

Pastor's Update, Saturday, March 20, 2021

Happy Saturday WFMC Family!

[Link to Morning Worship Live-stream \(becomes live at 8:20a\)](#)

Morning Worship: We continue with our “normal” Sunday schedule, with in-person worship gatherings at 8:30a and 11:00a, and Sunday school, and Youth and Adult Bible Fellowships at 9:45a. Inside the buildings on the church campus, please wear masks when you're within six feet of others and while singing.

At-home worshippers will find a copy of the worship folder and songs attached / below.

Two New Weekly Newsletters Now Available Electronically: The first from Free Methodist Communications - [Light and Life Weekly Magazine](#) and second, a [Weekly Newsletter From the Free Methodist Foundation](#).

Vacation Bible School - 2021 WFMC is planning a day-long VBS on June 7 at the property of Ben & Nichole Shafer (rain dates of June 8 or 10). The theme is God's Creation and includes a variety of outdoor activities and Bible lessons for the kids, grades K through 5th. We would meet at the church at 8:15am and be back around 2:45pm. Children would bring their own sack lunches and masks would be required in the vans, but not outside.

Interested in volunteering to help and/or sending your children? [Click here to complete the VBS survey](#).

A Helpful Article At least I found it so, from Chip Ingram (Decision Magazine.)

If we are entering a new epoch in history, how do Christians need to live? We're living in a world right now that's different from any other time in our lives. COVID-19 is the greatest global disturbance that we have ever seen.

It has brought with it big questions: What now, and what's next? Where do we go from here? What things will never return? And even more important, what is God up to, and what is our part in this drastically changing world?

I've come to three conclusions. First, we will never return to “normal.” Second, we can rebuild. Third, now is not the time to mourn the past, but to innovate, to dream, to lead, to be bold and to recognize that God is “shaking the world so that the things that can be shaken will be shaken and the things that cannot be shaken will remain” (Cf. Hebrews 12:27).

Those who study history tell us that about every hundred years we enter a new era, a major shift in how life works. And about every 400 to 500 years, we enter a new epoch where drastic shifts alter the course of history forever. Think of major shifts like the fall of the Roman Empire, the rise of Christianity or the Reformation. This global pandemic, in concert with the shifts of power globally; massive economic challenges; the surging impact of technology; the decline of the nuclear family; distrust of major institutions; and the growing polarization around race and politics, has created the perfect storm for drastic change.

I think it's safe to say we have begun a new era and possibly launched the beginning of a new epoch. I believe that now is the time to be Christians who live like Christians so the church can do what God has promised and purposed it to do. What does that look like? Allow me to summarize what I believe we must do by using an acronym to help us remember Who and what is most important—C.H.R.I.S.T.

Christ, Not Causes

There are many important causes, but we must focus on the priority and the centrality of Christ. It's not that causes are unimportant, but they are secondary. As believers, we need, first and foremost, to focus on the Person of Christ.

I would suggest that many causes will be best served when followers of Jesus return to their first love. Some causes have begun to take a higher priority in the church and in individuals' lives than Jesus. And these secondary issues are causing division in the Body of Christ. However, when we focus our devotion on Him and His Word, we will treat one another as brothers and sisters (see John 13:34-35). We'll address various causes, but we will be unified first in our commitment to Him and one another.

Healing, Not Hostility

Jesus came at a time when there was great hostility. There were class struggles between the poor and the very rich. There was political division and oppression. There was great disease. Jesus' response: He healed the sick, fed the poor, instructed the rich to be generous and taught us to be peacemakers. We, as followers of Christ, need to focus on healing, not hostility. We need to be asking: How do we help people? How, in humility, do we speak the truth in love as we meet the needs of others?

"As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ... 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.' ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:18, 20-21, NIV). And that has to begin in our homes, our small groups, our neighborhood, our workplace, our churches, our communities.

Relationships, Not Real Estate

If there's anything we've learned from this pandemic, it's that people are desperate for community and relationships. And we in the church have to admit that we've too often measured our growth by our buildings, our real estate and the number of people coming to our services. We've taken the practices of business and mass marketing and tried to mass-produce disciples.

Now is the time to ask ourselves, "How is that really working? What does the average Christian's life look like?" We have many decisions, but few disciples. We now have the opportunity to create new ways to connect hurting people who have experienced some of the greatest challenges and pain of their lives.

Relationships are at the heart of Christianity. "If you abide in me," Jesus said, "and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7, ESV). "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13, ESV). You don't lay down your life for brothers and sisters by attending religious activities. There's a role for services and programs, but we have to get back to the heart of discipleship, and the heart is deep, authentic relationships.

Innovation, Not Indignation

As things change rapidly, the temptation for some of us is to be indignant. "It used to be like this; now you're changing my church, my world." And there's an anger and resentment that can breed as people lose predictability and control.

It's hard to change traditions. But the drastic upheaval we're seeing creates an opportunity to innovate like never before.

Many no longer drive to work. The rhythms of life have changed. How we communicate has changed. How we give. How we love one another. We need to shift from the organizational, collective focus of our churches, which developed passive believers, to: "What is the individual calling that God has on each of our lives?" Now is the time to equip every believer to be a difference-maker in their sphere of influence.

Substance, Not Success

My generation needs to own this: Our kids, teens and young adults don't know the Bible, and research indicates most of their parents aren't regularly in the Bible either. They don't know theology or why it matters. We need to return to truth. And I don't mean teaching it in a perfunctory way that people can simply quote things. I'm talking about the radical study and engagement in God's Word that creates parents living out their faith in such a way that kids learn by "catching" it from their passion, character and example.

Trust, Not Technology

Technology and science are the new gods of our world. They promise to deliver us from all our problems. We need to leverage technology, but put our trust in God and His Word. Trust His promises. Trust one another. Trust in the institution of marriage. Trust in the institution of the church.

Technology is a wonderful thing, but its excess and overuse is negatively transforming God's people to embrace the values of the world. Technology champions progress; yet now it curates your life and reinforces your prejudices. The Utopia it promises is a myth. Its value is great only when used with wisdom and restraint.

New epoch or not, the core issue in all humanity, for all time, is the issue of the human heart. It doesn't matter whether your IQ is high or low, whether you're rich or poor, black, brown, white or Asian. The heart must be healed, the truth must be taught and love must be lived out, and the only One who can heal, restore and empower is the Lord Jesus Christ.

First Trust Covid Tracker My financial advisor sends these every once in a while and I find them helpful – see below / attached.

And Finally, In The Interest Of Keeping Our Senses of Humor –

A woman by the name of Gladys Dunne was visiting my church for the first time. After the service, as the congregation was exchanging greetings, she extended her hand to another congregant and said, "Hi, I'm Gladys Dunn." The man replied, "I'm glad he's done, too!"



Peace and Blessings, Sisters and Brothers,

Pastor Daryl