

COLLOQUIES with Pastor Brian

“What Shall We Do?”

In Acts 2, Peter has just preached to the listening foreign Jews about the death and resurrection of Jesus. The listening Jews are overwhelmed. They are distraught. In their anguish, they cry out to Peter, “What shall we do?”

I know THAT cry. “What shall we do?” Given our current epidemic and the entire communal, societal and global response to the Corona Virus, the cry of the Acts 2 listening masses resonates with me... with us. Yes, congregation “What Shall We Do?”

There isn't a precedent in recent memory. Our closest perspectives come around the polio epidemic, where some eldest members remember being taught via radio at home. Can you imagine doing school from home via radio? Some if not all of our children may have that type of experience very soon.

I've been through all the emotions. “God, why is this happening?” to “Maybe this is the church growing to new things...” to “What about our most vulnerable populations?” to “What will the future look like?” And into all of these, God speaks of ‘peace beyond understanding.’ I used to think of this as such a deep peace I couldn't even fathom the type of rest it might provide. But in light of current events, it might mean to possess peace when no one can understand why you have any peace at all.

Let me try to speak out of the peace of Christ that told the Cornells ‘God would be with us’ among the families of Minnesota. Let me speak from the place where God has shown all of us time and time again we are loved, our creation was intentional and we were formed to love the Eternal and love our neighbors.

Let me speak out of the peace that comes with keeping people safe and edging towards God's edge — not always being self-protective but thinking of others: the least, the last and the lost. We need to be safe AND to care for ourselves and others as God desires for us. So what does that look like?

Last week, I asked our administrative ministry to consider what we could do for the five areas of Christian expression we have done since the time of Christ. And here is what we came up with:

1. Worship will continue, both online and by phone. For this next week, I will lead worship services at our normal time using Facebook Live broadcast from the Northwood Church Facebook page. I will ask my children to help with the services this week, and going forward we will ask congregation

LET THE PEACE OF CHRIST



RULE IN YOUR HEARTS...

members to assist. We “HOPE” to be using a phone service as well, because several of our church members do not have internet access, or don’t possess speeds necessary to live stream. To do this, please follow these instructions:

Subject: Northwood Worship

Date and Time: 03/22/2020 8:45 AM US/Central GMT-0500

Description: Worship and Sermon, Sharing of Prayers and Checking in, Kingdom Time

Dial-in number (US): (425) 436-6349

Access code: 872463#

International dial-in numbers: <https://fccdl.in/i/brianjcornell8>

Online meeting ID: brianjcornell8

Join the online meeting: <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/brianjcornell8>

For additional assistance connecting to the meeting text “Help” to the Dial-In number above. Message and data rates may apply.

2. Giving: At this time, the only way we have to keep our ministries perpetuated is to keep all giving consistent. Even without meeting regularly, we have the same commitments financially we had when the year started. So we ask that you mail your tithes and offering to:
Northwood UMC, P.O. Box 295, Esko, MN 55733.

3. Teaching and Discipleship: We ARE planning to continue our Bible study called “Entering the Passion of Jesus.” In fact, with the current situation, participation might be easier than before. Both Northwood AND Asbury UMC are planning to try an online format to continue. More about this will be emailed to participants AND emailed to the church.

4. Singing and Praying: I roll out a prayer train each week on Facebook (my page as well as the congregation pages). You can text or call me with prayer at 828-434-6995. You can email prayers to me at bcornell@wnccumc.net.

Singing... well, I have an idea, but I’ll need your help. Would you each be willing to pick a song that gives you hope for going forward and I’ll build a Spotify Northwood SoundTrack for the rest of Lent? Then, we can sing along at our heart’s content. We might not hear you, but God will (and anyone close to you when you let loose).

5. Service: Friends, this will be tricky. How do we help without infecting? How can we offer help when the regular ways are disrupted? I trust our Missions Team and as soon as they have ideas, I’ll share them with you. Just because things are hard, Christians have never hidden from the call to serve others. Let us start with looking towards our neighbors, sharing our willingness to care for them and even inviting them to attend our virtual worship, prayer, adding songs to a playlist and just listening when they express fear or any other emotion.

The peace that passes understanding right now means to me to hold on to the peace that is promised, not the one that I might not feel. I hope these immediate small steps help you in this season of extreme change while following a God who is unchanging. Let’s offer each other grace to know we are all doing the best we can with what we’ve got right now, and that we are still and always God’s beloved. I thank God for your company in this time of challenge.

Peace.

Pastor Brian