



July 10, 2024

A Note from Pastor April

Greatest Hists: Revisiting some previous Letters of Encouragement, in celebration of all God has done during these last four years!

Dear Friends,

This week our amazing VBS kids are experiencing our new curriculum, "Just Like Me." One of the key lessons they are learning this week is how important it is for each of us to find and use our voices to advocate for others in our community.

Like the garden that is in the backdrop of our lessons, I can only imagine the seeds being planted in these young people that will continue to be nurtured and developed as they grow. We will need our children to grow into the leaders that our communities will need in the decades to come.

I share with you the Letter of Encouragement I wrote on the day of the Inauguration of our current president in 2021. Many of you remember all that had transpired in the two weeks prior.

Three and a half years later, as we head into another important election, the questions we were asking then feel just as relevant. And I feel so grateful to be a part of a church that is helping prepare ourselves and our young people to use our voices as we head into what that future may hold.

Blessings...



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Originally sent January 20, 2021:

January 20, 2021, has been on our calendars for quite some time...

As our country seeks to move forward in light of all we have been through in recent days, weeks, months, and years... this day is about more than just a new administration, a new president, and our first female vice president of color.

In many ways, today's inauguration holds in it a series of questions for us as Americans, and certainly for us as followers of Christ.

What kind of nation do we want to be?

What kind of community do we wish to build for the future generations coming behind us?

How will we be participants in this moment and in the many moments to come, choosing to act with the courage, faithfulness, and love we see embodied in Jesus Christ?



This week, I spent some time reading some of the last sermons preached by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In his final Sunday morning sermon, titled "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution," **Dr. King challenges the church to lead the way in facing the powerful forces of white supremacy and the ongoing poverty in our nation.**

I commend the entire message to you but found these words particularly poignant:

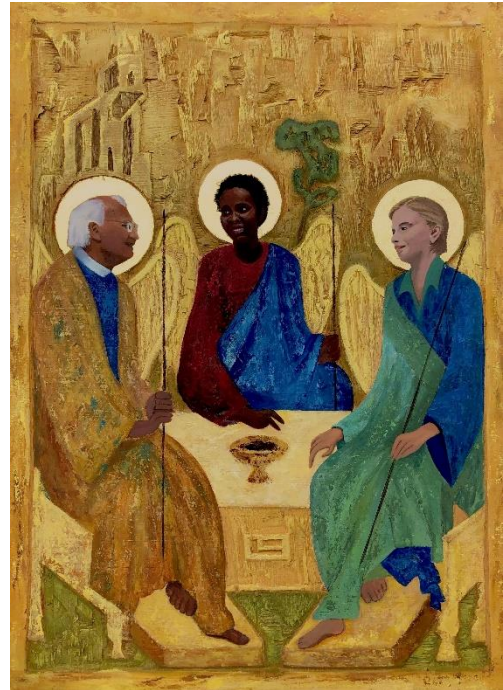
"Somewhere we must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God. And without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. So we must help time and realize that the time is always ripe to do right.... The real question is whether we have the will."

May today be an inauguration of a new administration **AND an inauguration of our ongoing commitment and willingness to be co-workers with God to build a nation that is doing the work of disentangling ourselves from the pervasive forces of racism.**

May we be committed to the way of unity we spoke of this past Sunday, modeled to us by God, who is Trinity, 3-in-1, as we seek to get it right TOGETHER for the good of the whole.

As a church, united in the love of Christ that holds us together, may we continue to UNLEARN all the habits and beliefs that are preventing us from listening and responding in love to our fellow brothers and sisters.

I offer to you again this image by artist Meg Wroe, an updated version of Rublev's *Icon of the Holy Trinity*, painted with the faces of real people... a deep reminder of the invitation that God extends to be connected to the community of God and with one another. May this image continue to challenge and encourage you.



May our hearts be filled with the hope we find in a God who has called us into community and partnership.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor April



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