April 23, 2020

My dear Friends:

After several weeks of doing this letter by way of video, I thought perhaps today I would do a regular letter. While I have a couple of things to share with you, I also simply wanted to tell you how much I (and our other ministry staff) miss you—your presence, your voices, your smiles. Usually, there is something happening most days in our church building, but for the past four weeks (and for the next two at least) it has been quiet and pretty empty. My heart longs for the day when we are able to reopen for regular office hours—along with our bookstore and gym—and simply to have you back around again. And don't even get me started on how much I long for "normal" Sundays....

But until then, we are in this strange time between times. During this time, please don't forget our drive to make five thousand face masks to be distributed through our ministry partners. As of my writing to you, we have received over twelve hundred masks—which is amazing. But please continue to work on these—we have point persons in each of our ministry communities and the entire effort is being coordinated by Philip and Mindy Johnson. If you need more information—or to follow the mask count—you can go to our website: <http://www.ipcmemphis.org/outreach/short-term-missions/mask-making/>.

Also, remember that Sunday, May 3, is designated a congregational Day of Prayer. Of course, we will have corporate worship via Livestream at 11:00 a.m. on that Sunday (we'll be looking at Lamentations 3 that morning); and we are encouraging you to use the entire day to pray by yourself and with your families. I'll have a short guide for you next week that will help you use the day well. Also, we will have a prayer service via Livestream at 6:00 p.m. that evening, modeled after what we do on Good Friday: Scripture readings, songs, and prayers. I trust that it will be a good day for us as we call upon the Lord with prayers of grief and lament as well as confidence and hope.

You have hopefully gotten the news that we will not be having Camp Palmer this year. I also wanted the congregation to know that the organizers of the Edge, which is our Junior High summer conference, have decided to cancel. We will be making decisions about Vacation Bible School and Senior High Choir tour over the next week or so. Even with these cancellations, we are still planning a variety of activities for our children and students so that as soon as our local authorities allow us to do so, we will be ready to be together again (with all the appropriate precautions as mandated by our health officials). This summer will obviously look different, but we are committed to caring for you and your covenant children—not just virtually, but hopefully in person soon.

That's the hard part about all of this, isn't it? We don't know and we don't have control over how the future is going to play out. I think that's been one of the most difficult parts of this for me: as a process and planning person, not knowing and being able to plan has been so hard. As we deal with that reality, we trust that the God who is in control is at work in ways we can't see or imagine. Trusting that it won't be too long until we will be together again, we entrust each other to God's kind care.

In the grip of God's grace,

