

Pause with Pastor

June 25, 2021

Encouragement from the Psalms

Bret is entertaining family this week, so we do not have his commentary on a Psalm.

Worship on Sunday, June 27, 8:00 & 9:30AM

8:00 – In the Sanctuary with Holy Communion;

and

9:30 – In the Sanctuary, on the lawn, and in the parking lot

with Holy Communion for all

Our on-the-lawn worship has been rained out the last few weeks. At the same time, our indoor worship options have expanded. This has led to a significant increase in indoor attendance. The big question is, “What will happen when we have a genuine choice of outdoor vs. indoor worship?” We will likely learn the answer to that question this Sunday.

We will maintain our outdoor option as long as people prefer that location. At the point that everybody is comfortable inside, we will cease the outdoor option and resume our 10:30 service, with Bible class at 9:15. If you are not able to attend this week but prefer outdoor worship, please drop me an email to let me know.

Old Dogs – New Tricks

Habits to keep, discard, or start

Over the last year we have all learned some new habits, despite the adage that says that can't be done. We have *habitually* worn a mask when entering any place of business; we have *habitually* maintained a distance between ourselves and others when standing in a checkout line or talking to someone face-to-face; we have even *lost the habit* of shaking hands or hugging a friend.

These new behaviors would have been unthinkable before the pandemic, and if we had tried to teach ourselves to do these things, it would have been a struggle. But the interesting thing about these behaviors is how quickly they became second nature. How many other behaviors have you picked up, consciously or subconsciously? And have they enhanced your life or made life less pleasant?

Now would be a good time to reexamine some of our learned behaviors, to determine if they have been beneficial and should be continued, or if they have been detrimental and need to be ‘unlearned.’ Have you spent more time contacting those you know are isolated, in order to keep them connected? Have you spent more time engaged in Bible study, since so many of your other activities were cancelled? Have you disengaged from others as a healthy reaction to the fear of contracting the virus? These are just a few suggestions of our behaviors that may have changed. Do an honest, thorough examination of your patterns to discover how your habits are different than they were before the pandemic.

All of these are new, learned habits. Moving forward, each of them is worth examining for their ongoing suitability. And now that you have discovered that you can ‘learn new tricks,’ it might be time to unlearn some, and at the same time, intentionally develop some new ones. Remember, you just demonstrated that, apparently you can teach an old dog some new tricks.

What are some new habits you would like to develop? What new opportunities have become available that you might like to explore. The pandemic necessitated some new habits. But can we decide to make some changes on our own, simply because they will make our lives more pleasant, because they will make someone else’s life better, or because we’ve always wanted to do this but never thought we could manage? Be as creative in determining what you want your post-pandemic life to look like as you were in adjusting to the needs created by the pandemic. Only this time, focus on enriching your life or the life of others.

New opportunities abound at Holy Lamb:

- Worship is now available at any time! If you are sick, you can still join in worship. If you are traveling, you can still worship with the same familiar surroundings. If an emergency prevented you from attending in person or watching live, you can watch it at any time. How about this for a new habit: Never miss another worship service, regardless of when or where you might worship?
- Bible study is no longer limited to the Fellowship Hall at a specific time. Many factors have prevented people from joining our Bible studies. All of the obstacles that I can think of have been eliminated
 - Traveling at night is no longer necessary – you can participate from home.
 - Out-of-town travel will no longer prevent you from staying current or catching up – the recorded Bible studies are available on our website.
 - Fear of being called on to read or answer a question, or fear of asking something silly is gone when you view a recorded Bible study. (By the way, we never call on any individual to read or answer a question. And any question is always considered a valid point for discussion.)
- With the cancelation of many ‘usual’ activities, many members have discovered joy in using that time in serving the needs of fellow members with phone calls, transportation assistance, etc. Is there an opportunity to organize some of these activities to more fully meet some of these needs?
- For the past year we have not had any congregational fellowship gatherings. Even before the pandemic, several had asked for more frequent events. After a year without any of them, most of us long for some time to simply visit, enjoy some food, play some games. What kind of plan might we develop to ensure that our congregation grows in our love for each other through such events, both large and small?

In short, let’s not allow this recognition of our ability to be flexible pass without taking advantage of it. We now know that change *is* possible. But this time, instead of making changes to avoid something detrimental, let’s make changes to benefit others and improve our lives – spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

In His service,
Pastor Panning