

BEHOLD!! SMYRNA

August 2020



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Dear Smyrna Friends,

We're in the wilderness. No matter how you look at it, we are smack dab in the middle of the wilderness – pandemic, physical and social isolation, turmoil, unknowing what comes next.

So, what do we do?

First, remember that we are not alone. God is with us in the wilderness, just like God was with the people of Israel who had been freed from slavery in Egypt on their way to a new home.

Second, just take what you need for the day. The manna would go bad if you took more than you need. We are all in this together, and there will be enough for the day – enough spiritual and emotional strength, enough food, even enough toilet paper. Help us other.

Third, remember that we are in the wilderness together. Reach out to a fellow traveler on the journey. We need each other.

Fourth, remember that some of the greatest spiritual insights have come from wilderness journeys – the ten commandments, for starters. Even Jesus had a wilderness journey. They can be transformative if we continue to trust in the goodness of God and God's will for all people.

What transformations are possible in our society if we have eyes to see and ears to hear the groaning of our neighbors and to see the ways that we need to be transformed ourselves? Prejudice, inequities, injustices – this wilderness time is a time to reflect and consider how we will be a part of the healing of the nations.

So, do not be afraid, people of God, for God is with us. All journeys have a beginning and an end. Even wilderness journeys.

God bless you all,
Pastor Deb

Ministers: All members of the church

Minister: The Rev. Dr. Deborah Patterson

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August's Worship Theme is "Continuing the Journey."

This is an unusual time of being church, when we are ministering as "the church scattered," but we are continuing the journey, and this will be part of the story of our now 129-year-old congregation that people will talk about years from now. So, the focus of our worship will be about "being the church" as we continue the journey. Please send photos of different times you were on a journey that you would be willing to share as part of the service.

We will welcome our Conference Minister, Tyler Connoley, to preach on the last Sunday of August. Stay tuned for more!

We were so blessed to have Natalie Becker, Co-Director of Camp Adams, bring us the morning message on July 12th. If you missed her peaceful meditation, please revisit the service on YouTube.



Virtual Coffee Hour for Smyrna

Please join us on Zoom (or by phone) for a virtual coffee hour each Sunday at 11:30 pm. Watch for the internet link or the phone number in your e-mail each week.



QUILTS FOR EMPOWERMENT — KENYA

The women are struggling under the competing pressures of Covid and food shortages. Their belief is, "It would be better to die from Covid than hunger." So, they brave the local markets for the necessities, which they can buy because of the monthly stipends we give each of them.

Norah recently asked each woman if she was able to eat at least two meals a day for the past week. All answered "yes." Likewise, none reported a child going to bed without an evening meal in the past week. We will continue to give women these stipends until they can resume sewing.

In anticipation of sewing once again, our Kenya team delivered a new treadle machine to Rose, who is training to become one of our seamstresses. The joy of owning her own machine and being able to work from home was unmistakable.

Recommended Reading



Linda Dunn, a member of Smyrna and the great niece of Nellie Eyman, is reading a book and will purchase it for our church library. While Linda was working at the Department of Education, she met the author.

The book's title is "Life at Fifty Below Zero", an Alaskan memoir on teaching and learning in Alaska written by Christina Reagle. It is a story about Christina and her husband going to Alaska to be teachers and their adventures in and out of the villages throughout Alaska. Christina became a good friend of Linda's and brought a copy of the book to her a couple of weeks ago.



Need a card sent to someone?

Carly Itami makes and sends cards out to people who need a lift and cheering up as the days go by. If you know of someone you would like a card sent to, contact Carly.

Tell her the reason for the card, i.e. birthday, illness, cheer. If you would also include the full address, it will help Carly clip and paste. Carly's email address is carly.itami@gmail.com.

An update from Mission and Outreach:

Thank you to each of you who contributed money to the Molalla Food Bank. In June we were able to give \$348.54 and as we get ready to send this Behold, we have received an additional \$122.50 for the month of July. In June we also collected funds to help families that are caring for children in foster care. Our church, with your support, was able to add \$281.78 to help with this project.

This August we continue these two special offerings.

1. The Molalla Food Bank
2. K.I.D.S. – Kids in Need of Desks which is managed through UNICEF



GRATITUDE JOURNAL

"I urge you to please notice when you are happy, and exclaim or murmur or think at some point, "If this isn't nice, I don't know what is."

Why gratitude Journaling? There is a huge amount of research around gratitude and how helpful it is for our mental well-being. Examples of how gratitude is helpful include: building more positive relationships, reduces depression, increases resilience, demonstrates improvement in physical health (as correlated to an increase in exercise and go to the doctor which leads to better physical health outcomes), reduces internal toxic emotions (increases empathy, decreases depression), and improves quality and quantity of sleep (to name just a few research findings).

How so? Gratitude journaling activates two different parts of the brain, the hypothalamus (stress regulator) and the ventral tegmental area (the reward system activator). So at the same time we are reducing stress, we are creating the sensation of winning a (little, tiny) lottery by increasing serotonin and dopamine (which is why some gratitude researchers call gratitude a "natural antidepressant."

WHY THIS TYPE OF GRATITUDE JOURNALING? Probably the best known researcher studying the psychology of gratitude is Robert Emmons. He runs Gratitude Works at UC Davis, so is obviously pro-gratitude. But some of his work showed a diminished effect of gratitude journaling over time when done daily, so many therapists suggest gratitude journaling once or twice a week so the brain doesn't "habituate" to the practice. Like I love ginger cookies. But if I had them every day, the theory is that I would eventually not get the same kick out of them. Though FWIW, I would be down to attempt this experiment

Ahem. Anyway. I've found this to be true of my clients who did daily gratitude journaling. They kept it up for a month or so, noticed a difference, but fell off after some time. So his findings make total sense, cookies aside. But research also demonstrates, that daily practice over time makes healthy habits more likely to "stick". That's because deliberative motivational processes is a secondary system process, and doing things daily makes them an automatic (primary system) process.

Which is to say, when we create the pathway for something being "the thing we do" it occurs naturally, rather than the thing we have to force. So how would we obtain a daily AND long-term benefit from gratitude journaling? I think nerdy thoughts, and was thinking on that one when I had an idea. What if the focus of our gratitude journaling every week was a different topic? The gratitude practice is daily and continuous, but with different topics the whiny toddler brain doesn't break in with "I'm booooooored" after a few weeks and the benefit dissipates. And THEN what if we built the questions to be more reflexive as the weeks go on? Focusing on our own inner wellness work and healthy relational patterns? Then it sets a reminder of everything we are doing to be and do better.

So I'm starting with this. A 12 week program. If people dig it, we may expand it out. Gratitude journaling activates two parts of the brain that help alleviate stress and increase a sense of happiness. None of this is to say that things can't be awful, and work needs to be done to make them unlawful. Gratitude doesn't replace social justice movements, advocacy, boundaries, and voice. It's about realigning ourselves with what is important. A remembrance of what we are fighting for, if we are in the midst of such a fight (and we kinda almost always are, right?) Keeping our brains healthy and holding center is a radical act of self-care. And you will see as you continue through these exercises, that this type of gratitude work is not just "I'm grateful for my morning coffee" (although I am 100% behind being grateful for morning coffee). Positive Psychology isn't designed to lull us into cultural obedience, but to help us stay strong to keep fighting whatever we need to fight for.....eeks!

Faith G. Harper, PhD, LPC-S, ACS, ACN



Treasurer's Report

General Fund

Beginning Balance 6/1/20	\$16,691.43
Receipts	6,534.41
Transfer to building repair fund	-250.00
Expenses	<u>-7,847.51</u>
Ending Balance 6/30/20	\$15,398.33

Thank you!

Thank you to all those who are helping to put together the Sunday worship services – from readers, to musicians, to those who are helping the church look so beautiful for the filming there. A special word of thanks to Tom Daniels and Joel Daniels for putting the services together. Please let me know if you would be willing to help read scriptures or prayers, or to provide special music in the coming weeks.



Valentina waits,
Her mask securely in place,
For Covid to end

Jeannie Rogers

Grandmas and grandpas
separated from grandkids
learning how to Zoom.

Lois Johnson



To my dear friends and Smyrna Family,

Thank you so much for your many kind expressions of love and sympathy on the passing of Asa. Your cards, notes, calls and other expressions of caring are greatly appreciated and treasured!

Thank You!



Ace so loved and enjoyed this little country church and it's people. And a very special thanks to both Pastor Deb Patterson and to Rick Gano for their faithful visits and presence! You both meant so much to him.

Ione Jensen

Dear Friends,

On hearing about gratitude journaling, I got in touch with my gratitude for the sweet, loving, wonderful, welcoming people at Smyrna UCC and how I am going to miss all of you.

After learning that Cam has to return to campus in September - November but go back to online classes for the winter semester, the only solution that made sense to me was to move to Monmouth. I take possession on 1 Aug, but will be in the process of moving through most of September.

I want to say "thank you" to all of you. You have surrounded me with your love.

My new address is:
989 Gwinn St E
Monmouth, OR 97361
email is lmmedaris@gmail.com.



May God bless all of you. Linda Medaris

Fun Historical Facts

VN:F [1.9.22_1171]

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children-last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the dogs, cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."



August 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

Please hold in prayer:

- Pat Bullard and all her family
 - Lone Jenson and her family,
 - Terri Milliren
 - Beryl and Dan Fisher
 - Garrett Veatch,
 - Debi Veatch
 - Blanche Kober
 - 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 or Carly Itami at carly.itami@gmail.com.

Mission Statement

Smyrna United Church of Christ is striving to be:

- ♦ 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.
- ♦ 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.