

In the Message bible, Eugene Peterson offers this in Matthew 11, “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.”

On July 2, I began a week of vacation with Mike to relearn the unforced rhythms of grace and rest our bodies from moving our home and ending and beginning a new appointment. We arrived at a beautiful Garden Island of Kauai and we began our first day walking the beach, treating ourselves to a huge and delicious Hawaiian Ice Shaving at JoJo’s and finished the day in the hot tub to enjoy the gift of water massage and the view of the sunset.

The second day, my eyes opened at 6am and I decided to go and sit on the seashore. I brought a cup of Kona coffee and a book for self-retreat. I sat on a beach recliner and got comfortable as I watched people walk, jog, walk their dogs, take pictures, and enjoy the sound of waves gently moving in and out. I read and I closed my eyes and centered in God in prayer.

Mike and I spent the entire vacation swimming, float in the ocean on an inner tube for hours and watched sea creatures climb the rocks and swim under water and we were in awe of their beauty. We spent the next seven days uninterrupted walking along the shore, driving and enjoying the beautiful natures, hiking and enjoying diverse food.



We had a wonderful time in Kauai but what I enjoyed the most was the early morning hours on the beach, watching, listening to the waves, reading, and centering myself in God. Since then, centering prayer has been my daily ritual for the last month and it has been such a blessing through this transitional time.



During this past month, I wondered about our church, Lake Merritt United Methodist Church and Lake Park United Methodist Church – how will our church look like as we are slowly but surely coming together in-person still very much living in this pandemic, how would the leadership needed for this moment in the life of the church, what are our church’s hope and dreams at this time? and how can we be hope and light for the world tangibly as a body of Christ? On my last day at Kauai, there was tropical rain that was passing through. I still went out to the beach early in the morning to center myself in God. As I opened my eyes, there before me was the rainbow mystically shining before me. There was deep peace in my heart and in my soul.



Daily, I center myself in God in my living room and at times in our beautiful sanctuary looking out the lake and seek the Holy Spirit’s whisper in my heart. Daily, I walk Lake Merritt and our neighbor of Lake Park UMC alone and at times with Mike and our furry grandchild Butters in unforced rhythms of grace.

Siblings, how are you? Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Our Christ invites us to get away with him. He invites us to walk with him to see how we can take a real rest in the unforced rhythms of grace. Come and see.

Deep Blessings, Pastor Sunae