To the People of Bethlehem Stonepile UMC and Springvale UMC:

For so long the information about the Covid19 pandemic has been all that is in the news each day. Not so much the last week. All the protests becoming riots with looting and so much property damage has taken the spotlight in the daily news cycle. It has been a disheartening week in many ways. The death of any human being, in this case Mr. George Floyd, while in police custody is almost beyond belief. And, likewise, the protests which so often have turned violent is also beyond my understanding. I can’t quite comprehend why the individuals who are doing the looting, setting fires, and other violent acts are willing to destroy their own neighborhoods. We live in troubling times. God has always had to deal with our human imperfections; in all of human history there have been times that we have been less that God would expect from us.

I want to share a few words written by Kirby Page which could solve a lot of our hatreds if we could just put them into practice. Mr. Page writes the following:

“In God’s sight a person is the most precious of all values. This truth possessed Jesus and never let him go. He illustrated it with stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.

Every individual is inherently worthful to the Father – every child everywhere, of every race, of every condition…..

Jesus taught and lived the twin truths that man needs God and God needs man. Jesus knew men to be frail, sinful, easily corrupted, sometimes monstrously depraved, capable of cruel and atrocious behavior – but always, always a child of God, and, even when a prodigal, indispensable to the lonely and yearning heart of the Father.”

Certainly in the past days we have seen that human beings can be involved in “cruel and atrocious behavior” as Mr. Page puts it, but we have also seen – both in the tragedy of the riots as well as in the Covid19 pandemic signs of goodness within humans. As Christians we must keep on keeping on and continue to see one another as God sees us. A hard thing to do, but necessary.

On a positive note let me say it was a joy to be in our outdoor worship this past Sunday. It was good to see one another’s faces – a joy to be in one another’s presence. We will do it again this coming Sunday at the same time: 10:00 at Bethlehem Stonepile and 11:00 at Springvale. Until then may the Lord God be with you.

Joy and Peace,

Pastor Bud