

# Reunion Day! Come home to PCBC! 'The Prayer 20/20 Impact'

June 7th, 2020

Dear Praying Friends, and Partners In Prayer Team, and whole Church Family,



*"For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it."*

**2 Corinthians 5:7-9 (NIV)**

Isn't it true that "absence makes the heart grow fonder?" During these days of Covid -19 "stay-at-home" and "social-distancing" aren't we all longing to return with God's people for reunion? Joni Mitchell wrote these lyrics in a song where she was referring to parks and trees: "Don't it always seem to go that

you don't know what you've got till it's gone?"

Yes, we all understand and know what it is like to "appreciate what we once had, but now that it is gone, we miss it even more." Many of us have found the sentiment to be true in terms of our being unable to enjoy friendly gatherings, church services, and mealtimes in local restaurants, and more. Even some who live alone have testified to feeling alone in their aloneness. On a recent morning, as I had begun to bemoan another lockdown day, I read

Hebrews 13:6: *"So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'"* Although we may be in lockdown, Jesus is never locked out!

Well, I am happy to announce that we are coming together again for a "soft reopening" of Palisades Community Bible Church. The absence of friends and loved ones seems to sting a little more than usual. But if you are not ready to return, do not rush coming back. We want everyone to feel sure to return.

As wonderful as the media and technology have been through this Covid-19 to help us keep connected, it has only been a temporary "fix" for meeting together in God's presence. It's like using a Band-Aid and cold press on a broken arm. What the patient really needs is the presence of the surgeon to reset the bone and cast it. The danger of being totally "church online" is very subtle. It is because media and screens are "one-way". They are only "in-lets" for entertainment. They never are outlets. We end up being "selfish sponges" soaking ideas, worship songs, spiritual thoughts, and Bible knowledge, but we never have an outlet or service to use our spiritual gifts or share our knowledge. I used the illustration of the Dead Sea last week, remember? It's



dead because the waters only run into it, and never out. There are many spiritual “Dead Sea” Christians, who are bloated and overloaded with spiritual wisdom and knowledge and truth, but never live it out or exercise it in their daily lives by meeting together with the local church. That is what church is about! Meeting and sharing and exalting the presence of God together!

With the Covid-19 causing many to fear, now the breaking out of riots is causing us more fearfulness. How are we as believers to act towards racism? I am deeply grieved by the murder of George Floyd, recorded in brutal and gruesome clarity, broadcast over and over on social media. Real people. Shattered families. Life plans swept away in an instant. Potential to contribute to society lost. The list of black lives lost goes on and on. Every name on that list matters to God. Every name should matter to us. It should matter that the list of those who died before them goes back centuries.

That list is spawned by racism; prejudice against groups of people based on the lie that they are collectively inferior. I have heard it all my life and have seen its effects. Racism is so clearly at odds with the Biblical truth that all humans have value, have equal worth and have great potential because all humans equally bear the image of God. What are we to do as a church today in this month of June 2020? We need to pray for peace, perspective, patience, an outpouring, and His presence!

**1. We need to pray for PEACE, because “the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (James 1:20).** Not since the aftermath of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination and the height of the Vietnam War protests have we seen a moment of national division like this in America. Yet, we dare not undermine the very standard of justice that makes George Floyd’s killing such an affront. Please know I respect and care that no one is ever racially attacked or killed. But the riots are not the solution. It’s senseless sin. Until we deal with what lies at the root of racial hatred, police brutality, and the endless back and forth recriminations, we will not know true peace, and that takes trust in the only true Prince of Peace, Jesus! We also need to pray for the riots to end in our larger cities. Minneapolis and other large cities have been hit very hard by those wanting to cause unrest. Kyle Hendricks was called to duty with the National Guard in Philadelphia this week. Andy Davis was called for extra duty for the Sheriff’s Office of Bucks County.

Sandi wrote us an update: *“Thank you everyone for your prayers during this unsettling time in our world! Andy Davis ended up getting called off and didn't have to go help with the rioting so that was a relief and an answer to prayer for the Davis family. I believe he's still on stand by though. Kyle is not in Philadelphia as we first thought but rather he is in Upper Darby. He's a man of few words and basically just says ‘everything is okay’. He's been working the ‘night shift’. As of now, he doesn't know how long he'll be there.”*

We are also sending prayer alerts concerning Bev Kramer's daughter and son-in-law Colleen and Kenny with their newborn daughter Giovanna. There have been some rioters in their area of Glen Rock, NJ. Along with that, Lori and I have a pastor friend and wife, Bob and Faith Cooke, whose church and home have been targeted with riots in New Jersey and called asking for God's people to keep offering prayer and protection for them all.

Yes, we will keep them covered in prayer! While we need to pray for injustice to end we also need for peace to prevail. Pray that God would bring conviction upon those causing the violence to end, and especially that they would find the peace of Christ during this time. As our nation convulses with pain, anger, and hatred, and now with the racial riots happening, this is a moment for Christians to shine for our Lord, who is the Prince of Peace. The Bible says, "...do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Ephesians 4:26), yet each sundown is bringing with it the darkness of more violence and destruction in more cities. Scripture also tells us, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). This means doing what we personally can do to right wrongs and help the hurting. It also means praying fervently to our Heavenly Father for Him to change hearts and heal our land. The One "who is in you"—Christ—"is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

**2. We need to pray for PERSPECTIVE, because "the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere" (James 3:17).** Sometimes we don't know the ways God will use us. We've been letting a young man named Brandon park his van and sleep behind our church during the whole Covid-19 crisis. Brandon is from Utah, and is working as a nurse in the Easton and Bethlehem hospitals. He wasn't able to find a campground that would accept him during this Covid-19 shutdown. This week he was thanking me for all the help in providing a safe place for him to rest from his third shift of work. I don't know how much longer Brandon will be our guest, but I wanted you to know that our church has been used in ways we may not have ever thought. We need perspective to give us wisdom as believers. My prayer is that we have been able to show Brandon that we can be hospitable to strangers. That kind of testimony is rarely seen. Please keep the perspective of testimony during our re-opening. We hope Christ is seen.

We also received this update from Nick and Kathy Borio:

*"Thank you for all the encouragement and support you've provided to us after our move to Florida. It's hard to believe we have been here almost two months! Attached to this e-mail is our latest update on our ministry at the Homes of Ethnos360 and a tentative look ahead at another move. You can also read it here on our blog:*

<https://blogs.ethnos360.org/nick-borio/whats-next>

*We are praying for you all! If you live in Pennsylvania and find that you have unexpected needs during this time, let us know if you want us to connect you with a*

*local church. Our sending and supporting churches have so many great resources available, whether you need prayer, fellowship, groceries, or anything! We have been so blessed as we've seen them serve God and be available to those in need.*

*We love and miss you all, and please keep in touch and let us know how we can pray for you. In His grace,  
Nick and Kathy Borio”*

**3. We need to pray for PATIENCE, because of God's “kindness and forbearance and patience” toward us all (Romans 2:4).** Ask God to change hearts and heal this divide in our nation. I had several great opportunities to interact with people from church during our voting this week. Just being around the school causes us to want to keep our community in prayer. In praying for patience, we will see things as our community reopens. We continue to pray this week for our graduates: Ash Foster, Amy Hendricks, Jaime Patterson, Zach Wyllie, and Riley Bowen. We are so thankful for them. I happened to talk with two graduates this week, and I tried to encourage them with how difficult their ending school has been. Both individuals conveyed that the “face-to-face” with their friends and family has been the most difficult thing to overcome during this “shut-down.” They are all looking forward to moving on with jobs and hopefully the start of colleges and universities. We pray for them to continue to do well despite the adjustment.

Sandi wrote a thank you for Amy with the virtual graduation taking place next week. *“Finally, I also want to thank everyone for the love and concern and cards etc for our family after my Mom was called home. I still miss her tons but have no doubt she is in glory and doing way better than the rest of us! I also thank those who reached out to Amy with congratulations on her graduation. It certainly isn't like any other senior year we've experienced! But, we're so thankful that God is in control and that we have been blessed with such a wonderful church family. I can't wait to see you all soon.”*

**4. We need to pray for an OUTPOURING of His wisdom and direction for our leaders and officials who are dealing with this crisis.** We had a wonderful visit with Tom and Alicia Vosters this week. We had them and their boys to our home for supper, and recorded a video for our church. I think we will feature it later in the month, but we are so encouraged by what God is doing and they commented how incredible our church has been in supporting and caring for their ministry in Cambodia. They are so thankful for our church not just praying “for them” but “with them.” Keep praying for all our missionaries and families as they all experience changes through this summer in ministry.

Did you know last Sunday May 31<sup>st</sup> was Pentecost Sunday? It honestly went right by me. It wasn't on my radar. The significance for Pentecost is the birth of the Church. It marks the day the Holy Spirit filled Christ's followers after He ascended back to the Father. There is no better time for us to seek a fresh

visitation from God upon our lives, homes, churches, communities, and country. As we open this week, please be in prayer for a “visit and reunion” in the presence of God this Sunday.

**5. We need to pray for His PRESENCE!** What does having His presence mean? What does it mean to have His presence? I mean, God is omnipresent, meaning He is present at all times and in all places. So what is being in the presence of God? Here are six truths about God’s presence taught in Scripture.

**A. God’s presence is everywhere!** In the beginning of human history, God enjoyed a close presence with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8). After their sin, they became separated from this presence. Throughout the Old Testament period, we find various ways in which God revealed His presence in special ways. These included speaking, as He did with Noah; in physical form, as Genesis 17—18 describe; and in visible form, as He did with the Israelites in the forty years in the wilderness. *Psalm 139:7 “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?”*

**B. When God reveals His presence to us, we can know and feel it.** Psalm 114:7 looks back at Israel's wilderness journey and describes God's presence as something that could make someone tremble in fear: *“Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.”* In Exodus 33:14 as God addressed Moses He proclaimed, *“My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

**C. God can reveal His presence to anyone in any manner He so chooses.** Jeremiah 3:17 speaks of a time when God's presence will dwell in a special way in Jerusalem, saying, *“At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart.”* Lamentations 2:19 calls for repentance in the presence of the Lord: *“Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord!”*

**D. God’s presence fills the earth.** In the New Testament, the angel Gabriel said he lived in the presence of God: *“I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news” (Luke 1:19).* In 1 Corinthians 1:28-29, Paul spoke of God's presence as a time which people speak with God: *“God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.”*

Second Thessalonians 1:9 speaks of the presence of the Lord in another way: *“They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”* This presence of the Lord is similar to that mentioned by Gabriel, speaking of being before the Lord in heaven. This is also similar to what Paul states in 1 Timothy 5:21 to Timothy, saying, *“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these*

*rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality."*

In Jonah, we see God's presence described as time hearing from the Lord. After Jonah heard God's voice, we read, *"So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD" (Jonah 1:3)*. We can't run from His presence, the problem is we don't always sense it. Our sin causes us to flee from His presence.

**E. God's presence takes up residence in every Christian through the Holy Spirit's indwelling.** Though God's presence is everywhere, the Bible also speaks of being before God in heaven as God's presence, His special presence in certain locations (such as in Jerusalem), and other times in which He revealed Himself at a particular time or place uniquely. Today, God's Spirit lives within those who believe in Him (John 14:23). We do not need to go somewhere special to seek His presence, but are called to worship Him and live guided by His Spirit that lives within us. We may sense God's presence in a special way emotionally at times, yet God is present at all times and in all places and in each believer. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: *"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."* He is truly in us even when we don't feel or sense His presence. He never leaves or forsakes us (Hebrews 13:5-6; Eph. 1:13-14). Here is a simple definition of presence that should help us in worship today: **"Presence is our sense that God is the ever living present and omnipresent One who is immediate to our needs and our interaction, returns to us His blessings and assurances as we acknowledge Him and interact with Him and His people."** We need to trust Him to the very core of our souls. We need to trust Him with our relationships, our circumstances, and our priorities.

**F. God's presence is most manifest and known when His people gather to worship and exalt Him!** Remember the electricity that races through us when someone famous walks by us? We can't miss it. Ditto when God draws near to us through the gathered body of believers. It keeps us insulated from "selfish-inward" entertainment and focus. When we are together as a body, we are worshiping that meets our inwards needs, but by the using of our spiritual gifts, we are exercising and serving and opening an "out" for our souls. We are not just "filling-up" on spiritual truth, we are "pouring-out" and that causes the entire body of Christ "The Called-Church" to grow. That is why *"when two or three are gathered, there I am in the midst" (Matthew 18:20)*. (Incidentally, that verse is in the context of church discipline more so than just trying to give legitimacy to a small prayer meeting or church service. The pastor might say something like "There are just a few of us here tonight, but we



are glad that we don't have to have a huge crowd for God to listen to us.' This verse is not just a comforting reminder of Jesus presence, but the authority of His presence to take care of sins happening in the gathering body.)

All this to say, I hope these thoughts of God's presence help us appreciate the regathering of our church this weekend. I hope we will believe the presence of God. We cannot trust our feelings. They are highly overrated and in fact are one of the most undependable of all human traits. On the other hand, God's Word is objective truth and if God says that He will give us His presence, He will. If He promises to be there among the body of Christ, He will! If we abide in His love, He abides in us, knowing that He goes wherever we go. In this knowledge, we will find joy in His presence and look toward being in His literal presence someday taking comfort, knowing all these things, *"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is [face to face]"* (1 John 3:2). And, *"No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever."* (Rev. 22:4-5).

Looking at the riots and the Covid-19 pandemic, doesn't it seem like it's getting just spiritually dark enough for an awakening? Could the Lord be preparing us for His coming? Is this just "dress rehearsal" and a graceful warning and chance for us His Church to be ready for His return? I believe it is. Don't just pray, believe! True love acts!

Will you pray with me?

***"Eternal Father, Creator of all things by Your Word, we delight in Your presence! We glory in Your beautiful holy Name! We enter with thanksgiving! We enter with rejoicing! Let our faith be in You and in You alone! Without You, we are weak, but when we walk by faith and trust in You, we are protected. When we gather as believers washed under the blood of Christ, we are dressed in Your praises, and we are enjoying the beauty of Your holiness. In every aspect of our lives, Jesus, let us place our hope and our trust in You. Not in 'horses' or other things of this life, or other people of this world. Your infinite wisdom and Your boundless grace is with us. Show Yourself to us as we glorify You in Your presence today! Give us wings of prayer and praise to soar like eagles in worship. Give us new songs to sing to You in faithfulness and steadfast love. We stand in awe of Your presence today! Holy Spirit let us humbly stand in Your presence, and You make our hearts beautiful. Dress us in Christ. Help us look good in praise together. Thank You for the reunion of Your people. We want to be called: 'Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!' (Ps. 33:12). We ask in Jesus sweet and beautiful Name, (And all God's church said...) Amen."***

**Standing In His presence with you,  
Pastor Corvin <><**

Quote: “The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of. Our attention would have been on God.” ... C. S. Lewis

“What would happen if we followed literally Jesus’ command to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us? How would it affect the reputation of Christians in the United States if we became known not for our access to the White House but for our access to heaven on behalf of those who strenuously, even violently, disagree with us?” ... Philip Yancy

