

Sunday, June 2, 2019

John 17:20-26

Theme: "THE POINT OF DEPARTURE-A PRAYER FOR FUMC"

(Greetings)

Yesterday morning I was joined by the chairperson of the Council, Susan Fitchko, Ivy Cox, and ReJulia Stover...

We gathered at Crozet UMC to listen to Bishop Weaver as he offered words of hope...

He anointed those gathered, and he answered questions regarding the recent Judicial Council's decision...

During their two hours drive from Williamsburg to Crozet UMC, his wife, Linda, drove while Bishop Weaver composed a letter to us...

In his letter, he addressed the shooting in Virginia Beach...

The letter was distributed to pastors late yesterday morning and it read in part:

"Once again the Lord of light and love weeps over our nation and the tragic murders in Virginia Beach...

We join in prayer for those killed, their families and the Virginia Beach community...

May they know the comforting presence and eternal hope of Christ in their grief and pain...

We give thanks for those who quickly responded with courage as neighbors helping neighbors, as well as those who arrived with public safety and medical help...

Our prayers and support are also with our Virginia Conference United Methodist congregations serving in that area...

I invite us all to work to end the violence that is on the news every day in our society...

Let us reflect on why such terrible events continue to happen. What initiatives can followers of Jesus take to help create a cultural moral commitment to "Thou shall not kill"?

How can we more effectively care for mental illness, enact sensible gun legislation, reject the glorification of violence in the media, and be sensitive to the signs of stress building in friends, co-workers, and neighbors?

In short, how can our congregations be “part of the solution”, following Christ, the Prince of Peace?"

Bishop Weaver 's letter invites us to love one another and embody the peace of Christ...

His call is timely, especially during a time in our society when the civil discourse is everything but love and peace peace...

But as I read Bishop Weaver's letter, I realized that his call to action also addresses a key factor as it relates to the lectionary text for this morning...

In this chapter, Jesus prays for Himself: "Father, the hour has come..."In other words, He declares what has been accomplished...

Later in the chapter, Jesus intercedes for His disciples...

But He doesn't stop there, He expands the plead to include all believers...

FUMC, like Bishop Weaver, all loving Christians, and the families affected by the Virginia Beach shooting, my heart grieves this morning...

We continue to pray each day: "Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven..." (Matthew 6:10)

When we pray that prayer we are saying that the way things are in heaven is the way they should be on earth...

We can reason and conclude that there isn't any sickness in heaven so there should be no sickness on earth...

There isn't any depression in heaven so there should be no depression on earth...

There isn't any shooting in heaven so there should be no shooting on earth...

Butvis this what the Lord's Prayer actually means...

I do not think so...The Lord desires that we love one another and that His will for us is peace, happiness, and joy, and good health...

So, when we pray for someone who is ill, we shouldn't ask for God's will to be done, we should name the illness...

At the point of departure, my heart breaks, but it also rejoices this morning...

It breaks because of our broken world and the violence that continues to take place each day...

But it rejoices because as I lift up my face to the Lord, I do so with great hope...

"Father, the hour has come..."

Father, the season is over...

Father, the work you sent me to accomplish at this station is over...

Father, prepare me for the next station; prepare me for the next task...

But I would be remised if I did not intercede for the disciples I am leaving behind and those still to come...

FUMC, this is a prayer for you...

I pray that all will be one (unity...)

I pray that you will abide in the Lord...

I pray that you will glory in the Lord...

I pray that you will behold His glory...

I pray that He will be your foundation...

I pray that you will embody the Christian Faith...

I pray that you will perfect what it means to live in harmony...

I pray that the same transmission of the glory from God, to Jesus, to the church, will have the same effect on the unity of Christ among you.

I pray that you will allow the Oneness of Jesus to become an expression of your love for one another...

I pray that your love will reflect God's love for Christ and His church, since it is such love that motivates and justifies the church's mission to the world...

I pray for protection...

I pray for prosperity...

I pray for guidance...

I pray for spiritual growth...

In closing, Jesus invokes the First and Second persons of the Trinity to draw distinction between the world's ignorance from His and his disciples' knowledge of God...

(John 17:25)

"O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me..."

At the point of departure, Jesus sums up His work, past and future, properly describing its purpose and character in terms of the realization of the love of God through Christ among His disciples...

(John 17:26)

"And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them..."

FUMC, at the point of departure, I hope I have faithfully declared to you the name of Jesus...

I hope I have faithfully declared to you His love, grace, and peace...

I hope I have faithfully declared to you the love with which Jesus loves me...

I hope that that same love be in and remain with you...

As we transition to the Lord's Table, I prayer that you come with an expectation of meeting Christ...

Amen!