



FIRST EVANGELICAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

Cerritos, Fullerton, Oakland, and East Lansing Campuses

June 2, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

It's been a while since we have seen each other. From the bottom of my heart, I pray that you are all doing well. I miss you all, and have been thanking God for His faithfulness and protection upon our Church. Hope this email finds you and your loved ones in good spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational health.

I have good news to share with you. The Pastoral Staff, after prayerful consideration and in our staff/prayer meeting this morning, decided to conduct in-person worship services beginning June 21, 2020 in all our campuses. While our worship services will offer the opportunity for us to come together to praise the Lord, we also understand that some people may not be quite ready to join in. We will continue to provide live-stream simultaneously. For now, Sunday schools, prayer meetings, fellowship or small groups Bible study/sharing will be done online, via zoom or other apps. Please be assured that your total well-being is still our primary concern. We will continue to observe the CDC, federal, state, and local health agencies guidelines to keep us safe and healthy. (See attached policies and practices). We will not let this coronavirus paralyze us, but by God's grace and strength, we shall overcome.

In my personal devotion this morning, I was reflecting on this passage in Genesis: the story of Jacob going down to Egypt. Jacob was full of trepidation, leaving the land of his father and dwelling among strangers of a foreign land - a new scene and likely to be a trying one. Yet the path was evidently appointed for him, and armed with God's promise, "I will go down to Egypt with you", he unequivocally resolved to go.

When the coronavirus pandemic arrived, many of us were fearful of the global outbreak. However, we did not just sit around and do nothing. We understand that nothing in our lives happen without God's allowing it. We imitated Jacob's example by offering sacrifice of prayer unto God, seeking His protection and direction. We feel reassured that the Lord is with us in all our ways, and experienced the blessedness of the "Word become flesh and live among us."

Though the pandemic is not over, we have more confidence now in the Father's love; even beyond the ocean, His love beams like the sun in its strength. Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we fear no evil. We are marching onwards with faith in our God; and like Jacob, we hold on to God's promise to us as well.

Moreover, God promises not only to be with us during crises and troubles, He also promises "I will surely bring you back again." After more than 10 weeks of quarantine and physical isolation, God is bringing us back to worship Him together in person and to reacquaint ourselves with each other to strengthen our body life. Let us exercise Jacob's confidence. "Fear not" is the Lord's command; His divine encouragement helps us to be courageous. God's presence and protection take away all unbelieving fear. Without God, we should fear to move, but when He bids us to, it would be unwise to tarry. Let's go forward and fear not. Emmanuel, the Lord is with us!

Jesus loves you,

Pastor Joseph H. Lao



蒙愛羅省基督教會

喜瑞都堂、福樂敦堂、義橡園堂 及 東蘭莘堂

二零二零年六月二日

親愛的弟兄姐妹：

我未與你們相見面已經有一段時日了。我發自內心由衷地祈禱你們一切都平安。我想念大家，並為神對我們教會的信實與保守獻上感恩。願你和你所愛的人平安！

我要與你們分享一個好消息。我們的牧者經過慎重的考慮，在週二上午的教牧同工會中決定從 2020 年 6 月 21 日開始在各堂會恢復在教會的主日崇拜聚會。雖然到教會聚會讓我們能夠一起來讚美神，但我們也了解有些人可能還沒有準備好回到教會參與主日崇拜，因此我們將繼續提供線上直播。至於主日學，禱告會，團契或小組查經，現階段將繼續在線上透過 Zoom 或其他應用軟件進行。你的安全和健康仍是我們的首要關注的事。我們將繼續遵守 CDC、聯邦，州政府和衛生機構的指導方針，以確保大家的安全和健康。（請參閱隨附的措施和要點）。我們不會讓新冠病毒癱瘓我們，我們將倚靠神的恩典和力量來克服困難。

在我今早的個人靈修中，我反思《創世紀》中雅各到埃及的故事。雅各充滿恐懼離開了父親的土地，居住在陌生的異域，一個全新並具有挑戰性的地方。然而，這條路是為他預備的，並且帶著神的應許：“我要和你同下埃及去”，於是他毫不猶豫地定意就去。

我們許多人為全球性疫情的爆發而擔憂恐懼，但我們不是無所事事坐在那裡。我們知道在我們的生命中所發生的事，如果沒有神的允許，就不會發生。我們當效法雅各，向神獻上禱告的祭，尋求祂的保護和指引。我們心裡充滿平安，因主與我們同在，並體會了“道成為肉身，住在我們中間”的祝福。

儘管疫情尚未結束，但我們現在對天父的愛有了更大的信心。祂的愛像陽光一樣光芒四射。雖然我們行過死蔭的幽谷，也不怕遭害。我們憑著對神的信心前進，和雅各一樣，堅信神所賜的應許。

神不僅應許在危機和苦難中與我們同在，而且應許“也必定帶你上來”。經過十多個星期的居家避疫，神又帶領我們回到教會一起來敬拜祂，並重新過肢體的生活。讓我們操練雅各的信心，主的命令是“不要懼怕”。祂的話語使我們剛強。神的同在和保護能消除任何不信的恐懼。若沒有神的同在，我們應當害怕前進；但神若吩咐我們前行，拖延時間是不明智的。讓我們前進，不要害怕。以馬內利，主與我們同在！

耶穌愛你，

劉華梁牧師 敬上