



Pastoral Update—July 3, 2020

Freedom (of a Christian)

“Being free as a Christian means we are free to serve others.”



It's the 4th of July! We celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Freedom! America is the land of the free and the brave. We celebrate our freedom and declare our freedom to do as we wish within the law as we move freely throughout our country. Sometimes people use freedom as a reason to do what they want to do because they can, in spite of what is good for all. Just because we are free to do something doesn't always mean we should.

This relates to interpretation of the letter of the law vs. the spirit of the law. St. Paul in his epistles directs us to God's law of love for all that is the measure of our actions. Martin Luther, our forefather in the faith, wrote a treatise called, "The Freedom of a Christian." He argues that in faith we are perfectly free from sin and worry about salvation, but we are also wholly servants of all with a duty to serve in love. So, we are free, but paradoxically we are ruled by Christ's great commandment to do all we do in love. *Being free as a Christian means we are free to serve others.* Luther says it is because God dwells in us, so that by faith in God we become "little Christs" to one another and treat our neighbors as Christ has treated us. We have great opportunities in this time of COVID-19 and the movement for racial justice and the eradication of racism to use our freedom for love of our neighbor and for the good of all.

I am using my freedom to social distance, stay home as able, and wear my mask in public. I am using my freedom to take time to listen, learn, reflect, and pray about racism in our country. I have re-read "I'm Still Here," by Austin Channing Brown, I have re-watched "Just Mercy," and presently, I am reading Ta-Nehisi Coate's book, "Between the World and Me." One thing I have learned is that it's not enough to believe or just say, "I'm not a racist," but we are called to take action to end systemic racism using our energy to actually be *anti*-racist. That is a whole new ballgame. So up next, I will be reading "How to Be an Antiracist," by Ibram X, Kendi. I will consult more resources and share them with you in the days ahead, and I will pray, asking God how Desert Cross is called to serve in this particular time.

How will you use your freedom?

Pastor Andrea

Update: Pastor Doris is having surgery on Friday, July 10th. Please keep her in your prayers. Cards and well wishes may be sent to her home. Please contact the church for her address. Thank you for your loving support of my colleague and partner, Pastor Doris, at this difficult time!