

Romans 12:9-13

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. NRSV

We have all heard the saying, “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade” and that really struck me yesterday as I walked around my neighborhood with my dog. Boy, life sure has handed us lemons! Each day I wake up and count which day this is of staying at home trying to stay healthy, so I don’t infect anyone else or overwhelm our healthcare system.

So, it’s time to make some lemonade. There are multiple ways to make lemonade. We can add sugar or a sugar substitute, or other flavors such as strawberry, raspberry or blueberry. We can add iced tea and/or even add some alcohol. No matter how we make our lemonade, it is still basically juice from a lemon.

And so, it is with the church, we are all Christians, although we have lots of variations. Not just in what we believe but also in how we “do” church. Prior to the last week for most of us church was done in person, in a building, and with other likeminded individuals. Now we are doing church through live streams, you tube and even going to a drive in. Yet we are still the body of Christ in the world. If I can dare say that there is a silver lining during this pandemic, then it is that we are worshipping and doing ministries in new ways. These are things we talked about, prayed about, and wondered how we could reach new people to share God’s love with them. Now, more people than ever can join us in worship. People can be anywhere there is internet access. People in hospitals, nursing homes, private homes and even abroad can join us as the body of Christ in worship. We aren’t stuck in our buildings anymore. That’s amazing and remarkable!

Paul exhorts us in Romans to hold fast to what is good, love one another, and be there for each other. And we are finding new ways of doing just that. Phone calls are being made to make sure people are okay, Facebook is filled with posts checking in on each other and offering help if it is needed. Friends are texting each other to make sure we are all surviving. I am seeing more of my neighbors because we are all out walking to get some exercise and fresh air. We are certainly being God’s hands and feet in the world. What wonderful opportunities we have to genuinely care of each other.

Let us rejoice in that this pandemic allows us to persevere in prayer and extend hospitality to strangers. We may be frustrated by the loss of our freedom of movement, and it might be really challenging to remain shuttered at home, and yet prayer is a way for us to maintain some control, to help one another and to be reminded that God is with us every moment of every day.

So, we are making lemonade in new ways. And it really tastes fantastic! Steeped in God's love, in care for each other, helping each person persevere and, in the end, I believe we will be stronger, more resilient, and more actively the body of Christ in the world.

In Peace,

Pastor Suzanne