

## PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

The best thing is yet to come!

Now! Summer fades into fall, and winter will take its place soon. What are the signs of seasonal change that you feel? I drove the car to go to Monroe downtown with Lisa for groceries. While I was driving, I saw many leaves change color and fall off. In the summer it was lush green with its density, but as summer fades into late fall the colors starts to change to the yellows and oranges I noticed as I was driving.. Eventually, trees will be left with bare branches. Trees without leaves looked like dry, skinny bodies. But, don't be discouraged. Trees have reasons for dropping leaves. The reason is to prepare for next season, spring.

These days, I often hear about some of the members of the church whose health is deteriorating. Some of them say they are hospitalized or that family and friends are sick. It breaks my heart every time I hear the news. But I am sure, that every situation we face has a reason in God's sight and that He is in control of all our problems. So, in the name of the Lord, I encourage all of you who are going through all kinds of physical decline and mental turmoil.

It is my encouragement as a Pastor for you. God's greatest blessing has not come to you yet, but it is coming to you little by little and day by day. C.S. Lewis once said, "There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind." God will do the most extraordinary things for all of you. In 1 Corinthians 15:49-50, "And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man. I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."

With God, "you are stronger than your struggles" trust in Him, be encouraged, and keep standing on Christ and his promises. He is an unsinkable solid rock for you and me.

### **COVID Cases Increasing and vaccination increasing**

These days, the total number of confirmed COVID cases are increasing in Michigan. And also, hospitalizations have been steadily increasing again. As a pastor, I earnestly ask you all to take care of your health in this situation. Especially, drink plenty of water every day and wash your hands after going out.

Some is good news that I share with you, "more than 5,308,437 which is 53.3% Michigan residents are fully vaccinated and also, 5,781,965 which is 57.9% took at least 1 dose (all data from Google). After that, Coronavirus have brought us fear and panic, but now the statistic tells us that vaccination is steadily progressing. It brings me hope and confidence that very soon our churches will go back to our usual gatherings without facial masks hugging each other.

### **Spiritual Vaccination**

"Vaccination" is good news for all of us, and it brings us hope and joy. However, I am hoping you could think about the spiritual sense of vaccination in our Christian life.

In Ezekiel 47, it tells us the process of how the Spirit of God covers us and protect us from all kinds of evil influences. In verse 1, "I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east." When Ezekiel saw the water coming out from the temple, it was only ankle-deep. After that, water was getting deeper and broader, and then was knee-deep. The Spirit of God led Ezekiel into the deeper side that was up to the waist-deep. In verse 5, water eventually became a river, and covering his entire body was deep enough to swim in like a river. The water that Ezekiel talked about is not actual water, but it is the Spirit of God coming down and leading him into the presence of God.

Verse 12, "fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing". It sounds like that when you come to Church, a place of worship (temple), the Spirit of God fully covers you up, and you would be fully protected from evil by the power of the presence of God.

Please come! Come into the deep water! The water coming out from the holy temple will protect you and heal you from all kinds of spiritual crises and challenges. If you stay in God's presence, you can soak the spiritual water. Your leaves will not wither, but your life will prosper because your spirit is fully vaccinated.

Now you are in the vaccination process physically, and you will be fully vaccinated sooner and later. However, it is time to think about your spiritual vaccination. "Come into the deep water," which is the presence of God. The Spirit of God fully vaccinates your soul from evil influence.

All members of Carleton UMC pray for your well being. "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well" (3 John 1:2).

*Pastor Eun (Cloud) Poy from the well*

