



Preaching, Teaching and Reaching for
Transformation and Liberation

“CONSCIOUS AND INTENTIONAL MINISTRY: DOING WHO I AM”

Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” Isaiah 6:

THE PASTOR'S PEN 

January 10, 2021

To my Pilgrim Rest family,

Thressessa and I Praise God for the opportunity to have served you these 18 years. Additionally, I praise God for blessing me to serve 25 years in full-time ministry. Whereas for some, pastoring has been a burden and has caused misery and suffering (some data record that between 250 and 1,200 clergy leave pastoral ministry each month, thousands of churches closed in America last year and thousands of people a day left the church last year), I receive great joy from serving you. I praise God for our times together in worship (even now online), and the sermons that have aided our spiritual growth. I praise God for the teachings that has assisted us in developing our relationship with God and growing into our calling to be “doers of the Word.” I praise God for the times that we have shared together in the celebrations as well as the tragedies; in the mistakes as well as the recoveries from the mistakes; and in the misunderstandings as well as the resolution of the misunderstandings. I praise God for it all.

Like many of you, we see and interact with you more than my biological family. We pray for you every day, and truly desire God’s best for you, your families, your careers, your finances, your communities, and your lives in total.

One of the greatest challenges of 2020, was the Covid-19 virus and the strain that it had on family gatherings – including our gathering as a church. However, I praise God for what we have been able to do via technology, and the ability to remain connected for worship services, Bible studies, church school classes meetings and other fellowship opportunities.

Last, I praise God that God is God. We expected and received many miracles and witnessed the power of God in numerous ways in the congregation. As one example, in November we asked everyone to remain prayerful regarding the sustaining of mild weather so the contractors could complete the tuckpointing work on the exterior of the church building. Praise God, our prayers were answered and on December 22 they completed the work. Those of you who are long-time Wisconsin residents know that only God could have held back the snow and provided temperatures warm enough to complete exterior work at the end of December.

Indeed, 2020 was a year to be remembered. 2020 brought out the worst in many (blatant racism, the inequalities in black and brown immigration versus white immigration, public patronage and promotion of white supremacy, the revelation of health disparities, and the widening of the wealth gap to name a few). Beliefs and comments that were once spoken in private and sheltered environments were expressed and encouraged publicly.

Nevertheless, as much as 2020 brought out the worst in many, 2020 also brought out the best in many. It brought out the best as we were able to use technology for worship, church school, Bible study, etc. It brought out the best in the users (*you*sers) of technology for worship, church school and Bible study. Many of you had never used a conference call line, Zoom, Facebook, Google Duo, Facetime, etc. and now you are professionally proficient in their use, and teaching others. It brought out the best as many of you engaged in innovative ministry, relevant ministry (phone calls to seniors and the sick and shut-in, the Lunch Ministry and others), personal ministry, sustained church giving and have stepped up to do above and beyond what you had previously considered possible.

In 2020, we proved what we could do it because we had to do it.

In 2021, we will prove what we can do because we are called to do it...

As Sis. Claudia Reid faithfully challenged us, “We do not want to be that church.” That is, a building on the corner, taking parking spaces for church activities, participating in perfunctory church rituals, yet in every other way disconnected from and invisible to the community.

In 2021, we desire to be the **Radical, Revolutionary and Relevant Church** that Jesus modeled, and had in mind when He said in Matthew 16:18, “*On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*”

The **Radical, Revolutionary and Relevant Church** that our enslaved ancestors risked beatings and tortures to attend so that they could have “real church.” A church that gave them hope and sustained them through the horrors of slavery and the daily brutality that they faced.

The **Radical, Revolutionary and Relevant Church** that civil rights participants went into for meetings, trainings and before mass protests so they may be equipped and transformed to go out to transform the world.

The **Radical, Revolutionary and Relevant Church** in which many of us were raised, taught and developed. The church that established the foundations that made us who we are today, and upon which we now stand to accomplish greatness for humanity.

In 2021, we desire to be the **Radical, Revolutionary and Relevant Church** in fulfilling our ministry calling...

In 2020, our emphasis was: **Conscious and Intentional Ministry: Doing Who I Am**, undergirded by Ephesians 1:18 (MSG) “*My eyes focused and clear so I can see exactly what it is He is calling me to do.*” Our emphasis was on seeing what God was calling us to do.

In 2021, our emphasis is: **Conscious and Intentional Ministry: Doing Who I Am**, undergirded by Isaiah 6:8, “*Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’*” Our emphasis is on doing what God is calling us to do.

My prayer is that each one of us, Knowing who we are... Knowing why we are... Seeing exactly what it is God is calling us to do... Says, *Here am I! Send me.*

- ✓ **Church Ministries** – Each ministry is called upon to pray for **Radical, Revolutionary and Relevant** ways that God is calling upon you to fulfill your ministry calling for the 1st Quarter of 2021.
- ✓ **Lunch Ministry** – We will continue the Lunch Ministry into the 1st Quarter as MPS is deciding when children will return to the school building and receive lunch and breakfast.
- ✓ **Hosea, Inc.** – We will complete the renovations in the Healing House, evaluate our organizational structure and reaffirm the ministry foundations in preparation of resuming the ministry in late 2021.
- ✓ **Church Property** – We will be proceeding with the previous decisions made regarding our property on Sherman Boulevard and Fond du Lac Avenue.
- ✓ **Frederick Douglass School** – In 2021, we will purchase the Frederick Douglass School Building – 3409 North 37th Street. In the fulfillment of the purchase of the building, renovations of the building and the implementation of the ministry in the building, we will need your support. We need your **Physical Support**. We need your **Intellectual Support**. We need your **Financial Support**.
- ✓ **Our Prophetic Witness and our Prophetic Voice** – We will present clearly our Prophetic Witness and pronounce proclaim boldly our Prophetic Voice

I am excited about what God is going to do for Pilgrim Rest, with Pilgrim Rest and through Pilgrim Rest in 2021.

I pray that you likewise are excited about what God is going to do for Pilgrim Rest, with Pilgrim Rest and through Pilgrim Rest in 2021, and that you are **IN IT TO WIN!**

WORK FOR THE WEEK

JANUARY MEMORY VERSE

⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." **Isaiah 6:8**

JANUARY MEDITATION QUOTE

"One spoke to me one day and said, 'Now Dr. King, don't you think you're going to have to agree more with the Administration's policy. I understand that your position on Vietnam has hurt the budget of your organization. And many people who respected you in civil rights have lost that respect and don't you think that you're going to have to agree more with the Administration's policy to regain this.' And I had to answer by looking that person into the eye, and say 'I'm sorry sir but you don't know me. I'm not a consensus leader.' I do not determine what is right and wrong by looking at the budget of my organization or by taking a Gallup poll of the majority opinion. Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

TODAY'S STUDY QUESTIONS AND MEDITATION:

Do not permit people to define you by your past _____

Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future _____

FOR THE YOUTH

You are not locked in who your family is _____

You are who God created you to be _____

No matter what people say or how people feel, Do You! _____
