

From Your Pastor

Dear Church Family,

It's a new year, thanks be to God. A new day, thanks be to God. A new moment, thanks be to God.

In 12-Step programs like Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous, "One Day At A Time" is the beautifully timeless motto, and it is one that serves us all well today. Recently I heard from a church family who has been involved in AA for many years, who said they were handling pandemic-life pretty well. "We've been practicing One Day At A Time for a while now," they wrote. "So that's what we're doing."

I appreciate these reminders so much. I am and always have been a restless one. I don't stay in one place or on one topic for long. (Confession: the reason I lead worship is because I have trouble sitting through worship). I think I could successfully live with six arms to do all the things my brain wants to do, and I'm simply not good at living in the moment.

My restlessness is part of what has made me a faithful Disciple, a courageous leader, an encouraging parent and partner. I consider my restlessness a gift. And yet if I'm honest, it is that same restlessness that sometimes stands as an obstacle to spiritual growth, integral leadership, and discernment.

I'd imagine many of you are like me, or know someone like me, who is deeply challenged by restlessness right now. It feels like claustrophobia; terrible Cabin Fever. The beauty of "One Day At A Time" is that it is simultaneously challenging and comforting. The challenge is to calm down and recognize what God is offering us right here and right now, rather than reaching for tomorrow or 10 years from now... and the comfort is that all we have to do is make it through this One Day; what we do today will be enough for today.

Jesus offers this same promise in Matthew 6:34— "do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." After asking the question in 6:27 - "can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?"

As I write to you this month, I feel the pull to the "past: all those things I didn't do yesterday, and feel the pull to the "future": all those things I need to and want to do tomorrow. While planning is essential and good, we have to balance it with living for today. Today I pray that God will hold me to this moment, I am writing a reflection to the congregation I have the honor and privilege of serving. I hope that my words will be a bridge of connection, so when you read them you will know that God is holding you tight on this day, and when another day comes, God will hold you tight on that day too.

Now, a few words about what I'm up to this month, without defeating the purpose of staying in the moment:

1. We will begin planning our Annual Meeting as we always do in January. It will take place on Zoom the first Sunday of February. You will receive an Annual Meeting packet, and information about how to access the meeting. We will do our absolute best to keep everyone informed about how all of that will work. While there is always room for improvement and growth, I want you to know that our Executive

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Team and our staff feels very confident about the current financial and spiritual health of our church, given the turbulence of this season. We feel blessed and encouraged.

2. Our Covid-19 Advisory Team has not met since late November, as it became clear that regathering was not going to happen in the month of December. They will meet this month and update the congregation with a letter which will either be included in the Annual Meeting Packet or be sent out slightly before that. If you have information or questions for the team, please send them to the church office or to me, and we will forward them. Or we can ask a member of the team to respond to you directly.

My “One Day At A Time” reflection was inspired by my current state of living. Two of my children began a new semester of remote learning on January 4th: new teachers, new schedules, new classmates. They will likely finish this school year in Remote Learning. My other child is continuing Remote Learning through our own Haynes Nursery School three hours a week and is bouncing off the walls the rest of the time (she literally never stops talking). I never imagine the stress of supporting three kids through Remote schooling, with all of the emotions and questions and math problems. It often feels like the only thing I can think about is the One Day. All of that being said: it is my honor and privilege to serve this church and be present for you in your lives. I simply ask for your grace if I’ve dropped a ball or if my response is delayed. If you ever feel like I’ve forgotten something important or haven’t responded to you in a timely manner, please, please, remind me. You can even *nag* me. What matters to you, matters to me. Please know that is true today, and when another day comes, it will be true on that day too.