



Missionary Messenger

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Reconciliation: True Love in Action

But now you must put aside all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free, but Christ is all and is in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with hearts of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with one another and forgive any complaint you may have against someone else. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which is the bond of perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, for to this you were called as members of one body. And be thankful. ~ Colossians 3:8-15 (BSB)

The year 2024 is the year of reconciliation here at NMMC. Every year I seek God for a theme for the year and this theme helps me in sermon preparation and a guide for my newsletter articles. I am so uncomfortable with this theme because it means that I must practice what I preach. This is not fun. I can only hope that I am not the only one who is hearing this as a call from God to seek healthy relationships with those around me. I would like prayer for courage to do what I need to do. Please don't make me the only one uncomfortable.

I have been reviewing a book that I own by Dan Allender titled: *Bold Love, The Courageous Practice of Life's Ultimate Influence*. On page 161 Dan gives a healthy definition of reconciliation. "Reconciliation is restored peace, true Shalom, or wholeness and health returned to something that was broken and diseased." He then goes on to lay the costs of reconciliation for both sides. "Reconciliation is costly for both the offended and the offender. The offended forgives (cancels) the debt by not bringing immediate judgment and termination of the relationship, as might be reasonable and expected, given the offense. Instead, mercy is offered in order to invite the offender back into the relationship. The cost for the offended is in withholding judgment and instead offering the possibility of a restored relationship. The cost for the offender is repentance. *Biblical forgiveness is never unconditional and one-sided*. It is not letting others go off scot-free, "forgiven," and enabled to do harm again without any consequence. Instead, forgiveness is an *invitation* to reconciliation, not the blind, cheap granting of it."

I hope that this helps all of you to know where we are going in our journey through Scripture in the year 2024. May God give all of us the courage to enter into this journey of reconciliation.

In Christ, Pastor Ken



CONNECTION NOTES:

"I Am Tired and Out of Ideas"

The word I have chosen for 2024 is AUTHENTIC. It was Mariam-Webster's 2023 Word of the Year. (I learned that after I decided on my "word for the year".) It's not surprising considering all the political hype, and the junk we see and hear everyday.

Given my desire for realness, I am applying the trait of authenticity to my life this year. Because of this, my personal prayers are evolving. I was praying about our outreach ministry, fumbling over my words, not sure what to say or, even what I was saying. The thought struck me—be authentic! So I prayed the above title. "Father, I am tired and out of ideas."

I instantly received God's answer. In my heart, I heard "Good, now I can work!" Oh my! How my heart sank. I realized that I had placed myself in the way. I was trying to "help" drive outreach (like that was even possible)!

Jesus says in Matthew 16:24, "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am" (The Message). We, (or maybe I should say I) tend to allow Him to drive BUT tell Him how and when and where! We try to take over again. We hinder God's kingdom work when we do that. So, in the spirit of authenticity, I publicly declare that He is God, inclusive of the outreach ministry, I am not! Do I have any idea of what direction our outreach will take this year? No. But I know the One in charge and He is faithful! "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18 (NIV) Let's focus our eyes on Christ and see what He does in and through us.

I ask that you please pray for our outreach ministry. Pray that the Holy Spirit shows each of us our part of His plan, and pray we will be faithful to His call. Thank you.

Focused on Him, *Sue*

CONNECTION ACTIVITIES:

SuperB Owl Party!

Sunday, February 11 @ 6p to ?

Bring some snacks. Grab a friend. And come join THE party. (Psst...This has nothing to do with owls.)



Ladies Spring Luncheon and Paint Party Saturday, March 2, Noon

Bring a friend, bring a salad and join us for our luncheon. After lunch we will craft a simple spring cross for all who wish to participate.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Love month has arrived!! John 3:16 is the focus for Kids Kingdom!

Join us at 9am; Sunday school has been interesting. Check it out for yourself!

Tuesday Bible studies will be starting up again on February 13 and will be providing childcare!

Love on one another!

Amanda, Education Director

Memory Verse of the Month!

Romans 12:18 (BSB)

If it is possible on your part, live at peace with everyone. (BSB)

Who Are We?

Pastor: Ken Sistrunk 260-229-5949 (cell)

PastorKenNMMC@gmail.com

Elders: Dave Jackson (vice-chairman),

Tim Baker, Jon Gnagy

Directors:

Christian Ed: Amanda Burns

Outreach: Sue Howard

Stewardship: Tim Baker

Worship: Jon Gnagy

Secretary: Joanne Sistrunk

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JANUARY 2024 LADIES DAY
FLAPJACKS, FRIENDS, & FLANNEL

