

## PASTOR'S NOTES, September 2020

*“So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.”*

- Galatians 6:10 (NRSV)

*“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

- Hebrews 10:25 (NIV)

Confession time: Over the last month, especially during a couple weeks in that time, I have been (let me put it nicely) a less-than-focused Christian. You probably would not have noticed, since few of us see each other daily. But with the move to the new house, and especially the process of cleaning out the old house to sell, I have been very focused on these tasks, so much that I have given little time (at least physically) to other people (except for Sue).

It occurs to me that there are naturally times when we are so consumed with a task that we might find ourselves more self-centered than usual. For many of us, this happens when we have to care for a family member, or when we ourselves get sick. When I was in school, it was also the time around midterms and finals. So it is not unusual for us to sometimes go through these times. The danger is that while it can be a time we can excuse ourselves for not thinking of others, we can get caught in this. During the semi-quarantine over the past few months, there are a lot of Christians who have said, *“I just can't do anything for the church or anybody else.”* This was how many of us initially responded to our community's shutdown. This is true still for many of you, especially if you have health issues. However, for most of us it is more true to say *“I can't do for others in the ways I am used to doing.”*

While I was looking through old records during my move over the last couple months, I came across a church program I had used years ago. The people who decided to participate set a daily devotion time early in the morning. They agreed to take about a half hour each day that would include

- prayer,
- 10 minutes reflecting on a Bible verse,
- 10 minutes deciding on some unexpected act of kindness for someone else that you would do that day,
- and a little time planning to serve the church at least 2 hours a week.

This program was a stickler about the early morning devotional time, but it was from a time when people had a more common schedule. With night shifts, weekend work hours, and shifting work schedules, the important thing for each of us is to find that half hour time that will work for us.

In the past, when church leaders called on people to give at least 2 hours of service to the church, there were many more options, such as teaching Sunday School, joining the choir, or being part of a work group to fix up a part of the church or fixing up someone else's house. But even then, the most important work of the church has been to show our love to others. For the people we know, or others in the church directory, we can use phone calls, letters, and online

messages. Our kindnesses might mean dropping off something at someone's door. So, even though we are more limited in our options in doing service, there is still service we can do for others that is the essence of service to the church.

When we are extremely busy, it is even more important to set aside time to pray and plan to do something for others. I confess that I, too, have been caught off-guard by this, consumed by tasks that need to be done and only later realizing that I still could have taken at least a few minutes (or a half-hour) to plan so that my life this day makes a difference to someone else. So, for me, I intend to re-focus on making each day count for someone besides me. I invite your prayers not only that I will be a better pastor for all of you, but that I can be a "more-focused" Christian and we all can benefit.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name "Ken" written in a cursive style.