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The Furman Community Unites

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A NOTE FROM THE OFFICE OF ALUMNI AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT

To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven.” Perhaps this sentence has you humming that famous Pete Seeger tune made popular by The Byrds in the 1960s, or maybe you’re transported to Sunday school when you first read this biblical passage as a child.

The spring of 2020 is definitely proving to be an unprecedented season. A global pandemic has disrupted our lives, and with it, our traditional model of higher education. Though the tulips are blooming and trees greening, there is no bustle on campus from students and faculty. Teaching and learning are happening remotely. Employees are working from home offices. Events canceled or postponed, including the Commencement ceremony. Seeger’s song goes on to say, “a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.” As we practice social distancing, we’re instructed to refrain from the physical embrace of our friends and neighbors.

Fundamentally, Furman University is an organization that brings people together and nurtures relationships. Our mission is to educate the next generation of leaders, which is a monumental contribution to society. Now more than ever, the world needs Furman-educated thinkers and leaders, and even a pandemic can’t stifle our commitment toward that core mission.

May we all recognize that times of crisis and uncertainty can be reframed

as opportunities. We can choose to find comfort and community in others and allow ourselves to feel a figurative embrace. And when our Furman alumni network joins together, that embrace has the potential to be a giant bear hug, one that envelops us in friendship, solidarity and hope.

As we broaden our perspective beyond the confines of our own home and family, I am confident that we will find great inspiration. Alumni who once conducted scientific experiments in the labs of Plyler Hall are now

the nurses, doctors and other medical professionals saving lives. Alumni blessed with the gift of communication are using their written and spoken word to tell stories, ask questions and foster dialogue. The many educators in the Furman alumni community are teaching and shaping the lives of school-age children in new and different ways. Countless Furman alumni are servant leaders, models of goodwill and shared humanity. This list could go on. It not only brings me peace and comfort, but also



THE FURMAN COMMUNITY UNITES



great pride, to recognize the leadership and contributions of Furman alumni, regardless of the season.

In the coming weeks and months, let us unite as a Furman community. Lean on your Furman connections and extend a hand for others who are seeking one. Find rest in those Furman friendships that are deep and life-giving. Plug in to one of our 20-plus FAN Clubs around the country. Follow our social media channels and join in virtual conversations. We may need to grieve together, but I hope we can also laugh and learn together. Continue to serve Furman philanthropically. Your generosity, combined with gifts from other alumni and parents, could offer critical support to students who need it more than ever.

We will weather this storm and emerge a stronger and more resilient community. The Furman spirit is mighty, and it will carry us through the challenges of this season. ♦

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Allison M. Foy". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Allison McCann Foy '05
*Executive Director of Alumni
and Parent Engagement*

For possible inclusion in the next magazine, we'd like to hear from you. Please share examples of how you or fellow alumni have made an impact – whether in the medical profession, supply chain, educational realm or some other way – through your response to the pandemic. Email magazine@furman.edu.