Pondering our Journey during Lent

The writer Kathleen Norris in her book, *Dakota*, wrote about a time when she was giving a writing workshop for an elementary school. A little girl, “sitting halfway in, halfway out of her desk, with one leg swinging in the air,” wrote on her paper, “When my third snail died, I said, I’m through with snails.”

The third grader’s comment struck me with its power. You know when one thinks of all of our losses, all of our hurts, all of our grief, it is amazing that any of us ever venture to love again.

Loving sometimes is tough to do. To expose oneself to being vulnerable is not always easy. Did you ever resonate with that old Simon and Garfunkel song *I am a Rock*?

Don’t talk of love, Well, I’ve heard the word before—It’s sleeping in my memory — I won’t disturb the slumber of feelings that have died — If I never loved I never would have cried

That song was burned into my memory when I was about eleven years old. I was spending part of the summer with my oldest brother who was stationed at Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Denver, Colorado. It was the early seventies. He had a stereo system with boxes attached that had lights in them, and the lights reacted to the music. It was so cool. It seemed state of the art to one so young. I played the Simon and Garfunkel albums, *Bridge Over Troubled Water* and *Sounds of Silence*, over and over again that summer. “And a rock feels no pain. And an island never cries.” I imagine all of us have felt that way at one time or another in our lives.

Christianity has many wonderful images that speak to the core of our faith: ship, anchor, dove, shell, star, etc. But the image most central for me that speaks volumes upon volumes is the crucifix.

Seeing Jesus upon the cross, anguished with pain, with nails through his wrists and feet, side cut opened by a spear, speaks to the depth of God’s firsthand knowledge of human pain, and suffering.

We do not serve a God who is unaware of our hurts. Christ emptied himself out upon a cross so that a bridge could be built that no troubled waters can ever take down. Because of what Christ has done, we have the assurance that God is with us in this life, through all of life’s ups and downs, pain and happiness, sorrows and joys. Through it all, we know that God is with us. And as this life fades into eternity, we will not travel that journey by ourselves for God will go with us.

At the beginning of this article, I quoted the third grader who wrote, “When my third snail died, I said, ‘I’m through with snails.’” The last line of the little girl’s poem said, “But I didn’t mean it.”

As we ponder the journey that we travel in this season of Lent, from Ash Wednesday to the Via Dolorosa, from Good Friday to Silent Saturday to Resurrection Sunday, the message confirmed in our hearts is that we can risk loving again because God never stopped loving us.

In God’s Grace We Abide,
Pastor Mike
In-Person Worship to resume on Sunday, February 21

The Church Council has voted to resume in-person worship starting on February 21.

You are invited to come back to in-person worship for both the 8:45am and the 11:00am worship services; we will continue to share our services via livestream for those who choose to worship from home.

Of course, we will follow all of the safety precautions that we instituted in the Fall: masks, social distancing, temperature checks, and registration.

Online Church Bulletin

The bulletins for our Sunday morning worship services have been enhanced to aid in your worship experience, especially for those who are worshipping with us online.

You can view the bulletin by following the links in the email sent every Wednesday with worship details OR by going to the church website and looking for the green button on the same page as the worship videos.

The bulletin is formatted to fit regular printer paper, so you can print it out at home easily. The bulletin not only includes the Order of Worship, but it also has the lyrics to the hymns and a full announcement section. We hope this helps our online viewers be able to participate in worship more fully!

We are BACK!

Our Youth Group is back with in-person gatherings on Sunday nights at 5:00pm in the Fellowship Hall! If you have a youth grades 6-12, we would love to have them join us!

If you have any questions, please contact our Youth Director, Wayne Purdy at wayne.purdy@mainstreetumc.org!

Everyone is Welcome!

Youth Mission Trip Updates

We are proceeding with our plans to take our Middle School & High School Youth on the ASP Mission Trips this Summer. The high school & college youth will be going June 20-26 and the middle school youth will be going July 4-10.

If your child is interested in attending one of these mission trips please email Wayne Purdy at wayne.purdy@mainstreetumc.org. We still have room on each trip but the deadline to sign up is on Monday, March 1.
**Kids Connect Lessons for the month of March**

**REMEMBER THIS:**
“Wait for the Lord. Be strong and don’t love hope. Wait for the LORD.” —Psalm 27:14 NIrV

**Our Theme:**
Patience is waiting until later for what you want now.

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**Week One**
Luke 2:25-35
Simeon waits for the Messiah

**SAY THIS:**
*When you have to wait, remember God is with you.*

**Week Two**
Exodus 32:1-35
Golden Calf

**SAY THIS:**
*When you have to wait, remember what’s true.*

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**Week Three**
Genesis 25:24-34
Essu’s Impatience

**SAY THIS:**
*If you don’t wait, it will cost you.*

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**Week Four**
Matthew 21:1-11
Palm Sunday

**SAY THIS:**
*You can celebrate even when you’re waiting.*

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**At Home Activities for the month of February:**

**Morning Time:** Remind your child that while they wait for something today, God is with them. Tell them to pay attention to all the times they wait during the day and encourage them to say a little prayer during that time. It could be a prayer for someone else or for themselves to have patience. Either way, it will be time well spent!

**Drive Time:** There can be a lot of waiting during drive time. Waiting in traffic, take out line, practices, and so much more! Why not celebrate while you wait by singing the song from this month. Head to msumckidsconnect.org

**Meal Time:**
Q&A for kids: Do you find it hardest to wait for your birthday, vacation, or Christmas? Why?
Q&A for parents: What are your favorite patience hacks?

**Bed Time:** Waiting can be tough but trying to skip the wait can come at a big cost. Share something that you’re having a hard time waiting for. Pray that when you’re tempted to jump ahead this week, God will give you the patience to slow down and wait.
Main Street Lenten Mission Project: ARCA (Addiction Recovery Care Association)

ARCA (Addiction Recovery Care Association) is a non-profit residential program located by the Union Cross Park. Here men and women receive medically supervised support and counselling to battle addiction. I first encountered ARCA over a decade ago. My brother spent 28 days with them trying to break the chains of alcohol and opioids. This isn’t a spa. The facilities are old, it is underfunded, and the staff are stretched thin. Regardless, they work diligently to literally save the lives of addicts. They offered me counselling and invited me to Family Group meetings. This is an agonizing ordeal for all involved.

We have an opportunity to support ARCA and the important work they do. The Genesis Sunday School Class is sponsoring a collection of items needed by the residents. Many arrive from court or the hospital with nothing and no one to bring them cloths or toiletries. Please look for the collection box in the narthex. Also, consider a monetary donation either through the church or at ARCANC.org.

I encourage you to visit the website to learn more about services at ARCA. Add the staff, patients, and families to your prayer list. My brother was never able to fully break those chains. His battle ended last year when his heart and lungs failed. Our support can prevent such tragedies in the future.

Items needed:
- New in package underwear (men’s and women’s, all sizes)
- Hygiene products (no alcohol in ingredients)
- Feminine hygiene items

New or gently used:
- Jeans
- T-shirts
- Sweatpants/shirts
- Seasonal outerwear

Thank you, Main Street UMC, for all you do!
—Sandra Hemphill

Dear Main Street.

Thank you for the Christmas Cards that so many of you sent me over Christmas!
—Elva Sieg

I go to my mailbox every day because very often I will have mail. It may be from a Sunday School Class or just an individual. To tell the truth I may not even know them. But I enjoy going to see who they are. I also appreciate the phone calls from Al & Dale. Every time I go to the doctor I have them ride me by the church to see how the building is coming along. Please remember to keep me in your thoughts and prayers.

Blessings to everyone at Main Street!
—Mabeth Thomas

Join us in welcoming
Mark & Julia Kinlaw to Main Street UMC!

The next time you see them make sure to give them a BIG Main Street Welcome!
Would your small church group like to meet in person?

The Trustees have opened up a few of the larger rooms on campus so they can be available to Sunday School classes, UMW Circles, and other small church groups to use.

We are currently scheduling the usage of the JC Grose classroom, the Chapel, and the Choir Room. We hope to make the Fellowship Hall available soon. We have maximum capacity units for each of these rooms, ranging from 7 to 14 units/household (a husband and wife who live together would count as one unit).

- Contact Betsy Tang (336-993-3411) in the church office to schedule usage of a room and make arrangements to get a key.
- Time slots are reserved for one hour with a buffer afterwards for clean-up time; rooms may only be reserved 2-3 weeks in advance. We are not setting up recurring meetings at this time.
- Attendance must be taken at your class meeting and turned in to the church office. Information should include name and temperature of those in attendance.
- A cleaning checklist will be provided for your class to complete at the end of the meeting. This should also be turned in to the church office, along with the key, on the next business day following your meeting.
- Face masks must be worn while on church property.
- At this time, we are not allowing food or beverages in small group meetings so that face masks may be kept on during the meeting.
- Class members who feel uncomfortable meeting in-person should be provided with some type of remote access; be prepared to zoom or FaceTime them during the class meeting.

One Item More, Each Time at the Store!

Sponsored by the Cornerstone Sunday School Class, this ministry invites you help our neighbors in need by supporting Crisis Control and to pick up One Item More, Each Time at the Store!

Crisis Control item for

March is: Instant Grits

Donation boxes can be found in the Narthex and in the Chapel.

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If you would like to participate in the MSUMC Book Club, led by Pastor Mike, please email tina.crew@mainstreetumc.org to request the ONLINE ZOOM MEETING information.

March 18, 2021:

April 22, 2021:

May 20, 2021:
Everything Happens for a Reason, Kate Bowler (New York: Random House), 2018

June 17, 2021:
Man’s Search for Meaning, Viktor E. Frankl (Boston: Beacon Press), 2014

July 15, 2021:

August 19, 2021:
God and the Pandemic, NT Wright (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 2020
Staff Parrish Relations Team Update

As those close to Dale Hilton are aware of his announcement to retire in December, we would like to take this opportunity to share with the congregation at large. Please take time to continue to thank Dale for his years of service as a servant leader, teacher, mentor and just overall for being a beacon to so many that he has come in touch with. Best wishes to him and his family on their next journeys together.

Additional office Staff changes are Underway:

- Susan Furmage will be retiring at the conclusion of the building project. Susan has been active in transitioning her Business Manager activities to Tina Crew who now has assumed the position of Business Manager.
- Susan will continue as Building Project Manager through the completion of our new building.
- To facilitate responses to future inquiries, please reach out to Tina on all Business Manager and older building related matters and to Susan on all new building project related matters.

Please keep all mentioned above in your prayers as they start new journeys, relationships, and with their continued support of MSUMC’s mission “To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the World”.

Always Choose Love

God wants us to choose to love him freely, even when that choice involves pain, because we are committed to him, not to our own good feelings and rewards. He wants us to cleave to him, as Job did, even when we have every reason to deny him hotly. That, I believe, is the central message of Job.

Satan had taunted God with the accusation that humans are not truly free. Was Job being faithful simply because God had allowed him a prosperous life? Job’s fiery trials proved the answer beyond doubt. Job clung to God’s justice when he was the best example in history of God’s apparent injustice. He did not seek the Giver because of his gifts; when all gifts were removed, he still sought the Giver.

--Philip Yancey, Where Is God When It Hurts?

If you have a child birth to 5th grade, or you just want to stay up to date with the happenings of the Children’s ministry you will have to start following along with all our new digital Kids Connect options.

- Bookmark www.msumckidsconnect.org
- Like us on facebook @ Main Street Kids Connect
- Follow us on Instagram @mainstreet.kidsconnect

By doing so you will be sure to never miss out on all the fun, and all that God is doing in the life of our kids at Main Street!

Save the Date

Saturday, April 3 — Children’s Easter Egg Hunt

Starting Monday, June 28— Thursday, July 1— Vacation Bible School
Preschool (ages 3-4) 9am-NOON
All ages (ages 3-12) 6:00-8:15pm

More details coming soon!
## A Record of our Faithfulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR PRESENCE:</th>
<th>1-24-2021</th>
<th>1-31-2021</th>
<th>2-7-2021</th>
<th>2-14-2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live Streaming (unique views)</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>Internet Outage at the church</td>
<td>207</td>
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<td>373</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>OUR GIFTS as of:</th>
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<th>1-31-2021</th>
<th>2-7-2021</th>
<th>2-14-2021</th>
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<tr>
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<td>($37,239)</td>
<td>($37,461)</td>
<td>($41,668)</td>
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**We extend our Sympathies to:**

- Cliff Alexander upon the death of his uncle, Willie Brown
- Pat Cunningham upon the death of her cousin, Betty Holcomb
- Bob Prescott upon the death of his sister, Mary
- Bob Dalton upon the death of his sister, Carolyn Dalton Stuart
- the friends and family of Juanita Higgins upon her death
- the friends and family of Gil Snyder upon his death
- the friends and family of Vanda Viehman upon her death
- Tara Stamper upon the death of her grandmother, Helen Tewes

**We share our joys with:**

- our Outreach Committee served 52 meals and gave away 30 coats in partnership with the Salvation Army
- John Pridgen upon the birth of his grandson, Thomas Alexander Goumaz
- our newest members, Mark & Julia Kinlaw
- Kerry & Theresa Wilson upon the marriage of their son, Brian
- Elizabeth Plybon and Mike & Ann Cronin upon the birth of their son and grandson, Thomas Calvin Plybon

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**Get Connected and Stay Connected**

- Main Street United Methodist Church
- mainstreetumc.org
- 993.3411
- churchoffice@mainstreetumc.org
The United Methodist Men’s Chicken Pie Fundraiser Sale is almost OVER! Order yours by 9am on Monday, February 22!
Each item is $13.00 each or you can mix and match 3 items for $36.00. Here’s what you can choose from:

- 9 inch Chicken Pie
- Baked Spaghetti
- Brownies

- a 4-pack of small (4 inch) Chicken Pies are also available for $16.00 for each 4-pack (not apart of the mix and match special).

Order yours today by emailing UMM President, Frank Robbins at frobbins18280@gmail.com. Pickup your pies on Saturday, February 27 outside of the fellowship hall.