

Hi friends!

I want to take a moment and send you thanks on behalf of my family and myself. The sudden death of my brother-in-law due to the Covid-19 infection has been heartbreaking for our family. I am often in tears as I return from the mailbox with stacks of envelopes from you all offering your sympathy and prayers. I admit that we have not read most of them just because we are still not quite in the place to sit with them right now but know that we are eternally grateful for them! I am not the only one who has been on the receiving end of your compassion and care. In just the past couple of weeks many in our staff have experienced the death of people close to us we love. Cynthia Bement is grieving the loss of her aunt who passed away quickly after a cancer diagnosis. Rachel Loomis received news that a dear friend passed away during childbirth of her first child. It has been a season of loss for so many of us. Some of us grieve the loss of loved ones who have died, some of us are deeply affected by the loss of a sense of “normal life” in the past year and a half. For many of us, we are finally starting to feel some sense of relief, only to have infection numbers spike and a new aggressive variant rear its head. Some of us feel as though we are experiencing something like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of the 19 months we have shared together.

I bring this all up for a couple of reasons 1) To tell you thank you for the way you have cared for one another. I communicate with many other pastors and other congregations on a regular basis and many, when under the kind of stress, we have experienced, do not treat each other well. I am so grateful that Kennewick First has shown love and care to one another in this season. 2) To remind us that in in this community of faith we get to experience the Love of God through our relationships in this church, AND we have the privilege of extending that same love, compassion to each

other, and to the world when we commit to loving God with all we are and loving our neighbors. Thank you for being that church!

Finally, I want to encourage all of us to evaluate our actions and risks in light of the Delta Variant that is sweeping through our community. We will continue to gather together for worship services, asking that all of us participate in the compassionate inconvenience of wearing masks, regardless of our vaccination status. We are asking that you make use of the sanitizing stations available as you enter, and that we don't linger in the building after the service. If you have been exposed to someone who has been ill or are showing symptoms of illness please stay home and take care of yourself. Even with those protocols in place and following the CDC and State guidelines for religious gatherings, many of us are not comfortable gathering in groups. Please know that you have our support if you decide in person worship is not the best choice for you! Knowing that is the case for many of us, we have made a commitment to make sure that we live stream our Worship services every Sunday so that you can continue to be part of the worshipping life of Kennewick First even remotely.

Thank- you friends!

Pastor Mark

Downtown Historic Walk

Don't Forget! On **Saturday, August 28th from 10 am to Noon**, you can "wander amongst" the history of our Kennewick Avenue businesses. Tour guides will regale you with stories of our past.

Do you remember places like Pratts Garage or the Polly-Anna, or the roller-skating rink above Washington Hardware? Come enjoy a walk-through history of "our town." I bet you have stories of your own to share!!!

Youth Group Parent and Student Orientation Meeting

The Jr. and Sr. UMY Orientation for teens and their parents will be held on Sunday, September 12th, from 6-8 PM. We will begin by meeting in the sanctuary to go over information about youth group, Sunday School, Cornerstone Bible study, trips, and fundraisers. Teens and parents will have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have. Following the information portion of the orientation, we will have an ice cream social!

Kennewick First UMC offers opportunities for 6th to 12th graders to learn and practice Christian principles and participate in fun activities. It is our goal to provide a safe and structured environment where the youth feel welcomed and loved by the Lord and their teachers and leaders. If you have any questions, please give our Director of Youth Ministries, Rachel Loomis a call at the Church.

Sunday Worship

Just a reminder that we are meeting in person every Sunday at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary for Sunday Worship. If you aren't able to join us in-person, remember that you can tune in to our livestream of the Worship Service on YouTube:

(<https://www.youtube.com/user/PiratesoftheColumbia>)

If you plan on joining us in person, we ask that you sign in when entering for worship, so that we have a way to contact you in case there is information that we need to give you regarding health issues. We are asking that all who are in attendance, regardless of your vaccination status, please wear a mask while indoors, and that all of us make use of the sanitizing stations as you enter the sanctuary. If you have been exposed to the virus or if you are showing symptoms of illness please stay home and join us remotely for worship.