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Hello church family!

Summer mornings might be my favorite time of the day. I tend to sit outside early, before it gets hot and before the day gets going, to pray and write. Like right now! It's easy to get distracted, but it's a good kind of distraction, what with the hummingbirds and finches and bees and the good summer smells. It's also easy to get distracted by the rose bushes that REALLY need trimming, and the weeds that need pulling. But you can't tempt me right now, roses and weeds. You need to just hold your horses for awhile, I have other stuff that needs doing.

I do find that kind of yard work very relaxing, like working a jigsaw puzzle. Not the hard cleanup work of spring (although that is satisfying too, when it's done), but the daily maintenance kind of stuff. I appreciate it much more now than I once did, even...undoubtedly because this time of sheltering-in-place that has enforced such limits on all of our comings and goings that it has taught us some things. Even as we all resist it, and hate a lot of it, and feel the stress of constant change and uncertainty and isolation, I find that more and more folks are noticing how much slower life has become, and thinking that might not be such a bad thing. More and more of us are noticing that some of the things that used to fill our lives and take our money might be things we can do without. And other things that we never really appreciated enough or spent enough time and attention on, we appreciate now more than ever.

Things like breathing slowly, and looking carefully. Like focusing on one thing at a time – doing the dishes, or listening to the radio, or drinking coffee, or cooking something, or trimming the roses, or doing a puzzle -- and really appreciating it, looking for the good in it and giving thanks for it, spending real time with it before moving to the next thing. Like putting down the electronics, and having an actual conversation. Like focusing our full attention on someone, even for 5 minutes, rather than passing by them on our way to something else.

In the books of the Law in the Bible, God gave the people specific rules around nearly everything. They had been slaves in Egypt, forced to work, having no freedom at all...and then they had escaped to the desert, and had to figure out how to survive. So God put rules and structure around everything, to give it a holy purpose. To clean the hands and the dishes became a holy thing, an act of humble devotion. To cook and eat became a sacred thing, filled with gratitude and the presence of God. To be born, and grow up, and learn, and love, and raise children and grandchildren...to sing, to dance, to build and create, to rest...all of it became a deliberate, careful, intentional act of worship and praise of God. I wonder if we, as human beings, are rediscovering the wisdom in that.

It was so good to be in worship on Sunday. Just being able to see the eyeballs of some of our church family, and talk with some others who worshipped from home, set my own heart a bit more at ease.

I think my prayer for us this week, though, (as it often is) is that even when life returns to normal and we can worship together without any restrictions at all, we remember to go a bit more slowly, to pay better attention, and to make every moment an act of worship.

In God's amazing grace,

Pastor Dawn

Worship at Epworth and at Home!



“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings like eagles. They shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not faint. Teach me, Lord, teach me Lord to wait.”

From “Teach Me Lord to Wait” by Stuart Tamblin in 1953. Based on Is 40:31

This week we continue our worship series on Hope, spending time in the Hebrew Scriptures with the stories of Daniel, Elijah, Ezekiel, and more. During the time of the prophets, the people of Israel struggled under oppressive powers of all different kinds. The prophets continually warned them to trust in God and return to the ways of God - to care for the poor among them and reject greed and excess, to worship in spirit and in truth -- saying that doing these things would help them prevent or withstand disaster. But they didn't listen. (Human beings never seem to listen to these kinds of warnings from God, do we?) And so the people of Israel experienced terrible despair and hopelessness when disaster struck. We read about that hopelessness in the Psalms and in the heart-cries of the prophets themselves, deep pain and feelings of lostness and abandonment. But then, through the prophets God gave the people hope. Because even when we ignore God's guidance, reject God altogether, and make a mess of everything, God never abandons us.

There are some beautiful hopeful passages all over the Hebrew Scriptures. One of them comes from the prophet Zechariah, in chapter 9:

Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.”

Don't you find that you just want to read that over and over and over? We who hope in the Lord not only cling to the lifeline God provides (in worship last week we learned that the root of the Hebrew word for hope is a word that means rope...our lifeline), but we can also be surrounded by a stronghold built of that hope. God calls us there, to God's presence, to the spiritual home where we can find rest and love and safety. Even when the slings and arrows are flying all around us, we can rest secure and fear not, for God is with us always.

Some of us will gather in worship on Sunday morning at 9am, and a few of us at 11am, wearing masks and taking every precaution to love God and love one another as we worship. Some of us will come to church at 9am but stay in our cars for drive-in church, listening to the service via outside speakers and the sermon on the radio. Some of us will continue to worship from home, joining us on Facebook Live or on KVLV AM 980. ALL of us will come into the presence of God on Sunday waiting in joyful hope for the coming of our savior Jesus Christ. See you then, beloved. ♥

News and Fun Stuff

Prayer and Healing Service



Join us for a quiet, sacred time of prayer and healing on Wednesday, July 22 at 7:00pm. We will gather out on Epworth's front lawn, if the weather is cool enough. If not, we will gather in the sanctuary in the air conditioning. Either way, God will be with us. If you have joined us before, you know how deeply healing and meaningful it is. If you haven't, we hope you will try it. It is a time of almost entirely private prayer, guided by scripture and reflections, and accompanied by soft music. Hope to see you there.

“And they came, everyone whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and brought the Lord's offering to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the sacred vestments.”

Exodus 35:21

The Return of 12 Step and Other Support Groups

As we open the church in phases, we are SO GLAD to be able to welcome back our AA and NA groups, Codependents Anonymous, TOPS, and our Men's Group! We are keeping things limited to those groups for now, so that we can make sure we have good processes in place for cleaning and sanitizing without overwhelming our staff and volunteers. Please call the church office for new times and dates, Covid-19 guidelines, and any other questions.

Our Epworth Community Food Pantry, Golden Threads clothing ministry, and Fallon Daily Bread will continue as they have been, with limited volunteers, good masks and distancing, and to-go meals only. Fallon Daily Bread is back to just Mondays and Thursdays. A big extra thank you to all of the wonderful folks who direct and volunteer for all of these ministries!!

Your Trustees Need You!

Your trustees would dearly love some extra help keeping things neat and tidy around the church! Someone to mow the lawn once a week, a couple of someones to do light weeding whenever you see it needs to be done, another couple of someones to do a bit of dusting, window cleaning, and tidying up around the church now and then. A few minutes at a time once a week or so is all we need, and it would be an enormous help! No need even to call the church office really, just step in when you can. Thank you, friends, for this and all of the other little things angels do behind the scenes to make this beautiful church the wonderful place it is. ♥

July Birthdays!

Jim Wieboldt, 7/1
Mike Berney, 7/1
♥ Debi Kissick, 7/1
Dustin Stritenberger, 7/2
Hayden Brown, 7/5
Barbara Evans, 7/8
Jackie Warburton, 7/8
♥ Darline Hughes, 7/9
Grant Mills, 7/9
Shirley McDonald, 7/12
Ariel Endacott, 7/13
Faye Tewell, 7/13
Darrell Dugan, 7/16
Aaron Fraker, 7/16
Shayda Lofthouse, 7/16
Dan Wolf, 7/16
♥ Kathy Albiston, 7/20
Jaime Lawrence, 7/23
Jerry Noonkester, 7/23
Laura Ivey, 7/24
Bill Hughes, 7/27
Wilma Miers, 7/31
Marlene Pierce, 7/31

♥ *Our beloved Debi Kissick, Darline Hughes, and Kathy Albiston were such incredibly important members of our church family. Prayers for their families and friends, who love and miss them still.*

This Week in History

- In 1099, Jerusalem falls to the Crusaders.
- In 1430, Joan of Arc, taken prisoner in May, is handed over to the bishop of Beauvais to be tried for witchcraft and heresy. She was 18 years old.
- In 1589, the first group of colonists arrives at Roanoke, Virginia.
- In 1789, the storming of the Bastille starts the French Revolution. 2 days later, an experimental “commune” is set up in Paris to live without the authority of the government.
- In 1877, Thomas Edison records the human voice for the first time.
- In 1882, Mary Todd Lincoln, widow of Abraham Lincoln, dies after a stroke at the age of 65. She was only 5’2” to his 6’4”!
- In 1918 the Bolshevik revolution begins with the assassination of Czar Nicholas and the royal family. Rumors swirl that young Princess Anastasia escaped, and over 100 different people claim to be her over the next 85 years.
- In 1938, Howard Hughes and his crew set a new world record for around-the-world flight.
- In 1939, Frank Sinatra records his very first song, “From the Bottom of My Heart”, with the Henry James Band.
- In 1945, American cruisers and bombers attack Japan for the first time. This week that same year, the US tests the first atomic bomb at a test site in New Mexico.
- In 1954, Vietnam is divided into North and South Vietnam, along the 17th parallel.
- In 1960, John F Kennedy accepts the Democratic nomination for president.
- In 1969 the Apollo 11 blasts off from Cape Kennedy, Florida on its way to the moon.
- In 1974, G Gordon Liddy, John Erlichman, and 2 others are convicted of conspiracy and perjury in the Watergate Scandal.

Famous birthdays this week:

Anti-apartheid activist and political prisoner Nelson Mandela, author Hunter S Thompson, astronaut John Glenn Jr, comedian Red Skelton, hymn writer and minister Isaac Watts, entrepreneur John Jacob Astor, actor James Cagney, TV and radio personality Art Linkletter, former African American child slave who became an investigative journalist Ida B Wells, actress Barbara Stanwyck, actress and dancer Ginger Rogers, master Dutch artist Rembrandt, folk singer Woodie Guthrie, President Gerald Ford, Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman. And of course, Shirley McDonald, Ariel Endacott, Faye Tewell, Darrell Dugan, Aaron Fraker, Shayda Lofthouse, and Dan Wolf! ♥