



SFC April 2020 Newsletter

Message From Joel

I keep telling people that I feel like I fell asleep in one world and have woken up in another. Less than four weeks ago my wife told me the most incredible news... She is pregnant with our first child! All of the best emotions filled our home while we celebrated the good news. The ensuing days were filled with awe and wonder as we dreamed about the world we want to build for this beautiful new baby that will joining us. We truly couldn't be happier!

Fast Forward One Week

All of a sudden people are sick and dying, schools have moved online, businesses have shut down, and people are losing their jobs. The list of everything that is happening right now seems endless. To say that people are overwhelmed is an understatement. Immediately, stress and fear took over my every thought. That great beautiful world I wanted to prepare for our child is suddenly a very scary place. Not to mention that my wife is working at an urgent care facility that was testing 300 - 400 people for this virus daily. Scary, scary stuff.

I'm sure most of us have a story like that right now. In one hand we have all the great things in our lives and in the other hand we have all of the bad. My prayer and struggle right now is how to live out each day with optimism and hope while holding onto these two things that are truly polar opposites.

Somewhere in all of this chaos I was reminded of this verse: ***"There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear" 1 John 4:18.***

Now if you're like me then you're already asking yourself questions that I asked:

- Is love going to make this virus go away?
- Will love bring back loved ones who are lost?
- Can love get people their jobs back?
- Is love providing us with toilet paper?

(Didn't know I was that skeptical did ya?)

After I stopped being difficult, the truth of this verse began to reinvigorate my soul. Yes, I am already absolutely in love with this child that I won't even get to hold until November. And yes, I have never loved anyone or anything (sorry Buccaneers) more than my wife. I love her more and more by the minute. When I begin to **focus on love** the fear begins to fade. Instead of worrying about the world I'm motivated to help the world. In the battle of fear vs. love I'm letting Love Win.

So no, I don't think love will make the virus go away, or bring back someone who has passed (exception Jesus), or fix the job market, etc.... But I do think right now we have a great opportunity to "**Love Our Neighbor**" the way Christ asked us too. So again I'll ask:

- Is love going to make this virus go away?

No, but I'll love my neighbor by staying inside and not putting others at risk.

- Will love bring back loved ones who are lost and Can love get people their jobs back?

No, but I'll love my neighbor's who experience loss in any and every way that I can. I'll also love them by seeing the world through their eyes.

Let's all love a little more.

With Love Not Fear,

Joel

SFC News and Updates

As you know this is a very fluid situation so things are subject to change. As of now all onsite programming, services, and events are canceled through the entire month of April. We will update this as soon as we know.

Mission Trips:

As of this point in time, we are still proceeding as if we are going on both mission trips. We have until May to either ticket or cancel our Belize tickets. We have been in contact with Steve Potter from UMCOR and there is work to be done in Immokalee. We want to see how things progress in the next few weeks before we make any decision to cancel. A lot will depend on what the Pinellas Board of Education does regarding school and our government regarding travel. Please stay in communication with us and we will do our best to keep everyone updated.

An email and phone call will be going out specifically to those of you who have signed up for missions trips as we are seeking some feedback.

Local Missions:

We will not be going to Street Ministry, April 13th or meeting for PB&J April 14th. No decision has been made for May street ministry or PB&J at this time.

Online Information

We have moved our weekly small groups, confirmation class, and Compass and Thrive nights online! It's been great getting to stay connected with the students. We believe in "physical-distance" not "social distance." Here's how you can stay connected.



Email Joel or Lynn for the links to Confirmation Class or your grade specific small group.

To Join Compass Click:
<https://zoom.us/j/590793990>

To Join Thrive Click:
<https://zoom.us/j/718407475>

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