At Home, In Different Places

By Richard Gehring

Although we are all facing the same “Stay-at-Home” restrictions these days, I’m struck by the very different kinds of stresses that we are each facing. For parents with young children, it may be overwhelming as they juggle working from home with guiding their children’s schooling. For retired people, it may be isolating as they lose direct contact with family and friends. For essential workers, it may be all-consuming as they try to carry out their jobs while protecting themselves and their families.

In a similar way, our response to the pandemic from a spiritual perspective may be quite different. Many of us probably find comfort in something like the beginning of Psalm 46: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.”

But some of us may not be ready for such confident pronouncements. Many of us may need to first cry out as the psalmist does elsewhere, “How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long?” (Psalm 13: 2)

Others may identify strongly with the father who beseeches Jesus to heal his son, declaring, “I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9: 24)

And perhaps we could learn a lot from the wisdom of Job’s friends when they first come to him in his time of great loss: “They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.” (Job 2: 13)

Thanks be to God who has created and gifted us each differently, who understands the unique circumstances we each face, and who is able to be found no matter our situation.

Fear and Great Joy

By Deborah Wetherill

Spring is here, but it doesn’t feel like any spring that we have experienced before. We are staying home, working as we are able, and trying to support each other’s emotional well-being as we can.

It may be hard to see a light at the end of the tunnel when there are so many questions that remain about the future. Even so, there is goodness to be found within these struggles.

On Easter Sunday, Pastor Richard challenged each of us to reflect on ways that we can find joy in our current circumstances.

Some questions you could ponder include:

- What fears or challenges do you face?
- What joys are you able to experience?
- What are some things you might be learning?
- What resources are you turning to for comfort and strength?

Or you could finish these sentence starters:

- What we really need is...
- Some things they don’t tell you

(Screen grab from the Palm Sunday video processional.)

(Virtual Sunday school gathering time.)

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Pentecost and Transformation

By Deborah Wetherill

One thing that can happen during times of grief and struggle is transformation. The disciples experienced this as they were present for Jesus’ death, his appearances after he rose from the dead, and his accession to heaven.

As we celebrate Pentecost at the end of May and remember the arrival of the Holy Spirit, we also need to remember the challenges that came before. The disciples lost their friend and teacher, then feared for their own lives and hid in fear. They celebrated Jesus’ return, and then grieved when he left again. Even though Jesus said he would send a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the details of when or how this would happen were unknown.

We are also living in a time of great uncertainty. We are learning and experiencing new things and hard things. We too face unknowns and need the Comforter that Jesus promises is coming. God wants to do transformation in us and through us as we learn to rely on God’s provision.

What is your transformation story during this time of COVID-19?

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—Romans 8: 38-39, LMC Verse of 2019-2020

Fear and Great Joy

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about sheltering in place are...

• What I am learning about (pick an emotion e.g., grief, loneliness)...

• What I want to remember about this time is...

After thinking about the prompts above, take a short video of yourself (3-5 minutes), and share it with the pastor’s to be used in our virtual worship together.

Sharing your thoughts during this challenging time may feel scary and vulnerable. However, hearing from each other helps to draw us closer and feel less alone in our struggles when we have to be physically distant. Worship planners are not looking for perfection or a performance; we want to see you. Your story could help or strengthen someone else in their struggles.

May sharing your experiences with this family of faith help us all to move from a time of fear to a time of great joy.

Left: LMC kids are the cutest.

Administration Commission Update

By Rebecca Kuhlmann Taylor

During this time of social distancing, the Administration Commission continues to meet together and make decisions virtually. Most recently, we held our quarterly meeting by Zoom on March 26. Here are a few items of note.

Office Wing Renovation (OWR)

This project continues to be on hold. The Administration Commission, OWR Committee, and OWR Fundraising Committee will meet on May 6 to talk again about potential next steps in this new COVID-19 environment.

Alternate LMC Workday

LMC would typically host a communal workday in May to get our church yard and building in tip-top shape as we approach the summer. To honor the Stay-at-Home order, we have reduced our typical spring to-do list to a few essential yard tasks that can be completed individually or with members of your family, on your own schedule, and without entering the church building.

If you are healthy and feel you can safely visit the church yard, please consider assisting. Contact Norm E. for specifics.

Custodial Contract

Because the church building is not in regular use, we have temporarily suspended our twice weekly custodial

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Pastoral Search Update

By Cynthia Kimball

The Pastoral Search Committee has been hard at work on our search task. The first key agenda item was updating our congregational profile. We met several times, virtually of course, and divided the work among us. We completed the congregational profile by the beginning of April and submitted it to our executive conference minister, David Miller.

The next step is for David to connect our search committee with those pastors, trained in Christian Formation, who are looking for a church. Please continue to pray that God will bring forward the right person to pastor our lively congregation. Stay tuned!

Looking Ahead at LMC

While LMC typically switches the time of our service to 9:30 AM on the first Sunday in June, Ministry Team has decided to maintain our current 10:00 AM time through the summer.

There are still many unknowns that affect our worship. Specifically, we do not know how long we will remain with a stay-at-home mandate nor when it will be safe for us to come together in person for worship. Hence, Ministry Team wanted to avoid another change and decided that we would all benefit from remaining consistent with our current 10:00 service time.

June
• 7: Trinity Sunday

July
• 1: New LMC leaders take office
• 19-26: MYF SWAP service trip (tentative)

August
• 23: Verse of the year (2020-2021), worship service

September
• 12-13: Church retreat at Menno Haven

October
• 4: World Communion and Heavenly Banquet (tentative)

November
• 8: Covenant Sunday

Summerfest!
—Denise H.

I think everyone is looking forward to being able to hold this traditional community event sometime this summer. But before this can be planned, we need someone to volunteer to be the Summerfest coordinator! Without a coordinator, we will not be able to have this annual summer tradition, and we really need it more than ever this year.

Do you feel called to this? Contact Denise. She has all the info on what needs to be done to coordinate a successful Summerfest.

Parking Lot Entrance Repairs

Although we are erring on the side of caution with respect to the Stay-at-Home order and work to be done at the church, we decided to proceed with the repair of the concrete and railings at the parking lot entrance to the church. There is a significant advantage to doing this repair work while the church building is not in use (for example, so that we don’t have to arrange an alternate entrance while the railings are gone).

Since the contractors can conduct this work while maintaining social distance, we decided to proceed, and this work is currently being completed. We look forward to a safer and more attractive entrance when we all return to the church building in the future!

Admin Update

(Continued from page 2)

service. We continue to pay our monthly bill, however, so that the individuals who normally clean LMC continue to be paid.

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