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## ***THE PASTOR'S PEN***

In times like these, when immigrant children are separated from their parents with no guarantee that they will be reunited... In times like these, when people run the risk of being gunned down anywhere they go... In times like these, when LGBTQ people are denied services in the name of Christianity... In times like these, when women are victims of assault in a male-privilege world... In times like these, when people of color struggle to survive in a country enmeshed in systemic racism... In times like these, when Flint, Michigan, USA still has no drinkable water and Puerto Rico, USA is still without power...

In times like these, it's tempting to give up and give in to a sense of hopelessness. But we mustn't. God needs us now, more than ever before to be God's voice, God's hands, God's feet, God's very presence in the world.

It's not unusual to look to quotations from contemporary and historical heroes for encouragement. There's some relief in seeing your feelings of frustration, fear, and hopes put to words. That's probably why so many memes are shared on Facebook. But lately, I've found some relief in the Psalms because they also put into words the wide array of feelings that assault me in times like these.

When I am tired of waiting for justice, I find in the Psalms words for my feelings: "How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?" (Psalm 13:2)

When I need words of hope and encouragement, I find them in the Psalms: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea." (Psalm 46:1-2)

When I'm looking for an anthem of resistance, any psalm of praise will do, because with their lyrics, I am choosing joy, even in the face of injustice: "Every day I will bless you, and praise your name forever and ever. Great is Adonai, and greatly to be praised; God's greatness is unsearchable." (Psalm 145:2-3)

I give myself permission to replace words in the psalms to make them more personal and meaningful to me. "My enemies," then, sometimes are replaced with actual names. Mention of "kings" might be replaced with "the President." "Rulers" and "nations" become "politicians." In this way, the psalm is transformed into one for times like these.

If you haven't tried re-reading the psalms as if they were written for times like these,

you might give it a shot. They just might provide the relief you are looking for.

But whatever you do, remember to take a break from the headlines every once in a while (Luke 5:16); try not to fall into the trap of demonizing your opponent (Luke 6:27-28); and never forget that you are God's beloved child (Romans 8:38-39).

Peace and blessings,  
Charley

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

*The following is a tentative list of upcoming church activities and community events. Contact the church for a confirmation of the calendar.*

### **Weekly Events:**

- **Central Texas MCC Worship** (1601 Clay Ave.) on Sundays at 11:00 a.m.
- **Live and Let Live AA Group** (4209 N. 27<sup>th</sup> St.) on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, June 30 – Families Belong Together Rally** at Heritage Square, 6-7PM, protesting the fact that families remain separated.

**Sunday, July 1 – Accessibility Sunday.** Worship will take place downstairs in the Social Hall.

**Sunday, July 8 – Potluck Social** immediately after worship in the Social Hall. Good food, good fellowship!

**Wednesday, July 11 – Pride Planning Meeting** for October's Out on the Brazos Pride Event will take at 6:30PM in the Social Hall

**Sunday, July 15 – Accessibility Sunday.** Worship will take place downstairs in the Social Hall.

**Sunday, July 15 – Ice Cream Social** immediately after worship in the Social Hall. You bring the ice cream; the church supplies the toppings!

**Tuesday, July 17 – Masterpiece Ruling Town Hall** at Lake Shore Baptist Church (5801 Bishop Dr.), 5:30-7:30PM. Learn from experts about how Masterpiece affects the fight for equality and what you can do to protect yourself.

**Thursday, July 19 – HIV Support Group** at 6PM in the Social Hall begins with a potluck meal and continues with connection and conversation.

**Sunday, July 22 – Restaurant Sunday.** Join others after worship for food and fellowship at a local restaurant.

**Saturday, July 28 – Court Show** in the church sanctuary at 7PM, raising funds for school supplies.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

*The following people, who join us for worship, have birthdays this month. If you have corrections or additions to the birthday list, please call the office at 752-5331 or email us at [centexmcc@earthlink.net](mailto:centexmcc@earthlink.net).*

**Susan DeSoto – July 10**

**Donna Johnson – July 15**

**EJ Cook – July 16**

**Diane Greenwaldt – July 22**

**Roland Russell – July 22**

**Sam Cathey – July 28**

## Families Belong Together Rally



Waco will join with people across the nation who are rallying and protesting the fact that families remain separated. The event is sponsored by Waco Immigrants Alliance and will take place at Heritage Square (300 Austin Ave.) on **Saturday, June 30**, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

## Ice Cream Social



Cool down from the summer heat with an after-worship ice cream social on **Sunday, July 15**. You supply your ice cream, and the church will supply the toppings!

## Masterpiece Ruling Town Hall



DID THE SUPREME COURT JUST CREATE  
A LICENSE TO DISCRIMINATE?  
What *Masterpiece* means for Waco



EQUALITY



Since the *Masterpiece* decision earlier this month, the opponents of equality have been proclaiming victory, asserting that the Court handed them a big win. The decision has clearly emboldened anti-LGBTQ groups and their supporters, leaving LGBTQ Texans to wonder if it's open season for discrimination:

- Does the *Masterpiece* decision create a license to discriminate?
- If you're turned away for being gay or transgender, what can you do?
- Is it too late to stop anti-LGBTQ activists from passing more religious refusal laws targeting communities they don't like?

Get the answers you need from the experts. The event will take place at Lake Shore Baptist Church (5801 Bishop Dr.) on **Tuesday, July 17**, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

## Restaurant Sunday



Join others after worship on **Sunday, July 22** for lunch at a local restaurant. It's a great way to get to enjoy each other's company while helping yourself to good food!

## ***Christmas in July***



Central Texas MCC is collecting school supplies for the kids and grandkids of folks who use the church's HIV food and hygiene pantry. We'll be collecting supplies throughout the month of July. There's no need to buy backpacks; those have already been purchased. But consider the following:

- Crayons
- Glue sticks
- Pencils
- Pens
- Scissors
- Rulers
- Loose leaf paper
- Composition notebooks\*
- Hand sanitizer
- Folders\*

*\* It's helpful if your purchases are gender-neutral.*

You can also support the cause by attending the Court Show at the church on **Saturday, July 28** at 7:00 p.m. Proceeds will be used to purchase school supplies