



April 16, 2020

Dear Bethany;

**One month ago today**, we gathered in the church office watching the news as our city leaders issued an order that would essentially send us all home. It has been a difficult month for everyone. Each of us has wrestled with a range of emotions including fear, confusion, anxiety, worry, anger, grief, frustration and loss. I can admit to feeling all of these in the past few weeks.

**Be still and know that He is God.** That can be hard, especially when I don't feel still inside. While it is ok to feel all of those emotions, we are also called to "take every thought captive." Paul tells the Philippians to "be anxious for nothing." That's doesn't mean turning a blind eye to what's going on but rather to allow the "peace that surpasses all understanding" to protect our hearts and our minds. He challenges us to keep our thoughts fixed on the truth that the "God of peace" is with us. I have to make a daily (sometimes hourly) choice to keep my mind fixed on God's Word rather than the news cycle. Let's keep encouraging each other to lean into our relationship with God during this difficult time. He is our Rock and our Strength.

**I am grateful for so much**, even during this time. I am thankful for our team, who has worked together remotely to live stream five Sunday morning services, a Time of Prayer, a Good Friday service, and other daily pre-recorded video content. I am also grateful for each of you who have sent words of encouragement to our staff; who have stretched yourselves to participate in new ways through our online services; who have volunteered to serve others in need; and to those who have invited others to join our Sunday services. Thank you! God is being glorified!

**Giving Update** Thank you also to those who have so faithfully contributed to the work that God is doing through Bethany. We are extending our Easter offering through April 19. Any giving that is marked Easter (either online, text, or via mail) will be used for COVID-19 relief efforts with our local and global mission partners. Thank you for your generous giving. Here is an update so far:

- Weekly budgeted need           \$27,981
- Last week's giving               \$23,606
- YTD giving                       \$425,985
- Ahead of budgeted giving       \$6,264
- Easter YTD giving               \$5,070

**Something New Is Coming!** After the climax of Easter, there can often be a sense of "What's next?" I can only imagine that the disciples felt much the same way. But not for long. Soon after Christ's resurrection, they were given the gift of the Holy Spirit and a new mission to change the world. They were just getting started! The same is true for us!

2250 Clark Avenue \* Long Beach, CA 90815 \* 562-597-2814 \* [info@bethanylb.org](mailto:info@bethanylb.org)

*We desire to glorify God and see people transformed into passionate disciples of Jesus.*



I am so excited for Sunday's **start to a new sermon series in Thessalonians, "Waiting for the Son"**. It is timely, practical, and has the potential to change the world around us! You can watch our live stream at 9 AM on Sundays or any time throughout the following week. at [facebook.com/bethanychurchlb](https://facebook.com/bethanychurchlb).

**But not only Sundays!** In addition to Sunday sermons, I invite you to join me mid-week for new video content and live stream interactions connected to the message. Check our Facebook page daily for this new content, you won't want to miss out! All of this content will continue to be available on our Resource Page found on the bottom of our website.



**Extended Stay at Home Order** Finally, I wanted to let you know that the Stay at Home order has been extended and we will not be able to resume services or other gatherings until after May 17. We will continue to monitor and adjust as new information becomes available. Thank you for praying for wisdom for our leaders. We are anxiously awaiting the time when we can gather together again!

**We miss you** and want to know how we can pray for you, how we can serve you, and/or what God is doing in your life during this time. Please email us at [info@bethanylb.org](mailto:info@bethanylb.org).

I am praying for you today and look forward to you connecting with us during our Live Stream Sunday at 9 AM.

Grace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Pastor Jeff'.

Pastor Jeff Levine

2250 Clark Avenue \* Long Beach, CA 90815 \* 562-597-2814 \* [info@bethanylb.org](mailto:info@bethanylb.org)

*We desire to glorify God and see people transformed into passionate disciples of Jesus.*