



MARCH 15 2020

Dear Friends of Sherwood and Mt. Home United Methodist Churches

I have been praying continually that you would each be kept whole and healthy in this time of social distancing. I hope that the disruptions to ordinary routines are not causing you hardship and I'm mindful of the many ways this is impacting our communities and people all over the world. I think not only of those who are ill, and those who will become ill, but also the people out of work, the children out of school, the financial instability this will cause to so many people and everything that flows from that.

On the other hand I have

witnessed how much kinder and attentive people have become in the midst of this confusion. Each time I've interacted with a stranger this past week they've paused to ask me how I'm doing in a sincere tone and shared a piece of their own story they certainly would not have offered in ordinary times. The human longing for community and connection, and the spirit of compassion and solidarity is powerful.

Because we cannot gather in worship and must remain in solitude this Sunday I invite you to reflect on this piece of the story of Elijah from 1 Kings 19:

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, how he had killed all Baal's prophets with the sword. Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah with this message: "May the gods do whatever they want to me if by this time tomorrow I haven't made your life like the life of one of them."

Elijah was terrified. He got up and ran for his life. He arrived at Beer-sheba in Judah and left his assistant there. He himself went farther on into the desert a day's journey. He finally sat down under a solitary broom bush. He longed for his own death: "It's more than enough, Lord! Take my life because I'm no better than my ancestors." He lay down and slept under the solitary broom bush.

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Then suddenly a messenger tapped him and said to him, "Get up! Eat something!" Elijah opened his eyes and saw flatbread baked on glowing coals and a jar of water right by his head. He ate and drank, and then went back to sleep. The Lord's messenger returned a second time and tapped him. "Get up!" the messenger said. "Eat something, because you have a difficult road ahead of you." Elijah got up, ate and drank, and went refreshed by that food for forty days and nights until he arrived at Horeb, God's mountain. There he went into a cave and spent the night.

Hymn - [Spirit of My Silence by Sufjan Stevens](#)

Stories of God caring for God's people in the wilderness are everywhere in scripture. In this particular interlude Elijah flees danger into the wilderness, fearing for his life. He expects to die there, but God gave him food, drink, and rest. By tradition it was the birds, the ravens who fed Elijah, and this image of God's sustaining care has especially informed monastic and hermetic traditions down through the centuries.

There is a mysterious kind of sustenance to be found in solitude with God, but many of us avoid solitude. Sitting quietly with one's self can be a very hard thing to do. We may be assailed with doubts, fears, guilt, or shame. We may find ourselves recalling painful memories, or unhelpfully analyzing our past choices and behaviors in ways that are painful. We may become

bored, and out of boredom make poor choices regarding our self-care. Boredom often drives us to distraction and consumption.

But every spiritual tradition in the world contains advice to spend time in solitude, to meditate, to journey inward and to study our own soul. When we ignore this advice we stunt our own spiritual development. We trap ourselves in counterproductive behaviors and rob ourselves of the wisdom and maturity we are intended to attain through communion with the holy spirit.

So may you breathe deeply and slowly. May you rest in the wilderness. May you be sustained by God's loving presence, and may you be refreshed for the road ahead.

The Peace of Jesus Christ Be With You,

Rev. Aric Clark

Pray Requests

Request from Cheryl Barry

As a member of the Congregational Care Team I would like to request prayers for continued healing for Anne and Leonard Grubowski. Anne broke some ribs awhile back and Leonard still has some challenges from his stroke last year.

Request from Jan Bartlett

Prayer request for Betty Gordon's daughter who has been diagnosed with the virus. She lives in Redmond, WA. Thank you.

Request from Tom Ettelson

Prays for my sister Kathy. She has been cleared of cancer and then had it reoccur several times over the past 3 years. She is undergoing radiation treatment again. She has endured a great deal of pain in her recovers. Prays also for her husband Joe. It is hard to see your wife in pain and Joe has been there and is being there for his wife and kids. Please, prays for Kathy and Joe.

Prays for my brother's wife Claudia. She has aggressive cancer and has not been able to swallow without aspirating since last March. She must sleep sitting up and thus has not slept well since last year. Fortunately, she is getting ahead of the cancer with aggressive treatment. Prays also for my brother; it is hard to see your wife in pain. He has struggled to take care of his wife, keep a job to keep health insurance, fight with insurance companies, health care establishments, pharmacies, and government agencies. Please, prays for Claudia and Jack.

Prays for the Nicholson, Black, Lowry and Neenan families for they have lost their patriarch. Some of you knew him as Nick, Gordon Nicholson (my wife Wendy's father). He passed away 2 weeks ago last Sunday. He had what could be called a good death; he transitioned with

is son Keith, daughter Wendy and granddaughter Sydnee by his side. Gordon was a kind man who could connect with anyone. He would instantly make that connection and talk with anyone no matter their social status, their physical anomalies, nor if ostracized by others. He was truly a man of grace. Please, prays for his children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces, and grand nephews and nieces.

Prays for Gordon's youngest child, Scott (my wife Wendy's brother), the youngest of six. Scott has terminal cancer, had no insurance and lost most of his assets from the disease. Because family and friends have rallied around him, he has been shown the love and the help he needs. Scott has those traits from both his mother, Priscilla who passed away 15 years ago and his father. Priscilla was one of those who could get things done, getting a project completed. Scott was in construction and knows how to get a job done and provide work for others. And Scott is like his dad, is the kind of guy that is fun to be around. He just makes that kind of human to human connection. Please, prays for Scott.

I would ask you for prays not to be from pity or request to change God plan for their lives. I know the guys would be put aback. Rather pray a pray of thanksgiving for their lives, for these beautiful lives and those who they have touched, family, friends and acquaintances. Also pray for God's love to be shown to them in their moment of need and tribulation.

Send pray request to officesherwoodumc@gmail.com in care of Congregational Care Team



Contact Info

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Check out the updated website:



Lay Leader: Laura Hartley
Administrative Council Chair: Lynelle Eck
Pastor Parish Relations Committer Chair: Georga Dorsey
Deacon: Ben Hartley
Trustees Chair: Thomas Ettelson
Worship Committee Chair: Diane Peters
Do you know someone who is unable to come to church or a shut-in?
Contact our congregational care team:
Chair Cheryl Barry

Newsletter Editor: Tom Ettelson t.ettelson@comcast.net

Event Calendar

Sunday Service suspended until further notice

Every Thursday, Shared Table Sherwood UMC suspended until further notice

UM Men's Breakfast suspended until further notice

Trustees Meeting online

Choir Practice suspended until further notice

UMW Elizabeth Circle meets suspended until further notice

UMW Lydia Circle meets suspended until further notice

Church Council suspended until further notice

Additional messages and information from the Bishop, Conference and District:

The Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church:
[Coronavirus Resources GNW Area](#)

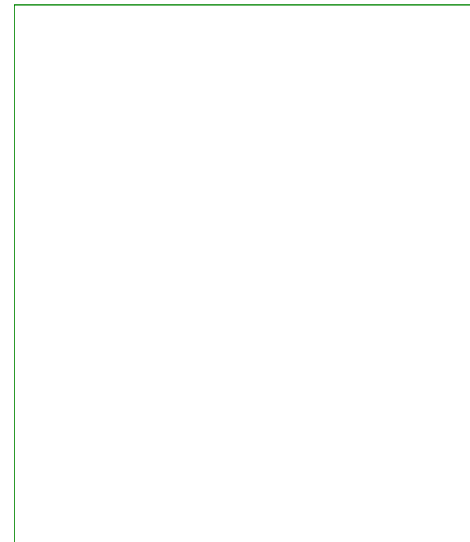
An Expression of The United Methodist Church : [One Great Hour of Sharing](#), [UMCOR Donations](#)

Here is a piece worth linking to on what "flattening the curve" means and why social distancing is important:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/coronavirus-simulator/?utm_source=pocket-newtab

Local Church Responses to COVID-19

<https://greaternw.org/local-church-responses-to-covid-19/>



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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH