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August 11 – Unsettling but Hopeful | A Message from Jim Everette

August is the month that brings us hot days, humid nights, severe thunderstorms, and the potential for hurricanes. We experienced all of these and an extra little shake from a nearby earthquake last week. Our congregation has been shaken by the tragic death of two of our members that were from two vastly different worlds, but they stood side-by-side as friends and brothers in Christ. Tom Wallace and Sawni Moo made huge impacts for the Kingdom of God on earth. They embodied faith, hope, grace, and love. Both men were selfless, generous, compassionate, loyal to their families, their friends, their neighbors and their church. They were mentors that earned the respect and trust of many because of their integrity, honesty, and dedication to following Jesus. These men had wives, children, and in Tom's family, granddaughters, that loved them deeply and will miss them dearly. They are sustained and comforted by the assurances of their faith in the promises of Jesus, and the many ways so many of you have shared expressions of love for them, especially over the past few days. Both families thank you for your prayers, your presence, your kindness and your promise to walk with them in the days to come. We worship a loving God that is often most evident on earth in the tender ways we embody God's love. First Baptist Church does that well in the aftermath of a storm, and you are certainly doing it now.

August also means Back to School. The 2020-21 school year will be like no year we have ever had. The start of school demands flexibility, creativity, innovation, and ingenuity like never before, a lot like we have been living through as a church for the past several months. Recent conversations with parents, students, teachers, principals and administrators have been encouraging and challenging. All agree that they are trying hard to make the best of a difficult situation. I have promised my on-going prayers for them and assured them of the prayers and support of the finest church in the area. No one is sure what school is going to be like until it begins and even then, there will certainly be adjustments along the way. To our college students (especially freshmen) and their parents that are moving into new chapters of your lives; high school seniors that are beginning your final year; those that are transitioning from middle school to high school and from elementary school to middle school; those that are starting kindergarten; those that will be in newly created pods, and the students in private schools that may be entering a new year as "normal;" to all of our students, and to the teachers that are preparing to teach in ways you never imagined, principals that are facing new challenges and changes with each new day, and administrators that are being forced to make difficult decisions with ripple effects that go our far and wide, we pray for all of you.

My prayer is that you will rest in the promise that God's grace is sufficient to carry you through whatever comes your way. When challenges arise that may feel overwhelming, that God will guide you with amazing wisdom and carry you with God's great strength, in the name of the One that overcame the world and will empower you to overcome the obstacles you may face. Amen.

You are loved!