

Notes From Pastor Steve

Greetings everyone! I write this to you with a mix of excitement for our congregation and absolute heartbreak over the cause of the events that our state and nation find ourselves in. We have been issued a wakeup call and with it an opportunity for repentance and reconciliation. The name George Floyd should be the headline of every newspaper and magazine for the brutal and inhumane way that his life was taken away from him. Instead, the headlines are about riots and rioters, violence, fires, "outside agitators" and the abusive power grabs of various political positions. Unfortunately, those headlines direct our attention to the sensational and the divisive, not the necessary work of dealing in unity with the issue of racism. The Christian church should (and as Christians we MUST) lead the way in meaningful conversation, reconciliation and bringing about Holy Spirit led change to the system of racial abuse and division that exists in the United States. COVID-19 has changed our world in ways we are still coming to terms with, but the death of George Floyd MUST change our world in ways we too often refuse to come to terms with.

Recently at a staff team meeting, Pastor Jeff led us through a flyover view of the Bible and showed us how scripture is FILLED with different races of people. The personal lens we read the Bible through is the same lens that we see the world through. Every Sunday you hear us say that we are a biblical church. Here is a taste of what the Bible says about our role during the unrest in Minnesota over the past weeks: When the Bible speaks of nations, it is telling us about different nations, cultures and races. The Bible is woven start to finish with God's concern for racial justice and reconciliation. God created every person, every race of people, in HIS IMAGE. God lovingly created every color of skin out of the palate of colors that God chose for us to bear. Jesus lived for, died for, and was raised to new life for people of every color and every race who would believe in Him. The ministry of racial reconciliation is OUR ministry. It is OUR responsibility and it is OUR opportunity to Love Jesus, Love People and to Teach People how to Love Jesus! I pray you will join me in the days ahead as we work together with people of all races to create a just, equitable and loving future for all of us.

Looking to the weeks ahead, there are so many "what", "when" and "how" questions that you all have, and I wish I had the answers you are looking for. We have all been living with those questions for more than two months now and there are still more uncertainties than certainties. What we do know is that the governor's guidelines for indoor worship limit us to a number so small that it is half of what our early service typically is on a normal Sunday. While other churches are taking reservations and limiting attendance, we do not feel that turning people away from church is the policy that The Open Door should have. What that means is that we will have outdoor worship every chance the weather cooperates for us to do so. When it is raining, we will continue to worship together live and online. Please follow our website, Facebook page and Instagram for updates as they occur.

While none of this is ideal, we are doing our very best to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, all our souls and all our minds and we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. I am so grateful for your continued generosity that has allowed us to maintain our full staff and has seen our ministries and kingdom reach not only to survive, but to blossom, thrive and grow! God is at work among us and through our church and we continue to enjoy the privilege of seeing lives changed by a personal relationship with Jesus.

-Passionately pursuing Jesus!

Pastor Steve