



The Joyful Noise

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A Note On The Times

These sure are some interesting times we are living in.
-everyone

If you're like me, the last year and a half has been tiring. It feels like the same discussion is taking place, with a slight change with no end in sight.

I asked someone the other day in conversation; "how will this all end?"

They looked at me and said: "It's in the book of Revelation."

I said, "yes you are right. It certainly is."

These days we can't agree to disagree on anything. 'Everything' has to be a hot button issue filled with emotion.

There are exceptions but maybe this sounds familiar:

Culture today: "I will argue my point and I'm not concerned what you have to say, or why you feel the way you do."

Unhealthy discussion ensues.

What have we accomplished? Most of the time we have only made whatever situation we were talking about worse.

I'm not sure if we are hoping the other person or other side of the issue will come over to our side? If argument is happening just for the sake of argument? Or, are we just that passionate that we want everyone to know? Neither side (of late anyway) has a good track record for convincing the other side to come join our side. We are all pretty set in our beliefs. Changing them is going to take more than a few people (or instances) of someone telling you that you are wrong.

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:35

When it comes to the 'hot button' issues we face, and there are a lot of them. There is no middle ground. Many times, it seems as though we are 'forced' by culture to draw a line in the sand of what side we are on.

Instead of arguing about the issues that we all wholeheartedly believe (for very good reasons to us).

What if we:

Focused on what we do have in common: Love for God.

He says love thy neighbor.

He doesn't say love thy neighbor only if they agree with you. He doesn't say love thy neighbor only if they aren't as good at arguing as you are.

Love is love.

I know love thy neighbor can be debated too.

For me, love thy neighbor means understanding that how someone feels about something is not for us to decide. Someone else's opinions alone are not grounds alone for us to be upset with them.

I will love you even though I maybe don't see things the same way you do.

God gave us the ability to be human. In other words, he is not coordinating a mass scale puppet show as we know. We get to make decisions.

Through that we can still love one another. I know it, I feel it, I see it.

Reconciliation is possible.

Progress is possible.

It is going to take a God sized plan though! What divides all of us, (not just us in Rock Rapids) is not just going to go away.

What if the following principles guided our discussions:

-I respect you.

-I understand you have the right to choose.

-If I don't like what you choose to do, I must do what I need to do to move on. I cannot force you to do anything.

-I will make an attempt to hear where you are coming from before I respond.

-At the very least I know you are one of God's children and he loves you. Therefore, I will love you even though I don't 100% agree with your choices.

No matter how much we argue, debate, slander, scare, there will always be something to disagree on. But when we fight, we only hurt ourselves. The devil loves this, all of this!

When we can't love one another and respect each other's choices both sides suffer and the evil one wins.

God created us to be social beings. To live, work, play and be together. He didn't make all of us the same. Thank God for that! What kind of boring life would that be?

It is OK to feel different.

It is OK to believe differently.

It is OK to interpret differently.

Humans have been doing this since Adam and Eve and it won't be changing anytime soon.

My motto for the rest of 2021 is this:

Maybe you'll be interested in joining me because I'm tired.

*I respect your choice.

*I am OK with your choice.

*I will decide to do what is best for my family.

*I'm sorry if my decisions don't align with yours. I promise to still love and support you where you are.

I have huge goals and visions for our church. One of them is that we can focus on unity despite our differences. Despite what might be coming or not coming.

If we want to know how this all ends, that person from the beginning of the article is right. Read the book of Revelation. Here's the spoiler: We win! God wins! Jesus wins! And those who confess with their tongue, Jesus is Lord will not perish but will live forever.

We will never all agree on the issues we face. Together I believe that no matter what, we will persevere and the church, our church will emerge stronger.

I love being your pastor. I love that I am right here by the grace of God.

I am available anytime to discuss anything. I want to be available for all of you.

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Grace and peace,

Pastor T



If you would like to be included in the **Weekly Prayer Partner EMAIL** which includes scripture readings, prayer requests, birthdays, and weekly reminders, please email or call the church; especially if you have not received these lately. If you have email, but do not receive information from the church this way, please give your email address to the office. We may not have it, and it's important that we do going forward so you

can stay updated. Thank you.



HOSPITALIZED

Please contact the church office or Travis Remme if you know a member has been admitted to the hospital. With the new privacy laws being strictly

enforced there are many times we are unaware of hospitalizations. We would rather get ten calls than none at all. Thank you. **Prayer concerns** can be called into the office (472-2324) or emailed to the office at rockrapidsumc@premieronline.net or to Travis Remme at tremme2@gmail.com and they will be sent out.

Joys & Concerns



Praise God~

- ☺ Our Country
- ☺ The Church
- ☺ Joe Vander Zee
- ☺ Trio- Janelle Flatebo, Jackie Telford, Julie Taylor
- ☺ Rain
- ☺ Rev. Ron Johnson & family
- ☺ Holly Spitler- turned 93 years old
- ☺ Lyon County Fair
- ☺ All that volunteered and donated to the Oaklyn Foundation event
- ☺ Char continuing to heal



Prayers~

- ✧ Todd Warntjes family
- ✧ Dana Lutmer
- ✧ Judi Sieperda
- ✧ Wayne Grooters
- ✧ Family of Verlyn Vermeer
- ✧ Family of Carol Schubert
- ✧ Brenda Olson
- ✧ Jared & Darla Gross



August Birthdays And Anniversaries



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| 01~ Gable Sieperda | 15~ Corey Heimensen |
| 02~ Toby & Jill Lorenzen
Colby McIntire | Jacob Steenblock
Dan & Jami Vander Zee |
| 03~ Jim & Becky Rydell
Rylan Maxwell
Ben Sides | 16~ Thaddeus Engleman
Sam Halse |
| 04~ Dave & Marilee Schleusner
Rhonda Menning | 17~ Jaimee Lorenzen |
| 05~ Dale Hasche
Steve & Laurie Herman | 18~ John Vander Zee |
| 06~ Jacob Kumba | 19~ Ed Brown
Dave Schleusner |
| 09~ Abbie Gacke | 20~ Veronika Stubbe
John & Chris Vander Zee |
| 10~ Greg & Liz Stubbe | 21~ Larry & Mary Holland
Jay Kelly |
| 11~ Jim & Lila Kennedy | 22~ Jill Lorenzen
Debbie Selken |
| 12~ Scott & Sheila Maxwell | 25~ Tom Wall
Wyatt & Heather Stubbe |
| 13~ Wyatt Stubbe
Jeremy & Krista Sprock
Maggie Sides | 27~ Donna Inderwisch |
| 14~ Avery Littlefield
Gwen Vander Zee | 28~ Kiaha Borman |

*We apologize for any omissions or incorrect information. Please contact the office with the correct/missing information. Thank you!



JUSTICE FOR ALL Foundation invites you to an evening of entertainment, catered meal, and updates on how the Foundation has been benefitting JFA ministry efforts over the past year. It will be held at the Parkview Events

Center in Rock Valley, IA on Aug 20, at 6PM. You can save your spot by calling JFA at 712-476-2804. If you would like more information, please contact Joel De Wit (joeldw@jfa-nwiowa.org). Please join us, we hope that you will come out and support the on-going ministry of JFA as we continue to ‘share and -care in Christ’s name’!



Save the date! First Reformed Church of Rock Rapids has scheduled a “Night of Renewal” to be held Wednesday, Sept. 8 at 7pm in our fellowship hall. All are welcome to join us for snacks and fellowship as we hear testimonies from Missy Bass and Heather Erickson, both of Hills, MN. These mothers are a part

of Game Plan 4 Hope, which was started in Sept. 2019. It rose out of the hearts of two families who have been through life-altering experiences and felt the need to help others that are going through similar situations. Please join us in hearing their personal stories and the mission of Game Plan 4 Hope.