

ISIS AND TERRORISM: A REALITY WE CAN'T AFFORD TO IGNORE

Almost everywhere I go, I encounter someone who is raising questions about or expressing fear of possible terrorism. Those comments and concerns deserve a thoughtful, caring and accurate response. But it appears that most pulpits are silent on the issue, despite the fact that terrorism is one of the most significant matters of our time, because it affects not only *us* but the entire *world*! Unfortunately, the current silence in so many pulpits today is not greatly different than that of numerous churches in Germany during the rise of Adolf Hitler.

So on our first gathering of the New Year, on Sunday, January 10th, I plan to respond caringly with *facts* to the questions I've been asked, the fears I've heard expressed, and especially to some erroneous assumptions that people seem, at times, to be sharing with one another. Moreover, I want to help us to look at some vital aspects of this unfortunate reality through a *spiritual* lens, invoking *spiritual values*—an approach that seems to be absent from most discussions.

These times do not need more churchy “business as usual”; nor do we need sermons based only on prescribed lectionary readings that tend frequently to ignore some of the crises that we now face. The most powerful prophetic voices in our own scriptures attempted constantly to bring light into the darkness that people were experiencing in *their* era.

In *our* day, at least at CCM, I hope to do likewise. The title of my messages for January 10th will be, “ISIS AND TERRORISM: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW!”

With caring and abiding love,

**Your pastor and friend,
John**

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CCM?

January, 2016

Sunday, January 10 (2nd Sunday of the Month)

10:00 a.m. OPENING TO THE SACRED THROUGH WORSHIP

There is a great deal of misinformation on the internet, in some publications, and even (perhaps unintentionally) on local and national television. These inaccuracies need to be corrected. You deserve the facts—accurate information that will keep us appropriately informed; and you may not be getting it, on the most important current issues. Even if you are, it rarely is presented from a helpful spiritual perspective, especially when it relates to terrorism—an issue that we can no longer escape.

If you want facts you can trust, without political spin, you will have an unparalleled opportunity to get them this Sunday at CCM. We'll address questions about ISIS, Islam, the Koran, Jihad, the teachings and goals of radical extremists, and why Christians everywhere, as well as America and Israel are the main targets of their wrath. Also, we'll ponder the possibility of a spiritually-based response to those pressing issues.

As is our custom at CCM, John's message on "ISIS AND TERRORISM: WHAT YOU NEED MOST TO KNOW NOW!" will be followed by an opportunity for discussion. Our goal will be to help us think helpfully about a reality we dare not ignore! Feel free to bring other family members and interested friends to join you. (Out by about 12:00 noon)

Sunday, January 24 (4rd Sunday of the Month)

10:00 a.m. OPENING TO THE SACRED THROUGH THOUGHTFUL CONSIDERATION AND HELPFUL DISCUSSION: OUR INFORMATIVE NEW ADULT FORUM

It is no secret that Jesus said, if we ask, seek, and knock, the spiritual realm will be opened to us. Our time of togetherness today provides an opportunity

to allow that potential in each of us to be realized. Rarely do persons who do not take advantage of such opportunities have a meaningful sense of the presence of God. So, at CCM, we'll use this time of togetherness to open ourselves to the dimension of the sacred that we so often miss. When we gather, we'll continue to discover what it means to be a truly *progressive* spiritual person (as Jesus himself seemed to be)—an emphasis that appears to be ignored in most church groups. So if you want to be serious about an *authentic* spiritual journey, we'll look forward to seeing you. (Out between 11:30 a.m. and 12 Noon, depending upon the extent of productive discussion)