

June 2020 – Season of Pentecost
Series: *Unafraid*

Brainstorming Summary 5-18-20

based on

Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times

by Adam Hamilton

Members present: Karen Booth, Larry Jorgenson, Pastor Mary, Vicki Zuker, Kate Robbins, Diane Thompson, Betty Kinney, Karen Post, Carole Koch

2020 theme: 20/20 Vision – Seeking God’s Vision for Ourselves, Our Church, Our Community, and Our World

20/20 Vision theme connection: “Do not be afraid” is a constant word that we receive from God (100+ times in Scripture) and God’s desire for us to view the world with faith and not fear.

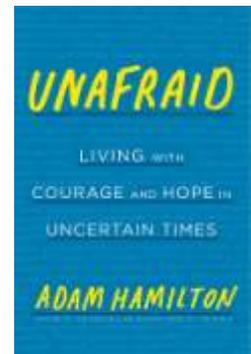
“Fear the Lord” is a call to be in awe of God – not to be afraid of God.

IMPORTANT NOTE: We are under a “shelter in place” order until at least May 28. Worship will be livestreamed from Pastor Mary’s house until the order is lifted. When the order is lifted, we’ll return to the sanctuary and continue to livestream worship each Sunday. However, we’ll also follow the directive of our Michigan Conference. If Bishop Bard directs us to continue to suspend in-person gatherings, we’ll work with a minimal crew to produce worship. We will need to make a decision about if we’ll continue with one worship service or move to two services.

Overview:

Everyone worries – some more than others – and there is a great need to address fear and worry in our time, especially in this time of Covid-19 affecting the whole world. All of us live with a measure of fear about something, but we don’t have to be controlled by it. We can live with courage and hope, secure in God’s love and presence with us.

We hope that this series can be a church-wide study, including a book study and daily devotional guide for adults along with specific resources for youth and children.



Resources: This book was not written with a Christian audience in mind. It was published in 2018 by Random House, a secular publisher. The writing rings true today in spite of being in a very different time. This is in keeping with the mission of Hamilton’s church to reach unchurched and dechurched people.

- Book intro <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhvscg4gch0>
- Series promo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0L9i4Z-3g5A>
- E-reader version <https://newbbstore.com/bbook/unafraid/> (\$6.99) or on Amazon (\$9.99)

- Companion book – Living Unafraid: Lessons on Hope from 31 of the Bible’s Most-Loved Stories. This is included in the bigger hardcover, Unafraid, at no additional cost.
- Sections (there is more than one chapter per section)
 - Understanding and Countering Fear. This is similar to Angela Thompson’s video. The full list of mental health resources is found at <https://lakeharborumc.org/2020/03/mental-health-resources/>.
 - Crime, Race, Terrorism, and Politics
 - Failure, Disappointing Other, Insignificance, and Loneliness
 - Apocalypse, Change, Missing Out, and Finances
 - Aging, Illness, Dying, and Fear of the Lord
- Adam Hamilton preached a six-week series:
 - “An Age of High Anxiety”
 - “Fear of the Other”
 - “Friendless and Alone?”
 - “Fear of Failure”
 - “The Sky Is Falling”
 - “Sickness, Growing Old and Death”
- First session panel discussion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-M80Hu154w>. Diane’s take: Very well done.
- Lynne’s Pinterest board for “Unafraid” <https://www.pinterest.com/lynandlid/unafraid-by-adam-hamilton/>
- Images (or ideas for images) that can be used in projection
- Check out other churches’ series. Here is a link to Church of the Resurrection, Adam Hamilton’s church in Leawood, Kansas: <https://cor.org/leawood/sermon-series/unafraid-living-with-courage-and-hope>

Images/metaphors:

- Tangled up yarn
- Paralysis
- Being “stuck” – effects of worry
- GriefShare rubber band ball of feelings, right
- Scissors cutting the “Un” from “Unafraid”



Music ideas: Use #2030 “First Song of Isaiah” each week.

- Be Thou My Vision (UMH 451)
- Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus (UMH 349)
- He Lives (UMH 310) – *and though my heart grows weary, I never will despair...*
- Easter People, Raise Your Voices (UMH 304) – *Fear and death can no more stop us from our pressing here below...*
- Held by Natalie Grant (death/dying)
- You Are Mine (FWS 2218) – *Do not be afraid, I am with you...*
- God of Grace and God of Glory (UMH 577) – *Grant us wisdom, grant us courage...*
- God of Love and God of Power (UMH 578) – *We are not the first to be banished by our fears from thee; give us courage...*

- How Firm a Foundation (UMH 529) – *Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed...*
- You'll Never Walk Alone – *Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart...*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV5_LQArLa0
- Standing on the Promises (UMH 374)
- In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful (FWS 2195)
- "Whom Shall I Fear?" by Chris Tomlin
- "Fear Is a Liar" by Zach Williams (Loneliness)
- "Trust in You" by Lauren Daigle
- "Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)" by Hillsong (failure)
- "No Longer Slaves" by Bethel Music
- "Even If" by Mercy Me (death/dying)
- "Live Like You Were Dying" by Tim McGraw
- "I Hope You Dance" sung by Lee Ann Womack

Ideas for the series:

- Use resources for those without Internet to stay connected throughout this series
- God moment/Star Word reflection each week – COURAGE, FAITH, etc. Jill McMahon is will the share hers, "renewal." Kate Robbins' is "delight."

Resources:

- Daily devotional readings from Unafraid – Send out to homebound in mailing
- Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World – and Why Things Are Better Than You Think by Hans Rosling. From the introduction: This is a book about the world and how it really is. It is also a book about you, and why you (and almost everyone I have ever met) do not see the world as it really is. It is about what you can do about it, and how this will make you feel more positive, less stressed, and more hopeful as you walk out of the circus tent and back into the world. Related TED Talk:
https://www.ted.com/talks/hans_rosling_the_best_stats_you_ve_ever_seen

Visuals: FEAR acronym – *False Events Appearing Real*

- Face your fears with faith.
- Examine your assumptions in light of the facts.
- Attack your anxieties with action.
- Release your cares to God.

Create:

- Hands-on item to distribute on May 31 with Communion
- Image that can be used as a screensaver or printed out. Send it out during the series.

Publicity: "See You on Sunday!" and June Harbor Light

General discussion points: 1) There are enough topics in this book that we might want to revisit them when we plan for 2021.

June 7, 2020: "The Only Thing We Have to Fear Is..."

Trinity Sunday - LIVESTREAM

Peace with Justice Sunday (special offering)

Scripture: Isaiah 40: 28-31 (Contemporary English Version)

²⁸Don't you know? Haven't you heard? The Lord is the eternal God, Creator of the earth. He never gets weary or tired; his wisdom cannot be measured.

²⁹The Lord gives strength to those who are weary. ³⁰Even young people get tired, then stumble and fall. ³¹But those who trust the Lord will find new strength. They will be strong like eagles soaring upward on wings; they will walk and run without getting tired.

Scripture: Psalm 27 (Contemporary English Version)

¹You, Lord, are the light that keeps me safe. I am not afraid of anyone. You protect me, and I have no fears.

²Brutal people may attack and try to kill me, but they will stumble. Fierce enemies may attack, but they will fall. ³Armies may surround me, but I won't be afraid; war may break out, but I will trust you.

⁴I ask only one thing, Lord: Let me live in your house every day of my life to see how wonderful you are and to pray in your temple.

⁵In times of trouble, you will protect me. You will hide me in your tent and keep me safe on top of a mighty rock. ⁶You will let me defeat all of my enemies. Then I will celebrate, as I enter your tent with animal sacrifices and songs of praise.

⁷Please listen when I pray! Have pity. Answer my prayer. ⁸My heart tells me to pray. I am eager to see your face, ⁹so don't hide from me. I am your servant, and you have helped me. Don't turn from me in anger. You alone keep me safe. Don't reject or desert me. ¹⁰Even if my father and mother should desert me, you will take care of me.

¹¹Teach me to follow, Lord, and lead me on the right path because of my enemies. ¹²Don't let them do to me what they want. People tell lies about me and make terrible threats, ¹³but I know I will live to see how kind you are.

¹⁴Trust the Lord! Be brave and strong and trust the Lord.

Synopsis: Fear and worry are a reality for everyone – no one is exempt. But these don't have to control and dictate how we live every day. We can trust in God's presence and care for us – and in God's promise to walk with us and guide us through times of trouble.

Felt need: To understand the physical and mental dynamics of fear (both good and bad) and God's presence to help us temper fear with faith

Visuals: Diagram of brain. Dog's thundershirt.

Media: All of these videos are helpful and we may use more than one.

- "Blessing in the Chaos." Length: 3:29. Cost: Free. A visual poem from https://www.danstevens.com/store/blessing_in_the_chaos. We own it.
- "The Weight I Carry." Length: 1:54. Cost: We own it. Last used: September 2009. We each carry around so many hurts, burdens, and struggles. Some seem to be insignificant on the surface while others feel impossible to shake. Added up, these struggles are overwhelming and can suffocate the joy intended for our lives.
<https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/worship-tracks/14676/the-weight-i-carry>

- “FDR Nothing to Fear But Fear Itself 1933 Inaugural Address.” Length: 0:06. Cost: Free. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cS17za6pVk> Comments: This calls us to take healthy risks, a good thing.

Discussion points: 1) People’s reactions to the pandemic are varied. Some said they were scared to begin with but are now terrified. Others are growing less afraid. 2) Pastor Mary remembers growing up with lots of fears. She also remembers being at a family camp and hearing a youth group leader ask, “How do you spell faith?” The answer was “risk.” 3) Larry: Fear of an unnatural death, i.e. protracted suffering or stroke as opposed to dying quietly in bed. 4) Brains develop at different rates in males and females. 5) Karen Booth’s young neighbor remarked that over the winter she had forgotten how high the play set is – a healthy fear that keeps her from taken unhealthy risks. 6) We liked: Fear does not stop death, it stops life.

Related info: Angela Thompson’s video from focus on mental health <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z9YcwEQ4-8&feature=youtu.be> Carole: Hearing that judgment is the brain’s way of scanning for safety was very helpful. See if we can use a clip illustrating how the brain works.

Activity: Normally we celebrate communion on the first Sunday of the month, but we will not this week as we plan on doing so on May 31.

Music: #143 “On Eagle Wings”

June 14, 2020: “Fighting Fear of the Other”

2nd Sunday after Pentecost - LIVESTREAM

Scripture: Deuteronomy 10: 12-22 (Common English Bible) “What the Lord Requires”

¹² Now in light of all that, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you? Only this: to revere the Lord your God by walking in all his ways, by loving him, by serving the Lord your God with all your heart and being, ¹³ and by keeping the Lord’s commandments and his regulations that I’m commanding you right now. It’s for your own good!

¹⁴ Clearly, the Lord owns the sky, the highest heavens, the earth, and everything in it. ¹⁵ But the Lord adored your ancestors, loving them and choosing the descendants that followed them—you!—from all other people. That’s how things still stand now. ¹⁶ So circumcise your hearts and stop being so stubborn, ¹⁷ because the Lord your God is the God of all gods and Lord of all lords, the great, mighty, and awesome God who doesn’t play favorites and doesn’t take bribes. ¹⁸ He enacts justice for orphans and widows, and he loves immigrants, giving them food and clothing. ¹⁹ That means you must also love immigrants because you were immigrants in Egypt. ²⁰ Revere the Lord your God, serve him, cling to him, swear by his name alone! ²¹ He is your praise, and he is your God—the one who performed these great and awesome acts that you witnessed with your very own eyes. ²² Your ancestors went down to Egypt with a total of seventy people, but now look! The Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the nighttime sky!

Scripture: Matthew 5: 43-48 (Contemporary English Version) “Love for Enemies”

⁴³ You have heard people say, “Love your neighbors and hate your enemies.”

⁴⁴But I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you. ⁴⁵ Then you will be acting like your Father in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people. And he sends rain for the ones who do right and for the ones who do wrong. ⁴⁶If you love only those people who love you, will God reward you for that? Even tax collectors love their friends. ⁴⁷If you greet only your friends, what's so great about that? Don't even unbelievers do that? ⁴⁸ [£] But you must always act like your Father in heaven.

Synopsis: Fear of “the other” takes many forms in our world – racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, and more. These fears are not a new reality, but continue to be sin that we must confront both personally and systemically. Often we vilify one another in order to give credit to unfounded fears. God calls us to see one another as beloved children – not as “us” and “them.”

Felt need: To confront our personal prejudice and systemic racism, xenophobia, and privilege

Visuals: Dividing line of “otherness.” Woman of Asian descent holding a sign, “I am not the virus.”

Media: “Brother.” Length: 3:32. Cost: Free with our subscription. Jesus was clear when he told us to love our enemies. In fact, He said that people would know we are His disciples by the way that we love (John 13:35). Featuring music by [The Brilliance](#), “Brother” reminds us that we have more in common than we realize. <https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/brother/>.
Comments: Michael has probably sung songs by them.

Discussion points: 1) Although we’ve addressed this topic during our series on politics and “Us and Them,” the issue hasn’t gone away. 2) Stereotyping is common. Vilifying others is a way of giving credit to our unfounded fears. 3) Ahmaud Arbery’s story is scary; a parent/spouse/child should never have to worry about a loved one being shot for jogging. 4) As a hospital volunteer, Bonnie had to make a call about someone openly carrying a weapon. He had a permit to do so. 5) Cultural differences affect how we see each other. 6) What would you do if you weren’t afraid? 7) Larry noticed an interesting Pinterest post about the six types of self care. 8) Notable pins: Rest your mind; calm your heart. Never let your fear decide your fate. 9) Betty: Going out and seeing someone unmasked or seeing the crowds protesting at the Capitol triggers her instinct to stereotype others. 10) We liked: Equal rights for others does not mean less right for you; it’s not a pie. They tell you to be yourself then judge you. “The more you can increase fear of drugs and crime, welfare mothers, immigrants and aliens, the more you control all the people.” – *Norm Chomsky*.

Related info: Karen will send out the second article as a PDF.

- General Commission on Religion and Race - <https://www.gcorr.org/>. To learn more about implicit bias by taking an online course go to <https://www.gcorr.org/online-course-implicit-bias/>.
- “Ahmaud Arbery and the Trauma of Black Runner” by Danté Stewart. May 12, 2020. “Christianity Today.” I wish the world saw me as a Christian first, not as a threat.
- Adam Hamilton’s question: In the situation I find myself in, what is the most loving thing I can do?

Activity:

Music: Us for Them; #577 “God of Grace and God of Glory”; #560 “Help Us Accept Each Other”; #572 “Pass It On”

June 21, 2020: “Facing Fear of Failure”

3rd Sunday after Pentecost - LIVESTREAM

Father’s Day

Scripture: Exodus 3-4 (NRSV) “Moses’ Call” Only Exodus 3: 7-12 is shown below.

⁷Then the LORD said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” ¹¹But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” ¹²He said, “I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.”

Scripture: I Samuel 17: 31-49 (New Living Translation) “David and Goliath”

³¹Then David’s question was reported to King Saul, and the king sent for him.

³²“Don’t worry about this Philistine,” David told Saul. “I’ll go fight him!”

³³“Don’t be ridiculous!” Saul replied. “There’s no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You’re only a boy, and he’s been a man of war since his youth.”

³⁴But David persisted. “I have been taking care of my father’s sheep and goats,” he said. “When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, ³⁵I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. ³⁶I have done this to both lions and bears, and I’ll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! ³⁷The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!”

Saul finally consented. “All right, go ahead,” he said. “And may the LORD be with you!”

³⁸Then Saul gave David his own armor—a bronze helmet and a coat of mail. ³⁹David put it on, strapped the sword over it, and took a step or two to see what it was like, for he had never worn such things before.

“I can’t go in these,” he protested to Saul. “I’m not used to them.” So David took them off again. ⁴⁰He picked up five smooth stones from a stream and put them into his shepherd’s bag. Then, armed only with his shepherd’s staff and sling, he started across the valley to fight the Philistine.

⁴¹Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, ⁴²sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. ⁴³“Am I a dog,” he roared at David, “that you come at me with a stick?” And he cursed David by the names of his gods. ⁴⁴“Come over here, and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!” Goliath yelled.

⁴⁵David replied to the Philistine, “You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶Today the LORD will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! ⁴⁷And everyone assembled here will know that the LORD rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the LORD’s battle, and he will give you to us!”

⁴⁸As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him. ⁴⁹Reaching into his shepherd’s bag and taking out a stone, he hurled it with his sling and hit the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank in, and Goliath stumbled and fell face down on the ground.

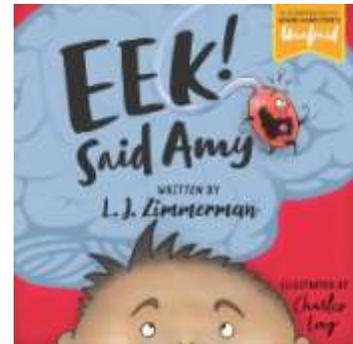
Synopsis: Fear of failing can stop us from living our faith because faith commands that we risk, which also makes us vulnerable. God calls us to be faithful, trusting that failure isn’t an end, but a part of living fully.

Felt need: To be honest about our fear of failure and be challenged by the reality that living our faith requires risk

Visuals:

Media:

- “10 Celebrities Who Failed” Length: 2:34.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHmMA3SCXVo>
Comments: Pastor Mary saw this video at Annual Conference. We don’t often see people’s back story.
- “Nike ‘Failure’ Michael Jordan Ad 1997.) Length: 0:30. Cost: Free. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvrbQBI4EII>
Comments: Adam Hamilton cited this ad in the book.
- “Worst-Case Scenario.” Length: 2:27. Cost: Free with our subscription. Controlled by fear and worry, our minds often race to the worst-case scenario in any circumstance. However, God wants us to trust Him with our tomorrows, and realize that He is faithful to walk with us through whatever may come.
<https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/worst-case-scenario/>



Related info: Adam Hamilton has learned:

1. Most things are never as hard as you fear they will be.
2. Successful people are willing to do things unsuccessful people are unwilling to do.
3. Discernment by nausea – taking the harder path.

Discussion points: 1) Every pastor struggles with the fear of failure. Pastors are not alone in this. Fear keeps us from trying things and stepping out in faith. 2) Dave Lorenz noted a few weeks ago in his God moment that more people are sharing their faith, himself included. 3) Betty: It can be easy to get worked up thinking about the possibility of failing. 4) Question for a FaceBook poll: Name one thing you’ve never tried for fear of failing. 5) This week the children will focus on God as the giver of grace. They will be asked, “What would you do if you knew you wouldn’t fail?” 6) Larry noticed that when he was working he did not have

time to think about failure, he had to act. It bothers him now that he thinks back about it as he can see he took some rather great risks and/or did stupid things. He wonders if men tried more in days past. They probably failed (and succeeded) more too. 7) This is Father's Day. Note that we have two very different examples of men in scripture. Moses had great doubts about his call. David seemed almost overly confident. 8) Karen Post liked several quotes: Failure isn't a problem; giving up is. Do not let fear decide your fate. 9) When Betty gave graduation speeches, she like to remind people of examples of recognizable figure who failed. They took risks and worked hard. 10) Pastor Mary recently watched a PBS special on the CEO of Spanx. She actually stood outside stores and gave people money to go in and buy her product for several years. 11) Revelation says to be ready.

Activity:

Music: For the Beauty of the Earth (UMH 92)

If gathered together, give a chocolate "treasure" to all men in the congregation.

NOTE: VBS (Virtual Bible School) is June 22-25. Related books:

- EEK! Said Amy by L. J. Zimmerman. Karen Booth has a copy.
- Scaredy Cat (there are many by different authors)
- "Chicken Little" (fable)

June 28, 2020: "Alone Together"

4th Sunday after Pentecost - LIVESTREAM

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12 (Contemporary English Version)

⁹You are better off to have a friend than to be all alone, because then you will get more enjoyment out of what you earn.

¹⁰If you fall, your friend can help you up. But if you fall without having a friend nearby, you are really in trouble. ¹¹If you sleep alone, you won't have anyone to keep you warm on a cold night. ¹²Someone might be able to beat up one of you, but not both of you. As the saying goes, "A rope made from three strands of cord is hard to break."

Scripture: Psalm 139: 1-10 (The Message)

¹God, investigate my life; get all the facts firsthand.

²I'm an open book to you; even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking.

³You know when I leave and when I get back; I'm never out of your sight.

⁴You know everything I'm going to say before I start the first sentence.

⁵I look behind me and you're there, then up ahead and you're there, too—your reassuring presence, coming and going. ⁶This is too much, too wonderful—I can't take it all in!

⁷Is there anyplace I can go to avoid your Spirit? to be out of your sight?

⁸If I climb to the sky, you're there! If I go underground, you're there!

⁹If I flew on morning's wings to the far western horizon,

¹⁰You'd find me in a minute—you're already there waiting!

Synopsis: Loneliness and the fear of being alone are a stark reality even as we're more connected than ever before. We all need time alone, just as Jesus took time away from others, but we also need to be connected. God created us for relationship with God and each other, and God promises to sustain us in every season of our lives.

Felt need: To understand the difference between loneliness and solitude and commit to care for one another

Visuals:

Media:

- "Lonely People." Length: 2:40. Cost: We own it. Used Sept. 2007 and Feb 2014. The true stories highlighted in this vignette confirm that this world is not as it should be. Jesus declared that we would encounter struggles and pain, but He also urged us to never despair for He has overcome this world. <https://www.ignitermedia.com/products/7015-lonely-people>
- "With You (I Feel Again)." Length: 3:54. Cost: Free with our subscription. This video reflects on how easy it is to be lonely in a crowd. Set to the platinum hit single, "Feel Again" by One Republic, the story follows an emotionally numb teen who discovers friendship and community in a surprising setting. <https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/with-you/>

Related info: Karen will send along PDFs of both articles.

- "Are You Lonely? You're Not Alone." By Andrea Petersen. Wall Street Journal. March 2, 2020. A new book from former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy explains why many Americans feel lonely and what we can do about it.
- "Overcoming the Panes of Loneliness." Ashley Hales interviews Eric Jacobsen, senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Tacoma, Washington. "Christianity Today." May 11, 2020. Glass has many uses, most of them morally neutral. It helps us let in sunlight, sharpen our eyesight, see our reflections, and sip our beverages, among other commonplace conveniences. But glass has also enable a series of social and technological revolutions that fuel increasing isolate from our neighbors and physical surrounding.

Discussion points: 1) These times are especially difficult for people who live alone and have no family close. For those who have it, tech has been a blessing. 2) We'll look at the difference between loneliness versus solitude (solitude is something we all need) and how introverts and extroverts handle loneliness. 3) We may be able to worship God alone, but we need community to challenge one another and hold each other accountable. 4) Now that kids have been out of school for so long they are missing face to face interaction. There was no preparing for this situation. Both kids and parents are struggling with issues of self-care, loss of structure, and losing academic skills. In pioneer times, physical distancing was pretty normal. 5) Mary and Ivan, who are 43 and 45, never zoomed (with friends) until now though it has been available. They did use "What's App." 6) We are recognizing now more than ever the value of gathering together.

Activity:

Music: #526 "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

NOTE: We host Family Promise (at day center) beginning on June 28.

July 5, 2020: “Our Greatest Fear and God’s Promises”

5th Sunday after Pentecost - LIVESTREAM

Scripture: I Corinthians 15: 50-58 (Contemporary English Version)

⁵⁰My friends, I want you to know that our bodies of flesh and blood will decay. This means that they cannot share in God’s kingdom, which lasts forever.

⁵¹I will explain a mystery to you. Not every one of us will die, but we will all be changed. ⁵²It will happen suddenly, quicker than the blink of an eye. At the sound of the last trumpet the dead will be raised. We will all be changed, so that we will never die again. ⁵³Our dead and decaying bodies will be changed into bodies that won’t die or decay. ⁵⁴The bodies we now have are weak and can die. But they will be changed into bodies that are eternal. Then the Scriptures will come true,

“Death has lost the battle! ⁵⁵ Where is its victory? Where is its sting?”

⁵⁶Sin is what gives death its sting, and the Law is the power behind sin. ⁵⁷But thank God for letting our Lord Jesus Christ give us the victory!

⁵⁸My dear friends, stand firm and don’t be shaken. Always keep busy working for the Lord. You know that everything you do for him is worthwhile.

Scripture: Romans 8: 35-39 (Contemporary English Version)

³⁵Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, suffering, and hard times, or hunger and nakedness, or danger and death?

³⁶It is exactly as the Scriptures say, “For you we face death all day long. We are like sheep on their way to be butchered.”

³⁷In everything we have won more than a victory because of Christ who loves us. ³⁸I am sure that nothing can separate us from God’s love—not life or death, not angels or spirits, not the present or the future, ³⁹and not powers above or powers below. Nothing in all creation can separate us from God’s love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Scripture: Philippians 4: 4-7 (Today’s New International Version)

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Synopsis: Some say we’re not so afraid of death as we are afraid of dying. But death is the great equalizer, even as we know the pain and grief of losing loved ones. We can face our fears with faith and trust that death is not the end – and that our lives have meaning and purpose.

Felt need: To voice our fear of dying and claim God’s promise of eternal life

Visuals/metaphor: Dog wanting to be with his/her master; iPhone upgrade

Media:

- “Fragile.” Length: 1:48. Cost: \$19.99. Life is fragile. It’s a fact we are learning in real time...every day.....We are not promised tomorrow, but we are given a simple truth to stand on: Our God goes before us. He will never leave us, He will never forsake us. Yes, life is fragile...But in our weakness, He is strong. <https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/93717/fragile>
- “In Uncertain Times.” Length: 1:34. Cost: \$19.99. In uncertain times, it’s easy to be consumed by fear, anxiety and hopelessness. But God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind. As we walk this journey together, let us remember our God is not surprised by any of this. He is sovereign. He is in control He is great, glorious, gracious and good. May we, without hesitation, find strength and peace in the truth. <https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/92640/in-uncertain-times>
- “Fear.” Length: 2:55. Cost: \$17.50. What does it mean to look your fears in the face? To let God guide you through your deepest fears? <https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/53470/fear>

Related info:

Discussion points: 1) Larry has an older friend who lives alone and does not want her kids knowing anything about her end of life planning decisions. He doesn’t want his family to have to make those hard decisions on the fly as they grieve and has kept them in the loop. On a related note: Several people in our group have books detailing what needs to be done after they die. **Please send Karen Booth your photos (Carole and Betty).** 2) Pastor Mary has been reminded once again of the importance of writing down wishes. Her family struggled with that to some extent when her dad died in February. 3) Being able to talk about death and dying is a gift. It doesn’t take away sadness, but it is helpful. 4) Vicki’s mom had a hard time understanding why people would fear death. She is confident is what will happen. After some discussion, she did come to see that it is the process of dying (and the associated pain) that people fear. 5) Admitting our fear of dying is helpful. 6) Plan ahead. Make decisions now while you can.

Activity:

Music: This Is Not the End; #707 “Hymn of Promise”