



Reflections from Pastor Brooke for July 24, 2020

Seek God and God's strength; seek God's presence continually. ~ Psalm 105:4

Weather permitting, there will be worship on the front lawn at 9 a.m. Please bring your own chair and mask. If you are unsure about whether the service will take place due to weather, call 440-467-2328. Feel free to park in the drive near the front.

Where do you seek God's strength? Is it in the giggle of a child? Is it in the beauty of the summer flowers? Is it in the shared, socially distanced smile in the eyes of a friend? I have been seeking God's presence more lately. I know I have plenty for which to be thankful, not the least of which is this faithful congregation. But the grief is heavy in the air these days. There is no end in sight for the coronavirus. In the last week, I have learned of young friends of friends who have either been diagnosed with serious illnesses or have died. I miss being able to hug people when they are hurting. As I said, much like the summer air, the grief is heavy.

I know God is present; otherwise, I would be huddled in my bed, wishing the world to go away. Instead, I open my email to find words of encouragement from members of this congregation. People show up to a book study on race. Other people show up to pull flags out of the ground and, hopefully, more people will show up to place them into the ground in the shape of a cross. We are a financially healthy congregation at the moment because of your faithful pledges. God is in all of those places and God is greater than the grief, but it is wise to acknowledge that grief. To take that grief to God and not necessarily ask God to remove that grief, but to hold us in that grief. To allow the tears to flow or for us to shake our fist and yell at God, "Why?" Yes, it's okay to get angry at God — God is big enough to handle it.

So whether you are in a place of acceptance right now or a place of grief, my prayer is that we can all experience God's strength and be aware of God's presence. God will show up for each of us in unique ways, but our faith assures us that God **will** show up.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Brooke".