



# The Voice

LA VERNE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

June 2020

## New Normal, New World, and New Church

Greetings to you all in our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

In these coronavirus chaotic days, people, of course, have yearned to return to “normal.” We didn’t expect at all about this unforeseen situation in which people are forced to wear face mask; schools suddenly closing to online classes, people losing their jobs, faith-based organizations closing their in-person worship services and activities, retail stores closing, decrease in the number of cars running on streets, social distancing being required at every place, and so on. Furthermore, what worries us most of all is the positive test results of the COVID-19 and the ever-increasing death toll rate that are constantly on our mind.

Many people have said that we will not return to normal, but will live in a new normal in which human behaviors are changed after the pandemic. This coronavirus pandemic will change daily life for most people. It keeps bringing to us limiting person-to-person contact, like handshakes and hugs, maintaining distance from other people. (see Korinne Griffith, *The ‘new normal’ after coronavirus*, Kansas Capitol Bureau, May 1, 2020). These changes will be kept maintaining in human life after the pandemic. It must be a seismic shift, according to this prediction of the future.

Think about how our religion is fundamentally related to the particular meaning of “body” and “intimacy.” We believe and practice in faith that we are the spiritual or mystical body of Christ; The church is the body of Christ; We are body of Christ; We receive Christ’s body and blood by partaking bread and cup in remembrance of Christ’s sacrificial love and God’s grace in the Holy Communion; We practice baptism signifying the meaning that believers are invited to the children of God; We practice the foot washing on Maundy Thursday; Pastors sometimes lay their hands on the head of a congregant for their blessings and prayers; We shake hands and hug each other for sharing the peace of Christ each other in thankfulness and blessing; We participate in Christian fellowship in love and grace of Christ and share meals together, and so on. We are brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and children of God in his household.



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The Christian practice as I mentioned the above, as many people have now worried about, are in danger of either losing unexpectedly or being radically changed with the new interpretation of the Christian belief. On this matter, I don't agree with those who predict that our Christian belief and practice will not be any more vital in the age of the post-coronavirus pandemic. But I agree with those who invite Christians to think about what the church is and how it should stand for its mission in this radically changing global situations.

Without changing, the church and our faith cannot be viable to proclaim effectively the good news to the world. They may lose their taste of "salt" and function of "light" for transforming the world.

We have power to get over our current difficult situation and hold fast to hope that our world would be soon recovered. We can only sustain this power and hope, when we faithfully rely on the work of the Holy Spirit. We don't know when and how the Holy Spirit makes the world recover and allows us to return to normal. But I surely believe that the Holy Spirit, God who reveals to us through the Spirit, is working for the restoration in and through us.

During the first century in Asia Minor, the apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthian Christians to instruct and restore their church and viable Christian life. It is only possible for them to do when they rely on God and the work of the Holy Spirit.

*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"— these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:9-13)*

I believe that our Holy Spirit gives us wisdom, power, and knowledge as well as "help" to pass through the long tunnel of the suffering reality. We don't know when and how the Spirit works. We don't know when the virus will go away from the world. We don't know how much we are required to be changed for responding to Christ's commission to transform the world. But I believe that the God who is good, whose love is eternal, and whose mercy is so abundant, never forsakes us and leaves us to sit in despair and not to change our ways of services and activities.

Let us continue to pray and open our hearts and minds so that we humbly obey Jesus Christ's commands and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit for here and now as well as the future. Because. . . . "Best of all, God is with us." Be safe and thankful.

Blessings to you all,

Pastor Park

# CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL SETS IN MOTION PLANS TO REOPEN

At a recent ZOOM meeting the Administrative Council established a Re-opening Task Force to make plans for a possible reopening of Face to Face gatherings at our church. Bishop Hagiya has sent out guidelines and each church is asked to develop their own plan for reopening and submit that plan to the District for approval. The Task Force includes Janice Stearns, Ben Pangilinan, Edna Lardizabal, Alma Roberts, and Pastor Park. Your ideas are certainly welcomed, and you may contact any of the members of the Task Force to share your thoughts.

One of the guidelines is that we can only allow 25% of our seating capacity in the sanctuary at one time. This will necessitate two services on Sundays. Possible times would be 9:00 and 11:00. A letter will soon be sent out to ask you to state which time you prefer. It is so very important that you respond ASAP so plans can be made to accommodate everyone. In the meantime we hope that you are worshipping with us each week by going to the Church's website [lvumc.org](http://lvumc.org) and scrolling down to the worship date you are seeking. When we reopen, masks will be required and we will be seating every other pew. You will be informed of all other changes as they are set in motion. Please continue to keep yourself safe as we also do all we can to maintain the safety of our communities.

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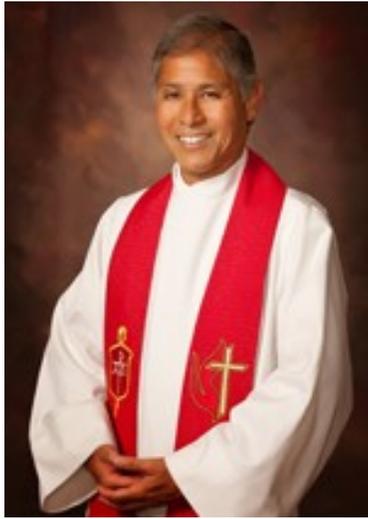
## A BATTLE THAT DOESN'T EXIST

For some people of faith there exists a divide between Science and Religion. It is an artificial divide that need not exist. Our faith affirms that "In the beginning God created...and that creation was good!" Our faith affirms that God is behind all creation; God is the *Who* and the *Why*. Science has wonderfully explained to us the *What* and the *How*. God created us with body, mind, and soul. and in response we worship him with all of our heart and mind and spirit. It is through our mind that God enables us to understand how creation came to be and how it works, and to partner with him in on-going creation. We see that today as we count on the scientists to discover a cure, a vaccine, a medicine to conquer and destroy this unwelcome guest Covid 19. It is not a betrayal of God to listen to the scientists, rather it is the scientists whom God uses to help us find solutions. May God bless us all as we work together to do his will.

## THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

When you drive by the church now you will notice that the front Memorial Garden is looking it's best ever. As the weeds have been cleared out, it is hoped persons walking by might feel welcome to come and sit beneath the shade of the trees and sit for a while on one of the concrete benches. This didn't happen overnight. It took more than a month of weeding, by many persons. It shows that we can complete an "impossible" job by working together. Special thanks to Bjorg and Hilary, to Ralphie, to Barbara, to Allen, and to Alma. Pastor Park also did his share of dumping buckets of weeds into the dumpster.

We still need help. Though the Memorial Garden and Preschool yard have been weeded, there remains the massive back (west) parking lot, the area around the Pergola, and the Community Garden area. Would you consider coming down to the church any time you're available to help? Bring a shovel to loosen weeds that have come up in the pavement, bring a broom and dustpan and bucket to pick up the weeds to empty into the dumpster.



## OUR CAL-PAC BISHOP GRANT HAGIYA

### **BISHOP HAGIYA ASKS FOR A PLAN TO REOPEN**

Our Cal-Pac Bishop Grant Hagiya has requested a plan from any church that wishes to reopen, regardless of when. This plan would then be submitted to the District for approval. LVUMC has developed such a plan and the Administrative Council will be reviewing it and suggesting a possible time for reopening. Some of the items that will be part of the plan are as follows:

- 1 - 2 services to accommodate our congregation with social distancing, sitting ever other row.
- 2 - wearing masks
- 3 - using hand sanitizer
- 4 - placing the offering plate in one stationary location
- 5 - temporarily replacing the choir with solos, duets, trios, quartets (where distancing can be Implemented)
- 6 - serving Communion using individual packaged elements
- 7 - discontinuing for the time being any movement for the "Passing of the Peace"
- 8 - No food during fellowship time, though Coffee and bottled drinks could be available.

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### **Bishop Hagiya shares a Message on Racism**

Regularly, our Bishop Grant Hagiya communicates his response to vital issues that are confronting us. In view of this past week's events, he shared his response to Racism. He reminds us that we cannot close our eyes to an issue that is dividing our nation - that issue is racism. He challenges the churches to provide opportunities for conversations around this topic. He reminds us also that conversation alone is not enough, action is required. For Christians action is always required as we seek to implement God's will to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with Him. Though we are not yet able to meet together for face to face exchanges of ideas, he suggests that we begin by doing some inner searching. He provides 3 questions that might be a start.

- + What are my own racist tendencies that I don't want to talk about or admit?
- + How have I been complicit in American racism?
- + What can I proactively do about it right now?

It does not matter our race, ethnic group, the culture in which we grew up, etc. All of us need to enter the conversation. As we proceed, may God bless us everyone.

La Verne United Methodist Church  
3205 D Street  
La Verne, CA 91750

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Office: (909)593-2013

Pastor: Rev. Min-Kyu Park, Ph.D.

[laverneumc@gmail.com](mailto:laverneumc@gmail.com)

Worship with us online at 9:55 a.m.

[www.lvumc.org](http://www.lvumc.org)

Return Service Requested



IN OUR



*Thoughts and Prayers*

Those impacted by Covid-19

Those whom from their labors rest: Dale Jackson

Please continue strength and healing prayers for:  
Rubin S. Alano, Maria Amores, Claudia Boyle,  
Shawna Butera, Kimball Coburn, David Fitzsimons,  
Barbara Jackson, Angelita Jose, Tomiko Kitani,  
Gwen Leonard, Len Marquez, Rey Martin,  
Jamie Ortega, Beatriz Phipps, Helen Sandelo,  
Ken Sandelo, David Svatos



# **Birthdays This Month**

Leeann Taylor (1)  
Hannibelle Ortega (5)  
Debbie Walton (6)  
Nick Hortick (19)  
Bob Stearns (23)  
Gwen Leonard (26)