

From the Pastor's Desk: Where Will We Go from Here?

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

It was a very strange feeling, wonderfully strange, to stand in the family room and appreciate *The Sea Tree*, as we call it. The 9-foot artificial tree, narrow and tall, covered in ornaments made from seashells, ornaments from trips to Stone Harbor and various lighthouses and blue and silver ornaments that remind me of the sparkling waves at the shore. The tree skirt looks like the beach with the wind whipping the sand.

When we get to do anything that is familiar, nostalgic, and fun it feeds our spirit! Our spirits are starving, parched and tired. We need to be mindful of how we care for our spirits today. Self-care has become a necessity not something to be considered as selfish. We have been taught through Jesus' teaching that we all have necessities to see to on the Sabbath day and if presented with an opportunity to bless, take it. Yet the value of rest and reconnection with God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit along with reconnecting with our selves, family, and friends, got lost somewhere a decade or two or three ago.

Perhaps we have all been too busy for so long we have not noticed what we gave up due to our busy-ness. Quality time alone to read the Bible and meditate on what it means for you today, quality time with your spouse, family and friends, had become a luxury you just couldn't afford on a regular basis. Maybe once in a while, but certainly not weekly! There is too much work and running around we need to do!

Slowing down (and for some, stopping altogether) for a time has offered us a precious lesson in re-evaluating our priorities, shifting them, and choosing better. When the time finally comes when we can go about our lives with greater freedom what will you take with you from this experience?

I know a lot of people tend to wait till the new year and begin resolutions. Perhaps we need resolve today and every day to make the rest of our lives the best of our lives, the way God intended for us to live. Be intentional about our connection to God and to pray and ask Him to lead our steps and help us grow stronger in our faith so that we can take all of the blessings given to us and bless others. Keep working on our relationships with our friends and family and especially the family of Christ so that we grow in our ability to love and be loved.

Where will we go from here? That depends on you.

"And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left." – Isaiah 30:21

This blessed Christmas season may you enjoy quiet reflection. Listen for the 'word' behind you offering direction through deep connection with Christ. And may we all be healed in ways we never knew we were ailing before the crisis hit. Remember Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

With hands to the plow,

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