

Message from Pastor John Medwid – November 2020 Newsletter for First Lutheran Church

Upheavals, Change, Progress

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

“On the turn”

Keep walking, though there's no place to get to.

Don't try to see through the distances.

That's not for human beings. Move within,

But don't move the way fear makes you move.

I love the works of Rumi who was the 13th century Persian poet, Islamic scholar, theologian, and mystic. The imagery and imagination of poetry provides an apt landscape for us at this juncture of our lives. In the midst of tremendous upheaval, where the very foundations of our lives are shifting, poetry can provide some context where we can momentarily stand and look over the rubble!

Corona virus, murder hornets (are they still around?), political upheavals, polarization, natural disasters, racism, climate change . . . the list seems almost endless! While each issue individually could seem overwhelming, the combination of them is over the top!

In the midst of all of this, the advice of Rumi is very appropriate. We may feel as though there is no place to get to in our lives. Familiar landmarks have faded away and disappeared. Pre-pandemic life seems like a distant memory. When our external GPS is in a permanent state of recalculating, we need to take the words of Rumi to heart and “move within.” Our internal landscape, our deepest center, can provide a necessary anchor during these challenging and uncertain times. To be grounded and to be centered is so important when the external landscape of our lives is in shambles. Each day provides us with opportunities to sink deeply into the Ground of our Being which goes by the familiar name of God. In the midst of the storms and chaos at the surface of our lives, we find within that center of stillness where we can gain our bearings and our balance.

Fear can be a powerful force in our lives. It can paralyze and it can motivate. Rumi's warning is well taken to not allow fear to influence how we live and what we do. Hopefully, we see the challenges of life as opportunities to channel our energy and momentum in constructive ways to bring about positive change. That change, though, must begin in each of our hearts! It can be easy to point the finger at people and institutions that are the cause of all of the ills in our society, but the truth is that until we can admit our part in the situation, then nothing will change for the better. The quote of Gandhi which says, “Be the change that you wish to see in the world” is an apt one for our times. It all begins within and then moves outward!

Keep walking. Move within. Keep fear in check. Perhaps it's not the most profound advice, but it's a start!

Peace,

Pastor Medwid