

Saturday, March 21, 2020-Please read thru the entire email.

Note: We aren't sure what next Sunday will look like, we are following all recommendations of the CDC. We are asking that no one, other than food pantry workers, and those performing essential, critical tasks for church operation be in the church building so that we can keep it sanitized. If you are in the building please text Cara so she can be aware and communicate that to the proper people for cleaning.

Cara and Pastor Kelly are going in when needed and letting Diane know what is touched for proper sanitizing. Every other event in the building is canceled until further notice and we are asking that no one be in the building during this time to keep those who have to be in the building safe.

A note from Pastor Kelly:

Dear Friends,

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has halted our Wednesday evening Lenten series as well as our Sunday worship services. I hope and pray, fervently, that the interruption to our daily lives will not cause a serious disruption or upheaval to your living conditions and that you will remain healthy and safe throughout the emergency period.

The Wednesday series was entitled The Walk and was a cursory examination of five spiritual disciplines to practice as we attempt to “walk with Jesus” as his disciples. The author of the series, the Rev. Adam Hamilton, outlined five disciplines that should be exercised as individuals and as a community.

The FIRST discipline was WORSHIP. Focusing on Psalm 95, the author reminded us that worship “is the primary and appropriate response of the creature to the Creator.” This may be as simple as expressing “Thank you!” or “I love you” to our God. Worship is not something believers attend or watch. It is something you do. We were encouraged to pray five times a day in our individual daily lives and to join with a community to worship together. Worship keeps us connected.

The SECOND discipline was STUDY. This is listening for our Master’s voice...God’s self-disclosure or God’s efforts to speak to us. We were told to discover and discern the word of the Lord in general revelation and special revelation. The former recognizes the divine presence in nature, the arts, life experiences and people, and conscience. The latter looks specifically at the Holy Spirit, scripture, and Jesus for guidance. The author asked us to read five chapters of the Bible each week and to study scripture with a group.

The THIRD discipline was SERVE. If we are to walk with Christ, we want to be about demonstrating love in our pursuit of justice, charity, kindness and good works. The author directed us to several scripture verses to highlight the emphasis on serving God and one another. “Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.” (Matthew 20:26) and Ephesians 2:10 “For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life,” and more. The author wrote that part of what is necessary to serve Christ by serving others is our willingness to be interrupted. Hamilton charged us to pursue five acts of kindness a week as individuals and to serve in and through our church.

The FOURTH discipline is GIVE. Jesus made it clear that it is crucial to be generous, as it is elucidated in our church vision statement. The Bible declares that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” And in the gospel of Matthew Jesus declares, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will

be also.” The author asserts that our checkbook or bank statement is a “spiritual selfie.” What we do with our money tells us something about the condition of our hearts. The good life consists of gratitude, living purposefully and generosity. “Because we were created in the image of a generous God, we were created for generosity to be the regular rhythm of our lives.” We are invited to perform five acts of extra-ordinary generosity towards others each month. Together we are to give to God through our church, where our generosity, combined with others', makes possible the ministry of the church and its witness in the world.

The FIFTH discipline is SHARE. I will share that theme next week—in person or online. Stay tuned.

In the meantime, practice the disciplines. Discover ways to stay connected to God and one another. Pray for the victims, for the fearful, and for those health providers in harm’s way.

I am have attaching a sermon from another preacher, unfortunately it's on facebook and not Youtube, so you need to have facebook to view it. She is unorthodox, but what she says is thought-provoking and challenging. [Facebook Link-Click Here](#)

(TEXT version for those without facebook) [Click here for text article](#)

Please abide by the recommendations to maintain social distancing, restrict travel and gatherings, wash your hands regularly and refrain from touching your face.

As I walked into my doctor’s office on Thursday and faced a gaggle of masked staff, I noticed a scripture on the wall. It is from the prophet Isaiah: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”

Be not afraid!

P.S. Most of the expenses of the church and its ministries continue throughout the pandemic and our absence. Please consider mailing your contribution to the church (if able/possible) or use our website [Click Here](#) scroll to the bottom of the homepage and you'll see the online donation form and you enter your credit card information. (Cara just did this and it worked!).

Cara and I are available to answer your questions and address your issues, if we can. Cara checks the church phone regularly or her cell is 856-261-6749 (shared with her permission), and I may be reached at 917-941-7177.

May God bless you and keep you!!

Pastor Kelly Grimsley, Interim

(Try listening to "Be Still and Know"-The Fray) [Click Here](#)