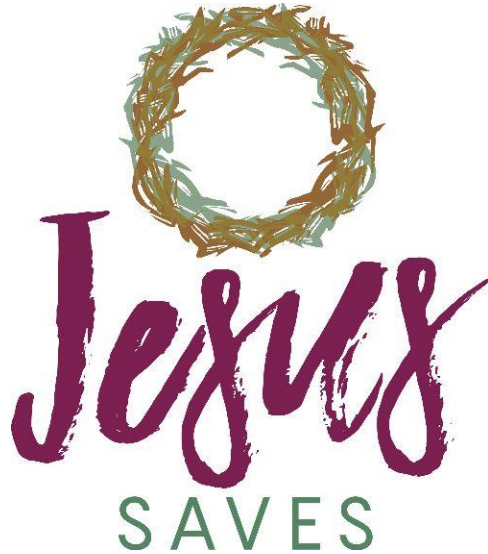


## HEARTBEATS- Staying Connected 3-29-2021



Dear Friends in Christ,

ONE AT ONE – Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, March 30, you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week pray for the continued distribution of the COVID-19 vaccination. Pray for rapid and equitable dispensing of the vaccine and an increasing commitment by people to receive it. Pray that there are few side-effects and that this medical treatment controls and eliminates the spread of the virus.

There is no resurrection without the crucifixion.

That may seem obvious, but there are a lot of people who avoid worship on Good Friday, yet flock to their churches on Easter Sunday. We love the pomp and celebration of Easter, but many do all they can to avoid the sadness and conviction that comes on Good Friday. This is one of the reasons why Palm Sunday several decades ago became "Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion." It is important to hear the narrative of the crucifixion and, since so many chose not to attend the services of Good Friday, it was decided to start including the entire passion narrative on Palm Sunday.

There is no resurrection without the crucifixion.

If you think about it, the resurrection means nothing if we are still under condemnation for our sin. Unless that sin is removed, we are guilty, and we must suffer the consequence for our sin. Paul reminds us in Romans 6: 23, "for the wages of sin is death." It matters not how much good you do, if you sin, you are

guilty and must receive your punishment. That's why Jesus' death means so much. When He, who was without sin, accepts death on our behalf as the outcome for our sin, we are then freed and can also receive the promised gift of the resurrection.

But there is no resurrection without the crucifixion.

While many may not want to hear about Christ's suffering and death on Good Friday and while we know about it in the back of our minds, it is important to be face-to-face with it. It is so much more than what happened one day and a couple days later Jesus rose and all is forgotten. Our sin cost Jesus His life. And before that He was arrested. He was tried and accused by false witnesses. He was ridiculed and bullied. He was tortured. He was forced to carry the cross-member of the devices of His execution. He had spikes driven through His wrists and ankles. He was publicly humiliated. He was hung where all who passed by could see. His clothes were taken by those who carried out the sentence against Him. He was given vinegar to drink. His lungs slowly filled with the moisture of His own labored breathing until He could breathe no more. All this was because of our sin and, for at least one day out of the year, we need to be reminded and confronted with that.

There is no resurrection without the crucifixion.

But, recognizing that makes the resurrection all the sweeter, all the more meaningful. It would be enough to know that Jesus suffered and died for our sins. How much more wonderful is the Easter good news that He has risen! It is going from the lowest moment to the highest. This is what Easter is all about, but it is most joyously received when one has first journeyed to the cross with Christ.

There is no resurrection without the crucifixion.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Jeffrey