

Pastor's Update, Saturday, December 5, 2020

Happy Saturday WFMC Family!

[Sunday Morning Worship Service Link \(becomes live at 6:00 a.m. Sunday.\)](#)

Worship Plans Tomorrow, December 6, our worship service will be online. The church campus is closed to all events / groups of more than 25 persons until Friday, December 11. The office remains open from 8:30a to 1:00p daily.

We plan to return to in-person worship on December 13, which will be a celebration of Jesus' birth through the Christmas pageant, *The King's Birthday*, a traditional telling (by our children, primarily) of the story through narration and song, at both 8:30 and 11:00. We will, of course, livestream the 8:30a.m. service, so if you aren't comfortable attending, or if you are especially vulnerable or not feeling well, please choose the online option. If you do attend in person, please wear masks while moving and singing, and keep social distancing (can I just say...I'm so sick of that phrase) protocols in place. All Sunday schools, YBFs and ABFs will also meet in person on the 13th.

This Week's Announcement Sheet is attached to this e-mail. Of course, since tomorrow's worship service is of the pre-produced variety, the words to the songs are able to be included in the video. Tomorrow's worship service does include the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

On Christmas Eve, we will have a live nativity displayed outside from 5:15-5:50p so that everyone attending both the 4:30 p.m. and the 6:00 p.m. services can see it. If your child / children are 4 years old - 5th grade and would like to participate, please email Cheryl Schell at cschell@wfmc.net by December 15.

Life Together and Corona Virus If you are like me, you have friends...people in our church and your family...who disagree with you and one another about something concerning this virus: masks or no masks, gather or don't gather, shop or don't shop, shake hands or don't, and on and on. The news doesn't really help either, since, as I've mentioned before, no matter what your opinion, you can find a talking head or an article on the internet or TV that will substantiate it.

All this adds up to mean...these are difficult days for anyone who is in relationship with other people – which, of course, includes all of us. So as we relate with others, please remember that followers of Jesus are to be peacemakers.

That doesn't mean that we pursue peace at any expense, and especially at the expense of Scriptural truth. We are to be seekers and defenders of truth.

Further, the sort of peace that comes from the complete stifling of conversation and debate usually winds up being a false peace in the end.

What does it mean to be a peacemaker? I might suggest the following:

1) Recognizing that just about everyone is under added stress right now, and people usually react rather than respond when they're stressed. This moment in time is something of a perfect storm for stress reactions. Family issues, the holidays, politics and government, job issues, the quarantines and lockdowns, threats to freedom – real and perceived...all of these are coalescing to affect people. Simply remembering this will help us offer grace.

And speaking of grace, being a peacemaker also includes, 2) choosing to give people more room for those reactions. Let's determine to be gracious and patient with others, which, might I say, may involve,

3) Simply ignoring some peoples' comments or posts. It's a very freeing thing to recognize that we don't have to respond to everything other people declare. The fact is, they may soon regret saying or posting it. (I mean, don't we all wish we could

take back some dumb words we've said in days past?) Sometimes the most gracious thing we can do is just let go of something someone said or posted...or maybe let go of all of social media for a season.

Also, it's important for us all to 4) remember that our opinion may be the one that is proven wrong over time. Especially regarding the virus, everyone has been wrong in one way or another over these past months. I want others to bear with my errors, so I'd better be ready to bear with theirs. Humility is a foundational Christian virtue, and we all are being challenged to practice it in these days, which can be a good thing for us and everyone around us.

Followers of Jesus are called to be bridge-builders whenever possible, and right now, the tone and tenor of our nation needs bridge-builders. Practicing the fruit of the Spirit in our actions in these days is a powerful witness for Jesus in our angry and frustrated world.

Covid and the Church Knowing how to respond to the virus numbers and managing these lockdowns and governmental requests in the church is a tricky business. No matter what decision is made about in-person worship, a number of people will disagree. As I've written previously, in making these decisions, we have tried very hard to keep in balance 1) the biblical instruction in Romans 13 to honor our civil authorities, 2) the encouragement of Hebrews 10 to not neglect gathering together, and 3) the biblical mandate to love others – which includes giving up our rights and privileges at times for the sake of, in this case, those who are especially vulnerable to COVID and all those who care for them.

As I've said before, the number that I keep a close eye on when making decisions about in-person gatherings is the Fayette County hospital headroom percentage – how much room hospitals have for COVID patients. ([Click here to see that info.](#)) To me, that tells the story, as it applies to us, better than simply the number of confirmed cases. If you remember, the stated goal for all the precautions, from the very beginning, was to do all we can to keep the hospitals from being overwhelmed and as I write this, the hospitals nearest us are still in the green at 29%. That's a good thing.

I also try to track the infection rate here in Jessamine County, ([available here](#)) which at present is described as "On average, each person in Jessamine County, Kentucky with COVID is infecting 1.05 other people. Because this number is around 1.0, it means that COVID continues to spread, but in a slow and controlled fashion." That's pretty good news too.

Of course we also must take into consideration the health of hospital staff. Since we have several health professionals in our church, I hear about this first-hand from time to time...both good news and bad. One good thing in this area is that the CDC revised down their number of quarantine days for virus exposure, which will help free up people more quickly to return to work. This includes, of course, health care providers. Still, it is a very stressful thing to care for people in these days, and for COVID patients in particular, so let's pray especially for our doctors, nurses and care-givers, and also all those places, especially the cities, where the hospital crisis is acute.

And Finally, in the Interest of Keeping Our Sense of Humor About All This – Two Items Today:

A young man asked an old, rich man how he made his money.

The old fellow, with an air of pride, replied, "Well, son, it was 1932...the depths of the Great Depression; I was down to my last nickel, and I invested that nickel in an apple. I spent the entire day polishing the apple and, at the end of the day, I sold the apple for ten cents.

The next morning, I invested those ten cents in two apples, and after spending the entire day polishing them, I sold them at 5:00 pm for 20 cents. I continued this system for a week, and by week's end, I'd accumulated a fortune of \$6.40.

Then my wife's father died and left us two million dollars."

And then this, from the Babylon Bee, to help us keep a bit of perspective. (If you're not familiar with the Bee, think big time satire.)

*2020 Rated Worst Year Ever, Provided You Never Lived At Any Other Time In History
December 2nd, 2020
Babylon Bee*

U.S.—Across the country, there is general consensus that 2020 has been the "worst year ever." According to studies, 82% of Americans agree that 2020 has been a terrible year of unprecedented suffering and misery. Experts confirmed that 2020 was indeed the worst year, provided you have never lived in virtually any other time-period in all of human history.

"We noticed that most of the respondents who called 2020 the worst year also enjoyed delicious food being delivered to them for 8 months while they sat on their couches with the air conditioning on and binge-watched shows the whole time," said one researcher.

"While we understand it hasn't been easy, we also found very few instances of Viking raids, Black Plague, famine, world war, using rotary telephones, needing to look things up in a physical dictionary, slavery, people being burned at the stake, walking miles to school, living in caves, sleeping on the ground, ice ages, Nazi holocausts, civil war, infant mortality, global floods, ethnic cleansing, using leaves as toilet paper, using leeches as medicine, using wooden mallets as an anesthetic, fighting wild saber-tooth tigers, cannibalism, occupation by the Persian Empire... what was I talking about again? Oh yeah-- most people in 2020 never experienced any of those things, so comparatively speaking it's been a pretty decent year!"

"Worst. Year. Ever." Tweeted one local man who has been making more money than most Zambians make in a lifetime -- all from the comfort of his computer.

"Can 2020 be over yet??" Tweeted a New York fashion executive whose preferred candidate just won the presidential election.

"I just can't anymore. Ugh!" exclaimed another after Uber got his dinner order wrong.

The only exception was one oddball who walked out of his front door and took a deep breath of the morning air. "Thank you, God, for this amazing air!" he said. The oddball has been detained for further scientific study to figure out what on earth is wrong with him.

Peace and Blessings, Sisters and Brothers,

Pastor Daryl