

Good Morning Emmanuel Church,

How are you holding up? It's been quite a week, as we seek to find a new normal with the regular routines of life being taken away. Perhaps it feels like time is standing still. Or perhaps time suddenly feels all-encompassing as our online platforms for communication seem to take over and we wonder if it's ok to disconnect. And even if we did disconnect, what would we do? Where would we go?

In these times when we are asked to practice physical distancing and self-isolation, we must remember we are not alone. We are in this together and *"The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress (of hope)."*

This morning, I'd like to invite you into a moment of stillness with God and each other as we look at Psalm 46 together. This is a psalm that God's people often turn to in times of trouble as a way to comfort ourselves and others. Throughout this psalm we read several descriptions about God; He is our refuge, He is strong, present and our greatest source of security. *"Therefore we will not fear."* These words reassure us that the work of God is not hindered by our fear and worrying or our distracted minds. He fully understands that we feel this way and embraces us in this place. In Christ, we find our protection in all circumstances as we trust in Him alone for all our needs.

In verse 10 of this psalm we hear God speak directly to His people, saying, *"Be still, and know that I am God."* And although we often interpret these words as a call to rest and relax in God's presence - which is a good thing - the context of the psalm points to something even deeper. These words from God are given as a command, to His people in a time of war and upheaval. When God commands His people to "Be still..." what He is really saying is, "cease striving" or "stop". Rather than try to fix all your problems on your own, remember who God is. Be still and bring your fears to Me. Be still and see what I'm doing, even in the midst of this uncertain and scary place. Be still and know I AM with you.

The Bible's book of Psalms is a wonderful place to dwell, as we read the prayers of God's people. To converse with God, is to pray. And prayer is the primary way God transforms us and His world. We'd like to encourage you this week to pray for one

another. If you have a church directory at home, this is a great place to start. Pick one person or family a day to bring before God in prayer trusting that He knows what they need. If you feel really brave, maybe pick up the phone and call the people you've prayed for. Just say hi and let them know you're thinking about them. This will go a long way in helping us experience the love and presence of Jesus in and through each other.

**Prayer:** Jesus our ever-present comfort in times of trouble. Remind us that we are not alone, that you are walking with us through every moment and that you will be there in the moments to come. You are Emmanuel, God with us, and you will not let us go. May your grace and peace that surpasses all understanding replace the fears and sorrows that burden us and fill us with your hope and enjoyment for the future. We pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

We have included the words of Psalm 46 as well as some worship songs to listen to today. May there be space to sit with God in the stillness and feel His gaze upon you. Blessings, Pastor Cari

**In Christ Alone** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMixnWehee0>

And for our children, here is a song you've been learning in Sunday School, it would be great for you to sing this with your parents this week ☺

**Rise Up and Shine** <https://youtu.be/pt62Vkws8vM>

### **Psalm 46 (NIV)**

- <sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.
- <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
- <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.<sup>[c]</sup>
- <sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- <sup>5</sup> God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.

<sup>6</sup> Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

<sup>8</sup> Come and see what the LORD has done,  
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

<sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease  
to the ends of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields<sup>[d]</sup> with fire.

<sup>10</sup> He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."

<sup>11</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.