

Wednesday Musings August 8, 2018

We spend a fair amount of time in church praying for individuals and that is important and right. But today it's also appropriate to pray for ourselves as a nation, for us as a people. One year ago today a so called "Unite the Right" rally was held in Charlottesville, VA. It in essence, it was a Neo-Nazi / KKK rally along with a counter protest. When it was all done, one of the self-confessed Neo-Nazis drove his car into the protestors, injuring many and killing one. In many ways, it was a tactic that could have been ripped directly from an Isis playbook. This weekend, that same group is planning an anniversary rally in Washington, DC. I suspect that authorities will actually be prepared for them this time. Beyond all that, however, is the need for prayer for us as a nation. We, as a nation, have never fully come to grips with the issue of race. Our earliest history was built on the backs of slaves. And it wasn't only in the south where this "building" took place. A friend who is currently serving a church outside of Boston said that their historic church in abolitionist New England recently discovered that many of their founding members owned slaves. The dorm that I lived in while attending Princeton Seminary was the first and only building at the time the seminary began. Down in the basement of Alexander Hall there was space for slave quarters. Viewing people of color as less than human and a property to be owned is a part of our national heritage that we have never fully owned or come to grips with. We fought a Civil War over the issue. During the Jim Crow / segregation "separate but equal" period, people of color were no longer enslaved, but they were far from equal in any aspect of life. There was a story on the local news last week about a woman in the Triangle who was pulled over by police because the license plate holder on her car, installed at the dealership where she purchased the car, apparently obstructed part of the license. The officer who stopped her, approached the car, but the woman was confused about why she had been stopped. The officer then dragged her out of her car, handcuffed her behind her back, roughly shoved her into the back of his patrol car and took her to the police station to be booked. All of this was capture on a dash cam in the police car. All this for a license plate holder! After the report I said to Margot, if that woman had been white, she never would have been stopped.

We have made progress on the issue of race, but we still have a very long way to go. The events of Charlottesville one year ago as well as repeated stories like this woman with the "defective" license plate holder, bear witness to just how much work lies ahead. So, as we pray for those in need, let us also pray for ourselves and our nation, and the work we need to do continue moving forward. And let us also pray that this weekend will be less violent than the one in Charlottesville a year ago.

On a lighter topic, tonight is our annual Ice Cream Social. Folks will gather in the Bray Fellowship Hall starting at 7. There promises to be a wealth of delicious ice cream and toppings, as well as some tasty munchies. This coming Sunday the Official Board will meet. Please note that we are back on our regular schedule, so we will gather at 8:30 am. However, rather than meeting in the Conference Room, we'll start in the sanctuary. All of our boards and committees are having their pictures taken for display at Homecoming. This Sunday is the Official Boards' turn. Merle Sharpe and Ken Little decided that the sanctuary would make the perfect backdrop for this photo. Afterwards,

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we'll convene the meeting in the church library. Following worship, the Board of Christian Education will make use of that same room for its meeting. This Sunday will also be the second in my sermon series on the temptations of Jesus. This week, "The Great Anxieties of Life: Part Two – Certainty." For the sermon we'll be looking at Ex. 16.1-4, 13-21 and Mtt. 4.5-7.

Our Homecoming Celebration on September 16th is rapidly drawing near. As a part of that celebration, Cindy Sharpe has agreed to make commemorative T-Shirts to mark the occasion. Samples of the shirts will be available during the reception follow worship the next several Sundays. All shirts are priced at \$10 apiece, and they come in different sizes, colors and fabrics. Look for order forms in the parlor or in the church office. All orders and payments should be made to Merle. The deadline for orders will be September 2nd. Shirts will be delivered by the 9th, and we encourage folks to wear them for Homecoming on the 16th! Also, in anticipation of Homecoming, check out the church's art gallery. Hanging there you will find two stained glass windows from our old church along with four pen and ink drawings of the four buildings associated with our church's past.

On the prayer concern front: Rodney Paul was hospitalized on Sunday. He had a blood and intestinal infection and, fortunately, he was able to go home this afternoon. He appreciates all your prayers. Connie Collins' husband, Tim, is scheduled to have his shoulder surgery this coming Monday. Last Friday we heard from Bob Barrow's that his daughter, Emily, had been hospitalized with a very rapid heart rate. Doctors believe that this condition can be controlled with medications. Now they are now running tests to determine the best option. As we announced in worship on Sunday, Anne Marie Greer's grandmother passed away this weekend. She had been in a Hospice Care facility in Canada where she lived. Mason and Matthew left to drive north Sunday afternoon. On Monday, the Fonville's boarded a plane for Prague to visit family and care for grandchildren. Parkie King continues his rehabilitation at Liberty Commons. Then, please continue to keep in prayer - for Anna Gerow, Nancy Thomas, Louise Walters, Margaret Turner and Donna Freeman.

Hope to see you at the IC Social tonight.

Mark