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Hello church family!

It is Week 8 of the quarantine, and I pray that it is finding you well. I am in prayer for every one of you every day, by name, and I know that God's strong hands are on you. I hope you know, it is healthy and normal for you to feel lonely, or irritated, or unsure, or happy and hopeful right now. Or anything else! God is with you through it all.

This Sunday is Mother's Day, and it is a strange day not to be in church! For many of us, Mother's Day ranks up there with Christmas and Easter as a day the family absolutely MUST be in worship together. For others of us, the mixed and sometimes very difficult emotions that come along with Mother's Day make us yearn for the company of our church family more than ever. And for others, grief and loss or a painful past makes us want to flee church altogether. You are all in my prayers about that, too.

So, I find a few things helpful when it comes to Mother's Day. First, that the Bible is filled with all kinds of examples of mothers. Good ones, and terrible ones, and human ones who sometimes make mistakes. Adoptive mothers, and absent ones, and women who don't have children. All different kinds of mothers, all different kinds of women, all loved and seen and known by God, and deeply valued in all their God-created complexity in the family of faith. Second, that our lives are filled with people of all kinds who nurture, guide, teach, discipline, and even parent us: teachers, doctors, neighbors, grandparents, and others. We all have people in our lives who do that for us, and it is a great joy to give thanks for all of them. Third, that when God designed human beings, he called the woman the "ezer kenegdo," which is a term the Bible often uses to describe God: it is poorly translated "helper", and rather denotes partnership and strength, and means more like a warrior who stands by the man's side and even saves him. Deuteronomy 33:29, Psalm 20:2, and Psalm 70:5 are excellent examples. We will talk more about that on Sunday, which is Youth Sunday too by the way! Kenny Coval will be bringing the message, along with others who will be adding their thoughts. And fourth, that Mother's Day was originally designed not to sentimentally honor mothers but rather to honor the contributions of all women AND to promote an end to war of all kinds. It was a pretty radical thing, proposed first by Julia Ward Howe (who famously wrote the Battle Hymn of the Republic) and then by Anna Jarvis, who remained happily single for all of her life and wanted to honor the work of both Howe and Anna's own mother who worked with Howe on all kinds of peacemaking, community-building work.

I pray that you are enjoying the sounds and smells and beauty of spring, beloved. Keep an eye on your email (you'll see why on the next page), and I will "see" you on Sunday!

Love and blessings,

*Pastor Dawn*

# Kitchen Table Worship

When the Christian church first began, and for at least the first couple of hundred years or so, worship happened in private homes, with family and a few friends. There are stories of Paul preaching in synagogues and getting kicked out eventually, at which point he would be offered a home nearby from which to preach and teach. Small groups of people would come to share meals and hear Paul talk about salvation in Jesus, would be baptized, and voila! A new church was founded. When Christianity was illegal in the Roman Empire, the church continued to operate in homes but much, much more secretly, usually with just families meeting together. Today in places where Christianity is illegal, Christians worship in some of the exact same ways. In North Korea, for example, where most people live in tiny apartments with very thin walls, local believers describe bringing Bibles out from hiding places in the woods and reading aloud in whispers. In Somalia, small groups worship together very carefully out of fear of violent extremists, declaring their love of Jesus in hushed tones without the loud shouting and exuberant singing so common elsewhere in Africa. But worship is powerful and joy-filled nonetheless.

Oh give thanks  
to the LORD, for  
he is good, for  
his steadfast  
love endures  
forever!

~ Psalm 107:1

What if we treated worship the same way? Thank God we are not persecuted for our faith, and we can declare our faith loudly and clearly to the wide world! But even if we choose not to stand on our porch loudly singing our favorite worship songs (a practice your pastor HEARTILY endorses, by the way), what if we treated our faith and our time in worship as the precious, exciting gift it is? What if we thanked God every day that we can worship in our homes, that we get to read our Bible whenever we want, that we can praise and pray and dance and sing to our heart's content? When we do that, we not only connect with God and invite the presence of the Holy Spirit into our homes, we also become part of that great cloud of witnesses who let NOTHING stop them from worshipping the Lord. It's an awesome thought, that we pray inspires your time in worship this week.

Many of you are connecting with worship by video or the radio, and praise God for that! About 150 people join us in worship each Sunday (most watch the video later in the day), many of whom have never come to Epworth before. Isn't that great! If you don't have a radio or a way to connect to worship, your Church Council would love to provide one for you! There are several of us who have good radios that we would love to give you, and several more who would love to show you how to see the sermon on the computer. **Please let us know what you need! YOU ARE IMPORTANT**, and we really want to be connected however we can.

In your email, look for a link to Zoom, where we will spend the beginning of worship together by video or by phone. We tried it last week and it was so much fun! We will sing together, laugh together, and hear the scripture for the day. Then we will leave it on for the sermon, which will also go out on Facebook Live and the radio, as always. If you don't have email, please call Pastor Dawn, she would love to connect you by phone!

Oh, and! Don't forget to share your God sightings and prayers! Time limitations prevent us from sharing them during that Zoom call (remember, we normally do them after the sermon because we don't quite have enough time at the beginning half of worship), so please send them to Kathy Reynolds at [kmreynolds3@gmail.com](mailto:kmreynolds3@gmail.com).

# News and Fun Stuff!

## How Churches Handled the Spanish Flu Epidemic in 1918

There is a lot of good historical information to be found online that shows how Christian people all over the world responded to the stay-at-home orders in their communities, how they cared for each other, and how they struggled to know the right thing to do with regard to worship. Turns out, there were all the same differences of opinion then as now! We wish there was something specific we could find about Fallon back then, but with the museum closed we are out of luck for now. Here are a few snippets from newspapers around the country at the time:

### May Birthdays!

♥ Shasta Kelley, 5/2  
Bailey Stritenberger, 5/13  
Ailene Brown, 5/18  
♥ Bob Johnston, 5/19  
Jeanie Fahl, 5/20  
Kate Pinder, 5/23  
Ernie DeCoux, 5/24  
Cathy McKean, 5/28  
Margaret Knox, 5/30  
Maggie Neidigh, 5/31

♥ Shasta Kelley,  
daughter of Kelli Kelley,  
passed away some  
years ago.  
Bob Johnston, Gaye  
Johnston's beloved  
husband, passed away  
in 2017. They were  
deeply loved, and are  
sorely missed.

### Sunday, October 20, 1918

**MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN:** The *Journal* found that church closures didn't leave the city's "pastors with any surplus of leisure on their hands." With the faithful encouraged to engage in "home worship" and read sermons published in newspapers, Protestant and Catholic clergy were instead devoting more of their energy to pastoral care and sick calls.

### Monday, October 14, 1918

**BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA:** "We have had the strange experience of a churchless Sabbath," wrote the Methodist revivalist George R. Stuart in the *Age-Herald*, "what has it taught us?" Most importantly, the pandemic should convince "Intelligent Christians" to trust science rather than seeking to "tempt God to perform a miracle in the preservation of our health... Christians do not discount their faith in the omnipotence of their God by keeping their bodies and homes and streets clean and nongerm producing; by using care in traffic and travel, accepting vaccination, sprays and disinfectants and keeping God's own laws of health and life. Any other course is the fruit of ignorance and false teaching."

### Saturday, October 26, 1918

**GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN:** The *Herald* doubted that anyone has suffered more from the state ban on public worship than the members of the city's seventeen Christian Reformed churches, who "have been trained from childhood to regard regular church attendance as natural in their lives as eating breakfast." Families are trying to fill the gap with private worship, but Reformed leaders are upset that churches are closed while schools remain open: "...it would seem that if there were danger of contagion anywhere it would be among the physically undeveloped youngsters congregating in the school rooms day by day."

**From now on,  
brothers and  
sisters, if anything  
is excellent and if  
anything is  
admirable, focus  
your thoughts on  
these things: all  
that is true, all  
that is holy, all  
that is just, all  
that is pure, all  
that is lovely, and  
all that is worthy  
of praise.**

~ *Philippians 4:8*

## Materials Needed for our HeLP Ministry!

With masks, sanitation procedures, and social distancing well in place, we are still glad to be able to provide shower and laundry services to our neighbors in need. Because none of us are traveling and using hotels right now, we are running very low on travel-sized shampoos and things for folks to use! So if you are able, we would love your contributions of tiny soaps, shampoos and conditioners, razors, toothpaste, and combs. The Dollar Store is a great place to get them inexpensively, and Walmart also has a section for travel-sized things like this. Mondays and Tuesdays are a great day to bring them to the church, or between 3pm and 6pm on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays while Fallon Daily Bread is open. Thank you for your help!

## Native American Sunday

This week, along with Mother's Day, the UMC recognizes Native American Sunday. It is one of the yearly Special Giving Sundays that enables us to provide funding for ministries with and by Native American Christians in their own communities. Here in the Western Jurisdiction of the UMC, funds raised to go support our sister church in Schurz led by our friend Nate Sam-Whistler, another in Round Valley California, and another near Klamath Falls, Oregon. These churches are historic and vital in their communities, providing Christian worship and all kinds of community services. The church in Schurz was established in 1901 under circuit rider Robert G Pike, and by 1905 there were 16 adult members and 300 children in Sunday School! The unused Methodist Episcopal Church building in Gold Hill was moved from there to Schurz, and that's where they worship now. Pastor Nathan has been providing excellent pastoral leadership there for the last few years. If you feel moved to give toward Native American Sunday, just send your check to the church with "Native American Sunday" in the subject line. For more information, look on our Conference website at [www.cnumc.org](http://www.cnumc.org).



## Epworth Swag 😊

Thank you for your orders so far! We are almost to our 24 item minimum, and we want to make sure you have a chance to get your hat, tshirt, or sweatshirt before we place the order. The order form is included here in your packet! Call the church and let us know if you have any questions, 423-4714.

## Pizza (or something) with the Pastor

You are invited to spend some time together with Pastor Dawn, for no reason at all! We are finding that Zoom is the best way to do that right now, because folks can join by phone or by video. Every Tuesday evening at 6pm, you are invited to talk more deeply about whatever we talked about during Sunday's sermon, ask questions or offer your own thoughts, hear the scripture for the coming week and study that a bit, and just talk together about Anything We Want! Watch your email for the phone number to call, or the link to connect by video. If you don't have email, call Pastor Dawn on her cell phone at 671-5553 so that she can give you the phone number and password and stuff. ❤️