

# WEST CENTER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The Pastor's Newsletter

January 2020

In this new year and new DECADE we, as the people of God are called to imagine a new reality, a new paradigm for our lives: our churches, our bodies, our finances, our spirits We are called in this season to believe like we never have before, to dream big dreams and to speak life into our dead situations. So today, I encourage you to pray like you never have before, to dream like you never have before, to believe God like you never have before. I will be praying with you. Rev. Kris

*West Center Church seeks to worship the Living God, being led by the Holy Spirit, to carry on the work of Jesus Christ in justice, peace, simplicity and unity.*

Starting January 5, 2020, we will share a time of devotion in the sanctuary for 15 minutes before the choir rehearses. A short devotional reading followed by silent contemplation.

## Weekly Inspiration:

The divisions, dichotomies, and dualisms of the world can only be overcome by a unitive consciousness at every level: personal, relational, social, political, cultural, inter-religious dialogue, and spirituality in particular. This is the unique and central job of healthy religion (remember that re-ligio means re-ligament!). — Richard Rohr



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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HAPPY NEW DECADE!

**STARTING JANUARY 5, 2020, IMMEDIATELY AFTER SERVICE:**

**COFFEE & CONVERSATION WITH PASTOR KRIS**

An informal scripture study. A time to share and ask questions.

Jan. 5: The Lord's Prayer

## REV. KRIS' SERMON DECEMBER 29, 2019 VISION 2020 EZEKIEL 37:1-14

The visions and dreams of the mighty prophet Ezekiel were amazingly detailed, and they reach so far into the future that they are still speaking to us right here and now.

When you look at what had been happening in Ancient Israel and how they had become so debased, and corrupt, worshipping false Gods and idols and mistreating the least among them, it's almost like you are seeing the present time. When you wake up in the morning and you have coffee and if you watch the news you take in your daily dose of carnage, and you observe your daily dose of corruption and you watch as we destroy the earth, each other and everything that has meaning to us as the true people of God....well, that is where Israel was. And After God told Ezekiel that despite the depravity of the people, he was going to restore, you know you are reading our times now.

So, The Lord takes Zeke into a valley filled with dry bones disconnected bones...bones strewn about everywhere ... And the Lord says to him: MORTAL can these bones live? Mortal: you who are yourself subject to death; you mortal who has a transitory life: You who belong to this world: MORTAL: Can these bones live? Oh Lord God you know! Then God says to him: PROPHECY to these bones: Foretell, speak life, declare! Open your mouth and speak life to these bones!

God has given us the power to speak life to our own dry bones. What? You mean to Say God that we have that kind of power? YES! AND God says: Prophecy to them and tell them; oh dry bones, hear the WORD of the Lord: I will cause breath to enter you and you shall...not you might, not you could, not it is possible, but YOU SHALL! AND I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon them and I will cover you with skin, and (again) I will put breath in you AND YOU SHALL LIVE! I don't know about you, but I am so glad to know that I have that kind of power, that God has given me the power to speak into my dead financial situation and to change it, to speak into my broken body and be healed, to speak to my confused mind and have clarity, to speak to my broken heart and have joy.! Today I will speak life! Today we will speak life Today we shall live!

But notice that God needs **the mortal man to SPEAK LIFE TO PROPHECY TO THE DRY BONES!**

**Speak life and prophecy to the dry bones of the church.**

**Speak life and prophecy to the dry bones in your own lives, your body, your relationships, your finances, your marriages, your careers, your retirement.**

Has it ever occurred to you that God needs you to be a co-creator with God in Her ever-evolving creation in order to keep this universe going? I mean, I know, I know, God is God and can be God all by God's self, but I want you to consider just for a moment that God really NEEDS us in order to have the kind of Beloved community that She initially envisioned? And who else is going to do it?

I mean, we are of the highest created order in the scheme of things. **BUT WE HAVE TO SPEAK THE WORD.** The scripture does not say speak a word, it says speak **the WORD** and these bones shall live! We have to stay steeped in the word of God. We have to study and pray and preach. And if we do not, those dry bones will remain bone dry!

There is a devotional that I use written by a poet named Marc Nepo, his book entitled, *The Book of Awakening*. Nepo says” *“Look at the ant and antelope, at the worm and the butterfly, at the dog and the castrated bull, at the hawk and the wild lonely tiger, at the hundred-year-old oak and the thousand-year-old patch of ocean, and understand that no other life form has the consciousness of being that we are privileged to.*

*To recognize that of all the endless species of plants and animals and minerals that make up the Earth, a very small portion of life has the wakefulness of spirit that we call being human. That I can rise from some depth of awareness to express this to you and that you can receive me in this instant is part of our precious human birth.*

*You could have been an ant. I could have been an anteater. You could have been rain. I could have been a lick of salt. But we were blessed—in this time, in this place---to be human beings, alive in rare ways we often take for granted...this precious human birth is unrepeatable. So, what will you do today, knowing that you are one of the rarest forms of life to ever walk the Earth? How will you carry yourself? What will you do with your hands? What will you ask and of whom? Today you are precious and rare and awake. That should usher you into grateful living. That should tell you that hesitation is useless. Grateful and awake, ask what you need to know now. Say what your feel now. Love what you love now.” SPEAK LIFE NOW!*

### **West Center: Creation is waiting.**

The whole of creation, gazing eagerly as if with outstretched necks, is waiting and longing to see the manifestation of the children of God. All creation is waiting for the revelation of God’s children. Who are we? How will we serve, how will we revive, how will we move forward?

If you believe in the power of the resurrection, you will know that you can speak life to dead things to dead situations and to what some say is a dying church , you can prophesy over it and in it and like Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, you can bring it from out of the tomb to be the church that God wants and needs us to be!

And before you say to me: Pastor: I just don’t have...or I just can’t .....let me tell you this:

If you don’t have youth and energy, Do what you can with wisdom and mother wit and common sense. If you don’t have a college education, do what you can with a clean heart. If you don’t have a whole lot of money, do what you can with a whole lot of faith. If you can’t PREACH – PRAY, If you can’t PRAY -- MOAN, If you can’t MOAN -- CRY If you can’t CRY -- JUST TRUST GOD! If you don’t have the ENEGY TO RUN – WALK. If you’re too weary to walk STAND, If you’re too tired to STAND -- SIT

If you're too weak to sit. LEAN, If you're too frail to LEAN – LOOK, IF YOU can't LOOK – THINK. If you can't THINK – FEEL, If you can't FEEL – WAIT and Breathe! Because I know you can breathe!

Breathe...breathe right now, breathe Life into our dry bones so we can live and serve and love and serve God's creation.....And it doesn't matter how old you are, how busy you are, how little time you think you have,...Open ourselves up to RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT!

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**AMEN**