



Pastor's e-Note

Morristown United Methodist Church (August 1, 2018)

Greetings, good friends. Hope you are enjoying this beautiful summer season.

I am glad to be back from my trip to Honolulu. Thank you so much for your prayers and good wishes for my parents and family. Although we had to make life-altering decisions and deal with difficult realities surrounding our mother and father, I am so grateful that Jennifer and I could spend some quality time with them each day while we were in Honolulu. They are now placed in the same wing at the Liliha Healthcare Center. Now, I am back to work with a renewed body, mind and spirit.

Last Saturday morning, Pastor Jennifer, Pastor Charles Perez and his family, Kris Hansen, some folks from the Nueva Esperanza Ministry and I participated in the "WE CARE: Keep Families Together" Rally at the ICE Detention Center in Elizabeth, NJ. It is one of the three detention centers in our state. 200+ United Methodists from various churches came together for a peaceful prayer vigil, and shared our concern for the well-being of those who are being detained in that location and other places. Bishop John Schol, Harriett Jane Olson, and other leaders from GNJ Annual Conference all spoke in one voice for compassion and justice for all God's children, no matter where they come from and what language they speak.

The biblical mandate is that we are called to love God and love ALL God's children. We are also called to welcome strangers in our midst and show them hospitality.

We are a nation of immigrants. Our ancestors came from some other parts of the earth (Europe, Asia, Africa, etc.). We immigrants ultimately united with the indigenous people (Native Americans) in our country. Granted that they, too, were also immigrants probably from Asia 10 to 20 thousand years ago, but we do consider them really indigenous. Our country's name, United States of America, reminds us to work for the unity of all people. We are bigger than living based on tribalism ("we versus them" mindset).

Sometimes I wonder what God will ask when we go to heaven. Will God ask us, "Where are you from? What country are you from?" Probably not. Instead, God may ask us, "What have you done with the love I gave you? Have you shared my love with the world or have you kept it to yourself?" I am inviting us to draw the circle of love wide and then wider. In our divided world, we need to let the language of love speak and bring change.

This coming Sunday, our church will host a joint worship service on the Green at 10 a.m. with our Presbyterian Church friends. Our own Pastor Charles Perez will share the message on "What Kind of Bread?" If you are in town, please do all you can to join us. We'd love to see you. Also, if you can, please come and join the summer choir practice at 9 a.m. in the choir room.

Have a blessed weekend and see you Sunday.

In Grace and Joy,

Pastor Brandon