



By Pastor Koenig

**R**etooling our lives in the face of the coronavirus is perhaps one of the most difficult and stressful ordeals many of us have faced in recent memory. In the face of confusion, fear, and disruption, it is hard to keep perspective. For much of each day, it's understandable to feel like we are being abjectly subjected to some nebulous restriction for some undefined cause for some undefined timeframe. And, unlike a national war effort, it is hard to remember that through all of these measures, we are actually banding together to fight the advances of an aggressive, though microscopic, enemy. We ARE... in this together. Yet it would be naive to think that we have not been asking the age-old question, "Are we there yet?"

**I**n some ways, we are almost there. Coronavirus, social distancing, and suspended worship notwithstanding, we are in the advent of Easter! We are entering into that time which brings the church year full circle; that moment when we realize that, like it or not, Christmas and Easter are indelibly connected by Lent—none of us can simply pass effortlessly from birth directly to resurrection. Perhaps we have never felt the pain and sacrifice of Lent as we do right now.

**S**oteriology—the doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ—is really all about what he did for us, on behalf of us, out of love for us. It is NOT about what we can do to earn any of that. We simply have no control over the actions of God, or even over the love of God! Now, as we grapple collectively with this pandemic—which is bigger than all of us—maybe we can replace some of our fears with the realization that God, too, is bigger than all of us. And that today we have the wonderful option to place our hope in God who has brought us through so many disasters before. And from which we have always emerged, stronger!

**E**ntertaining the restrictions that are in place may seem like a burden, but it is actually all about community. This is one important way we can care for our neighbor: by making sure that we are not the cause for anyone to (quite literally) stumble with this virus. Especially since we don't know if we're carrying it, or passing it on, until it is almost too late. So, in the midst of our practicing of social distancing, we are, ironically, being community!

**N**ourished by the knowledge that we are doing the right thing; fed by our faith in the promise of all that is to come; we can be socially distant without being isolated. We can set the example that calmness is contagious too. And we can run this race with the perseverance, patience, and peace that passes all understanding. After all, Christ rose for us; surely we can rise to this!