

# A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

March 22, 2018

My dear Friends:

I hope that everyone enjoyed their time away over spring break. But I also hope that we will see you once again at IPC. I always get a bit nervous when folks are away—not simply because I care about numbers, per se. Rather, I worry that you might not be under the ministry of the Word, listening to the voice of Jesus, participating in the sacraments. We very much believe that while personal worship is significant and family worship is important, God works preeminently through the ministry of the Word in the gathered community on the Lord's Day. And so, when you aren't around—especially if you are not worshipping with another congregation when you are away—you are actually in a measure of spiritual danger.

I think that's part of the struggle of soul care, in general. We don't tend to do the things that are conducive for our spiritual well-being and we tend to do things that are actually destructive. In that regard, I think pastors face the same challenges as doctors. How many doctors I have talked with during the years who have complained about their patients not following the appropriate regimens, only to relapse into the same condition! And how often that is the case for me as a doctor of the soul! I can point you to the right person (Jesus) and place (his church) and activity (worship), but I can't make you do it!

Of course, at times, I can't make myself do it either, in this sense: as a pastor, one of the great challenges I face is not simply to "lead" worship or to "preach" a sermon, but to be the lead worshipper and to hear the sermon directed to my own soul. As I'll suggest Sunday, it is not enough to hear God's Word, but we must listen fully engaged; and it is not enough to show up to worship, but we must worship with engaged hearts and minds. That's the way by which God's Word, his sacraments, and prayer become means of grace for us, conduits of divine mercy and Gospel grace.

And so, I'd encourage you to be with us, especially this week. I'm so looking forward to Palm Sunday (8:30 a.m./11:00 a.m.), Maundy Thursday (6:00 p.m.), Good Friday (noon), and Easter Sunday (8:30 a.m./11:00 a.m.). I'm praying that God will meet us and transform us into new people, reshaped to engage our city for his glory. Will you pray with me toward that end? See you soon!

In the grip of God's grace,



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