

Zoom Worship Service
05-10-2020 Via Zoom

Announcements

After Ministry and Counsel met Tuesday evening, it was a general consensus that we would be continuing to meet for worship via zoom for the foreseeable future, so you can plan to continue checking in with us each week!

Next Sunday we will have a prospective pastoral candidate joining us to bring a message, so I know you'll want to hear what this woman has to share with us!

Also, please put May 31st at 9:30 AM on your calendars for our first Sunday (which is last, not first this time) gathering to discuss our relationship with Iowa Yearly Meeting. We may be ready to make important decisions about our future during that time. It will be a zoom meeting again and will lead us into worship at 10:30.

Tuesday evening at 7 PM Endowment Committee Meeting

And we have several birthdays to celebrate this week: Mary Denmead will be celebrating tomorrow, Fonda Wettestad on Tuesday, Anita Starr will have her special day Friday, Bob Arn on Saturday, and Gordon Edgar one week from today! So happy birthday to each of you!

Are there any other announcements that any of you would like to make?

Joys

- Tali and Kitty's children's message
- All the blooming flowering trees
- Hilda sent word she is grateful for the phone – hearing someone's voice is much needed – and also for the way people are trying to support each other and businesses.
- Jim and Kathleen are proud parents of Hannah Glasson Darling who will be receiving her Masters of Social Work this coming

week in Oakland, California! She has worked hard and grown a lot.

•

Prayer Concerns

Ed English is having his EndoVascularAorticRepair on Thursday, so please keep him and Tanya in your prayers for a quick and safe repair of the aneurism.

Michael Conner's also has his urolift surgery coming on Wednesday; and continue to remember his sister Susan as she recovers from her colon surgery.

Lyn Kane's friend, Ann Weinard, has a sister who is in Mercy Hospital with the Coronavirus.

And we also want to remember the family of Ann Hinkhouse a retired nurse who went back to work at Wilton Nursing Home following her retirement, and died of the virus. Ann is a second cousin of our Hinkhouse folks (Hilda, Dick, Stan, Cliff, and Glenn) and spent her life caring for others.

Teresa Winder's boss, Jim Harkman, lost his mother from a sudden heart attack, and one of Allan's former employees, Tim Beranek died of a heart attack at age 60; Teresa had previously worked with his wife at UIHC. Please keep these families in your thoughts and prayers as well.

We learned this week that Geery Howe lost his 98 year old father to Covid-19 so please remember this family as they grieve. But as a joy, yesterday Geery and Jane learned that they are proud new grandparents. Their son Ryan and his wife Lucy welcomed a son, Luke Orion Howe.

Lyn's friend Barbara (who has been on our prayer list in the past) is asking us to keep all the airline pilots in our prayers (her son is one) encouraging companies to keep them up to speed in training so all will be safe when WE may be the ones flying and in their care.

A reminder to offer prayer for all those who have lost jobs (and have families to support) that opportunities will open up for employment.

I would like for us to remember all the residents in nursing homes and care facilities, as well as the workers in the packing plants across the state where the largest percentages of the virus are occurring. As businesses begin to open up, it will important for all to continue to practice safe care for ourselves and others.

The Message **The Women in our Heritage**

When thinking about what to share on this special Mother's Day, I remembered sharing a Mother's Day message when I was the pastor at Pleasant Plain Friends back in 1998-99. So I flipped through the old notebook of messages I had kept, and found one from '98. The message I shared that morning was on being a memory maker, and one phrase I had written was this: "In 10-15-20 years from now, what will be the memories our children will still be talking about?"

And I realized it's been 22 years since I asked that question! I had one daughter at Central College, one about to graduate from high school, a son finishing his sophomore year, and one his ninth grade. So this year I asked them to only share some of their memories of things we did together when they were growing up - rather than spend money on a gift - just to see what they might say now!

Although this is officially Mother's Day, I want to focus my thoughts on women in general, and the characteristics that we share with so many of the women in scripture, because we women each have things that illustrate the important lifelong traits that most all women share. (And don't worry, guys, your day will come when we get to Father's Day!)

As we take a look at some of these women in our heritage, I believe there are still lessons we can learn. This is my second Mother's Day since my mom's passing, and I am still learning ways to be a better woman - and mother - from her legacy. And there are also many

women in scripture who exhibited traits we can still aspire to today, even though it's important to keep in mind the patriarchal societies these women were a part of.

In the first book of our Bibles, Genesis, we find Hagar, a woman with the important trait of Endurance. Hagar, an Egyptian slave and maidservant to Abraham's wife Sarah, was no doubt told she needed to become Abraham's second wife because first wife Sarah couldn't conceive and give him a child; Hagar probably had no say in the matter. Hagar does bear Abraham a son, Ishmael, which causes friction with Sarah (can you imagine that scenario?!) When Hagar and Ishmael were mistreated by Sarah, they fled, trying to go back to their homeland, but eventually ending up living in a desert where survival was extremely difficult. But Hagar was certain God would bless Ishmael, and it's commonly believed today that Ishmael's descendants became a part of the Muslim faith, while Jews consider themselves to be descendants of Abraham's and Sarah's child, Isaac, born later in their lives. Hagar endured a lot in her life, but God blessed her for it.

In thinking about endurance, we don't have to think too hard about this time we are currently in! We have been ordered to endure a lot – a virus that makes living difficult. Maybe not as difficult as Hagar in the desert, but I am convinced that good things will come for us, too, and we must endure, especially when caring for our children and loved ones when we can't always be physically with them.

When I mention the story of this next woman, Jochebed, found in the first two chapters of the book of Exodus, the name may not sound familiar. But you might remember her if I mention she was Moses' mother who put him in a reed basket and set him in the Nile to hide him and keep him safe. Her name may not be familiar because she's not given much credit, but without her mothering of Moses and doing everything in her power to keep him from being one of the Hebrew boys Pharaoh declared were to be thrown into the Nile and drowned, there could not have been a leader to take the Israelites out of Egypt where they had been enslaved. Jochebed's legacy was the lengths she went to protect her child.

Who of us women – especially mothers, even if it's the mother of cats or any pets – doesn't want to protect those we care for? In many ways, most women are 'mamma bears' when it comes to being protective of those we care for. A mamma bear will do almost anything to keep her cubs safe, and we read stories of human mothers ferociously trying to protect their children. I think of all the health care workers right now who are doing everything in their power to protect themselves, their families, and their patients.

I hated living twenty minutes from Fairfield when my kids eventually gained that freedom that a driver's license provides. I wanted to protect them from the 'other drivers' who might cause them to be in an accident. I also wanted to protect them from Middle School bullies (and I will admit to not doing a very good job of it at times). Jochebed is a wonderful example of the lengths we should go to in order to protect all those in our care.

These next two women - Naomi and Ruth – exemplify another important trait. Their story is found in the book of Ruth, and their legacy is being faithful to family. After ten years of their extended family living together: Naomi's two sons and their wives, Ruth and Orpah, the sons both died. In a patriarchal society, a woman without a husband basically had no life, so Naomi released her daughters-in-law to go find new husbands. You probably know the rest of the story, how Ruth knew Naomi would have trouble surviving alone as a single woman, and refused to leave her side, choosing to have them both move to a new land and live out their lives together with Ruth's new husband, Boaz.

I remember my mother-in-law telling me about how she and her two sisters would each take four months of the year to care for their mother when she had health issues and could no longer live alone. This was certainly a common past practice for many families. I'm not sure we have done today's families any favors when at the first signs of disease and aging, we immediately put them in a nursing home. But this is a different time when many families have all adults working outside the home, making caring for a parent very difficult.

I remember when my dad began to require more help and how my mom struggled to care for him for several years until she no longer had the strength to do so. But I learned how important it is to care for family when I watched mom go to the care center three times a day to help my dad with eating, shaving him and brushing his teeth, kissing him goodnight before leaving each evening, and even just sitting with him in his room as he dozed. The importance of family is probably one of the strongest traits my mom and my mother-in-law both possessed and demonstrated to their families. And when my own family would drive up to my parents for a visit, Mom always asked us if we couldn't just stay a little longer.

This is an area most of us could do a better job of remembering the lessons we can learn from our heritage when it comes to supporting and caring for our extended families.

The story of 'never give up' Hannah is another woman's life experience we can learn from in the first chapter of Samuel. Hannah was also a woman unable to have a child, but she continually prayed for a son, with the promise she would give him to the Lord. I think Hannah might have been the first Quaker since she was praying so hard that she was shaking, but no words were coming out. The priest Eli, who was witnessing it, thought she was drunk. Hannah did eventually have a son, Samuel, and when he was old enough, Hannah delivered him to Eli, and Samuel went on to lead Israel and anointed the first two Israelite kings, Saul and David.

I wonder how many times we have wanted something so badly, but when it didn't happen right away, we give up trying. Whether it's a job, a life partner, or just something we want to be better at, I think we sometimes just give up too easily. Most things that are important are worth working hard to attain with a never give up attitude!

And finally, I am sure most everyone is familiar with this final woman we can learn lessons from, Mary, the mother of Jesus, who helps us see ways to overcome sorrow in our lives. You'll find stories of Mary interspersed throughout the gospels, and I think of all the suffering she endured. Losing young Jesus when he took off for the temple and was

teaching the elders (probably much to their distaste), then watching him minister to the people and feeling that mother's pride. But to watch a beloved child be horrifically crucified? That is probably something none of us mothers – or any woman for that matter - will ever want to have to experience!

But Mary didn't stay away when Jesus ran into trouble, and was there at the foot of the cross, watching excruciating suffering of this beloved child. One of the gospel writers has Mary as one of the women coming to Jesus' burial tomb to put spices on his body. Mary had other children to continue to support long after Jesus' death, and I am confident she did not fall apart and abandon her family, but worked through her grief to continue to be a strong woman.

And I think of all the grandparents, parents, children, and friends who have had to watch a loved one die during this current pandemic, and like Mary, could do nothing to be a comfort. But I wonder if Mary didn't have an idea that this son of hers was going to leave a legacy that would give meaning to the suffering – a future time when millions and millions of people would follow his teachings to make a difference in the world.

And we, too, must look to the lessons of the times we face suffering. Death always causes sorrow, but it doesn't have to cause the loved ones left behind to give up hope. We will all leave a legacy when we pass this life, so it's important to learn what we can do to be the best we can be while we have this opportunity.

We can still learn from these lessons of endurance, protection, the importance of family, never giving up, and overcoming sorrow from these ancient women that are a part of our heritage. So to all those of you who are mothers or who simply had a mother, this is the day to not only celebrate, but take assessments of our lives and the legacies **we** want to leave behind – ten...fifteen...or twenty years from now!

I'd like to close with a familiar poem by Mary Korzan as a dedication to the legacies of all women on this special day. It's titled, "When You Thought I Wasn't Looking".

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I wanted
to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed
a stray cat, and I thought it was good to be kind to
animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you
make my favorite cake for me, and I knew that
little things are special things.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard
you say a prayer, and I believed that there was
a God to talk to.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I felt you kiss me goodnight, and I
felt loved.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw
tears come from your eyes, and I learned
that sometimes things hurt, but it's
alright to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw that you cared, and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I looked....and I wanted to say thanks for all the things I saw when
you thought I wasn't looking.

***May we remember our Mothers today, and the legacies and lessons
from them as well as what we are leaving for future generations!***

