



Monday Morning Missive

Good morning, church family. Can you believe that we made it to 2021? I hope that your Christmas and New Year's celebrations were all that you hoped they would be and that you are ready to get back into the routine that so often describes the first week of January. I know that this holiday season was different for most of us. Sonya and I didn't make it to a single Christmas party this year, but we did get to spend time with our family. As part of this week's routine, many of you will be busy taking down decorations and getting the house back into order, but while you are doing that, try something different. Instead of doing the work grudgingly, embrace it with thanksgiving for the joy that filled your heart while you were celebrating with family and friends. And then, look forward with praise to next year and the

joy that will once again give you those moments of celebration.

Please be in prayer for our church family over these next few weeks. Doug and Emily Patterson are heading back to M.D. Anderson today where Doug will have a biopsy on a spot on his lung later this week. Maddie McClendon is continuing her time in Cincinnati as she goes through the treatments for her ovarian cancer. Jimmy Bagley remains in the hospital with pneumonia from the Covid virus. And many of our people have the virus as well. As you pray, pray for those who have been exposed to the virus and for those who may have symptoms. It is so easy to ignore both of these issues and try to continue to go on with life as usual, but it is imperative that you protect yourself and others. Most of us, like Sonya and me, will recover from the virus, but there are some who will end up in a fight for their lives. Believe me, even a mild case like we had is no fun. We are a month out from when I was diagnosed, and neither of us feel like we are back to normal.

Please understand that we shouldn't live our lives in fear of the virus, but if we take just the simplest precautions, we can make a difference for ourselves and for those we love.

We will continue to have only online worship services at least until January 17. I say "at least" because if the numbers among our church family continue to go up, our Leadership Team will discuss extending these precautions to a later date. While I don't look forward to that possibility, I want us to be wise and loving towards our entire congregation.

Your staff continues to do the work of the ministry – minus the visiting that we would typically do pre-Covid. However, if you need us, call us and we will be there. We will be calling as many of you as we possibly can over the next few weeks to check on you and to pray with you. It is not the same as a face-to-face visit, but it will be one way that we will be keeping in touch. Pray for us that we would have the wisdom we need to continue to minister

to our church family and our community.

Blessings for 2021,

Bro. Ben