

# BEHOLD!!

# SMYRNA

## April 2020



## UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*Dear Smyrna Friends,*

This is a very strange time, indeed, with the covid-19 pandemic challenging the whole world family. And yet, when **one reads the words of the Scriptures and our hymns**, it's clear that **people in every generation have faced tremendous challenges**, as well:

**"through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come...."**

*Amazing Grace*

**"Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain,  
May your blazing phoenix spirit resurrect the church again."**

*In the Midst of New Dimensions*

**"Today we call to mind the things that time cannot erode:**

**What God, Creator of the world is doing for our good.**

**What changes, challenges, and tests the church of Christ survives!"**

*Now Let Us All in Hymns of Praise*

**What are some of the hymns that our in your heart and mind that have helped you through? Perhaps, "Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, that calls me from a world of care."**

**Or maybe, "Oh what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*)**

Saints of Smyrna, remember that you are part of the Communion of Saints, the Body of Christ, a Cloud of Witnesses. You are not alone. So, reach out to others, in phone calls, e-mails, and letters. And reach out to God, in song, and in prayer.

God is with us. Thanks be to God!

Blessings,  
Pastor Deb

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## 6 Deep Convictions COVID-19 Can Instill in Us

The current COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented time in most of our lives. The rising death toll and the suggested (and some mandated) restrictions that attempt to limit the spread of this virus have brought fear and confusion to millions of people around the world.

And while this whole pandemic has been a surprise for **most of us, it hasn't been a surprise to God. Like any other struggle we face, God wants to work this situation for good in our lives.**

Here are 6 things God can teach us through the current COVID-19 pandemic:

### 1. How to Trust God Day by Day

*Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.* [Matthew 6:34](#)

**I'm a planner and I like predictability**--to know what tomorrow and the following weeks and months will look like in my life, but right now we are all living in a day by day situation. If you are like me, that can be stressful.

In Exodus chapter 16, we find the Israelites in a similar situation. They had to learn to trust God day by day for provision and health as God provided their food (manna and quail) only one day at a time.

God was preparing them to eventually inhabit their promised land where their food source would be a bit more long **term, but during this season they experienced God's faithfulness** as He provided what they needed one day at a time.

During this time, as things change day by day, we can learn to trust God daily in our lives, not only for financial provision, but also for emotional needs and much more.

We may not know what tomorrow holds, but we can trust in our God who does know and provides for our needs.

### 2. We Can Experience God's Peace No Matter the Circumstances

*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.* [John 16:33](#)

Tough and unknown times make us examine what and **who we are really trusting in. It's tempting to try to find peace in our circumstances, but it's when circumstances are unstable that you really build your [faith](#) muscles.**

Perhaps you are experiencing peace right now, or maybe God wants to use this season to build your trust and faith

in Him to help you in a later situation in your life.

Whichever side of the spectrum you find yourself in, **leaning into God's peace and faithfulness during this time will bless you tremendously.**

### 3. You Can Bless Others in All Circumstances

**The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** *There is no commandment greater than these.* [Mark 12:31](#)

COVID-19 has undoubtedly affected all our lives in some way, and it can be easy to focus on the situations we are **facing in our own lives, but it's also a great opportunity to look for ways to help others during this time.**

Since we are all facing this time together, it gives us all a great perspective on what challenges others are currently facing.

### 4. The Importance of Connection

Practicing social distancing makes us realize just how much our lives are interconnected with other people and how important that connection is to our lives. Oftentimes, connection with others often just happens in our lives naturally with work, school, family, friends, neighbors, church, people in the community, etc., but when we are faced with needing to distance ourselves physically with the majority of people, we have to become intentional about connecting with people in different ways.

There are so many ways we can connect with those we care about in our lives: texting, phone calls, video chat, social media, online church, and even letters through old fashioned snail-mail! We are attending our grandsons virtual birthday party on Zoom, a video chat platform!

Isolation can be draining, but connection with others is life-giving, and sometimes it takes situations like this to make us realize just how life-giving it really is.

### 5. Our Need for Rhythms of Rest

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.* [Matthew 11:28](#)

For many people, life has suddenly slowed down a lot. **Appointments are cancelled, parents don't have to get kids rushed off to school, work commutes are non-existent if you are working from home, and social activities are on hold.**

Not everyone is experiencing this slow down (thank you healthcare workers, grocery store employees, and everyone else who help keep things running during this time), **but if you are one that falls into this category, it's a perfect opportunity to take this time to live a little more slowly and take some time to reflect and be intentional.**

Take time to seek God on what you are supposed to do today, not what you think you should do. Take opportunities to snuggle and connect with your kids. Those of you who are telecommuting, take a break every so often and give your kids a hug. The point is to slow down and enjoy the little things that often get missed in the hustle and bustle of normal life.

### 6. The Essential Role of Gratitude

*Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* [1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)

If you are at home with your family a lot these days, this can either cause you to be frustrated and stressed, or you can take this opportunity to embrace thankfulness for what God has blessed you with.

Close quarters with family may cause arguments, but your family is a blessing from God. Most of us have a home to live in (and possibly work from during this time), technology that allows us to connect with others in the midst of social distancing, and our health, and these are all things to be thankful for.

Even the people you long to connect with and the things you look forward to doing once this season is over are things to be thankful for.

If you are missing something or someone during this season, take the time to thank God for what/who that is and the knowledge that you will be able to enjoy them in the future.

Thankfulness helps us stay focused on how God has blessed us more than the struggles we may be facing and **keeps us walking in God's peace.**

While we may not know the full implications of this pandemic for years to come, my prayer is that this season makes a mark on our lives and changes us for the better.

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* [Romans 8:28](#)



Location unknown



taken at Hope Village in Canby.



### Adult Education

Adult Ed at Smyrna will resume again in the fall – please send Pastor Deb ideas for programs that you would like to see, or if you would be willing to lead a session, as well.

### Memory Café —

**We hope to start back with Smyrna's Memory Café again on September 3<sup>rd</sup>.**, the first Friday of the month.  
Program TBA.

### Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance March 1, 2020	\$22,507.80
Receipts	7,123.00
Transfer to Bldg. Repair Fund	( 250.00)
Expenditures	<u>(11,845.70)</u>
Ending Balance March 31, 2020	\$17,535.10

## Glenda Yoder Sano Scholarship Program

Since 2004, the Glenda Yoder Sano Scholarship fund has provided over \$31,000.00 in scholarships to deserving young men and women who have been actively involved in the life of Smyrna United Church of Christ. All of the recipients have used the funds to further their education either in a college or a technical program. As a congregation, we should be proud of being able to support our young people in preparing for their futures.



Unfortunately, the scholarship fund needs continued donations in order to survive. The program started with a large donation from Larry Sano in his late wife's memory. As many of you may remember, Glenda Sano was immensely involved in youth programs at Smyrna through out her life, and Larry was interested in seeing this involvement continue.

If you would like to help us maintain this program for our future young people, please do so by either making a check payable to Smyrna UCC Scholarship Fund or a cash donation. Either can be sent or given in person to Rick Gano, Committee Chair, or Irene Schriever, Treasurer.



## Mission and Outreach Update —

Our Mission and Outreach Committee is making the following recommendation for ways that our church can respond to the Covid-19 crises. Until we are able to meet again at the church, we are suspending the children for change offering.

For May and June, we are encouraging cash donations to:

- The food bank
- Help a foster child
- The Department of Human Services and Every Child just launched a state wide program called MyNeighborOR to help meet the needs during this crises. There are now 4,000 families in Oregon caring for more than 7,000 children.
- Mark your donations to Canby Center for underwear in honor of Undie Sunday (we will not be collecting underwear at the church this Mother's Day)

Send payment to Irene Schriever, Treasurer

Paulette Eyman continues to go to Portland each month to pick up pet food that is donated to and given out at the Molalla Food Bank where she volunteers.

We received this thank you from "With Love."

## Virtual Coffee Hour

We are grateful to Rev. Tyler Connoley, our Conference Minister in the Central Pacific Conference of the UCC for bringing a word of greeting to our service on Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, and for hosting our virtual coffee hour. The church has purchased a Zoom license, and starting on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11:30 am, we will be hosting virtual Coffee Hours after church, and we hope you will join us.



## Notes of THANKS

Thank you to Jeannie Rogers for continuing to send out the bulletin, and to her and Elaine Daniels for putting together the Behold each month. Thanks also to folks for putting wonderfully inspiring posts on our Smyrna website. Thank you to the Health Committee and Diaconate for reaching out to members and friends who are more isolated than most. Thank you to the Technology Committee for putting together the worship services, particularly Joel Daniels and Tom Daniels.

Thank you to all who continue to support the ministries of the church with your gifts and offerings, and thank you to our Church Treasurer, Irene Schriever, for keeping track of our finances. Thank you to Paulette Eyman and Paul Yoder for facilitating the floral cross, and thank you to all those who brought flowers, and who participating by recording parts of the Easter Service. Thank you also to Kristin Wishon for recording the flute duet (playing both parts herself!) on the Easter Service.

Dear Supporters of With Love ~

Thank you for your recent donation to With Love. Your contribution will be put to good use supporting Oregon's foster families and children.

March has presented a rather unexpected set of challenges. As you are aware, life has changed in many ways, yet the needs of foster families remain the same. Thankfully, the families are still receiving assistance. In fact, 61 families were served this month. That's remarkable and shows the ongoing creativity and hard work of With Love. Speaking of creativity, families are being sent craft kits to be used at a virtual craft event on April 11<sup>th</sup>! In addition 130 families were given Amazon gift cards. So you see, the work continues and we are grateful — for you!  
The With Love Team

# May 2020 at Smyrna

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**No matter who you are,  
or where you are on life's  
journey, we welcome  
you.**

# SMYRNA



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
a just world for all



## Prayer Requests

Pat Bullard and all her family  
Beryl and Dan Fisher  
Garrett Veatch  
Debi Veatch  
Blanche Kober  
Asa and Lone Jenson  
Vonda Stoneking  
Paul Burkert  
and all others who live alone or who have other concerns.

If you know anyone who should be on the prayer list in the Behold, please let Jeannie or Elaine know. If they would enjoy receiving cards notify someone in the Diaconate.

## Mission Statement

**Smyrna United Church of Christ is striving to be:**

- ◆ A spiritual haven, where we accept and care for all people and God's creation in an outreach of grace.
- ◆ A lighthouse of God's compassion, where worship, teaching, learning and spiritual growth take place in community, powered by thought and action.
- ◆ A Christian people, working for God's realm in ecumenical harmony with other people of faith and conviction.
- ◆ A place of peace, where we offer to all an extravagant welcome wherever you are in your life journey regardless of your ethnicity, marital status, religion, gender, race, age, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation, and where we teach the stories of God's love and call on our lives.