

“Putting a Period When God has a Comma”- 1 Corinthians 3: 1-10

I love the measurement of time. From nanoseconds to light years. I love time. I love knowing what time it is all over the world. I have an Apple App that helps me to do just that. It's called World Clock and you can know what time it is in over 5000 places. Right now, it is 3:05 tomorrow morning in Auckland New Zealand. I could tell time at the age of 4 and had my first watch at age 4. I love calendars. When I was growing up the Rexall Drug Store had a wonderful calendar with all kinds of historical notations on each day and the moon phases. I could not wait for the time each year that this calendar would come out and I would run to the drugstore to be one of the first to get it. By the way I have several calendar Apps. I can tell you what day of the week it was when they signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. It was a Thursday by the way. I know, big deal. Get a life.

In seminary when I anguished through 3 years of Biblical Greek, memorizing vocabulary and learning verb tenses of words, I also learned that there were two words in Greek for the English word for time. The first word is *chronos* where we get the word *chronological* which means measured time. You know years, weeks, days etc. The Greeks have another word for time which is *kairos*. This is time that is measured in history, reflection, and in outcomes. It also means opportunity, season, fitting time, meaningful time, and suitable time for action. It is also known as God's time. For example, we measure time in *kairos* by reflecting on the historical impact of the period known as the Civil War or Columbus discovering America. The New Testament uses the word *Kairos* 86 times.

As I leave Peace Church, I leave having done 3 years in *Chronos* time. I hope that as I leave the church as your minister, that I have also done some good *kairos* time. That somehow Kay and I both have made a difference or an impact even if it is being in some small way that will in some way impact the historical impact of this church.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church, he writes to a church that is distracted, and mired down by misdirected priorities. In this third chapter we find

Paul dealing with the church's arguments as to who belongs to which church leader. There were different camps in the Corinthian church depending upon whether you followed Apollos or you followed Paul. This caused the church to be spiritually immature and weak. Paul reminds them that they and we all belong to Christ. In verse 9 Paul reminds the church that they are God's servants, God's field, and God's building. In verse 10 Paul reminds the church that foundations are laid by one but someone else is building upon it. But there is a foundation already laid and that is Jesus Christ.

When you leave a church, you hope you have built a good foundation and that God will provide the next person to build on it. You hope that you have left a good footprint that is the footprint of Jesus that the next person can build on. So, what kind of foundation have we left?

In our 3 years together a lot has happened. A lot has happened in the chronos time. In the chronos time we have laughed together, we have anguished together, we have stepped out in faith together for change, and we have remained the same together. Through the generosity of a family we have been able to add screens to our worship experience. In our 3 years together we have added new members that you can see visualized on the altar with all the ribbons you see. We added fellowship programs such as Peace Travelers in which we took 24 trips and 429 people participated. We added a prayers and squares quilt ministry where a group of dedicated people sew prayer quilts for the congregation to pray over for individuals who are struggling in life. We also had Food Fun and Fellowship where groups of 8 would gather once a month for four months to get to know each other well. I know several couples now who have learned to enjoy the dominoes game called Mexican Train. Together we have strengthened the finances of the church by paying our apportionments. A portion meant for others. We have sent people on the Emmaus weekend and they have come back inspired to deepen their faith with Jesus. Finally, and very important we have brought Mandy on to work with our youth and children. She has jumped in and we have seen a difference in this area of ministry. So together we have done a lot in our chronos time.

But where is the kairos time in this time together? As we reflect on this passage of time what does it all mean? From these Chronos events we find Kairos meaning also. I've seen some people grow in their faith in Christ. I've seen more involvement in ministry by some people who had not been as involved before. Like the church at Corinth, we discover always that Jesus is the foundation of who we are and what we do. There are times during these three years I wondered where Jesus was, but he has always been the foundation of our work. In the time we have had together I must admit I have lost a lot of sleep worrying about our church its present and future ministry, you the laity, and those outside our church. Those who have fallen away to never return. You don't know how many times I heard our clock in the hall at home chime two-o'clock. I have worried not because of lack of faith and trust in God, but because I have had some responsibility for the future of Peace church. I hope you feel excitement and anticipation and maybe a little uncertain as to where God might be taking this church in its future.

In the kairos time, I leave you as a church with the challenge to work together, as Paul challenged the Corinthians, to find the common ministry with and in Jesus Christ. There are many challenges ahead for you all. You will have to deal with this aging building. There is the need for carpet in the sanctuary. The kitchen needs upgrading, new security is needed. There is also the talk of sound boards in Burgess Hall. There is the always the challenge of bringing new members not only to help with the finances of the church, but more importantly because people need God and they need the church. This will be accomplished as many of you have done already, inviting friends, co-workers to church. To let the love of Jesus and God shine out through you so that people will want to know more about your source of joy. There is always the challenge to help people to grow spiritually. The need for more studies of the Bible and opportunities for mission work beyond the building.

While there are many challenges, there are many genuine opportunities to make a difference for Jesus at Peace Church. Get behind Mandy and help Mandy with the youth and children. You may be a grandparent or a great-grandparent and think you are out of it, but everyone can invest in some time and help with

the children and the youth. Mandy needs the church's support financially, support in time investment, and enthusiasm to talk up what the children and youth are doing. Mandy needs ambassadors for her ministry.

You need to help people grow in Christ by praying about going on an Emmaus weekend. Talk to those who have done this and see if this would be a great help to you in growing your relationship in Christ. Help Scott your new pastor to start more Bible studies to help you deepen your faith. When these are up and running find the time to attend them eagerly to them and learn together.

It seems sometimes that we feel that God has put a period on Peace Church. I have heard people say to me in this church, "I've already done my time. Get someone new to do it. We have done what God has called us to do. There is no more. Period!" Right? Not so! God has only put a comma. There is still more work to do. You are getting a new minister who is full of energy and full of ideas. Scott is ready and waiting to come in and work closely with all of you to help strengthen this church. He wants to get to know you and work with you. Like Paul said to the Corinthian church in our passage, I came and laid a foundation and another person, Scott, and all of you, will come and build upon it.

Scott's and Kim's chronos is about to start. More importantly, Scott's Kairos is also about to start. Who knows what richness of ministry will come during their chronos. Who knows the richness of ministry and future during their kairos with you? Only God knows what is in store for you. I will be anxious read and to hear all about it. My chronos and kairos are going to another church where Kay and I will start a new chapter in our spiritual walk. God has not put a period in our lives nor in the church we end up landing in, but he merely is putting a comma. Will you pray for us that we might make a difference where we go both in the chronos and in the Kairos as we will be praying for you in your Chronos and Kairos with Scott and Kim.

Many years ago, I was given a poster which was a beautiful star lit night with these words from the Old Testament book Daniel. "Those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever." As I conclude my ministry I hope

that throughout the 40 years, I have done just that: led people to righteousness.
It's my prayer for you. Thanks be to God.