



First Church Tucson Weekly Digest

“Taking the Longer Path”

By Paul Cho on November 16th, 2020

A part of me wishes that we would no longer need to talk about the pandemic. I can sense the fatigue in our community by the amount of activity I see on our streets, in markets, and our parks. I've been taking long walks on Saturday mornings at Sabino Canyon. It's nice to be in our desert landscape under the blue skies and drinking in that morning crisp air. But I'll tell you, when I'm wearing my mask on these walks, I am again, a minority.

We had hopes that by Thanksgiving Sunday (which is this coming Sunday), we would be able to gather for in-person service, at least in small group configurations. But alas, the spread has increased. Just 3 days ago on November 13th, we hit nearly 4,000 new cases. Those are numbers that are on par with ones we experienced this summer, which peaked at 4,797 new cases on June 30th.

Needless to say, our journey back to “normal” is still some time away. Without undermining the seriousness of our challenges, I am still convinced that grace abounds.

One of the joys I have during the pandemic is my increased time outdoors. Meetings and visitations, if they are necessary, are often outdoors. I go on long walks and I even commute by bike when possible. But it's not just my increased time outdoors that has changed. I began to take longer paths. I will go up a hill to visit with a colleague. I will walk Tory through a longer wilderness trail. I will bike a longer, but more scenic route home. It dawned on me, taking the longer path is not always bad.

I certainly long for our time in worship together. I miss our fellowship, the enticing treats, the smell of Pastor Allan's famous soups. I miss singing our hymns! And praying together. I miss the sound of laughter in the corridors, and the chimes that ring from our bell tower. I miss the warm handshakes and even warmer hugs, especially from Ms. Jae Hammond (who shares her greetings to all our members. She prays for all of us by name if you did not know.)

At the same times, I am so grateful for the ways we are able to connect. I am glad that this pandemic has renewed our congregational care ministries and our callers. I am glad for the consistent and more frequent releases of this newsletter. I am grateful for the cards that I get from our congregants in response. I am excited about our renewed hearts to help the faith community at Fuente de Zida Methodist Church in Mexico. (More on this later)

Even at home, I am grateful for the increased time I have to spend with my children. (I am thankful that across the country, there hasn't been a school shooting since March.) I am grateful that my kids take prayer seriously, and prayers for healing seriously. (I should add,

my son prayed for my thumb to heal from the cut that sent me to urgent care. The area of the cut began to tingle that night. Today, just over a week since he prayed, I am bandage free. Hallelujah!) My wife and I are constantly discovering the wonders of an Air Fryer. She has embraced the arts and crafts now that she's basically our children's at-home teacher. I even feel that this pandemic is changing my personality a bit, and I'm hopeful that it will be for the better.

All this to say, taking the longer path has its blessings. I encourage you also, if you have been putting somethings aside, to embrace the longer route home.

Join a ZOOM weekday class. Watch and worship on our Sunday Morning Live gatherings on Youtube. Learn to video record and join our virtual choir. (More on this after Thanksgiving.) Volunteer if you can in a local cause you are passionate about. Participate in our outreach or help us prepare for a new opportunity.

If we had not done so because we thought to wait for normal to arrive, I think we might be missing out on the joys, the graces of God provides. Let us take the longer route home, and discover the many joys we have in living in the love of God.

Rev. Paul H. Cho

"I can't change the direction of the wind,
but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination"
~ Jimmy Dean

"It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light"
~ Aristotle



Families of Javelina found on golf course, almost 20 of them relaxing on grass, not scared of people around.

By Duk Hong

THIS WEEK'S
ANNOUNCEMENTS & GATHERINGS

Thanksgiving Service

This Sunday, join us on Zoom for our Sunday Morning Joint Thanksgiving Service. November 22nd at **10 AM**. Pastor Raven will be speaking.

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/97274927766?pwd=bVlqNmZjTk84bHFHd0JRS0U5R0c4Zz09>

ZID: 972 7492 7766

PW: 6226481

(Reminder: This year's Thanksgiving Day luncheon is cancelled.)

Fuente de Zida Methodist Church Outreach

Our dear sister church in Mexico has faced challenges much like our own due to the pandemic. In particular, the children of this faith community have not been able to gather for in-person schooling. With computers and internet being far too expensive and unavailable they have resorted to Tele-Education, that is teaching via phone. But this too, is costly. Simply put, it costs each student \$10 per month to have access to the phone for their 1 on 1 time with their teachers. The Women in Service at First Church Tucson feels the call to respond and we want to offer you an opportunity to join this outreach.

Our goal is to support 10 students for 10 months. If you would like to join in this effort, donate to First Church Tucson with the designation "Outreach" or "Women in Service Project". Mail or Online payments are both available.

Recruiting Weekly Digest Contributors

Have you come across an inspiring story? Perhaps you were able to capture a fascinating shot. We invite you to submit a story, a photo, or anything you feel would be in the best interest of our church. We will work to add them into our Weekly Digest. Submit your story or picture at <https://bit.ly/fumcsubmit>

Women on a Spiritual Quest

Meet with WSQ for book studies and the best kind of Methodist small group accountability. The current book is "Chasing Vines" by Beth Moore. **Mon @ 4:30PM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/92059519248?pwd=ZmN4dTFCcVVCVjlNM3FHUHVVemNFdz09>

ZID: 920 5951 9248

PW: 6226481

Exploring Biblical Wisdom

Gather for group Lectio Divina as we seek spiritual formation through scripture reading, reflecting, and sharing the Spirit that lives in each of us. **Tues @ 11AM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/98179862680?pwd=ck15OU5KbWUyY0NwOUNxbzJkOUVBUT09>

ZID: 981 7986 2680

PW: 6226481

Music Workshop - World Music Tour

Join Music Ministry Director Lorena Suarez as she tours the world music scene. This week, music from Austria and Germany! **Wed @ 5:30PM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/92978304567?pwd=Mmo4UWZtc012TUxzVS9VYXlpVU1iZz09>

ZID: 929 7830 4567

PW: 6226481

Information session about the Virtual Choir will be on December 2nd at 5:30 with Paul Cho.

Progressive Christianity Book Study

Explore the richness of progressive Christian thought through literature. **Thurs @ 2PM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/98015738087?pwd=eGFpVWRCUnZraWxUU1d0anRiU2pFQT09>

ZID: 980 1573 8087

PW: 6226481

Korean Language Ministry

금 주일 오전 10시에 Zoom에서 연합 예배로 드립니다.

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/97274927766?pwd=bVlqNmZjTk84bHFHd0JRS0U5R0c4Zz09>

ZID: 972 7492 7766

PW: 6226481

금 오후 7시에는 기존 Zoom 방에서 성경말씀 묵상 나눔이 있습니다.

Support the Ministries at First Church Tucson

Now is the time to give courageously to ministries that matter to you.

Visit this [link](#) or go to www.bit.ly/givetofumc to set up online donation.

You may also send gifts via Paypal to recipient address: finance@firstchurchtucson.org

And as always, you can mail in checks to the church office. Alternatively, have your IRA advisor automatically make payments from your IRA to the FUMC checking account.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Chuck Brandt (Nov 19)

[If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so we can update our records!]

SONG FOR **THOUGHT** “Crown Him with Many Crowns” **M. Bridges and G. Thring**

by **Lorena Suarez**

Director of Music Ministries on November 15, 2020

Matthew Bridges published in his second edition of *Hymns of the Heart* (1851) the hymn *Crown Him with Many Crowns*, which originally had six stanzas. Later, in 1874, Godfrey Thring composed and published a new version of this hymn. For this reason, many hymnals combine three stanzas from Bridges and one from Thring in modern editions. The text is based on Revelation 19:12.

The composer and organist Sir George J. Elvey wrote a tune called *Diademata* in 1868 for this text. The word *Diademata* is derived from the Greek word “crowns”. Enjoy!

Lyrics:

Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns

all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless king
through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing
who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified.
No angels in the sky
can fully bear that sight,
but downward bends their burning eye
at mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of years,
the potentate of time,
creator of the rolling spheres,
ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise shall never, never fail
throughout eternity.

Suggested recording:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuMh_ept-Js

LECTIO DIVINA PRAYER GUIDE
for Individuals and Families

CENTERING - *Practice Square Breathing*

- Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds,
- Exhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds.
- Repeat as necessary.

SONG OF PRAISE

Select a song of your choice, or
Refer to this week's Song for Thought

OPENING PRAYER - *Psalm 19:14*

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

READING

Matthew 25:14-30

REFLECTING

Take a minute or two in silence.
Allow your thoughts to rest on a word, a phrase, a memory from this passage.
Journal or share your thoughts from this moment of meditation on the passage.

RESPONDING

Respond to the reflection through the guidance from the Holy Spirit.

MINUTE MEMOIR - by Paul Cho

Unlike the oil from last week's reading, something we cannot share, the talents we read in this week's reading is something we ought to share. Moreover, talents are given to us as gifts, as opposed to the oil which we had to prepare in advance.

Assuming you are familiar with the classical understanding of talents and using our talents in service of God for the love of neighbor, let us reexamine the fault of the 3rd servant. I'd argue that it was not because he buried the talent. Rather, that he misunderstood the character of his master, and in fear, he hid the talent. It was his lack of understanding the true character of the master that was the problem and his hiding the talent was a response to the fear he felt because of his misunderstanding.

Perhaps we are also guilty of misunderstanding and misrepresenting the true character of God. Even if we ourselves do not intentionally do so, our culture has widely accepted the notion of a fierce and powerful, judgement and doom, fear mongering God. We should really be focused on the character of love in our God. "Perfect love casts out fear." (1Jn4:18) We ought to be advocates, witnesses, and spreaders of the fact that our God is one of compassion and love. Perhaps this is the true talent we have been entrusted with, and our task is to multiply this love in and through our lives.

RESTING

Dwell in your reflection and response.
Take time to offer God praise and glory.
Repent and seek forgiveness.
Offer joys and the concerns, adding in your personal prayers.
Lastly, offer a thanksgiving for God's grace and mercy.

CLOSING PRAYER *Wesley Covenant Service Prayer*

I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
exalted for you, or brought low for you;
let me be full,

let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.



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