

Pastor Letter 1/20/21

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A few weeks ago, I had a really uplifting conversation. We discussed why so many are struggling to see the goodness of God in these times. It appears we can have a great uplifting conversation or experience and then, only minutes or hours later, read or watch something that brings us back to this dark place of anger and frustration. In that conversation, I shared that this is because we are being bombarded with negativity. I told of my personal example in which I was having a great day, feeling close to God. Later in the day, my husband wanted to show me a twitter feed he was following that disturbed him. As I read one person's comment, I could feel my joy slipping away and being replaced by hatred and frustration at someone I don't even know. Someone who is a child of God, even if they are saying things that were hard for me to swallow. If we are not careful, we can succumb to the darkness by consuming too many negative voices. I am not suggesting we bury our heads in the sand, but spiritual growth and closeness to God more often comes when we unplug from the world and reconnect with Christ. Try committing this week for a specified time, perhaps even a whole day, to not consume any media in any form. Perhaps read the Bible, spend time in prayer, play some of your favorite music, read a good book and listen for what God is doing inside of you as a result. It may just surprise you how uplifting this time away can be and how regenerating it can be for your faith journey.

Another way we turn to God to escape from the world's negativity is through worship. Worship of the God who calls us to act in ways above the darkness that is being pushed upon us. Worship allows us to give back to God for the regeneration God gives whenever we return to the ways of Christ. We continue this week with our in-person hybrid worship plan. Again, I would remind you that if you are worshipping in person to wear a mask, keep safe distances and wait to be dismissed by an usher. If you are worshipping at home, I would encourage you to set up a worship area. Maybe bring a candle and light it, or whatever helps the space feel more sacred and separate from where any negativity can be consumed. Let us come together for a time of worship focused on an amazing, hopeful, joy giving, loving, peace filled God.

In His peace,

Pastor Nicki

YouTube live and video recordings <https://www.espresbyterian.com/worship/> or <https://www.youtube.com/user/ESPresbyterian>

click on the link below near the time the service begins at 10:00am to watch the live stream <https://www.facebook.com/espresbyterian/>

Additionally, bulletins and an online hymnal have been put on the website and can be found at <https://www.espresbyterian.com/worship/sunday-bulletin/>

Ways to give- mail or drop of check/cash through no contact mail slot in office window. Drop off envelope in offering plates before or after worship services. Donate on our website by going to the home page at <https://www.espresbyterian.com/> and clicking on the Donate button in the upper right corner. Designate where you would like the money to go by using the note section.