**Pastor’s Column March 19, 2018**

**By Pastor Jacob Sherry – St. John Palmer**

This year March Madness can be defined with many different moments and teams from the NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament. Michigan’s last second buzzer beater to defeat Houston being my personal favorite, which should come as no surprise. Exciting games, teams like Nevada and Loyola-Chicago advancing to the sweet sixteen, and powerhouse teams like Michigan State, North Carolina, and Xavier all going out in the first round. Both Kansas and Kansas State made it to the Sweet Sixteen which is a rare occurrence. But the team that defined the madness of march was the 16th ranked University of Maryland, Baltimore County beating the #1 ranked Virginia to make history.

 Madness and chaos, it’s what we look for in this tournament every year. After all it’s called March Madness, not March Basketball or The March Tournament. We want to see the madness of lower ranked teams beating the favorites. It wouldn’t be as exciting to see the #1 ranked teams all making it to the final four. We love the unexpected nature of this tournament it’s what makes it fun.

 We love the unexpected in sports, in entertainment, but not so much in life. After all, this past fall there was a lot of madness, as waters continued to pour upon Houston and people had to be evacuated from their homes. There was quite a few upsets in the rain numbers and the severity of hurricanes in Florida and Puerto Rico. There was chaos as stock numbers plummeted for a while and fears rose about another financial crisis. Suddenly the madness doesn’t seem as much fun. We hear about the riots and refugee crisis around the world as anarchy becomes the norm in other countries and we don’t yearn to be part of that madness, instead we ask God for peace.

 Jesus reassures us in our moments of fear, whether it is as a Virginia fan who would rather there not be madness in a basketball tournament, or someone who faces madness and chaos in every aspect of their lives. John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” Peace is the absence of danger, of enemies, or trouble. Peace is reconciliation and God has reconciled us to himself. We are his. We are safe, no matter what happens in a world of Madness. You are loved and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May that truth always bring you peace.