



Marvin United Methodist Church

The Little Church on a Hill with a Big Heart

April 2020

How to make through the next four weeks (or as long as it takes)

Listen to music you love. Cook - either for yourself or with family. Take daily walks outside if you can. Get dressed, put on make-up, if you normally do. Limit the time you watch the news -- be informed, but not overwhelmed. Consider reviving a hobby or pastime you have loved but not practiced much lately -- art, sewing, yoga, reading, puzzles, writing, etc.

All of these are good ideas, and you'll see more from Roberta's mental health article in this newsletter. But there is one thing missing. Do you know what it is? Now, for the first time in a long time, for many people, there is time to spend time immersed in spiritual disciplines. We often put those practices as a last priority, and sometimes in our busy lives, they get left off, or hurried through. The evidence is clear, however, churches that prioritize supporting the practice of spiritual disciplines are churches that grow and have vitality. The same is true for individuals. It SHOWS if you spend time and make spiritual disciplines a priority.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism taught about the unearned grace of God. We should be pursuing grace, not waiting for it to happen to us. We can use the means of grace to strengthen and confirm our faith as disciples. Our works of piety and works of mercy, as Wesley called them, can strengthen us internally to be God's hands and feet through external work.

Right now, our communal practices may be more difficult, but not impossible, to practice. Sharing in the sacraments, baptism and holy communion, find their deepest meaning when we are physically together. We can practice other communal works of piety, Christian conferencing, and Bible study using our computers, phones, and other digital means. Our Zoom meetings are an example of that, and as we experiment more, we will push the boundaries and find new ways to be together in study and conversation even as we are apart.

Individual works of piety, reading, meditating, studying scriptures, prayer, fasting, attending worship (online), healthy living, and sharing our faith with others can be done during this time of sheltering in place. We can share with each other and encourage one another by phone or using email or social media. Would you like to start an online Bible study? Whether you're a member of a Sunday School class or small group or not, let me help you facilitate using technology and creativity to continue to learn and share together. It may be easier to do this than you think!

When it comes to works of mercy, we will need to think outside the box! As we seek justice, ways to end oppression and discrimination, and addressing the needs of the poor, our response could include writing letters or emails on issues to those who have the power to change them. We might think of some contemporary issues that are especially troubling in this time and place, like the availability of medical care for those who are uninsured or underinsured.



One concrete way we can address the needs of the poor is to contribute to the Blessing Box that Woody-Dellinger and Waters family have built installed in front of our church. Please contact Katie or Pastor Amy if you can contribute nonperishable food to go in the box so that those who may have need can take what they need. We might also remember that our support of Marvin is even more important in this time than ever. As United Methodists, our contributions through our apportionments support well developed assistance programs like UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief, that we have supported in the past

with financial assistance and putting together cleaning and hygiene kits and our Agape Christmas Boxes). As you are able, please continue to support the work of Marvin locally and around the world by giving online or mailing your check to Marvin UMC, 2731 Startown Rd, Lincolnton NC Attn: Treasure (we will make sure Skip directly gets those unopened envelopes addressed "Treasurer").

Individual acts of mercy include doing good works, visiting the sick and those in prison, feeding the hungry and giving generously to the needs of others. You can see that some of these actions overlap with what we can do together. Our visiting, for now, should be phone calls, letters or cards, and texts, emails, or using social media to share our love and companionship with others. You can also help me out in knowing the needs of our church and community by sharing with me any illnesses or prayer needs that could use my attention!

All of these spiritual disciplines, whether they are for our inward growth (acts of piety), or for our outer actions (acts of mercy) they cause us to grow in our faith. Habits of generosity build on each other, both individually and in community. Simply letting someone you know that you are praying for them has power!

As we adjust to what is our "new normal" and even beyond this time, I pray that you will seek out these practices on a regular basis. What a joy it will be when we can practice them together!



—Pastor Amy—

— — — { OUR COMMUNITY AND WORLD } — — —

RELAY FOR LIFE: Why is it important to me?

By Jane Ziemba

On March 1, I introduced myself and our Relay for Life campaign to the congregation by asking a few questions. These questions were:

How many of you have lost a loved one to cancer?

Hands were raised.

How many of you know of someone who is battling cancer or has been diagnosed with it?

More hands were raised.

How many of you know someone who survived cancer?

A few hands were raised.

How many of you have survived cancer?

One hand was raised.

I was surprised by how many hands were raised. It is obvious that many in our congregation have seen the effects of cancer, myself included. I have friends and family members who have fought the battle, some not successfully.

Most recently, I lost my husband of 46 ½ years to cancer. I am still struggling to understand how he could move here (September 1, 2017) a supposedly healthy man and by mid- October (a short 6 weeks later) he was diagnosed with stage 4, not 1 or 2, but stage 4, non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Our lives were in turmoil, we didn't know what to expect, even though we had taken the "chemo class". Everything was looking good, his body seemed to be responding well to the chemo, he even kept most of his hair and his handlebar mustache. By the end of February, he was taking care of me as my RA and carpal tunnel surgery made me the patient. Then came the follow up testing after 6 months of chemo. Then, just as we thought we were home free, we found his cancer had morphed into a stronger strain. It was now

affecting his bright, logical, engineering minded brain.

So we began the trek to Charlotte for weekly rounds of spinal infusions - the only way to attack this new cancer. Our daughter was a blessing - she drove us to Charlotte each week around 5 in the morning. At this time, I was lucky I knew my way around Lincoln County with the newcomers map in one hand. What I didn't know was that I could have called the American Cancer Society and they could have helped me with transportation and helped me find a comfy place to sleep near the hospital instead of sleeping on the day bed.

David was still fighting, but getting weaker. I was asked if we wanted palliative care. We had no idea what it was, so at first we said no. Now I wish we had taken advantage if the program (through American Cancer society and Hospice) earlier. Our consultant was friendly, informative, told us what was available, and was a real cheer-leader for David's cause. Sadly, we didn't get her services until August of 2018, just before David entered the care facility. We were the couple that joined the church in October 2018 and I lost him Thanksgiving night of 2018.

My last eight years of teaching in Maryland, I was asked to teach a new program to middle school students. Part of the curriculum was family life, including the teaching of STDs. It was at that time that I learned that a common STD virus called simply "HPV" (Human Papilloma Virus) caused cervical cancer in females, penile cancer in

males, and oral cancer in both. Wow! What an eye opener - a simple virus can cause cancer. They had just developed a vaccine to be given to pre-teens and young teens that can prevent this virus from causing cancer. Maybe there is hope that more research will find other viruses that cause cancer. I am glad my young grand-daughters and former students are able to get this vaccine and be prevented from getting this form of cancer. They can be spared the heartache caused by infertility due to cancer. This is what the American Cancer Society helps to fund- research to save lives.

I am writing this because I want you to become aware of what the Relay for Life is and does. It is a major fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. Our Marvin UMC Team doesn't walk or run to collect funds, but we do have a major fundraiser each year - our ham biscuit, hot dog, and bake sale held at Carolina Hardware.

We can do fundraisers all year, not just in the spring. All the money raised goes to help research and benefit patients and families.

There are services available for cancer patients and families that I did not know existed-mostly free or reduced cost. As I mentioned earlier, transportation to treatment if you have no way to get there, also a place to stay if you are traveling for treatment, caregiver support, survivors network, "TLC" (tender loving care) offers affordable products for breast cancer survivors. They offer resources for helping with financial assistance for treatment.

Visit www.Cancer.org or call 800-227-2345. They care.



ADAPTING TO OUR NEW NORMAL: TIPS FOR COPING WITH LIFE IN THE MIDST OF COVID 19

BY ROBERTA WILSON MA, LPCA, NCC

For so many of us, tucked snug in our houses (or bouncing off the walls), where life can appear the same as it did a few weeks ago, it's hard to come to terms with and accept this new "normal" that includes social distancing, stay-at-home orders and even self-quarantine.

It all happened so fast. It's hard to wrap our minds around.

If not for news programs and dire warnings from government officials, life in Lincoln County, and much of America, looks pretty much the same.

Well, unless you go to the grocery store and try to find toilet paper.

Most of us are definitely home more. Generally, that means one of two things: either you are alone and feeling isolated or are spending most of your time in close proximity with family members. Both are stressful. Both are challenging, albeit in different ways.

While we might not have told anyone – except maybe God in a desperate whispered prayer – we're scared. We worry we, or a loved one, will get sick and – in the worst cases – even die.

We worry how we'll pay our bills if we have lost, or will lose, our jobs. We worry that our kids are suffering from home schooling and the sacrifice of milestone life events like prom or even graduation.

How long it will last? What will our country or our family look like afterward? We have a million questions and at least as many worries.

It is normal to worry; even God knows we do. Philippians 4: 6-7, tells us: Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Research tells us that faith and prayer help in times of stress. People who rely on them are more positive and resilient.

Just because we have Jesus doesn't mean we can't also benefit from some sound psychological advice. That's where I come in. As a licensed psychotherapist, it is my job to anticipate problems that develop when people experience great stress and trauma, to help you cope with new challenges from living during the global Covid 19 pandemic.

During these days of unprecedented change, I want each of you to monitor your thoughts and feelings. Think of your emotional state like a seesaw or level. Ideally, we want that seesaw to stay in the middle, with only minor movements up or down on either side. If we think of the level, we want the bubble to stay in the middle at plumb or square.

The seesaw and level both provide visuals for us to monitor how we are doing, emotionally and mentally. Big swings are evidence of emotional volatility. Maybe we feel unsettled, angry, depressed, lonely, or despondent. None of us are experienced enough to manage and regulate our emotions. Instead, we need healthy coping skills—not relying on food, alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or shopping or other compulsions to make us feel better.

We want to give ourselves, and family members, as much grace as we can muster. That means having realistic expectations of others, and ourselves and giving someone the benefit of the doubt.

If someone or something upsets us, take a deep breath before responding out of anger, frustration or fear. Walk away and ask for a timeout before responding. Forgive yourself when you fail and lash out. Then, ask the ones you hurt, with your words or actions, for forgiveness. Close quarters are the breeding ground for grudges, hurt feelings and misunderstanding, and may linger after this time is a distant memory.

*Monitor sleep, eating and exercise habits. Try to go to bed and get up at the same times daily. Irregular sleep habits adversely impact circadian

rhythms and can contribute to the development of depression, irritability, etc. When we feel anxious, we gravitate toward high-fat foods that stimulate the production of brain chemicals that soothe us. Use moderation.

*Exercise is a great coping mechanism. Walk outside or run the stairs or do high knee lifts several times a day. Go outside in the sun to promote Vitamin D production, positive brain chemistry and boosting immunity.

*If you work at home, approach your day in a manner similar to previous days. Get up at a set time daily, shower, get dressed – not in a suit but definitely not pajamas or sweats every day. Limit your workday. Don't escape into work. Set boundaries for work time. The adage, "All work and no play," definitely applies. Too much work throws off your life balance.

If you're alone and feeling isolated, call a friend.

*If you're alone and feeling isolated, call a friend. If you're sick of being jammed in the house with your family, carve out some alone time.

*Nurture yourself by doing healthy or harmless things that make you feel good. Wear clothing that lifts your mood. Several times a week, shower and get dressed in real clothes to keep yourself accountable.

*Monitor your thoughts. Too many news shows? You can tell by your mood. Too much screen time is correlated with depression.

*Balance your responses. It is not healthy to be in denial about the state of the world; nor is it good to catastrophize about everything. Remember the seesaw. Strive for a balanced attitude.

*Establish expectations for family members about household responsibilities and communicate them (maybe a list of rules on the refrigerator). If your expectations and goals are too high, modify your expectations.

*Create a gratitude journal. We are all making sacrifices. We still have lots for which to be thankful. Write down your blessings. Every day.

*If you find yourself getting lost in the abyss, make a schedule or a list of a few things to accomplish daily. It will help you feel purposeful and checking something off the list will give you a sense of completion.

*Do for others, but don't forget to do something daily for your self. An empty pitcher never quenched anyone's thirst.

*Be silly. Have fun. Delight your senses.

*Don't ignore your feelings. If you are sad, cry. If you are happy, laugh. You are a human not a robot and stuffing emotions brings about nothing but complications down the road.

*Most importantly, if you are having a hard time, reach out to a friend, your pastor, or a psychological professional like me. If you are being physically abused or feel your life is in danger, call a domestic violence shelter or hotline or even the police. We are all here to help, during and after this crisis.

Every day since March 20th, I have been posting daily mental health tips on my business Facebook page: Grace Christian Counseling. Look there for more in-depth information and tips



for happier, healthier living, psychological well being, and more stable relationships. You can also check out my webpage at www.gracecounselingcharlotte.com or reach me at Roberta.gracecc@gmail.com or 704-748-3585.

— — — { OUR FAMILY LIFE } — — —

By Marsha Warren

Are you tired of being quarantined and staying away from friends and loved ones? I am! I am ready to see my friends, my kids at school, my family, as well as my church family. However...I know that I'm doing my part by social distancing AND, as I keep reminding my daughter (the social butter-flone)...EVERYONE is feeling the same way. We are all in this together!

Saying that, though...I wish more people would think of it in that way- we are ALL feeling the same way! I have been so upset, and even

saddened, by posts I'm seeing on social media. I am not seeing much grace being given to each other, but rather more complaining and blaming. I see this more when I read posts about or hear comments that blame teachers or parents. Maybe because I am a part of both of these groups, I get more easily frustrated with comments blaming either one of them. We have to look at others' viewpoints.

As a teacher, I am trying my best to answer these questions: How can I

help and support the parents of my students with this at-home learning? How can I help parents create some normality in their children's schedule? How do I contact ALL parents- some are on Dojo, some have emails, some only have phone? How do I make the work I



give equitable since I know some students don't have internet? How in the world can I make, at the minimum, three contacts per student/parents each week without parents getting upset? How do I make my students still feel a part of our class family when we are separated? How can I prove we are continuing to learn and grow?

Teachers are not used to teaching online...all of this is new to us, too. We are having daily "classes" to teach us how to reach our students in different ways using different types of technology- technology that we've never used before either. Our instructional plans change daily as well- whether it be because of

new "rules" from the State Department or from our District or because, as we talk to parents, we see something isn't working. I ask parents to please extend grace to those teachers who are trying their very best to help and support you and your child during this crucial time. On the other hand, teachers need to extend grace to parents. Most parents did not sign up to be a home-school teacher...I know I didn't!

Parents are trying their very best to make sure their children do exactly what teachers need and ask, however...some parents are still working; some parents don't have access to internet; some parents are unfamiliar with terms used in today's classrooms; while other parents are just trying to help their children understand what's going on in the world today and why we need to stay home. Teachers need to consider all factors and extend to parents the same grace they expect.

Food for thought...Am I extending grace when I can or am I complaining about my situation? Am I trying to understand others' perspectives or only looking at my point of view? This is a time where I think all of us need to apply James 1:19 to our lives- *"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry."* We are all in this together!

— — — { PRAYER AND ACTION } — — —

In times of great uncertainty, the Church is called to spread hope.

One of the difficulties in being a church not able to worship together is in terms of stewardship. Most giving happens during our worship services. This time apart challenges us physically, mentally, spiritually, and financially. The work of the church goes on, and many of our expenses are fixed, not varying much whether we are meeting in our building or not. In fact, the needs of our neighbors, our community, and our world will likely increase during this time.

It is important, then, to continue to offer your tithes and offerings. Some of you have already found and are using our online giving portal for one time or regularly scheduled donations. <http://marvinmethodist.com/giving>
For others, you may be more comfortable mailing a check to the church. Please use our mailing address: Marvin UMC, 2731 Startown Road, Lincolnton, NC 28092 and put "Attention: Treasurer" on the envelope. We will then make sure the unopened envelopes get to our treasurer. If you have questions or concerns, or need help setting up online giving, don't hesitate to call Pastor Amy.

Backpack Ministry Needs

Pop Tarts, fruit cups, raisins, ramen noodles, individual packets of oatmeal and grits, Jell-O pudding cups, mac-cheese, bags, and crackers are needed. Drop them off in either the fellowship hall or the basement where we pack them normally. Please pray for the students at all of our county schools that they will be covered, protected and have enough food to get through the next couple of weeks.

Send a card this month to :

Ruth Poston, Peak Resources, 7615 Dallas Cherryville Hwy, Cherryville, NC 28021

Eleanor Ramseur 7615 Dallas Cherryville Hwy, Cherryville, NC 28021

Dare Lewis, 958 Baily Springs Drive, Lincolnton NC 28092

Nancy Watts, 3258 Startown Rd., Lincolnton NC 28092

Martha Ogburn 3190 Startown Road, Lincolnton NC 28092

Are there other homebound members that should be on this list or our prayer list? Please let Pastor Amy know!

— — — { INVITATION TO SHARE } — — —

About a week ago, in an email, Pastor Amy asked if anyone would like to share their answer to this question:

"How has God been at work in me in this time of social distancing?"

Thanks to **Katie Woody** for this reply:

During this time especially as a health care worker I have been trying to keep a happy face, even though I may have a good cry in the car on the way home. Working on the front lines we don't want our patients to see the confusion or "fear" in our eyes, and I have to stop and think "Other people depend on us remaining calm, and reassuring them that everything will be okay." When I get home I try to find ways to explain to Oliver why he can't go to school, see his

friends, or go to Dollywood without putting fear in his mind. Even though he is 3 his little mind is working harder than ever, and the last thing I want to do is worry him.

I feel that I have talked to God more during the last few weeks and have felt closer to him. From little conversations, to praying for not only my family, church family, and friends but also people I don't even know. I've seen God everywhere I look and even though we are facing difficult times, my Faith has kept me going.

Much love to everyone!

Katie



— — — { CELEBRATIONS } — — —

March Birthdays

16 Zakia Hamilton
17 Sonia Richards
23 Fred Herter
26 Angie Davis

April Birthdays

2 Jean Morgan
3 Parker Bryant
5 Shelby Baucom
5 Darra Kistler
6 Sarah Gaines
6 Alisha Shires
6 Skip Barnes
12 Barbara Ritchie
15 Daniel Hopkins
17 Todd Lewis
19 Frank Ritchie
23 Karla Guy
27 Mike Baucom

Congratulations to our class of 2020 seniors and their acceptance letters for the colleges of their choice. Drew Ellis has been accepted by Appalachian State University and Daniel Hopkins at UNC-Ashville.



Want to stay up to date with Marvin UMC? Check out our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MarvinUnitedMethodistChurch as well as our website: www.marvinmethodist.com.

We have also started broadcasting on YouTube a daily Porch Prayer, a 3 to 5 minute talk and prayer during this time.

Search for **marvinmethodist** on YouTube and look for our blue logo and subscribe!



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