

An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike for November 9, 2022

Communion and All Saints Sunday is this weekend, November 13th. Zoom is also back for the November 13th service. If you will be on Zoom this Sunday, Communion elements can be picked up in the Narthex this week. If you have any questions regarding this, please let me know.

Tuesday, November 22nd at 7pm we are beginning Advent Study with Prepare the Way of the Lord by Adam Hamilton. The book can be found on Amazon. This will be a Zoom Study. If you are interested, please let Jennifer in the office know.

It is already time for Outreach to roll out projects for the holiday season. We are doing things a little differently this year. We do not need to prepare the Thanksgiving Fixing bags for our friends at the soup kitchen this year. Those items are being provided by the Food Bank. However, with the cost of groceries, more people are coming to the soup kitchen for help. The shelves are as empty as I've seen them. **For the months of November and December our food collection will benefit the Pasadena Soup Kitchen with shelf-stable items that stretch a meal like pasta, mac & cheese, rice and instant mash potatoes.** We are completely out of those items. The Child Development Center will be helping us with this project. Regular size items are needed, not the super-sized items found in the big-box stores. **For Christmas we will be receiving names from the county for the Holiday Sharing program.** We have requested the names of 5 small families and 5 seniors in our area. We will be asking members and friends to help by providing help with the cost of a Christmas meal and presents for the children. This is the program we have been helping for many years. We should be receiving those names from the county in the next few weeks. We thank everyone for their continued support during this holiday season. -Thanks. The Outreach Committee

CALLING ALL VENDORS – The Child Care Development Center (in conjunction with the church ☺) will be having a Craft Fair on December 10th. We are looking for vendors. The cost of a table is \$20.00 and you can contact Jennifer in the church office if you are interested. **Also, we will be having a bake table (since the Harvest Bake Table was such a HUGE success!)** There is a sign up sheet in the hall on the bulletin board. Please don't wait to sign up!! Or contact Jen in the office 410-255-8887 or mtcarmel21122@gmail.com.

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.**

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.

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An Encouraging Word

"Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Proverbs 28:13"

The questions at the end of the day are the ones that really matter. I'm talking about the questions concerning the day that is past, the ones that assail us when we go to bed, the ones that ricochet around in our minds as we replay the events of the day. Sure, there are questions about the future racing around as well but there are no settled answers for those. Those are about the future, what we plan to do and what we want to do. As we all know things don't always work out the way we want or the way we plan or even according to our predictions. There's nothing we can do about those questions other than to just keep wondering. It's the questions concerning the day that is past that are most important.

The important questions at the end of the day, about the day, are the ones that shape us and prepare us for the day to come. These are some of the ones I ask. What did I appreciate in the day? Did I thank God for it? Was there an act of kindness performed for another in my day? Did someone provide an act of kindness for me? Did I thank them? Did I positively impact someone's life? Or was I just a pain in the butt? Did I make a friend? Did I make an enemy? In the living of my day, did I make the day better for someone else? At the end of the day, I will have answers for these questions. I might not like the answers if I'm honest with myself, but I ask them anyway. I ask them because these questions shape me.

I used to hate tests. No matter how hard I studied I rarely got a perfect score. I especially hate math tests. I had a real struggle with algebra. I'd take the algebra exam and be happy if I got a 75% score. The good thing about those tests is that they exposed my weaknesses and showed me where and how I could improve. When I used the old tests to study for future tests my scores improved. Answering those algebra questions, even the wrong answers, shaped my knowledge for future tests and prepared me for the final exam.

It's the same thing with the questions we ask ourselves at the end of the day about the way we lived in the day. Our answers shape our lives going forward. They guide the trajectory of our lives. If at the end of the day I realize that I have been unkind to someone I'll be resolved to try to be more kind in

the days to come. If I've hurt someone, I'll commit myself to apologizing in the day to come. These kinds of questions at the end of the day really matter, they shape our lives going forward.

James 5:16 commands, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Before we can confess to each other we need to confess to ourselves. That's why the questions at the end of the day are so important, they make possible the healing of our relationships and the healing of our spirits. Without them we may keep making the same mistakes over and over again. Confession is good for the soul and confession starts with confession to self. That's what the questions at the end of the day are all about.

These questions asked at the end of the day are important because they are preparing us for the final exam; the questions asked at the end of our lives, the questions that prepare us for eternity. As you may have guessed these questions at the end of life are strangely familiar. Have I been kind? Have I lived mercifully? Humbly? Is the world better because I lived? Did I say thank you? Don't be afraid of the questions. Don't be afraid of the answers. They are all for our good as we grow closer and closer to God.

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