The Voice

LA VERNE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

March 2020

Cheap Grace, Costly Grace, and the Cross of Jesus Christ: When we begin the holy season of Lent . . .

Greetings in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beginning from Ash Wednesday, the holy and penitential Lenten Season (40 days before Easter; February 26-April 11 for the year 2020) has been observed in the Christian tradition. It is time for us to reflect our relationship with God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

As we can see two pictures below, Lent is an opportunity for us to think about the cross of Jesus Christ and suffering with the following questions: What do they mean to us today? How is it with our soul now? How do we follow Jesus Christ? I believe that to follow Jesus Christ is to *conscientize* that Jesus Christ does not present himself in powerfulness and glorification, but in weakness and suffering for those who are socially disabled.

For this year's Lenten season, I've got a chance to revisit Dietrich Bonhoeffer's books. I especially would like to share with you his inspirational remarks of the cost of discipleship. He, a German pastor and theologian in the 20th century, described both "cheap grace" and "costly grace" in his *Discipleship* as follows.

"**Cheap grace** is preaching forgiveness without repentance; it is baptism without the discipline of community; it is the Lord's Supper without confession of sin; it is absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without the living, incarnate Jesus Christ. . . . ." (44, bold added)

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"**Costly grace** is the hidden treasure in the field, for the sake of which people go and sell with joy everything they have. . . . .It is costly, because it calls to discipleship; it is grace, because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*. It is costly, because it costs people their lives; it is grace, because it thereby makes them live. It is costly, because it condemns sin; it is grace, because it justifies the sinner. Above all, grace is costly, because it was costly to God, because it costs God the life of God's son—"you were bought with a price"—and because nothing can be cheap to us which is costly to God. Above all, it is grace because the life of God's Son was not too costly for God to give in order to make us live. God did, indeed, give him up for us. **Costly grace is the incarnation of God.**" (45, bold added)

I pray that all of your spend a meaningful time for self-reflection and deepening your relationship with God in Jesus Christ in the holy Lent.

In Christ,
Pastor Park

* *Thanks to our sisters, Edna and Alma, who beautifully decorated the Altar and the Cross for the holy Lent.*

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VISIONING RETREAT SETS OUR LEADERS ON THE RIGHT PATH FORWARD

On Saturday, February 22, 17 of us gathered for the annual Visioning Retreat. Lay Leader, Leo Ortega, led the opening worship and introduced David Jamir, pastor of the Covina United Methodist Church who spoke with us about "Church Leadership." He challenged us to see ourselves as servants, that the Christian understanding of leadership is that of servanthood. Further, in this time of changing attitudes about the church and religion itself, we must seek to thrive, not just survive. Following Pastor Jamir, Pastor Park shared ideas about our specific tasks as leaders (servants) of this congregation. Everyone can fill the leadership role depending upon the task. Prayer undergirds all of our work and gives strength to our commitment. Then came a time for our response, our visioning for our shared ministry in 2020.The goal is to share a common vision as our governing purpose - the WHY of our task as Christians. It is not necessary that we agree on all matters, discussion, even disagreement is welcome, different viewpoints help to refine our task together. Here is a synopsis of the comments shared. This is not a formal statement - may not even be the best way of stating the opinions expressed, but it will give you an idea of "where we see ourselves moving forward in 2020.

A shared vision will permeate and help to guide all our actions.
We do want to thrive, not just survive.
We affirm that "we are one in the Spirit, one in the Lord," therefore we will work together, fostering cooperation, mentoring and cultivating each other's gifts.
It is not enough to just talk, or just repeat the past, we will form a plan that helps to stabilize our church in order that we have the resources to serve the needs of the congregation and the community, and bring the love of God to all.

This is an incomplete statement, it needs refinement, but you get the idea. What is needed now is for YOU to step into this journey and share your ideas and time and resources. "I am the Church, You are the Church, We are the church together." Let's make that a reality!
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CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONCE MARDI GRAS IS HERE CAN EASTER BE FAR BEHIND???

Of course that comment is made "tongue in cheek." Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday is the day and night before Ash Wednesday the beginning of Lent and that is the start of the six week journey to Easter. For Christians this is a time of reflection and spiritual growth. To help with that growth, we are offering a book study on *The Call: The Life and Message of the Apostle Paul,* by Adam Hamilton. The class will be offered on Thursdays from February 27 to April 2; identical sessions happen at 10:00 A.M. or 7:00 P.M. to fit your schedule. We have studied several of Hamilton's books and there is general agreement that his writings are both engaging and challenging. He invites the reader into the story of significant persons in the Bible, and enables us to see them not just as historic figures but as fellow participants in the journey today. Even if you have not gotten a book, or missed a session, you are invited to join in. Contact Alma Roberts for more information, 909-392-0292.

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CONFIRMATION CLASS UNDERWAY

Sunday, February 23, was the first meeting of the 2020 Confirmation Class, an opportunity for young students to learn more about the United Methodist Church, - its history, theology, and organization. The class will meet each Sunday until Palm Sunday when those who choose will be welcomed "officially" into the fellowship and membership of this church. Confirmands (that's what those attending the classes are called) will share an evening with Pastor Park n Friday, April 3 where they and their sponsors and parents will be able to share their newly acquired knowledge with Pastor and also to quiz Pastor with their questions. We'll be adapting "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" to "Who wants to be a United Methodist." It is not too late to join in this class. We meet Sunday, leave for class in the Sunday School Room after the anthem. Younger children will also have class at that time.

Keep Lenten Season Holy
February 16 – April 11

6 Week Lenten Book Study
Every Thursday through April 2. We are offering two meeting times. 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Palm Sunday
Service, April 5 at 9:55 a.m.

Maundy Thursday
Service, April 9 at 7:00 p.m.
In Marshall Hall

Good Friday
Service, April 10 at 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunrise
Worship Service, April 12 at 6:00 a.m.

Easter Sunday
Worship Service, April 12 at 9:55 a.m.
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Preschool / Shade Covers USA Voice Report

2/26/2020

1. Shade Covers USA has installed the large shade "sails" for the preschool.

2. In several areas the sprinkler lines interfered with the concrete supports for the shade poles and had to be cut or rerouted.

3. The water lines had to be relocated or rerouted anyway and are part of expenses involved in the Shade Sail installation.

4. Shade Covers USA, during the construction, accidently severed the main sprinkler line and in desperation shut off all valves to prevent damage. It was discovered that the large shutoff valve south east of the breeze way leading to the severed line could not be turned off completely and had to be replaced.

6. The Water Department source valve feeds the #1 campus shutoff valve, which was discovered to be leaking as well, and needs to be replaced. (This is complicated by the fact that the Bottle Brush Tree in the west parking lot is interfering with valve system access.)

7. #2 diversion valve, in the breeze way, feeding the LVUMC Pre-School is leaking. It has to be repaired so the water can be shut off if any plumbing is to be done in the PS.

(8)

(8)

(9)

8. Water lines in front of Pre-School have been replaced but there is now a need to do some landscaping.

9. The south playground southeast Shade Sail post interrupted a sprinkler water line which seems to be under pressure. Shade Covers dug up the pressured line and it was capped.

10. Several of the interfering sprinkler heads have been removed and are under consideration.

YIC
Allen Franke
Secretary
LVUMC Trustees