

It's been a heavy month for everyone living in the United States. We have seen more killings from a school in Colorado, the assassination of a political activist, and all the nonstop political media that follows such tragedies which often cause more harm and divisiveness than good. I must confess as your pastor that it's really difficult to know what events merit me commenting on something or even speaking up when I know the risk is high. Furthermore, what should I say and when should I say it? I carry the joy and burden to be pastor to each of you with your various opinions, experiences, expectations, traumas, viewpoints, and beliefs. Add to that this current climate that we are all expected to have an opinion about everything immediately all the time. And bluntly stated, it's just hard and I often feel like walking on a tightrope.

During times like this, I really see my main responsibility as helping you process whatever it is you are processing through with a lens of faith (Specifically, as I have said in Bible study multiple times "a Christological lens). It is not to make judgements, not to tell you what to think, what to feel, or even draw conclusions for you. Instead, to help you be a disciple and remain a disciple of Jesus through it all and especially when tensions are so high due to social media.

So when I am confused or overwhelmed, I return to what I call first principals. What are the most basic things that God asks of me as a disciple of Jesus? I think there are a lot of them that could be extremely relevant right now. For instance, to do justice, love kindness, walk humbly (Prophet Micah). To love your neighbor, to love your enemy, to pray for those who persecute you, to stand up for the least of these (Jesus in all the Gospels). But the first principal that I have been returning to and contemplating lately comes from Apostle Paul which he writes "Let love be genuine. Hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good" (Letter to the Romans, 12:9). I've been thinking about that. Simply put, hate what is evil but hold fast to what is good. We have to be honest and take off our rosy-color glasses to acknowledge there is a lot of evil to hate right now. If not, we are simply blind and we are ignoring others' real pain. Therefore, I admit I hate murder even though it seems the right solution to a select few. I hate that kids have to wake up without a parent or a spouse without their other half, I hate to see more shootings and awful assassinations, I hate that some children are scared to go to school. I hate calls for war in the aftermath. I hate the lack of humility that it seems we have and the lack of humanity that we see in one another. I hate the demonization of people and especially the rhetoric of politicians who seem more interested in stoking more fear than actually solving problems. There is definitely evil to hate. We have to stand against that which is evil.

At the same time, in moments like this, I also try to cling to what is good. To remember that there is more that is good. There is so much good: community is good, listening to one another is good, processing with others is good, worshiping together is good, remembering who God is and what God is doing for us is good. Just this past month here at FMCC I've seen good in new worshippers officially joining the church, youth and adults being baptized, and members reaffirming their faith is good. I am encouraged by those who speak the truth with humility and those who speak prophetically what it means to love in the midst of hard times. I am impressed by the courage that people have to wake up and live each day even in the threatening world. I give thanks for the people who try to follow Jesus and express authentic love. Let us hold on to what is good!

I do not know what else to say. However, I think maybe the biggest problem facing our world right now is hatred. Specifically, hatred or fear of the other. A close second and very much related is unwillingness to have healthy dialogue. I do not know the solution to that besides to try my best to follow Jesus' call to love. Both when it's easy, but even more when it's pure hard. And, yes, right now it is hard. So my best wisdom to everyone in this moment is hate what is evil, hold on to what is good, and seek to love one another as genuinely as you can.



Last Month's Prayer Request

(The "FMCC Cross Connection" email contains the ongoing prayer list)

Rex Krueger, prostate cancer, Carol (son)

Joe, successful heart stint last Thursday, Sydney D'Alessandro (husband)

(update) Kathy Coates, Ft. Myers rehabilitation and nursing facility for broken foot, Church Family
Kathryn Hamm, fell, dislocated right shoulder, and fracture of greater tuberosity, Church Family

David Johnston, Betty Johnston (son)

Betty Johnston, Church Family

(update) Joyce Turney, recovering from multiple blood clots and stroke after surgery, Church Family

Sidney Kittila, Church Family

(update) Vicki Iorio, good doctor appointment, Church Family

Linda Poor, in the death of her dog, Frequent Visitor

Ruby, in the ICU, Linda Lee (son's best friend)

Shirley Fizer, high blood pressure, Church Family

New 30oz church tumblers are still available for a donation of \$15.



Terry Garlow, Vicki Iorio, Pam Johnson, Doreen Kall, Pauline Levin, and Barbara Snyder

Save the Dates

Monday, Sept.29, outreach meeting from 11:30-12:30pm in the fellowship hall

Sunday, Oct. 5 World Communion

Sunday, Oct. 19, potluck after worship

Sunday, November 9, celebrate our veterans in worship and potluck afterwards

October Birthdays

(Name Missing? Email the office.)

Rev. Ed Bodanske	12 th
Elias Runyon	13 th
Carol Krueger	14 th
Ulrich Knobel-Simonsmeier	16 th



Cordials Barbershop Quartet
Sunday, September 21, 2025

Outreach Corner

Our recent potluck was terrific with the Cordials! We are looking at some fun events for not only the adults, but also the youth in the near future. If you are able, walk up the steps behind the sanctuary to see the new youth room. It's been great teaching the youth. Let me know if you would like to help teach this great group.-Linda