

FROM PASTOR LEMKE – Early April 2020

First of all I miss my visitation procedure and the devotion and communion time with you. It is always the highlight of my month. I puzzled how to stay in touch with each of you during this pandemic and have settled on old fashioned letter communication. I will do one such letter about every two weeks which will offer a Psalm from PSALMS FOR NOW, by Leslie Brandt (copyright 1974 CPH).

During this time that I cannot be with you know that the Lord Jesus is always with you as you remember His promise: “I am with you always to the close of the age.”

PSALM 23

The Lord is my constant companion.
There is no need that He cannot fulfill.
Whether His course for me points
to the mountaintops of glorious joy
or to the valleys of human suffering,
He is by my side.
He is ever present with me.
He is close beside me when I tread the dark streets of danger,
and even when I flirt with death itself, He will not leave me.
When the pain is severe, He is near to comfort.
When the burden is heavy, He is there to lean upon.
When depression darkens my soul,
He touches me with eternal joy.
When I feel empty and alone,
He fills the aching vacuum with His power.
My security is in His promise to be near me always
and in the knowledge that He will never let me go.

You might want to read it in the Bible version of your choice to find additional comfort from the Good Shepherd through His word.

“Now, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in your believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the power of the Holy Spirit.”

God's peace and be with you now and always.

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FROM PASTOR LEMKE – LETTER 2 – AFTER EASTER – APRIL 2020

It remains quite a change for all of us as we continue with the coronavirus scenario. We tend to feel disconnected from family and friends, and the reality is that we are. However, we are never disconnected from our God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He will always carry us in His everlasting arms. With the letter I share Psalm 46 for you from Psalms for Now by Leslie Brandt. You may want to read it in your Bible also.

Our God is still our Refuge and Strength.
He knows our problems and fears.
Thus we have no business doubting Him
even though the earth is convulsed in tragedy
or its human masses threatened
by ethnic hatred, disease, drugs, crime or abuse.

God continues to reign as all-wise and almighty as ever.
His eternal plan is not canceled out by the whims of human leaders
or the freakish accidents of nature.
Nations will destroy each other. Civilizations will perish.
The earth itself may one day become a smoking cinder
but God will not leave us.
He is forever our sure Refuge and Strength.

Just look around you; read the pages of history.
Refresh your flagging spirit with the reminder
of His great feats throughout the ages.
And you will again hear Him speaking:
“Relax, stop fretting, and remember that I am still your God.
I still hold the reigns of this world.”

God is here among us! He continues to be our Refuge and Strength!

So as we continue to be separated, may we all remember we are united in Christ and always under the Shepherd's care. God's Peace be with you always as we rejoice in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

BLESSINGS, PASTOR LEMKE

PEACE VISITATION LETTER 3 FROM PASTOR LEMKE – AFTER EASTER

We have been used to singing together on Easter Sunday at our Resurrection Celebrations hymns like “I Know That My Redeemer Lives – What comfort this sweet sentence gives” and “Jesus Lives, The Victory's Won – death no longer can appall us.” Even though we are not able to gather together to celebrate, the truths of the hymns remain and are ours to be claimed. So we celebrate individually that Christ died for our sins, that He rose again the third day, and that His victory is ours. He who died lives, and is present with us always on our life's journey.

I share with you Psalm 47 from Leslie Brandt's PSALMS FOR NOW:

Clap your hands! Stamp your feet!
Let your bodies and your voices explode with joy.
God is not some human concoction,
He is for real! He is Here!
Despite all attempts to rationalize Him out of existence,
God is in our world, and He reigns over our universe.

The rulers of the nations often ignore Him.
People of learning often pass Him by.
The masses of His creatures substitute their own little gods in His place
and worship the things they can see and feel.
Others build fortresses around themselves
and announce no need for God.

Our great God will not be ignored.
He will not remove Himself from our world.
Let us recognize His presence
and fill the air with His praises.

As we celebrated Holy communion together so often we rejoiced in His presence in our lives and rejoiced in being reassured of the forgiveness of our sins that is always ours. We were also strengthened in our faith being helped to keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. So in the midst of continuing challenges and things we do not comprehend we recognize His presence in our world and in our lives and we celebrate things past, things present and things future. We know that our Redeemer lives.

I look forward to celebrating with you whenever it will be possible.

PASTOR LEMKE