

November 3, 2020



Pastor's Parable

COVID-Grief is a new term I recently heard. It is a helpful definition for the way that many of us are feeling over these recent months. Let's review our understanding of grief in general, which may make it easier to understand how we are feeling in the midst of COVID. Grief is the common, internal feeling following a loss. The grief process creates emotions ranging from denial, bargaining, anger, depression and/or acceptance. We may have believed that grief only occurs when mourning the death of a loved one. It took me by surprise when I began to notice my emotions surrounding COVID-19 which led to a realization, "This is a grief reaction!"

COVID-19 has uprooted most aspects of day-to-day life. We have been forced to change plans and adapt to challenging circumstances. The loss or cancellation of most of our normal routines and events has caused upheaval and our feelings of loss and fear are valid. In a recent article in the Harvard Business Review, Dr. David Kessler stated the following: With a virus, this kind of grief is so confusing for people. Our primitive mind knows something bad is happening, but you can't see it. We're feeling a loss of safety. As Kessler mentions, it is unlike anything we have experienced, so we have difficulty predicting it and knowing what to expect.

One tough aspect of COVID-19 has been the slow cancellation of many events and experiences throughout the pandemic. It has felt as if life was slowly being taken away one moment at a time. Without the ability to acknowledge this grief, feelings of anger, sadness, or loss has arisen with the danger of being misattributed to other issues.

What can we do to overcome this grief? The first step of overcoming grief is understanding what we may be experiencing. Denial or pretending that the virus doesn't exist; anger over the social distancing has resulted in a loss of connections with others; or bargaining may have resulted in periods of isolating in hopes that everything would be "normal" after a brief time.

Many of us may be feeling a sense of hopelessness believing that there is no end in sight.

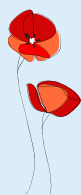
Rather than be future-oriented, I believe that in this time we should stay present-focused. Each of us should continue to practice essential self-care including prayer, meditation and staying in some degree of connecting with others regularly, albeit by phone or internet. Each of us has the unique ability to reach the end of this pandemic stronger, with a few new skills and an abundance of lessons learned.

We have to expect and understand that we may not function at the level that we normally might during this time — and that's OK! Grief is difficult. The emotions experienced are confusing and messy. Never forget that we are not alone and that with God's help, we will emerge as the People of God beloved and treasured.

-Pastor Mitch



Bell Choir Rehearsal:
Sunday from 11:30 - 12:30



The service on November 8th (this Sunday) will start at 10:20 am for a Time of Remembrance before the service of Worship. Doors will open around 9:50 am

Time Off

Pastor Coggin and Christine will both be off next week.

Please contact Whitney, Colina or your elder if you have need to contact St. Andrew's next week so that Pastor Mitch and Christine can both get some much needed time away before the start of the busy advent season. Elder Dirk Ryneveld has offered to lead the service on the 15th and Jorge Carrizales will play music. Thank you Dirk and Jorge!

Today the Presbyterian Prayer Partnership asks us to pray for peace as we remember those casting ballots in the United States today.



Advent Bible Study offered virtually for the four Monday evenings of Advent:

November 30, December, 7, 14 and 21 at 7:00 pm. Order your book on Amazon or from the Christian Book Store. Join us on Zoom each Monday for our book study from "Names for the Messiah: An Advent Study" by Walter Brueggemann



Can you help?

We hope to send some advent resources to our members who don't have access to a computer. Would you be able to help stuff, address and stamp envelopes? Contact Whitney or Rev. Coggin if you are able to help.



[Click here](#) to fill out the reservation form in order to join the in-person worship this Sunday.

Reservations are available from Tuesday afternoon until 2:00 pm Thursday. Reservations can be made by phoning 778-587-1227 Tuesday to Thursday or by filling out the form.

Share the Joy of Christmas

In spite of COVID-19, St. Andrew's Victoria will still be sharing the joy of Christmas with residents at Our Place and others who come for the annual Christmas community dinner there. There will be more details about how you can donate to make this Christmas brighter for these folks in November's LINK and in subsequent TWASA notices. Stay tuned...

For clarification to anyone who may be from out of town or who are unfamiliar: "Our Place" is a low barrier drop-in centre and residence for adults currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness and housing insecurity.



Sheelagh shared a picture of the Garson's Hallowe'en decorations and a mechanism for safely handing out candy. They had fun designing this and may even use it next year too!



Read From Your Bible This Week

Amos 5:18-24

Psalms 70

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 25:1-13

