

Devotion

I feel a strong immortal hope,
which bears my mournful spirit up
beneath its mountain load;
redeemed from death, and grief, and pain,
I soon shall find my friend again
within the arms of God.

- Charles Wesley

We've all been down this road before. Eventually, we all experience grief in the loss of a loved one, a family member, a dear friend. In times of grief, we've also experienced how much it matters when people reach out to us. They stay around. We've experienced their support, their help where they could, their reminder of how much they care for us. They tell us their stories about our loved one and the positive impact they had on their lives. Or they are there just to listen.

We've all been down this road before. Grief is an inevitable sign of being human. Grief is the cost of loving someone. And through the experience of grief, we learn firsthand what can help in times like this as well as what doesn't help.

Churches also go through seasons of grief. Today, our church is experiencing the loss of several beloved church members in just a short span of time. This means that we are all reeling with our several losses, we are all experiencing the questions grief brings to the fore: who are we now that we are without them, how do we go on without their voices?

Wendy Wright says of the church that "we are called to be food and drink for one another." That's how important we are to each other - as essential as food and water. And especially now, when we are suffering from these deaths.

We need our church family to comfort us, to be a buffer against loneliness, to share our memories and our grief. And they need us - to continue to love them, to let them know they have not been cut off as we work our way through our own sorrow, to not allow our sorrow to be a barrier between us and one another in Christ. In other words, we need each other. This, I believe, is where the church is at its best.

Paul reminds us in his first letter to the Thessalonians that "we do not grieve as those without hope." There is hope. Beloved, always share stories of hope with one another. Have confidence in your ability to reach out to one another in this season of grief. You've been down this road before. You know the way. You know what helps.

Yours in the journey,

Pastor Kristen

Announcements

JOIN US TONIGHT FOR WORSHIP AT 7:00PM Sermon topic: "The Reckless Acceptance of God". All are welcome.

CRETE WOMEN'S CLUB will be holding a flower sale in the church parking lot on Saturday, from 9am-3pm. Money from the sales goes to support Crete-Monee High School Scholarships (among 21 other philanthropic things they support).

Items in the sale primarily include hanging baskets and a variety of 250 plants. The prices are right in line with other retailers in the area.

UPPER ROOMS FOR MAY/JUNE are available in the church narthex to pick up. You can also contact Pastor Kristen on her cell phone or the church phone (708) 672-8353 ext. 2 and she will hand deliver them to your door. If you are home when she drops by and answer her knock on the door, she'd love to have a short visit with you. She will be maintaining social distancing and will leave your Upper Room on the porch.