

Friends,

As our Series on Jeremiah comes to a close, we look forward to a varied worship experience in July.

- July 19, we look at the controversial story of Abraham, Isaac and an almost sacrifice.
- July 26, we ponder baptism. As part of the service we celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism with the Thickens Family.
- August 2, we celebrate communion and consider what it means for us to be the body of Christ. The sermon will be unlike any sermon I have preached for you before.



In August we begin a new series called “Beguiled by Beauty: Cultivating a Life of Contemplation & Compassion.” This was inspired by the book of the same name by Wendy Farley, PhD, which lays out a theology of beauty that can lead us to greater compassion through spiritual practices of contemplation. Dr. Farley is a well-known theologian (www.wendyfarley.org) and a professor of spirituality at the Graduate School of Theology at the University of Redlands, home of San Francisco Theological Seminary. We are deep into a pandemic and while summer bursts out all around us, death and economic suffering are prevalent. It is difficult to imagine how to comprehend both simultaneously. Dr. Farley’s work does just that. She helps us understand that faith in Divine Goodness is held together with suffering in order to make moments like this manageable. She shows us how a more intentional spiritual practice can deepen the well from which we draw in order to survive, and to thrive, during the trying times of our lives. Each week we will include activities, both for children and adults that you can use at home.

This series is designed to take advantage of this time where we are worshipping together yet still separate. The order and feel of worship might be somewhat different than what you have been used to. I invite you to join me as we explore new ways to be God’s people.

Dale

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prayers for family and friends of Marie Cerny who died July 10. Services are private.

Prayers of healing for:

- Ruth Svestka, who is having surgery on July 28
- Judy Lynch, Susan Lynch's sister-in-law
- Diane Wenke, family friend of Sara Jackson, Dale’s mom
- Jack Smith
- Olivia, friend of the Nadkarni family, as she undergoes treatment for cancer.



ZOOM COFFEE TIME—Sunday mornings after the worship service you are invited to join Zoom coffee time. Here is the information you need to join us.

Audio of the worship service: You may call and listen to the service by dialing 1(312)626-6799 and use Meeting ID: 973 5627 6934; Password: 960995. Stay on the line after worship and join us for Fellowship. Here is the new link to Coffee Fellowship if you are joining on a computer: <https://bit.ly/RPCFellowship>.

For information on joining worship on the internet or phone please see the bulletin. Worship is offered on our YouTube channel, and folks can join us on their telephone via Zoom. If you don't have a computer or tablet but do have a "smart" TV, you should be able to go to the YouTube channel on the TV and watch the service. If you would like a DVD of the service please contact me.

Reminder: The entire RPC building is closed. There are no in-person meetings and the only people allowed in the building are those stocking the food pantry and staff on an as-needed basis.

YOU CAN BE A PART OF WORSHIP — If you would like to serve as Liturgist, please email Reverend Jackson, pastor@rpcusa.org



TITHES & OFFERINGS — The Session is committed to paying all staff during these difficult days. The ministry and mission of the congregation not only continues but is more important than ever. Please mail your tithes and offerings to the church at 116 Barrypoint Road, Riverside, IL 60546. You can also give online.

THEOLOGY ON TAP We all know the joy of a surprise gift, good news, or a great achievement -- all of those things eliciting feelings of gratitude. But these days, full of grief, worry, and uncertainty do not easily nurture a sense of thanks. Indeed, they seem to be gnawing away our hearts and our hopes.

So what of gratitude now? When we don't feel grateful? In a 6-part course based on her recent book, *Grateful*, Diana Butler Bass takes us into a journey to understand what gratitude is, how it can strengthen us as individuals and in community, and the surprising ways in which it subverts hopelessness and injustice. In addition to lectures and mini-practice sessions, Diana will be joined by other writers in conversation about how giving thanks has made a difference in their own lives.



In this course, we will:

- Explore the definitions and structures of gratitude, and how what we think about gratitude shapes our actions;
- Learn practices of gratitude that open us to new levels of awareness and awakening;
- Discover the power of collective gratitude practices for your community or organization;
- Understand gratitude in relationship to difficult circumstances and injustice; and
- Uncover how gratitude becomes the soil for genuine creativity for individuals and communities.

This on-line course is free but requires you register, here is the link: <http://bit.ly/GratefulGroupReg>. You may begin watching the videos and can **join us on Monday evenings, beginning August 10**. You need not be a member of RPC to join us.



EQUAL EXCHANGE FAIR TRADE ITEMS —If you find yourself baking more now at this time, remember we have delicious baking ingredients. Dennis Cobb highly recommends the baking cocoa. We have many organic fair-trade items for sale (tea, coffee, baking cocoa and hot cocoa, chocolate chips and chocolate bars). If you'd like more detailed information on products or to place an order, contact the church office to arrange contact-free pick up.

LITTLE FOOD PANTRY NEWS — Fresh produce will always be available Monday and Friday. If you are interested in volunteering to pick up produce once a month, please contact Tara Gregus at 708-447-9551. Canned food (especially meat products) and monetary donations are always needed and welcome. Thank you!



WEEKLY MAILING UPDATE—Beginning August 2, we are creating a new mailing list for those who would like to continue to receive the weekly mailing. We are happy to mail to everyone who likes getting the bulletin and announcements by mail. All information will continue to be emailed and on the website. Please contact the office by phone (708) 447-1520 or email: rpcoffice@rpcusa.org You need to let us know you want to receive the mailing or your name will be removed from the list.