



First United Methodist Church of Hanford

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.



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“Let us start building!”

Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer disgrace.”¹⁸ I told them that the hand of my God had been gracious upon me, and also the words that the king had spoken to me. Then they said, “Let us start building!” So they committed themselves to the common good. Nehemiah 2:17-18 (NRSV)

A broken community. The people live in fear and insecurity for a lot of reasons. Today they do not always know where their daily food will come from. Violence, injustice, poverty and suffering are persistent. This is many places in this country. This certainly describes Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah. The protective walls have been broken down, key residents carted off into exile, and the remaining population left vulnerable to cruel neighbors.

Years later Nehemiah gets permission from the King of Persia to return to Judah to rebuild the city walls and begin the restoration of Jerusalem. He does a careful assessment of the weaknesses and the resources available. He rallies the remnant living there to work with him, and in spite of their years of deprivation and depression, they agree, “Let us start building!”

As a leader, Nehemiah knew the only way to accomplish his goal was to bring the people together for a common cause. He succeeded in rebuilding the protective wall despite all the naysayers and enemies actively trying to disrupt his work. I believe the key reason lies in the final sentence of our reading: “They committed themselves to the common good.” They learned, once again, to cooperate, share, and look out for each other.

When we look at our own community, what do we see? Where we find those broken walls? We may recognize that some of our neighbors, families, may be feeling like the residents of Jerusalem in Nehemiah’s day.

Yet what might happen if by the grace of God we can come together as new neighbors and commit ourselves to the common good? How might we cooperate, grow, share and look out for each other? What are the talents, gifts, abilities that we can combine together to build new community and opportunities for each of us?

Let us pray: Gracious God, you are the God of new beginnings, the God of restoration and reconciliation. As we follow your lead, we pray for our neighbors, our community. Open up our hearts to each other and show us what common cause we can develop to bring new life and new love to the City of Hanford and beyond. Show us the gaps to stand in to rebuild hope, love and joy! Amen.

“Now I can say I Live a Day” (John Wesley)

Pastor Pablo

November 4th, 2020

Online Devotionals

To grow in your relationship with God and others, it is important to have some spiritual disciplines in your life. Below are some helpful websites that will lead you to read scripture, pray, and focus on God.

UPPER ROOM DAILY DEVOTIONAL <https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals>

A daily devotional including scripture lesson and story.

UPPER ROOM DAILY REFLECTIONS <https://upperroombooks.com/neweverymorning/>