

Greetings Redemption Hill Family—

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...

Galatians 5:22-23

What a promise for a season like this one—if we walk in step with the Spirit, these things will grow in our lives. Our world needs this fruit right now. As a spiritual family, we help each other walk in step with Jesus and his Spirit. Many of the ministries we normally count on have had to adjust for the pandemic. In this Pastor's Update I want to lay out important aspects of life at Redemption Hill for the fall:

Connection is more critical than ever

Our normal patterns have been disrupted by the pandemic, but with intentionality this can be a catalyst for deeper growth. Spiritual community exceeds physical proximity—it is a matter of the heart. How are you using this season to focus on heart connection with Jesus and others?

- Life Groups, ABC's, Men's Groups, Women's Groups and Student ministries all continue to offer ways of connecting—via phone, online or in person/outdoors. Now is a great time to jump in. Need help connecting? Reach out to us at info@rhchurches.com.

Mission is more complicated than ever

A lot of things are restricted right now, so it is a good time to press deeper into what is possible and trust God to work.

- It may actually be easier to connect with our neighbors. A conversation at six feet is closer than a wave pulling out of the driveway—and more likely to open up to things that matter. Pray for opportunities to build on this reality. Offer to help someone in need, offer to pray about hard things, let your conversations go deep. Ask God for open doors for the Gospel.
- If all we can do is pray, that is saying a lot! Prayer is the proper starting point for all impact, and often the very best thing to do. Hard things are happening. Hard words are being exchanged. Hard feelings abound. Now more than ever we must ask for God's wisdom and peace to prevail! Beginning October 11, we start a new series on prayer, but why wait? Now is a great time to intensify praying, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
- We can still pursue the Great Commandment and Great Commission together. We are having quarterly blood drives with the Red Cross, and Operation Christmas Child starts in a few weeks. These are great ways to show love, and the shoeboxes are a great opportunity for families to help spread the Gospel. More opportunities to get involved are coming.

Worship is crucial as always:

Worshipping God together is fundamental to life with Jesus. We have had to creatively adjust over the last several months, but vibrant worship remains foundational for our church family. Here is what fall worship will look like:

- We will continue live-streamed services online, Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and on-demand through our website. This remains the best option for many. We are working to keep them engaging and impactful.
- “Worship Outside the Walls” continues on our lawn, Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Cooler fall weather will make this even more pleasant (we explored putting up a tent but like many things these days they are backordered—so we will continue worship under the open sky). Services are structured with health in mind to make this option feasible for as many people as possible.
- Some will wonder when indoor services will resume. The short answer is, “We don’t know.” Our lawn service is both flexible and engaging, so we are very grateful for it. We know some churches do not have such facilities and find the government expectations much more challenging. Let’s pray for these churches and their leadership teams who have to discern how they can properly honor the government God has put in place, and continue to assemble together for worship. These decisions are difficult and are proving to be divisive in the family of God.

Let us guard our own hearts and pray for others. We need God’s grace to love him and others in this season. We need courage, wisdom, humility and grace to live and speak the truth in love. And we need to guard the unity of the body for the sake of Christ’s name. While always important, these seem uniquely tested right now. A lot of hurt, a lot of frustration and a lot of anger are in the air. This is understandable. The question is, “How will I respond to what is going on around me?” God wants to use this season to shape us more into the image of his son. If we can help you in that process please reach out and start a conversation. We are on a challenging journey, but it is a privilege to share it with you. If you have any questions or comments, please speak to me or any of our overseers.

We are praying for you,

Pastor Robert