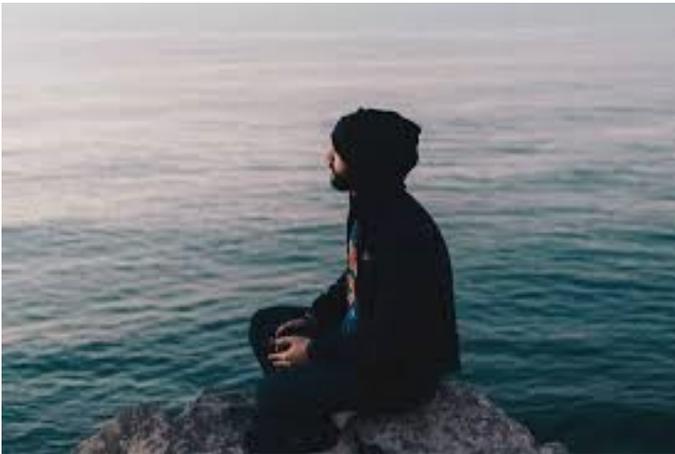




'Till We Meet Again!

Week of December 5 and 6, 2020



REFLECTION FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2020

PAUSE FOR THE CAUSE!

¹⁴Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. ¹⁵Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many."

Hebrews 12:14-15

Greetings my Friends!

Today is Thanksgiving! A day when we are called to reflect on the abundant gifts our Lord provides us each day and give thanks to God!

Alas, it has been my experience that many of us, even on a day that intentionally invites us to slow down and give thanks, are simply too busy or preoccupied to "pause for the cause!"

I know, I know, you barely have time to read this message let alone any additional minutes that it might create, but yet, I implore you to dedicate five extra minutes after reading this message.

Did you know that offering five (5) extra minutes each day can change your life?

I promise this is true. Today, I invite you

to join me in "the breathing prayer!"

When we are participating in the "breathing prayer" the first thing you should know is that it's OK if you have additional thoughts while sharing the "breathing prayer." Actually, it would be a little strange if you did not. You can participate in this "breathing prayer" anywhere! In your car (not while you are actively driving), in your bed, in your kitchen, wherever you are... you can participate in the "breathing prayer."

Why should you consider the "breathing prayer?"

Here are some short-term and immediate effects:

This will interrupt the output of your stress hormones

- Decrease anxiety
- Calm your mind
- Improve your focus
- Lower your heart rate
- Temporarily lower your blood pressure (Yes, this is my secret Dr. Nick!)
- Increase blood flow to your brain
- Increase your sense of well-being
- Improve your mood.

Now that is some wonderful results for five minutes, right?

Here are some long-term effects from regularly participating in the "breathing prayer."

- This prayer actually lowers risk of cardiovascular disease
- Strengthens your immune system
- Improves digestion
- Improves focus
- Increases energy
- Decreases over reactions
- Increases your ability to choose helpful thoughts and release critical ones.

Have I convinced you to give this “breathing prayer” a try?

OK, so here is how you participate in this wonderful prayerful meditation!

When you first try this, if you are very worried about time, set up a timer for five minutes.

Next, find a place where you can sit relaxed for five minutes with your eyes closed.

Now you are ready!

Step one: Inhale, as you breathe in say the words “Lord Jesus Christ.”

Step two: exhale, as you breathe out say the words “have mercy on me.”

(Please note: phrases can be said out loud or in your head.)

Repeat steps one and two for five minutes!

As you are participating in this breathing prayer, pay attention to:

- The thoughts that come into your mind (but keep praying through them)
- What you hear
- What you smell
- How you are feeling
- What you what to “give up”
- What blessings you have

Once finished, recall that indeed you, and all of us, are loved children of God! We are forgiven for our transgressions and we are invited to forgive others for their transgressions. Let go of those negative thoughts and live in the “new light” God offers.

The “breathing prayer” takes a little bit of practice, but I promise you it can help change your outlook on life.

So, on this Thanksgiving Day your pastor is asking that we all take five minutes a day to allow ourselves to be completely enveloped in God’s loving arms and at least try out this “breathing prayer.” Five minutes out of the 1440 minutes that God gifts us today. Ready to take a “pause for the cause?”

Until we meet again.

Keep trusting God, keep washing those hands, and “breathe!”

PJ



REFLECTION FORTUESDAY, DECEMBER 1 2020

A SEASON OF HOPE

Isaiah 51:1-12

¹Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the LORD.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.

²Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you;

for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.

³For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

⁴Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples.

⁵I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope.

⁶Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended.

⁷Listen to me, you who know righteousness, you people who have my teaching in your hearts; do not fear the reproach of others, and do not be dismayed when they revile you.

***⁸For the moth will eat them up like a garment,
and the worm will eat them like wool;
but my deliverance will be forever,
and my salvation to all generations.***

***⁹Awake, awake, put on strength,
O arm of the LORD!***

***Awake, as in days of old,
the generations of long ago!
Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces,
who pierced the dragon?***

***¹⁰Was it not you who dried up the sea,
the waters of the great deep;
who made the depths of the sea a way
for the redeemed to cross over?***

***¹¹So the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.***

***¹²I, I am he who comforts you;
why then are you afraid of a mere mortal who
must die,
a human being who fades like grass?***

I hope you are participating in the Pastor's Advent Challenge to intentionally share the gift of "Hope" this advent season. You can participate through social media or cards or conversations with family or friends to encourage them to have hope for the world. Hope is what we are focusing on this advent season as we wait and watch for the birth of our Savior.

Today's reflection comes from the 51st chapter of Isaiah, verses 1 through 12. Verse 4 speaks to my heart, "Listen to me, my people. Hear me, Israel, for my law will be proclaimed, and my justice will become a light to the nations." A light to the nations, so often we forget that it is our calling as Christians to show God's light and love through our actions. We are God's light in the world. In a world that is filled with depressing darkness, we are the light that shines through in God's name.

*"Listen To Me, My People;
Hear Me, My Nation: The
Law Will Go Out From Me;
My Justice Will Become A
Light To The Nations.*

Isaiah 51-4

BibleWordings.com

As you move through this week, contemplate how you can shine God's light and love in this dark world. How can we become beacons of light and hope for our neighbors? Each of us has different talents and gifts. Each of us have different situations. What can you do to bring light and hope?

One initiative that we are embarking on is to provide holiday cards to residents in nursing homes. Gather all your unused holiday cards and put a note of thinking of you or wishing you a wonderful holiday season and sign your first name. Drop them off with each card in its unaddressed envelope and put them in a zip lock bag and leave them at the Light of Christ back porch. I am confident that we all have unused cards, and we can take a little time to shine a light of hope to those who are socially isolated.

We can do little things to, thank an essential worker for continuing to do their job. Let someone in line in front of you. Call a loved one, send a card, share a laugh with someone. Today is Giving Tuesday, support your favorite charity. There are unlimited ways to shine a beacon of hope in this world.

My prayer is that together we will emerge from the pandemic, the racial discord, the political divide a stronger more compassionate nation. Share God's message of hope and love. Be the beacon of light in the darkness. After all, the birth of the Christ child is what we are watching and hoping. And it is Christ who brings the brightest light of all into our darkness.

In Peace,
Pastor Suzanne

2020 CHRISTMAS FOOD

COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION

We are asking each family to help families in need by donating one complete order of Christmas food from the Christmas food list (along

with anything else you'd like to add from the secondary list). If you would prefer to donate a gift card from Giant or Weis you can drop it off during the food drop off on Saturday, December 5. We are praying that we can help about 200 families.

You can donate safely via a drive by drop off on Saturday December 5 from 9-11 AM at Templo el Refugio, 111 Dewberry Avenue, Bethlehem. It is super important to donate on this day so that we will have a good idea of how many families we can serve prior to registration which will be the December 7th and 8th.

If you are in need or know someone who is, please contact the church office with your name, phone #, name and address of family/ individual needing food and recipient's phone #, and # of people in recipient's family by December 7th.

If you are able and willing to volunteer to help with the food collection and/or distribution, please contact Hal or Joyce Mante at mante@sprynet.com or 610-657-8901 ASAP. Please note that masks must be worn by volunteers and we will practice social distancing.

Christmas Food List

- Ham (about 5lb) OR
- small turkey/turkey breast (12-15 lb) & one can of gravy (ham is preferred)
- 2 cans fruit
- 2 cans green beans or peas
- 1 large can yams
- 2 cans corn
- 1 can cranberry sauce or jelly
- dry mashed potato mix
- 1 large box dry stuffing mix
- 64 oz. bottle of juice
- dry brownie/cookie mix
- large box of cereal
- candy treat
- 2-5 lbs of rice
- 1 can pinto beans

If you prefer, Giant or Weis grocery gift cards (no cash or checks) can be donated instead of food.

List of extra items needed by the Food Pantry

The pantry would welcome anything else you would like to donate (its fun to give things your family enjoys), but especially:

- Tuna
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Pancake mix (complete - only needs water)
- Pancake syrup
- Juice (no glass bottles)
- Canned soup (no glass jars)
- Coffee or tea
- Cereal
- Fruit bars
- Baked beans
- Canned meats
- Pasta
- Pasta sauce (no glass jars)



Feeding the Community

SPREAD SOME HOLIDAY CHEER

In lieu of our Giving Trees this year, the GWOH Team asks your



help with the following project. Please help spread some holiday cheer to the residents of local nursing/retirement homes by personalizing non-religious holiday cards with their envelopes, placing them in a plastic bag, and dropping them off on the back porch of LoC to be delivered by UPG volunteers. We have permission from Cedarbrook, Gracedale, and Manor-Care buildings 1 and 2 to accept holiday cards for their residents. All you need to do is write a quick message on the inside of the card ("Thinking of you" or "Season's Greetings"), sign your first name and place the card in its envelope. No addresses or stamps are needed. Suggestion: use cards you might have leftover from your own card list or free cards you receive in the mail from various charities. Our goal is to "Spread Some Holiday Cheer" to almost 1000 residents of these local buildings. Please drop cards off by Tues., Dec. 15th. Thank you for being a blessing to others!

**THIS WEEK IN THE UPG
DECEMBER 5—DECEMBER 13**

Saturday December 5

4:45 PM Worship (LiveStream Facebook St. P)

Sunday December 6

Worship available on YouTube

1:45 PM Sunday School Field trip to Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm

Monday December 7

7:00 PM Coffee & Conversation (Zoom)

Tuesday December 8

9:00 AM Staff Meeting (Zoom)

Wednesday December 9

7:00 AM Fellowship Meeting

Thursday December 10

6:30 PM Bible Study (Zoom)

Friday December 11

Saturday December 12

4:45 PM Worship (LiveStream Facebook LoC)

Sunday December 13

Worship available on YouTube

11:00 AM Sunday School Drive-Thru Christmas Party

