



Greetings From The Grove

Kallam Grove Christian Church
An Evangelical Covenant Church

March, 2018

Thank you once again, John!

"God's mind-bending love and power, displayed so perfectly at Easter, are real and present whether we fully realize it or not." Nathanael Putnam

Easter Letter from ECC President

Greetings Covenanters,
I did not grow up in a home with many spiritual leanings and so I never quite got the "giving up something for Lent" thing that certain of my friends would observe. But the older I get, the more meaningful simple patterns like that prepare me for the cross and resurrection of Holy Week. Practicing a modest personal constraint does indeed prompt me to be more mindful of the costly sacrifice of Jesus. In these days leading up to Holy Week, may I suggest another practice? Reading the hymns of the cross as part of your devotions. A grateful heart will grow as you ponder the grace extended to you, and the hope it represents for all. One example for me is verse two of "When I survey the Wondrous Cross," which says, "Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood." You will find other phrasings that speak to your own heart and circumstance. Regardless of what practice you might choose, do not let Holy Week catch you by surprise this year ("Oh, Easter is this week?"). Use these days to slow down, reflect, and be prepared to take to heart the sacrifice that literally takes you to heart.
Blessings,
Gary Walter, President, ECC

FROM THE MIND OF THE PASTOR MARCH 2018

IT'S LENT AND I'M OVERWHELMED

Hi all, I don't know about you, but I am feeling a bit overwhelmed this season and it is not primarily because of Clive. It seems that all over people are finding themselves in hard places. It is not only evident in our church, but everywhere else too. The flu season this year has taken a heavy toll on us all. Classrooms and offices are empty and doctor's offices and pharmacies are full. And the flu is the least of the worries many people are facing. It seems like a general season for deteriorating health and genuine medical crises.

Some people will say, "You can't let it get you down. You just have to decide to stay positive and keep going forward." I don't even know that I'm sad so much as totally disoriented. This season feels like a day at the beach when the water is rough. You get caught, surprised by one wave and as you laugh to yourself and begin to stand up you get blind-sided by another and another and before you know it you can't tell if there is more water in your lungs or sand in your swim trunks and you aren't laughing anymore.



April 21st!

Think about the Youth Auction now! Look through your closets & cabinets and find fine stuff to share!



Coffee and Donuts Fellowship is at 9:30 on March 18th! Hosted by Steve and Beth Anne! Hope to see you there! Thanks, Steve and Beth Anne!

Check your recipes for those goodies that have become so popular!

We missed Grovers in February!! We need a host for March!! Will you sign up?

These seasons come and go, but it is made extra hard for me to have one hit during Lent. Ever since my time in divinity school I have had a special affection for this season set apart for reverence. Our culture is totally worthless at being reverent. After generations of life in a culture where the only goal is to sell something to someone else, we can't be reverent. What is presented as reverence is quickly exposed as a selfish sales-pitch, if not outright hypocrisy. All our attempts just end up being overly serious and curiously confusing ("I know I am being serious, but I don't know why?") or painfully sad. Think about your experiences of award ceremonies, graduations, Communion, and funerals.

Reverence is different than being serious. For me, reverence is what happens when we take time to be in the presence of a mystery. I think this is why the closest many people get is when they are out in the woods. To be surrounded by such a multitude of life that is so different from us is to encounter mystery and it captivates us. It quiets the silly, trivial voices in us and makes us still, but it doesn't bring sadness. It sharpens our senses and brings joy and curiosity and hope for potential. There we can admit the absurdity of our existence, but do it without diminishing our self-worth. Seriousness is humiliating and draining, but reverence is humbling and life giving. As Christians, we have three great holy days, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost in which we encounter the greatest mystery of all - God's profound love for us. These are not times to be serious, they are times to be reverent.

In a society of total flippancy and insincerity, and if you don't believe me just try and watch any of the super bowl commercials again from this year, I crave time just to be reverent. I want Lent and Advent every year and I feel guilty if I miss them. Right now I am feeling pretty guilty because I can't tell up from down and the season is rushing by.




*Thank
you*



March 4-10, 2018 is **National Write A Letter of Appreciation Week**. Why not go back to the practice of old-fashioned etiquette and write a letter to show your selfless act of

common courtesy? Everyone loves for someone to say thank you, even if it is just for the sake of holding a door open for someone to enter or exit a building. *Thank you!*



Spring is the season after winter and before summer, in which vegetation begins to appear, in the northern hemisphere from March to May and in the southern hemisphere from September to November:



Song of Solomon 2:11-12

"For behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land."

I don't know if you ever feel guilty about missing God. If you do, I don't know what you tell yourself to ease the self-accusation, but this is what I have been meditating on. First, our God is the God of grace. Jesus lived our life and knows the chaos we suffer through. It is not an excuse not to try, but I do believe that God understands things are out of our control sometimes. Second, God gives us reverence for us, not for himself. God's existence is perfect love and perfect relationship. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist in perfect relationship to one another - always giving to the others what is lacking and always receiving back what they have given. God is not petulant; God's self esteem will not be damaged if I fail in a season to fully revere him. Reverence is for my benefit. When I come to a place where I can see things as they are - to admit both my unimportance and also incredible worth, to see myself as God sees me, then I find life. And when I begin to live into the image God has of me, then the world around me benefits too. So there is a loss when I miss Lent, but it is mine, not God's.

What, then, do I say about this strange season? When I was still running competitively I had races where I knew, even though I had given it all I had, that I had not run well. I hadn't shown up for whatever reason. The only way to handle it was to just shake it off and look to the next race. I had a habit that became an anticipated ritual - I'd take off my watch and throw it as hard as I could down the track or on the ground; sometimes I'd punt it. Lot's of times I did it to chants of my friends - "throw the watch, throw the watch!" It was a silly way to admit defeat without taking it too seriously. I want desperately to bathe in the full joy of Easter this year. I want Jesus' resurrection to flood your lives to the point that it washes everything else out - I want us to be drowned in it! Measureless joy and power and hope! But we might miss it. For whatever reasons, even though we give it all we had, we might not show up for it. We cannot allow ourselves to despair. If we gave it our best, we should not accuse ourselves for not trying harder. We have to find a way to "throw the watch" and move on to get ready for the next opportunity.

I pray the waves will ease up soon for us as a people, though the horizon looks darker than the skies above us. I will simply encourage you in a couple of ways. Keep struggling. Better to find yourself with a bathing suit full of sand and cursing on the beach than dragged out to sea. And if your best efforts to meet Easter this year are not enough, do not be discouraged. God's gift, or the efficacy of God's gift, is not based on our ability to comprehend it. God's mind-bending love and power, displayed so perfectly at Easter, are real and present whether we fully realize it or not. Finally, God knows our hearts and promises that if we seek him we will find him. Stay faithful, get ready for the next season and God will find a way to plow through our lives eventually and find us. And blessing be on those times, when full of reverence we can rest in the mystery that the God who created the universe knows and loves, more than any parent can a child, us.

Pastor Nathanael Putnam



Good Friday is a Christian holiday commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Calvary. It is observed during Holy Week as part of the Paschal Triduum on the Friday preceding Easter Sunday, and may coincide with the Jewish observance of Passover. It is also known as Holy Friday, Great Friday, and Black Friday.

PASSOVER

The eight-day festival of Passover is celebrated in the early spring, from the 15th through the 22nd of the Hebrew month of Nissan, March 30-April 7, 2018. It commemorates the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt.



March 25th-Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, one week before His resurrection.