



Looking Back, Looking Forward, Being Present

From Pastor TayLavor's Desk

Happy Summer, Beloveds!

Let us take time to pause and breathe in fresh air and sunlight together. We are halfway through the year already ... (I know, crazy!) and I want to offer us some space to pause and reflect. I invite you to take a moment to think of those in our community and where we all are. Some of us are down the shore, some of us home in Basking Ridge, some of us in other parts of the country, and even all over the world. But in this moment of pausing and reflection, we are connected.

This past year we have been able to have choir again... we've been able to sing together again. We have celebrated a risen Christ and watched beautiful spring flowers bloom. We have celebrated Little Lambs and high school graduates, confirmands, and baptisms... and so much more! This has already been a year of tremendous growth for us in so many ways. We have celebrated the lives and legacies of members who have

passed away, and we have celebrated new beginnings with Pastor Matt, Diana, and their family.

As we experience these events and milestones together, what are other successes and joyful moments that have taken place in each of your lives?

Let us pray together over the months behind us so far:

Gracious and Heavenly God,

You have given us so many opportunities. Opportunities to commune, to be sad, to be happy and joyful, to celebrate one another... God, we pray that your spirit is in all of that time and energy... That you fill us with peace in knowing that our community is ordained and loved by you. Thank you God for the gift that it is to do life together as we are able to do. May we never forget what a blessing that is.

We can also look forward from this point in the year! We can look forward to the rest of a peaceful and relaxing summer... a summer of planning and preparation as many of us are physically away and traveling. We can look forward to the fall, to see each others faces again as another season of programs begins.

What do you have to look forward to in your life? What are you exciting about sharing with your church family?

Let us prayerfully consider these questions together:

Gracious and Heavenly God,

There is joy in the anticipation of you showing up in our midst. Let there be joy in the peace, the rest, the planning that this season brings to us. Help us be reminded of just how deeply connected we are through your love, through this church. Let that reminder move us to action in this time...

And now... we've looked back, we've looked forward... So now, look around. As I look around, I hear people on the street talking and laughing outside my office window. I see the light from the sun shining through the currently quiet church office windows and doors. I am reminded in this present moment of how and when Jesus rested... He went to quiet places (Matthew 26:36-46) to do his praying and resting.

Our summers can get busy so quickly, even and especially in our pursuit of vacations, and time off.

Let us prayerfully breathe consider how we are truly resting this summer:

Gracious and Heavenly God,

**Inhale*

Let me be truly present in this moment.

**Exhale*

I know that you do not expect me to earn your love and grace.

**Inhale*

I am loved by simply existing.

**Exhale*

Please let me find peace and rest in the present.

Amen.