

*****IMPORTANT TIME SENSITIVE*****

BISHOPS TOWN HALL MEETING: SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

I ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO TRY TO ATTEND THIS VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETING THIS EVENING. IF YOU ARE UNABLE A VIDEO RECORDING OF THIS MEETING WILL BE AVAILABLE LATER THIS WEEK. AS MANY OF YOU KNOW A GREAT DEAL HAS BEEN HAPPENING WITHIN THE UNITED METHODIST DENOMINATION. THERE IS ALSO A GREAT DEAL OF MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION FLOATING AROUND ABOUT WHAT IS GOING TO BE HAPPENING IN THE FUTURE CONCERNING OUR DENOMINATION. BISHOP EASTERLING IS HOLDING THIS TOWN HALL MEETING TO CLEAR UP THESE MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

THERE IS NO COST FOR THIS EVENT. THE LINK TO REGISTER IS:

<https://www.bwcumc.org/event/8521374-2022-09-28-bishops-town-hall-meeting-setting-the-record-straight/>

An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike for October 1, 2022

It's not too late to sign up to help with the Harvest Festival on October 8th!! To make this a true success we must have a warm and inviting presence for all that come to visit us that day. We all plan on having a really good time! The sign-up sheet is still in the Narthex. If you have any questions or ideas, please contact the office and we will send you in the right direction. You can also donate to the event. Please just specify "Harvest Festival" in the memo line of your check. **We hope to see you on 10/8!!**

Speaking of Harvest Festival, today is the last day to pre-Order your soup, chili and apple dumplings!! I have attached a form for you use. **All pre-orders must be submitted by THIS SUNDAY!** Your yummy treats can be picked up during our Festival October 8, 10-2. Don't miss out on these **HOMEMADE TREATS!**

****NEW** We are continuing our food drive for NCEON in the month of October.** For the entire month we will be collecting **tomato sauce, tomato paste, stewed tomatoes and diced tomatoes.** We will also accept any of the items we requested in prior months. We greatly appreciate all the food items you have given in the past months, and they are always happy to receive our donations. NCEON stands for North County Emergency Outreach Network. It is located on 5th Avenue in Glen Burnie and helps people in our area with food and emergency services. Our church has supported this organization for over 30 years. NCEON is open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. You can check out their website at NCEON.com. -Thanks. The Outreach Committee

Regular Sunday School has begun for children between 3 years old and students in the 5th grade. Also, we are still looking for a volunteer teacher for the 4th Sunday of the month. If you feel young at heart, we are looking for you. You can talk to Leslie Fauconnet, Sarah Jenkins, Donna Helowicz, or myself to find out just how much fun you can have one hour a month. -Deb McMurtrey, Sunday School Coordinator.

We want to remind you that we are still using Zoom for our Sunday Services. Zoom allows you to join us from wherever you may be!! (Join us in your pj's with a morning cup of coffee) As most of you who Zoom our worship services know, I greet Zoom attendees as they sign on, take Zoom

attendance, and assign names to phone numbers as phone callers sign on. I open the Zoom meeting at 9 a.m. to give people time to sign on. I encourage you to sign on early to avoid the crush of people signing on at the last minute. The earlier you sign on the easier it is for me to attend to the greeting responsibilities. It also gives us a chance to chat and share prayer requests. **If you should have any problems logging in, please alert Jennifer in the office.**

We need to train, and have available, several individuals to operate the technological aspects of our Sunday Worship services on those days when Shannon and Joe are unable to. Please let us know if you are interested in helping in the ministry of our church in this way. You can contact either myself or Shannon Shanefelter.

If anyone is interested in volunteering to staff our nursery on Sunday mornings, please let me know. We may not be able to staff every Sunday morning, but we can let our young families know those Sundays when nursery will be available.

If you have prayer requests, even if you plan to share them at Sunday worship, you may forward them ahead of time to Jen at the church office and she will compile a list to be used on Sunday morning.

The Announcements and Bulletin for Sunday's service are included as attachments to this encouraging word. Please feel free to print them out and either bring them with you to the service or to use them as your guide as you Zoom the service.

An Encouraging Word

As a child one of my least favorite activities involved being chosen for teams. You know the drill. There are two "captains" and each takes turns choosing who will be on their team. I was not the biggest kid around, nor was I the strongest or the most coordinated. As a result, I was one of the last picked to be grudgingly accepted on my destined team. If I was the last picked, that was devastating. I was being judged as inferior. The whole process just reinforced my own feeling of inferiority and my dislike of those who stood in judgement over me. The whole process was divisive.

No one likes to be judged, but it seems we all do it. When we do, we are engaging in something that is destructive, not only for the ones we judge, but also of those who do the judging. Judging is rarely upwardly focused, it's more likely that when judging we are considering others as inferior to ourselves. In other words, we are looking down on someone. Either way it's destructive, whether we are congratulating ourselves in our superiority, or overcome with a sense of inferiority. Comparing ourselves to others is not a good way to build the unity and community that God intends. In fact, judging others is a divisive act that will destroy any sense of community. It is, in part, responsible for the fracturing of society we are experiencing these days.

Judging others is a mental process that is completely at odds with the values that Jesus lifts up in his Sermon on the Mount, especially humility, compassion, and unconditional love, to name several. So, Jesus warns us against doing it. "Do not judge others, so that God will not judge you in the same way you judge others, and He will apply to you the same rules you apply to others." (Matthew 7: 1-2)

Why do people sit in judgement over other people, or other groups of people? Most psychologists agree that judgmentalism arises out of feelings of inferiority or shame. So, people judge others as a

way of demeaning others in order to feel superior themselves. Judgmentalism may also arise out of not being privileged enough to receive unconditional love. Those who judge others may feel deprived of some asset and this sets them up to categorize others in a hierarchical or rank-order fashion. In other words, when they encounter another, it is always from a position of one being superior and the other inferior.

For those who live under God's reign such comparisons of inferiority or superiority are absurd. All are loved equally in God's unconditional love which has no limitations. Under God's reign each person is loved completely and absolutely by God. Those that would judge others are creating in their own hearts and minds differences that under God's reign do not exist. In so doing they introduce division where God seeks unity. In God's eyes not one of us is inferior to another. Such comparisons are not of God.

In fact, in taking the Judges seat over another person, or group of people, one is placing themselves in the God seat. They have become God's unto themselves, not a winning move in a monotheistic religion like Christianity. James 4: 11 – 12 declares, "Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another, speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge, who is able to save and to destroy. So, who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?"

Of course, this brings up the question, who is my neighbor? A Pharisee asked that of Jesus one day. Jesus responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan. The parable teaches us that our neighbors are not restricted to those who live within our own homogenous society or culture. Rather our neighbors include everyone. We are to love everyone, irrespective of their race, culture, religion, or nation.

My encouraging word to you today is to avoid sitting in judgement over another, whether that other be another individual, people of another religion, people of another race, or people of another culture. All are loved equally by God, all are made in the image of God, all in one way or another reflect God's glory. Who are we to categorize anyone as inferior or superior when such categories do not exist under God's reign where the only one in a position to judge is God?

The temptation to judge others, it seems in some quarters, is being encouraged these days. The temptation to categorize human beings as inferior is very much alive and well. Yet to do so is a direct challenge to the authority of God, a rejection of God's unconditional love and grace, and stands in opposition to God's vision of unity and community in our world that reflects the all-encompassing unity of God's Kingdom. "Do not judge others lest thou be judged!"

That's all for today. I'll see you on Sunday either on Zoom or at in-person worship. Until then be well, stay safe, make good decisions in this Coronavirus environment, and in please stay connected to each other and to God.

Blessings & Peace, Mike