

## Laurie's Message for Friday April 3, 2020



Good morning dear Apostles Family and Friends.

I do pray that this message finds each of you safe and well.

Am I correct in assuming that I am not the only one feeling the ill effects of seeing signs such as those illustrated above posted everywhere you turn? Not only are these signs seen on business doors, my email is flooded with such notices and the online newspapers and articles are focused on the same. Business closures, event postponements and cancellations, social distancing and mandatory stay at home orders are overwhelming me at every turn. Add the negative effects to the US economy into the mix, well it is just plain depressing and worrisome. It is very difficult not to have the current state of affairs in the United States and our own small town dominate my every thought.

Although I am normally content to have a day or two a week when I have nothing pressing on the calendar and can focus on home projects, read a book or dive into my latest craft idea; I am also a social person – I like to go out and about and I particularly like to gather with my friends. I teeter between thinking “this can’t really be as bad as the media is making it out to be, I can still run this errand”; to “holy smoke! This pandemic is for real, I am going to stay in bed and pull the covers over my head.” My calendar has more big “X’s” marked over scheduled events I had previously placed on it for March and April than I ever anticipated would occur. Will May be any better???

And of course, there is the elevated level of worry about our adult children (none of whom live at our house) and their health and safety. I am their mother who likes to fix all things for them (and who likes to be in control of all situations) – I want to see personally to it that they have everything they need, that are safe and healthy. They live in Columbia, MD, Saint Thomas, PA Erie, PA and Waynesboro, PA. So, I am unable to personally see to things for them (not that they want me to anyway...) Three of the four of them are working jobs that have been deemed

“essential” and are still working as normal. Although we are told precautions are being taken, they are at a higher risk of being exposed to someone carrying COV19 that I feel comfortable with.

For those of you who live alone, I imagine that the necessary distancing required for your own health and safety and the “stay at home” mandate can make you feel very isolated. Even more lonely or isolated than you may have occasionally already experience.

But do not despair! Although we may be distanced from loved ones and friends or living alone, we are never truly alone. During this time of personal distancing and closures, I find comfort in knowing that God is never “closed” or distanced from us – and never will be. All we need to do is believe in him and ask for his presence or assistance. I was comforted by this more than once this week. And, as the Lenten period draws to a close, holy week begins and Easter being just over a week away, we are blessed with constant reminders of God’s love and Jesus’s sacrifice for us. Although we will not be able to gather at the Church of the Apostles for Easter services, you will still be able to experience a service virtually! Pastor Narda has a wonderful service planned for you.

So, how have you been coping with all this distancing??? Bert and I have been maintaining fairly well by texting and calling our children, friends and loved ones. Just hearing their voices and receiving their reply texts have brought smiles to our faces. We have also ventured further into the virtual technology available and have face-timed with friends and had a virtual happy hour with multiple friends through an application called “Zoom”. Being able to see their faces as well as hear their voices was wonderful!!! Finally, taking a walk through the neighborhood is great exercise for the body and the mind. What a wonderful time of the year to get outside and take in the beauty of God’s creation. I have found the daffodils exceptionally beautiful and calling to me this year. I have realized that as a result of the closures and cancelations, I have less planning and tasks on my mind. This has enabled my thoughts during outdoor walks to be less “crowded” and allows me to notice all the beautiful buds and blossoms that are occurring and truly appreciate all things that God has created.

I am told that keeping to a normal routine during this time will greatly assist our wellbeing and outlook. This is particularly true for children and pets!

- Avoid the trap of staying up too late and sleeping in later in the morning (Bert and I are still working on avoiding this...)
- Make your bed every morning after rising.
- Don’t work or lounge too long in your PJ’s. Get dressed as you normally would.
- Keep your mealtime routines.
- If working from home, keep your normal work hours as much as possible.
- Take some time to sit with your emotions. Feel them, realize them and then you will be able to make a decision as to what, if anything you have the ability or need to change.

- Take the time to sit with God. Thank him for always being with you and turn your thoughts and worries over to him. Ask for his guidance and help through prayer.

I was drawn to Isaiah 41:10 this week, and leave this with you in hopes that you find comfort and strength in it during tough moments.

Isaiah 41:10 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>10</sup>So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Blessings to all.

Laurie