

Hello friends! This is Mike VanDordrecht. Most of you would recognize me as often playing the bass at the 9 and 10:30 Sunday services. In these crazy days of Coronavirus, Covid-19, and Social Distancing, I have missed seeing you all as we share worship and other activities at 1st Presb. Some of us have learned to fellowship by Zoom and social medias, but the in-person interactions are greatly missed.

As I have spent the majority of time at home, my wife Lesley and I have spent a lot of time talking with each other and walking around our neighborhood in Wikiup, wondering what the future holds for us, our children and grandchild. Seems like our whole world is being redefined. Even our ability to gather together as the people of God is being stretched, but in some ways, I am very optimistic that this will be a pivotal time for us all. We are finding new ways to be in contact and to worship together. I have been able to pray for many of you as I am made aware of needs. I am hoping that we will find many more ways to build each other up as the days go on, and that we will not lose these new ways of connecting when we are, at last, able to meet together again at 1st Presb.

In uncertain times, I often turn to music to help focus my thoughts. One hymn that has come to mind is Martin Luther's A Mighty Fortress. My mother, Maria, was a 16 year old teenager in the Netherlands when the Nazis bombed her city of Rotterdam on May 14, 1940. Her family home was spared, but all of the homes in her neighborhood were destroyed. The family relocated to a suburb and spent the next 5 years in a lockdown situation. My mother would tell of meeting at church on Sundays during the occupation. There was always a lookout to warn if the Nazis were coming to take away the young men to work camps (my father, in a different city of Holland, actually was taken to a work camp in Germany). The signal to warn the young men to go to designated hiding places was the A Mighty Fortress...as soon as the word came from the lookout, the organ would start playing and the young men would make themselves scarce. The last verse promises:

That word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
His Kingdom is forever.

We can trust that His Truth Kingdom will last!

Another song that I have been listening to and singing is by one of my favorite singer/songwriters, Pierce Pettis, from his 2001 album State Of Grace, called

I've Got A Hope, which can be heard on YouTube
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ptAbAT6L5c>):

Man is born to trouble
All the days of his life
As the sparks fly upward
From bonfires at night
They fill up the heavens
With pinpoints of light
And I've got a hope, I've got a hope
I've got a hope
That is not in this world

Time, it is turning
Like a plow in the field
It roots up the earth
And what's hidden is revealed
Sewing the future
While the past, it is sealed
I've got a hope, I've got a hope
I've got a hope
That is not in this world

Half of the battle
Is only with myself
While the other half
Is something I can't help

Lest I should stumble
I try not to forget
That every hair is numbered
Every footstep, every breath
And this life that I'm living
It will not end in death
I've got a hope, I've got a hope
I've got a hope
That is not in this world
I've got a hope
That is not in this world

Until we meet again! Blessings be to all of you...let us live in the Hope that is
not of this world