

Pastor Letter 3/2/22

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last night, my son, Gavin, and I were watching the Disney movie *Bedtime Stories* with the main character, Uncle Skeeter, played by Adam Sandler. In the last scene it was playing out the dream sequence the kids shared the night before, which was supposed to end up with their uncle Skeeter on fire. As such, the uncle is hyper vigilant in trying to avoid any fire. At the conclusion of the scene, which is celebrating his boss's birthday, he gets so scared of the fire being emitted from the cake that he sprays it with a fire extinguisher, causing him to be fired from his job. Gavin was confused because he did not realize the word meant a physical fire, not in the way it was used. In our daily lives, many people mix up words and definitions. One common example is sympathy and empathy. It is important though, as Christ's disciples, to distinguish between the two because when we are dealing with care of others, it will help us avoid pitfalls that might harm someone more.

The typical definitions are sympathy is when we feel sorry for someone going through a significant difficulty that we have not experienced ourselves. Empathy is when we can relate to (not know) the person's experience because we have experienced something similar ourselves. As Christ's disciples, we are called to be there with those who are hurting to not just have sympathy, but to participate in empathy. As scholar Brene Brown says, it is "feeling with people". The difference can be displayed in a parable like fashion. If someone were to fall into a well, those who are empathetic will find a way to lower themselves in the hole with someone and those who are sympathetic will shout from the top, "Do you want a sandwich?" It's not always easy and clear to see the difference, but empathy is being with someone. This means we must listen and work to where we can find connection and empathize in order to really feel their pain as if it were your own. Empathy is being the presence of Christ for those in need. To example Christ who for all people's sake, became human and suffered displaying what empathy as Christ's disciple looks like. May we seek to be empathetic for the many around us who are hurting as we seek to be Christ for them and all people we encounter.

In His Peace,

Pastor Nicki

**YouTube:** live stream and recording can be found at <https://www.espresbyterian.com/worship/> or <https://www.youtube.com/user/ESPresbyterian>

**Facebook:** 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/>

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