

## **An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike for November 16, 2022**

**This Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**If you are visiting the church during the week, please be careful of the children at the school.**

We ask that if you are driving in during drop-off or pick-up hours that you wait behind the cars as to not endanger any of the children getting in and out of the cars. These lines move rather quickly. Morning hours are typically 8:15-9:15 and then afternoon is usually 11:30-12:30. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

**Christmas 2022 Memorials** – Would you like to remember or honor a loved one this Christmas? You may do so by purchasing a poinsettia to decorate the church; or, instead, you may prefer to donate to the general fund or to the trustees' fund. To honor or remember family members or friends, please complete the form attached to this email and return it to the church. (Forms can also be picked up at the church as well) The deadline is December 7th.

**Our Holiday Bazaar benefitting both the Child Care Development Center and our Church will be on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> 9-2.** You won't want to miss it!! Lots of Vendors, Food and Activities for the kiddos! **Also, we will be having a bake table.** There is a sign-up sheet in the hall on the bulletin board. The bake table was a HUGE success at the Harvest Festival. Let's make it an even bigger success at the Bazaar! Please don't wait to sign up!! Or contact Cathy Jones.

**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

**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**

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." - **Ephesians 6:12**

Feeling that you are powerless is a terrifying feeling. Occasionally I have had a dream, a nightmare really, of being swept away in a fast-moving river, unable to swim against the current, being tossed about in rapids, and being swept toward waterfalls. Perhaps it's my subconscious telling me that I'm feeling out of control in some facet of my life. I really don't need my subconscious reminding me of that – it's not helping! The feeling of not being in control and of being powerless is a horrible feeling. Yet it is a feeling experienced by many every day.

The thing is I'm not really powerless! It's true that I don't have very much political power, and I don't have a tremendous amount of financial power, or political power leveraged by financial power, but I really don't need any of those. I have something better. I have spiritual power and spiritual power is a power that transcends any other kind of power that we can imagine or aspire to. When the world falls away, as it will for each one of us, political power will disappear. When the world falls away economic power and all it represents will disappear as well. Spiritual power will endure because spiritual power comes from God.

We experience spiritual power everyday in the love of others for us and our love for others. We see spiritual power in acts of kindness and compassion. We know spiritual power in the loving grace with which God forgives us, loves us, and holds us. We engage spiritual power through prayer, in acts of charity and love, and through bearing witness to the love of God. As we engage spiritual power, we

transform the world in ways that political or economic power never can. So, you see, any of us who love and serve God, and seek to love others as God loved us, are powerless.

The shame is that there are so many in our world who are feeling powerless in the face of political and economic power. I believe these feelings of powerlessness are the source of most of the turmoil and anger in our world. It is out of economic and political imbalances that anger toward economic and political systems is fomented and grows into systems of hatred and intolerance. It is paradoxical that many of those who are being driven by feelings of economic and political powerlessness - and resulting words and acts of anger - would also profess a faith in the one who grants them the greatest power of all - spiritual power. If they truly understood the power God invites them to claim, they would be free of the fear of powerlessness.

Claim the spiritual power that is offered us by God through faith in Jesus Christ. With it we can remain strong even as we are challenged by feelings of worldly powerlessness. With it we can transform the world with the powerful love of God and bring hope to those who are being tossed on the tides of fleeting worldly power.

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