



Dear friends,

So many old insecurities have cropped up for me as I remember September 11, 2001, think of the situation in Afghanistan and places in the world recently devastated by storms, AND now that COVID is rearing its ugly head in new forms. As I prayed for words to offer this week, I remembered a wonderful sermon by my colleague the Rev. Dr. David Bailey, recently retired from Central Presbyterian in Anderson. David shared it in March of 2020 and it impressed me so much that I saved it. The sermon was entitled "Be Not Afraid and Don't be a Dummy." It dealt with how we, as people of faith, deal with the fears and uncertainties of life. And his words called to me from over a year ago, offering wisdom and hope. So, WITHOUT permission, here is some of what he wrote:

"This is where the rubber meets the road in the Christian life. Are we going to be able to keep our heads when all those about us are losing theirs? Are we going to be focused so thoroughly on our own welfare and needs that we lose sight of the welfare and needs of others? Fear makes us hunker down to protect ourselves and keep others out. This is not life in the kingdom of God. We all know that, but we need to be reminded of it. Some of the most oft repeated words in the Bible are, "Do not be afraid," and they are usually said to human beings by God, angels, or Jesus. Balancing that assurance though, is the warning which is never given by God in so many words but is implied throughout the Bible: "Don't be afraid, but don't be dummies." God doesn't want us to go through life afraid that something might happen to us, but God doesn't intend us to take that to mean playing Russian Roulette with a pistol or racing through a neighborhood at 95 mph is fine.

Don't be afraid. "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age," Jesus promises. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." "Nothing in life or in death can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." When you trust that Jesus is with you always and is preparing a place for you in his Father's house for when you die, then there is no need to live this life fearfully. Be strong and of good courage.

On the other hand, don't be dummies. Wash your hands. Use the sanitizer. Don't go out if you are sick. Wear a mask if you have been exposed or you feel safer that way." MY ADDITION – get vaccinated.

I plagiarize his words to remind us all that, as Kingdom people, we have to have a mixture of faith and common sense and the key is to seek wisdom from the Holy Spirit for our personal circumstances. So for now at Nazareth, we will continue to carry on, seeking the wisdom of both science and our faith as we continue to be the Body of Christ on earth in this place. Therefore, if you feel safe, I hope to see you in Sunday School, Worship and at the Genesis Day celebration afterwards. Please read Acts 16:16-34 to prepare for worship.

Blessings,

Julie

Things to Remember

Coffee and Conversation returns this Sunday at 9:00.



This Sunday we will celebrate Genesis Day by starting our new Sunday School classes for the year. The YOUTH class will meet in the former Sr. Hi Room, which has the sofa and comfy chairs. The Confirmation class will meet in the former JR. Hi Room. All children's and adult classes will return to their normal rooms.

After worship, join us in the Family Life Center for a hot dog lunch, served in the safe style that we used during VBS. This will be followed by outdoor games, including water inflatables so don't forget your swimsuit and towels. BINGO, led by Mr. BINGO himself, will be indoors! Frozen Frog will provide Gourmet Shaved ice for dessert!

The Back Porch Circle will meet at 10:00 in the Fellowship Hall, Tuesday, Sept. 14. The new study books are in and cost is \$10. Circle 3 will meet at the home of Leslie Stuermann at 7:00. Visitors welcome!

IN OUR PRAYERS



- Carroll Caldwell
- Vickie Gray's sister, Connie Culbertson
- Julie Schaaf's aunt, Susan McFadden
- Russ and Dale Wright
- Rex and Debby Keaton and her brother-in-law, Bud
- Melanie Campbell's mother, Linda Goings
- Lois Weneck's sister, MaryAnn



The Mission of Nazareth Presbyterian Church is to worship and glorify God and make disciples for Christ

