

# VOICES OF HOPE



GIA R. HAMILTON, PSYD, LMFT

## MISSION

*Ignited by faith,  
we live out God's love by embracing,  
equipping and empowering  
vulnerable people in  
Southern California*

## VISION

*Sharing the love of Christ,  
we are a community to care  
and be cared for...*

*Where the vulnerable are  
safer and stronger*

*Where the dependent  
are self-sustaining*

*Where the isolated  
dwell in community*

*Where the weary  
will be given hope*

## VALUES

*Compassion / Advocacy  
Collaboration / Respect  
Innovation / Stewardship*

## *Who Helps the Helpers?*

That's a question on a lot of caregivers' minds but sometimes pastors are not given the permission to ask this themselves. At least that's what I've seen in my own home as my husband is a pastor. It's hard work trying to care for everyone in church, it's even harder when no one is around!

During the pandemic, we have struggled with re-envisioning church over Zoom, tending to the needs of our church family and working for justice and equity. We've all had to do this while socially distanced, worrying about bills, and with no end date for this pandemic.

Now that at least two family members are together for every waking hour of the day, we've experienced more tension in our household. We've had to negotiate our needs as a couple and communicate more than ever in our 23-year marriage! As we work through the tension and reconcile, our enjoyment of one another has deepened with more shared laughter and longer dinner conversations.

We've had to wrestle with God to let go of expectations of what we used to be able to do and how we used to be able to do it. It's hard. The letting go process is painful without our usual bearings and resources available. Just like everyone else, plans and hopes have been disrupted and the ambiguity of the situation is wearying.

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*Tomorrow is **World Mental Health Day**, a worldwide opportunity for all those affected by mental health issues to talk about what can be done for those in need and the resources available. We often think of those needing help as reserved or withdrawn but, what about those who have made helping their mission? Who helps them? Our Vice President, Health, Wellness and Recovery Services, Dr. Gia Hamilton shares some important resources and her own experience as a pastor's wife in today's Mental Health moment.*

So how do we help these helpers? Without any end date in sight, it's important to focus on the things we can control appropriately; routine, communication and connection, prayer, physical activity, nutrition and sleep, and hobbies...It's important to find joy where you can, whether it's with the people you live with, walking in nature, and engaging in enjoyable activities.

Pastors are human too and if you are not functional or things have reached an impasse, please reach out for professional help. We are all in this together and must bear one another's burdens as we can. Attached you'll find some COVID-19 Resiliency and Wellness helpful tips with a few support resources. Also included are virtual field trips and cultural enrichment activities to engage in.

Seek out and savor trustworthy people, friends, and confidants you can share with. There's a profound healing in knowing people enjoy you. Sometimes pastors need to take their own medicine and ask for help the way they encourage their congregants to. At least that's what I tell my husband.

With hope for our future together,

*A Pastor's Wife*

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