

*July 5, 2020*



We have chosen to follow Jesus' commandment to care for our neighbor, especially our most vulnerable neighbors (Matthew 22: 37-40), during the coronavirus/COVID19 pandemic. While we are not gathering at the church building, we have chosen to see this as a time for us to try new ways to worship, learn, pray, and stay connected ...after all, *God is always doing new things (Isaiah 43:1-19)!*

In these difficult times, we are committed to continuing to find ways to be the church.

Don't hesitate to be in touch if you need something, especially help...getting groceries or medicine, figuring out how to do all this online stuff, or just needing to chat. We are here to help!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Henry, the Elders, and Deacons of the First Presbyterian Church of Corona

*In order to open the music, place the cursor on the title, press ctrl and click. That will take you to the appropriate YouTube location to open.*

#### GATHERING SONG

[O Beautiful for Spacious Skies](#)

PRAYER Some of us come to worship with hearts full of joy, and others come with holes in our hearts. Some of us come weighed down with worry, and others come with peace and calm. Some of us come assailed by doubts, and others come with unwavering certainty. However we come, O God, here we are, with gratitude for the freedom to worship as we choose. Amen.

#### HYMN

[Eternal Father, Strong to Save](#)

PRAYER of CONFESSION O God you have led us to this land and, out of conflict, created in us a love of liberty, peace, and justice. We have failed you by neglecting rights and restricting freedoms. Forgive pride that overlooks national wrong or justifies injustice. Forgive division caused by prejudice or greed. Have mercy. God, on the heart of this land. Make us compassionate, fair, and helpful to each other. Raise up in us a fervor that sees and seeks good for all. Amen

ASSURANCE God's mercy and grace are sure. Believe the good news. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Alleluia! Amen

#### SCRIPTURE Matthew 11

**16** "But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, **17** "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' **18** For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon'; **19** the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

**25** At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; **26** yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. **27** All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. **28** "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

#### SERMON

"To what shall I compare this generation?" asks Jesus.

NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw told us who gets the nod as "The Greatest Generation." In a book by the same title (New York: Random House, 1998), he argued that it is the GI Generation that stormed the beaches of Normandy in World War II, that went to work in American factories, that bought bonds to support the war effort -- that this is the greatest generation.

These are the ones, women and men, the living and the dead, who willingly gave their lives, who gave their limbs in the war that honestly and truly saved the world from fascism, the war that protected the home of the brave, the land of the free so we might grow up in safety, democracy and prosperity.

Are they the greatest generation?

They came home with leadership skills. They came home with a strong sense of personal responsibility and patriotism. They came home to do their duty, to work with honor and live with faith. They came home to a new start and to rebuild a nation damaged by the Depression. They did so community by community as active citizens, as Good Samaritans.

When we baby boomers, GenXers, etc. look at our parents or grandparents of the GI Generation, it's hard for our own generational self-esteem not to take a beating. And why not? How can you top saving the world from Hitler? We honor them.

Armed with higher education, armed with a worldly sense not shared by their parents, they sensed a new freedom, and a new determination ... and with those views, they relocated to distant cities. They blended the national population. They developed a new and strong middle class of mobile, success-oriented families, creating a new America, a powerful America. The social strata, previously permanent, segregated and separate, began mixing in a manner unimagined ... creating prosperity, creating new ideas and, of course, creating trouble.

But they're not the greatest generation.

To question about which the greatest generation is a bad question. The wrong question. Because the greatest generation is not people born between a given set of years, but the people reborn in any age, at any age. The question is not of generational greatness, but re-generational greatness.

"To what shall I compare this generation?" asks Jesus. In utter frustration he bemoans the stubbornness of their hearts. "It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn'" (Matthew 11:16-17).

We all know Jesus wept. He also ranted and raved.

No matter what I do in the name of the kingdom, they find some reason to dismiss me. To ignore me. "Woe," he says. Woe to that generation that tries to trivialize me -- make me irrelevant.

Nevertheless, there was a portion in that generation and every one that has followed, the faithful that danced when he piped and mourned when he dirged. The dance goes on today. But it's not Generation X, or Boomers, or Builders or Millennial kids. It's all those and more. It's every person from every generation who submits to regeneration of the heart.

To call one generation the greatest immediately diminishes all generations who preceded it and all generations who follow it. It distracts us from the Christian truth that, before the Awesome Divine Presence of God, we are but one equal people, a single generation, a human generation.

It is clear that Jesus is really upset with the behavior of his current generation. Yet, he offers a promise.

**I will give you rest.**

**But that rest depends on something strange.**

**It depends on a yoke.**

We love the "I will give you rest" part but frequently don't read what comes after, the part about the yoke. Because what it says is not popular, at least not in our culture: it tells us that burdens are shared, that we are not responsible just for ourselves but for one another, that our work lets others rest, and that our rest makes others work.

Verse 28 extends the "great invitation" urging "weary" and "burdened" believers to "rest" with Jesus. Essential to understanding Jesus' invitation here is clarifying Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath in particular, the Torah in general. Obviously, Jesus did not intend to abolish all Sabbath observations -- but he did intend to reinterpret the Law by giving new ways to fulfill it. Jesus sought to teach a radical understanding of the depth of the Law's spirit. The "rest" Jesus offered was not just a break from practicing every jot and tittle of Torah mandates.

To facilitate this "rest," this new concept of faithfulness to the Sabbath spirit, Jesus offers believers a new "yoke." This language itself is not new, since the rabbis spoke of the yoke of the Law. But Jesus regards his claim as simultaneously more demanding and more rewarding: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill ... whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (5:17,19). Jesus offers his followers a new yoke that will enable them to surpass the scribes and Pharisees in righteousness and enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus says that his yoke is "easy", and his burden is "light," not because God's Law is abolished, but because Jesus shares his own unique knowledge with the new believer ("learn from me"). This yoke is "his" because Jesus also wears it. Believers are called to join him and walk with him, not just to be loaded down with a new law while he watches. Jesus offers every generation a new way to understand, to think, and to act -- as believers who share the yoke with him.

He invites us to respond to his offer to be yoked together in a new reality and to share that reality with those around us whose dreams have been shattered by circumstance, a lack of self-esteem, by less than perfect choices amid life and work, by systemic issues that confront us all. We can start sharing our souls by investing time and energy in our own communities.

Jesus made the world different by becoming aware of the reality of those whose lives he touched. The beatitudes of Jesus are uttered in response to those who had come to hear him. That power flows from among and within us whenever we dare to individually and/or collectively remain to accept our place in the yoke and be in touch with the Spirit of Christ. We must be God's eyes, ears and hands in the world. We are called to wake up and change the world.

In short, we make the world different by making ourselves different.

And we make ourselves different when, relying on God-provided love, we choose to respond compassionately to the human needs that exist around us.

We make ourselves different when, relying on God-provided insight, we see the face of Christ in the face of others.

We make ourselves different when, relying on God-provided energy and courage, we attempt what others say is impossible.

God's people are different people, and as such we can pray and work together for new realities in ways that were previously known only to the mind of God!

Some responses during the current pandemic and justice crises are clear. The number of people today who refuse to wear face coverings and practice social distancing is astounding. Even more astounding is the number of churches that want to ignore science and health guidelines and, in so doing endanger the health of worshippers. We have chosen to follow Jesus' commandment to care for our neighbor, especially our most vulnerable neighbors (Matthew 22: 37-40), during the coronavirus/COVID19 pandemic. While we are not gathering at the church building, we have chosen to see this as a time for us to try new ways to worship, learn, pray, and stay connected ...after all, God is always doing new things (Isaiah 43:1-19)! In these difficult times, we are committed to continuing to find ways to walk with Jesus.

We need to get beyond "the bumper sticker slogans" that are so easily misused, abused, misunderstood, and may not convey the reality or the depth of the changes needed. The issues that are deep, systemic and need people pulling together for positive change.



## Joys & Concerns

Pete & Marilyn's sister-in-law, Roberta, passed away after a long illness; prayers for the family. Becky's daughter, Caitlin, needing prayer. Continued prayers for Rochelle; joy she shows no sign of the Corona Virus.

### *Continuing Prayers*

Prayers for our country and elected ones. All people, law enforcement & civilians, affected by current violence in this country. Lynn Rodisch - healing. Pete - healing. Kofi - prayer. Loren Nelson - continued prayer.

*Please Pray During Week of July 5, 2020 for the families of:*

- ◇ Rita Riolta
- ◇ Lynda Rodisch



if you have a prayer request or joy to share, contact any session member, Pastor Henry, the prayer chain at [mom4tc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mom4tc@sbcglobal.net), or [judy@fpc-corona.org](mailto:judy@fpc-corona.org).

During this time of being apart,  
remember that your Deacons are  
available if you are in need of help.

PRAYER God of liberty, we rejoice in the blessed abundance you have bestowed on our cherished land. We praise you for the freedom of religious expression which allows us to gather the way we have today. We praise you for the freedom to say what we think without fear of the governing authorities. We praise you for the freedom to come and go as we please. We praise you for the benefits of education made available to all. We praise you for the freedom to dream our own dreams and to strive to make them come true. We praise you for the gift of living in a land untorn by war. We rejoice in the bounty of this fruitful land, which provides us with plentiful food and beautiful places to rest and play.

In freedom we are strong, yet freedom is a fragile thing. Help us protect our freedoms through the exercise of personal and civic responsibility. Sting our conscience every time we say to ourselves, "Let someone else do it; it's their problem; I don't care." Give us as citizens the brains to realize that poverty and violence anywhere weakens the nation everywhere, just as illness in one part of a body weakens the whole.

Help us choose leaders who will do what is necessary for the well-being of the nation, who will not simply promise to grant our selfish wishes in exchange for re-election. Help the citizens of this land to achieve consensus on our most pressing issues, so that united we can help our elected leaders lead with clarity, consistency and decisiveness.

As people who have been freed forever through the blood of Jesus Christ, help us defeat in ourselves the impulse to slavishly submit to the tyranny of self-interest and greed. Help us, whom you are preparing for eternity, to take the long-range view of what would be best for all, not merely what is expedient for those who presently enjoy political and economic advantage. Inspire us to be advocates for people whose voices cannot be heard in the public debate, that all your people may have a share in honor and prosperity and hope. In Jesus' name. Amen.

#### LORD S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever. Amen. Amen.

#### HYMN

[Mine Eyes have Seen the Glory](#)

#### BENEDICTION

[The Lord Bless You and Keep You](#)







## AN AGAPE MEAL

*While we cannot be together in worship to celebrate the Lord's Supper, we can celebrate an agape meal or "love feast" that recalls meals Jesus shared with disciples during his ministry. We may be apart from one another, yet we may celebrate a sacramental time at each of our homes as members of the "household of God"*

**PRAYER** Be present at our table, Lord; be here and everywhere adored.

God of earth and heaven, your hungry children feed,

Your grace be to our spirits given, that true immortal bread.

Grant us and all the human race in Jesus Christ to prove

The sweetness of your pardoning grace, the manna of your love.

**HYMN**                    [Come Share the Lord](#)

**SCRIPTURE**            **The Bread of Life – John 6: 27- 34**

<sup>27</sup>“Don't waste your energy striving for perishable food like that. Work for the food that sticks with you, food that nourishes your lasting life, food the Son of Man provides. He and what he does are guaranteed by God the Father to last.”

<sup>28</sup>To that they said, “Well, what do we do then to get in on God's works?”

<sup>29</sup>Jesus said, “Throw your lot in with the One that God has sent. That kind of a commitment gets you in on God's works.”

<sup>30-31</sup>They waffled: “Why don't you give us a clue about who you are, just a hint of what's going on? When we see what's up, we'll commit ourselves. Show us what you can do. Moses fed our ancestors with bread in the desert. It says so in the Scriptures: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

<sup>32-33</sup>Jesus responded, “The real significance of that Scripture is not that Moses gave you bread from heaven but that my Father is right now offering you bread from heaven, the *real bread*. *The Bread of God came down out of heaven and is giving life to the world.*”

<sup>34</sup>They jumped at that: “Master, give us this bread, now and forever!”

**Those gathered may pass a loaf/slice of bread, share a meal, and discuss joys concerns or matters of mutual concern.**

Philippians 2:5-11

**5** Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.

**6** He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what.

**7** Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a servant, became human!

- 8** Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death - and the worst kind of death at that: a crucifixion.
- 9** Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever,
- 10** so that all created beings in heaven and on earth - even those long ago dead and buried - will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ,
- 11** and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.

#### PRAYER

God, you loved us so much that we should love one another. No one has ever seen you. Yet, as we love one another, we pray that you will live in us and your love will be completed in us

HYMN [We are the Church](#)

DISMISSAL The grace and peace of Jesus be with us all