

Westlake UMC Update – March 20, 2020 – Video Transcript

Greetings friends, it is good to be with you this day. I know I am coming to you now via video during a time of great change, a time of uncertainty, certainly in our nation, in the world, and in the church, so I just want you to know that you have been and will continue to be in my prayers; that the staff and the leadership of Westlake United Methodist Church stands with you, and that most importantly, God is with you in the midst of this storm.

One of my favorite scripture verses is one that we've been going to, you hear a lot of folks going to it right now, and it's one I'd like to share with you now cause I know this is a frightening time for many. The first couple verses from Psalm 46:

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear”

I think there's a real difference between having recognition of danger and paralyzing fear. Friends, we have all got to take very seriously the real health risks of Covid-19, of the Coronavirus. We need a healthy recognition of the dangers of this virus. As followers of Jesus Christ, we know that we are called to love God and to love our neighbor. The reality is in doing that, we must take seriously the science-based guidance on how to protect one another, by maintaining social distance and staying at home to prevent the spread of this disease. This is putting into action that command from Jesus, to love and care for one another.

There is this healthy recognition of the reality that we now face in our lives, something that none of us have faced in our entire lifetime, in this pandemic. I know, for many, that the changes that are happening so rapidly with the spread of Covid-19, that it is really scary.

So I've been thinking about a study that I know I led and many of you were in a couple of years ago. It's a study from Adam Hamilton's book *Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times*. If you remember, if you were in that study, and if you were not, I want to share with you an acronym that Hamilton used for facing real fear. It's based on the word FEAR.

Face your fears with faith.

Examine your assumptions in light of the facts.

Attack the anxieties with action.

Release your cares to God.

Things are changing very quickly around us. We know every day, multiple times a day, we're getting updates, so we see the changes in our state, our nation, our world, and in our church.



WESTLAKE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Suburban Campus | Simpson Metro West Campus

Suburban Campus
27650 Center Ridge Road
Westlake, Ohio 44145

Simpson Metro West Campus
8519 Clark Ave
Cleveland, Ohio 44102

Phone: (440) 871-3088 | Fax: (440) 871-4481 | westlakeumc.org

So, I encourage you to stay connected to your church and check our church website, check your email, check our church Facebook page regularly for updates. Because we are moving in a new world right now, change is happening quickly, so we are suspending sending out a monthly newsletter. The reality is information needs to be shared much more quickly.

So, I plan to send out a weekly video, like this, that will share a message of hope and give you updates each week. And every Sunday I pray you will stay connected to this congregation and to God by worshipping God via our live streaming. You can watch our worship each week online on our website or now with the addition of watching it live on the church Facebook page.

Friends, we are blessed to have over one thousand full, associate and constituent members of Westlake United Methodist Church. The reality is, a church our size, we must all help care for one-another, so if you have a friend in the church, someone that's in your life group or someone within your family that you know does not get email, please contact them. Please share these updates with them over the phone, or if they're not on our email distribution, have them contact the church office so they can be added.

Now as I close this day, I'd like to offer you the closing words from that psalm that I began with, that beloved Psalm 46: 10-11

"Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth! The Lord of host is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Amen and Amen. Peace be with you my friends.