

June 23, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of The Old Scotch Church,

With the weeks of national unrest over inequalities in the U.S. came several statements from corporations, organizations and individuals. I've been looking to Scripture to guide me personally and pastorally as we seek in one more way to love God and to love our neighbors. With Session, I read Luke 18:9-14, where the Pharisee prays, boldly and loudly, "I thank you, God, that I am not like other people ..." Our invitation there is to see the folly of the Pharisee and instead come before God in humility, and to come before others with listening ears. We are called to listen and learn, because another's story often intersects our own story in ways we do not realize.

Last Sunday's text of Luke 7:1-10, with the Roman Centurion, who had built relationships with the elders of Israel and asked them for help, was an especially helpful lesson from Scripture. Here is a person of power choosing to learn about others, then build relationship with them, even to the point of loving them and being generous to them. Mutual respect is obvious, with a deep trust of one another. All of this happens before the actual need arises.

I am struck by the advance work we are called to in Scripture and by the urge to get ready for what God is about to do. The Centurion had the relationships in place to call upon when he needed them. That's a lesson for each of us – to build relationships with those who are different from us so that we understand one another better, and are ready to work together on issues.

Our differences with others can be racial, economical, cultural, educational, political, theological or you-name-it, so there are many ways we can engage another. I invite us all to start simply and share knowledge as we grow in our understanding of one another. Maybe while we're still sheltering it's about research, watching, and reading, but be ready for the other ways God might lead us into a wider knowledge of the varied and expansive humanity God created. Ultimately, God calls us to *engage* as disciples, which means acting out God's love in the world, because change is afoot, friends. May God lead us in the direction of faithful community with the world our Lord died to save, loving each person fully and equally.

Just a reminder that we'll be online for worship through September 6, with the hope of holding safe and responsible outdoor worship on July 26 and August 30. We'll keep communicating through mid-week letters and Friday prayer lists, as well as constantly updating our website.

Any questions? Our church office remains closed to the public, but Jeff Uecker is working in successful isolation at church and can answer all of your questions! (Church phone: 503.648.9573; church email: office@oldscotchchurch.org)

Friends, we look to the author and perfecter of our faith as we grow as disciples of Jesus. We trust our Sovereign God to lead us in next steps, as we also open our eyes, ears, and hearts to listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Tracie