



To my friends in Youth Pac & Pathfinders,

It saddens me that we aren't able to gather together for our regular youth meetings due to our current circumstances, but what a joy it is to write to you all! I hope to leave you with encouragement and hope as we move forward.

We have officially entered into a very unusual season. Extra-curricular activities are cancelled, classes look a bit different, restaurants are "take-out" only, toilet paper has become a hot commodity, Netflix bingeing has skyrocketed, and leisurely Target runs have sadly ceased. Our once normal routine is no longer familiar to us. (I mean, who would've thought that you would ever find yourself actually *missing* school???)

COVID-19 has forced us into a new routine. Many of you probably have a great deal of questions running through your head regarding this pandemic; however, the only question that truly matters is this: ***How are you going to respond?*** Our perspective on this situation will influence our attitude and actions. Circumstances are always changing, but thankfully, we serve an unchanging God who is worthy of the highest praise.

Essentially, we all have two choices of response: 1) complain & wallow in self-pity; or 2) rejoice & be glad in the Lord.

Despite our current circumstances, God is still good and we always have reason to rejoice in Him! Even when distress seems unending, you can still sing a song of praise because His steadfast love is persistent in pursuit of His children. Be confident in that fact - GOD LOVES YOU! He is still the God of abundant grace, peace, and freedom.

So, in the midst of what seems to be a crazy season, may all of hearts reflect that of David in Psalm 13:5-6, "But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because He has dealt bountifully with me."

It is my prayer that you choose to rejoice in the Lord during this time! Instead of complaining because you don't know how to use all this extra time and you find yourself bored, be *grateful* the Lord has allowed you this opportunity to slow down. Use this season as a time to re-prioritize. Consider who (or what) you are giving first place to in your life.

Though it may seem like you're on house arrest and forced to embrace social distancing, you're certainly not forced to embrace relational distancing! Remember, we were not created to live in isolation, but rather in community (Gen. 2:18).

Don't allow the enemy to use this scenario to pull you away from meaningful relationships. Don't let this season be one that pulls you away from each other. Don't let this season be one that pulls you away from the church. Most importantly, don't let this season be one that pulls you away from Jesus Christ. Rather, use this season as an opportunity to PRESS IN. Truthfully, we have been blessed with even *more* time to devote ourselves to God and His Word.

Again, our perspective on this situation will influence our attitude and actions. ***How are you going to respond?***

Your family at Nashville UMC is eager to walk alongside you during this time and we are here to provide you with resources to help you grow and stay connected! Pastor Scott and Pastor Luke have sent out information regarding the care and discipleship of the church as a whole. In addition to this plan, the youth will have the opportunity to continue this semester's Bible study series, *A Fruitful Life*, and grow in the following ways:

DISCIPLESHIP

- Fruit of the Week
 - A devotional will be sent out early each week via email inviting the youth to explore an additional fruit of the Spirit. (If you know someone who does not receive the weekly emails, please have them reach out to me or send me their contact info!)
 - Throughout the remainder of the week, youth will be encouraged with Scripture that relates to our particular fruit of focus.
 - Material can be viewed through email, the webpage, and/or social media.
- Recommended Reading
 - Like to read for fun? Take a look at these books listed below for spiritual growth:
 - *The Absolute Basics of the Christian Faith* - Phil Tallon
 - *Long Story Short* - Joshua McNall
 - *Called:?! Following a Future Filled with the Possible* - JD Walt
 - *Not a Fan. Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus* - Kyle Idleman
 - *The Quest for Holiness: From Shallow Belief to Mature Believer* - David C. Long

OUTREACH

- As previously mentioned - social distancing does not mean relational distancing!!! Here are some ways to serve your friends and family:
 - Be a support for one another (James 5:16) → Grab your BFFs and be each other's accountability partners. Share your heart and actually PRAY for one another.
 - Encourage one another (Heb. 13:3) → Reach out to someone you know that may be struggling and send them love, letting Christ's light shine through you!
 - Especially focus on the most vulnerable in our community - the elderly. CALL YOUR GRANDPARENTS. Seriously. Call them. Spend a few minutes of your day checking in on them and offer to help in any way that you can!
 - Serve those in need (Matt. 25:34-35) → We are collecting food at the church office to help those in need. A list of needed items can be found on our website at www.nashvilleumc.net/events

STAY CONNECTED

- Instagram
 - We have a youth page now! **GO FOLLOW @nashvilleumcnc_students**
 - It is here that you will get notified of new devotional material and receive weekly encouragements!
 - Be sure to also follow the church-wide page (@nashvilleumcnc) to receive updates and weekly teachings from our pastoral staff.
- Facebook
 - Find our page (Nashville United Methodist Church) and join us for virtual worship services on Sundays at 9:30am.
- Website
 - Visit www.nashvilleumc.net/youth to access our weekly devotionals!

Once again, it is our prayer that you choose to rejoice and be glad in the Lord during this time and PRESS IN to His Word and this community! God loves you and so does your church family. Know am I always here if you need anyone to talk to - please feel free to reach out at any time (252-567-9060). May God be glorified in this season! Talk to you all soon :)

Joyfully,

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