

Good Sunday morning Church of the Apostles family,

This week I was once again drawn to a symbol that represents the One who I can put my trust in, especially at this uncertain time in our lives. The symbol is a wooden cut-out of the head of Christ. It was given to me many years ago. There is a picture of it that I have included with this message. As you can see I have it attached to my key fob for my Prius. I thought that would be the perfect place to keep my reminder of the One – Jesus Christ – who I know to be my comfort, my strength, my joy, my peace, and my hope.



Maybe some of you carry a symbol of your faith or a meaningful token in your pocket or purse. Some people carry a Cross. These symbols remind us that we belong to a loving and generous God who sustains us and holds everything together in creation around us. Why does it often take a seismic event, like this coronavirus, to remind us that God is still a constant presence with us and that God has continued to love and sustain us? God is the one constant in these days, as God has been in days gone by. One thing I have found is that this virus has caused me to reevaluate what is of most value to me and to reflect upon the meaning of life, plus the awareness that any control that I thought I had over life is an illusion. I wish I could say there is a satisfactory explanation as to why we go through pandemics where people suffer and die. For me, I

have found there are things I must accept as real, that there are no concrete answers. What I do know is that when I surrender myself to God, I discover a peace and intimacy with God that defies rational explanation.

What is my assurance of this? The moments I see God in the faces of my grandboys, on a hike on the Appalachian Trail or in an amazing sunset. These days I see glimpses of God in the selfless workers, the essential personnel, providing care during this crisis. At a time like this I am reminded of God's sustaining love through Christ. I cling to the One who has an eternal plan for my life, who supports me with hope and encouragement through the fear, upheaval and emotional trauma I feel.

My hope is that you may place your trust in this same One - Christ our Savior – who through the mystery of the cross, suffered and died and was raised again to reveal God's unconditional love for all humanity. The message of the cross proclaims there is hope beyond all the suffering and pain. My heart finds rest in the confidence that the suffering Messiah loves me and is with me through every struggle. Jesus loves us with all our imperfections, doubts and brokenness.

So in these troubling days where we find ourselves getting weary of staying at home for our safety, my hope is that you will trust the love of God that will comfort your uncertainty, doubts, pain and struggles. Maybe you, like me, would benefit from carrying a reminder, a symbol that you can touch often in the day, so that your day may be anchored in that which we may not be able to touch or see but want to reach for all day long - JESUS - our hope and trust.

I close with a prayer from Glen Mitchell, who was once my husband Bruce's Spiritual Director:

What is at work here, O God, beneath all that is lost? What is taking shape in me that you long for me to see? What is groaning to be born?
Do you hold every broken heart this hour? How might I join you, O God, in that holding? Where is your love stirring that I might bring my love alongside?
Grow and deepen my trust, so what I know, and all I don't know, can be joined in you.
May it be so. Amen.

Blessings and Peace for the journey,

Pastor Narda