

Dave Emery is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Caring Relationships

Time: Mar 28, 2021 03:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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If you are able to attend the gathering this Sunday at 3pm to discuss this and respond to these questions, please note the Zoom invitation to this event.

If you are unable to attend, please send your responses to office@aberdeenpres.org or mail it to the office at 420 N Broadway, Aberdeen WA 98520.

May God Richly Bless You This Week and Always!

Pastor Dave
360-593-9033

Caring Relationships

- “By this everyone will know that you are disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35
- This is the main instruction for the Christian life. We are to care about one another at all times in every way that we can.
- Sharing in God’s true agape (unconditional love) moves us to fully heart filled programmatic activities and participation, heart filled faith, and a heart filled hope in God’s future for us and the world.
- We demonstrate and build a people that find freedom to share life stories, deeply encounter the Savior and easily ask for help.
- Welcome and hospitality is not just an activity of greeting people (although this is important,) but likewise, striving for all people to find their identity in Christ, welcoming and believing in a merciful Christ filled purpose and a true realized belonging in the household of God.
- Confront conflict. We know that as human beings we will not all see things the same. There will be times when a person or a few people object to what is being done. In such a case, we will seek reconciliation in all divisions, find ways to embrace all faithful points of view, and seek to be peacemakers and bridge builders together.

Background

The early church leader the Apostle Paul taught that we are to bear one another’s burdens, and in this way, we will fulfill the law of Christ. If we sow to our own flesh, we will reap corruption from the flesh; but if we sow to the Spirit, we will reap eternal life from the Spirit. *So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.*

Whenever we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the fellowship of faith, because we reap what we sow. It is the most simple and significant of commands, “to love the Lord your God, and to love your neighbor as yourself.” Yet it is, in truth, the most difficult thing to live into.

Christ's true and perfect agape-love is when the Spirit of Christ dwelling within me meets the Spirit of Christ in you, regardless of all else.

As I was in town again the other day, I stopped and had a late lunch at a fast-food restaurant in town. As I sat in the parking lot eating, I noticed a group of adult men and women standing around in the alley way. They seemed to have their belongings with them and they seemed to have nowhere to go or nothing else to do. They weren't uncomfortable or anxious they were just there together talking and sitting on the steps doing nothing. Elsewhere during the day, I drove by a couple of folks around town pushing full shopping carts. They weren't filled with groceries, but rather seemed to be filled with clothes and daily needed items.

I know that we seek to care for folks like these. I know that it is challenging to do so in these COVID days. Yet, what I am so pleased about, and what I know is a part of who we are at Aberdeen First Presbyterian Church is that we honestly care for those around us and all that are in times of transition and displacement.

Having caring relationships is not just about having friends in the family of God gathered as AFPC in the body of Christ here gathered, it is having caring relationships with all those we able who live in our town and community. We know this. We seek this. We encourage this. I have heard frequently and often from different folks a sincere desire to care for all those in town. This is exciting and this is what is being shared about as we consider having caring relationships.

Discussion

Significant relationships with other Christians matter because they teach us something about what God is like—the One who can love us in spite of ourselves and who loves us passionately enough to suffer willingly on our behalf. —

- What are the caring relationships in your life? What do they reveal about God?

- What are ways for the church to practice caring relationships with those outside our fellowship?

We demonstrate caring relationships when we stop and see the other person in front of us. We exhibit caring relationships when we listen to the other person and hear them completely. We witness to caring relationships when we act on what we hear in authentic and real ways.

- How have we gotten caring relationships right?
- What can we do to cultivate a climate of caring relationships?

What determines our brotherhood (inside and outside the church) is what that person is by reason of Christ. Our community with one another consists solely in what Christ has done to both of us...The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and Christ's work become the one and only thing that is vital between us.

—Life Together. Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, (born February 4, 1906, Breslau, Germany [now Wrocław, Poland]—died April 9, 1945, Flossenbürg, Germany), German Protestant theologian important for his view of Christianity's role in a secular world. His involvement in a plot to overthrow Adolf Hitler led to his imprisonment and execution. His *Letters and Papers from Prison*, published posthumously in 1951, is perhaps the most profound document of his convictions.

- What does an arena of caring relationships centered on Christ look like for you?
- How does our church ensure the vitality of caring relationships in Christ and with one another?

The truth is, despite the gospel's claim that Jesus will be with us always, young people usually assume that the church will not be always present... gospel's claim that Jesus will "be there" always, a community of affirming others must "be there" for them, demonstrating steadfast love on their behalf.

—Practicing Passion. Kenda Creasy Dean

Just a reminder of who Kenda Creasy Dean, PhD '97, she is an ordained United Methodist pastor in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, and the Mary D. Synnott Professor of Youth, Church, and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary. In addition to teaching in practical theology, education, and formation (specifically youth and young adult ministry, Christian social innovation, and theories of teaching), Dean works closely with Princeton's Institute for Youth Ministry.

- Where and how are we called to share caring relationships with the young people around us?
- What is at stake as we seek to reach out to young people in our practice of establishing caring relationships?

We see those outside our doors being the young, the homeless and those in need, the older person confined to their homes, as well as those adults that have fallen away from the church or have no idea what the church is and what it is about.

- How do we share the good news of the gospel and the love of God with those around us?
- We know we can make a difference in the lives of others; we know that we have something special and unique to offer to all those in our town. So how do we witness to this love and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?