

Stone Circle

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Love is the Answer

By Mary Columbo Reichert

In this time of isolation and fear it's important not to feel too isolated and afraid. Fr. Greg Boyle of Homeboy Industries said "love is the antidote to fear." So love yourself to calm; do something each day that restores your spirit.

Here are some of the things I'm doing; maybe you'll find inspiration.

1. Sit outside and experience how the day changes into night. The sky changes color, the birds fly home, the crickets begin their chirping...
2. Look at personal photographs. Seeing past adventures, family celebrations and nature's beauty take me to a time when life didn't seem so complicated.
3. Challenge Google or Siri to make you laugh. Each morning, Google tells me a joke that makes me smile. (My current favorite is: What did one ocean say to the other? Nothing, it just waved.)
4. Phone a friend. We may not be able to meet for lunch but we can chat on the phone. Hearing someone else's voice keeps me connected.
5. Keep a routine. I have a new schedule for cleaning, exercise and relaxation that helps create a sense of normalcy.
6. Follow a spiritual practice that centers you. Many worship centers are posting rituals online; quiet time alone can also be enlightening. I'm participating in both.

This list has no end; there is no conclusion. But love is the answer.

As we step into the unknown,
we discover
we can be fragile and strong
and terrified and brave
all at the same time.

By Paul S. Boynton
"Begin with yes"

*Women have gathered in circles
since the dawn of history
for birthing,
to share story,
at cisterns for washing,
at fires for warmth,
at wells to draw water,
in embraces of profound joy,
in prayer,
in rings of sorrow and mourning.*

*With hands grasped, we gather our
collective wisdom,
energies and strengths
binding us and
guiding us into the future.
Each woman brings her gifts,
placing herself
as a stone in the unbroken circle.*

© Janet Herrick

One day at a time. That is the best and shortest answer I have to the question as to how I am moving through this challenging and uncertain time. I think we've all said some of the same things: I'm scared! I've never seen anything like this! When will we see an improvement? Can we get through this? And some of the positive actions include teaching kids via the computer, writing encouraging words and helpful hints on sidewalks with chalk, placing bears in windows so the kids can search for those huggable stuff animals during a drive in their neighborhood and, if you are on Facebook, seeing all of the choir groups singing individually from their homes and put together by someone who has the technological know how.

I try to do a variety of things each day. Making sure I reach out to someone I haven't talked to in a while. I try to keep up with the Word Games I play as I know that's a way to connect with friends and even people I don't know. I've had to learn who prefers a phone call, who likes a text, or who does Instant Messaging or Facebook or Email. Goodness, it's nice to know there are more than a few avenues of staying in touch. I am sure I am not the only one who wakes up and wonders "what the heck day is it today?" With the routine of things to do away from the house gone for now, it sometimes takes a look at the calendar or a comment from a friend to get me straight on what day it is. Funny, I was talking to a friend the other day who thought it was Tuesday in the morning but by afternoon it was Wednesday. I can relate to that too. Can you?

How do I move through the day? So far, it's with balance and variety. Watching TV, reading, meditation, exercise at even the slightest level, and sleeping the best I can at night. I have weights and an exercise ball and we just bought a rowing machine. Today my exercise was a bit of rowing and pressure washing the backyard deck/gazebo. That netted me fresh air, sunshine, exercise and some sweat equity. I admit that my "food fetish" right now is Werther's Chewy Caramels. Bet you can't eat just one! Therefore, I need to keep up with the exercise at home. But I admit to missing my gym time.

We've got this! Together, we've got this! Breathe, focus, and try not to get stuck in one emotion. One of my dear nieces sent me this quote she found on a community board: "A positive attitude gives you power over your circumstances instead of your circumstances having power o'er you." We've got this! Together!

Affirmation Corner

By Margie Gray

All is in Divine Order

We are given opportunities in life to walk the walk.

I like to believe that I am a loving person. But I watch the news and see things being done in a way that doesn't make sense to me. People say things that are not rational in my mind. I get frustrated and angry. I can't begin to understand those whose beliefs are the polar opposite of mine. I struggle not to diminish them let alone to feel love for them.

Another belief of mine is that fear attracts that which we wish to push away. I am committed to positive beliefs, thoughts and focus so as to attract positive outcomes. My father has emphysema. Focusing on his health and well-being is where I want my mind to be, and yet my fear of what would happen if he were to contract COVID-19 continues to haunt the shadows of my mind.

Affirmations are the reminders I need moment to moment to BE in the moment and to be grateful for this experience.

♥ All is in Divine order!

♥ I am bathed in LOVE now!

♥ I trust that all is well now!

♥ Peace and love fills our world now!

We are spirit beings who are challenged to connect to our higher power so that we may be the best of who we are while we are living this human experience. I find I need, now more than ever, to be patient with myself. Forgiving of myself. Love myself. Only then can I have the same compassion for others that I have for myself. I am being challenged to walk the walk.

Prayer Circle

Sonia
Linda
Jody
Julie
Kelly
Arline

Please let us know the names of those you would like to have included in our prayer circle.

Calendar of Events

Upcoming events and gatherings have been suspended for the time being. We will keep you posted as to when we can meet again in person.

And the day came when—

By Deborah Bridges

All we have been hearing on the news is Corona-virus, not all the news being good either. Finally the officials declared we were to "self-isolate" for however long, for our own protection. Ready or not, here it is. All our appointments were cancelled, with hopefully the doctors reachable if needed.

How do we stay busy outside our regular activities? The "things to do" list helped a little. We could rearrange our day for more time for prayer and religious reading. Let's not forget our fellow neighbors that are also shut in. Our phone call could be the only call they get. If we have housemates, the same thing applies as we aren't allowed outside visitors right now.

So many of us are used to going to church on Sundays. All of that changed with the lockdown. Churches are under strict guidelines to work by right now. Services offered online, if you are lucky enough to have a computer. We still can't forget the ongoing bible studies and devotions we do each day. This can be done in any quiet moment of the day.

This is a period of time; a time when God is testing us and our reward will be seen down the road. Patience is a good thing to learn, also, as some around you may not be tolerating the lockdown as well as others.

Loving one another right now, if you did not before, is a good trait for you to learn also. We are all children of God and need each other, especially when His open arms surround us and say "I care."

Start that special project you've been putting off – it can be a big help to someone right now – what you can do in this area is a way to give of yourself.

Use this time to your advantage not only for yourself but for others as well. God bless you and yours during this time.

*"There will be rest, and sure stars shining
Over the roof-tops crowned with snow,
A reign of rest, serene forgetting,
The music of stillness holy and low.
I will make this world of my devising
Out of a dream in my lonely mind.
I shall find the crystal of peace, – above me
Stars I shall find" - Sara Teasdale
Submitted by Margie Gray*

Soup Supper

On March 6, we had a lovely evening gathering at Nancy's home to share a little meditation and enjoy a soup supper. Our Lenten Soup Supper has been one of Stone Circle's yearly traditions. Little did we know that the joy of a group gathering, in the matter of a few weeks, would be temporarily not allowed. Thank you, Nancy for a lovely and delicious evening.



The New Normal

By Jan Herrick

It has always amazed me how quickly we can adapt to a new normal. I know when I have been traveling and staying in very unfamiliar surroundings after only a short time I have adapted. Showering with a hose and bucket and countless other inconveniences can be navigated with determination and necessity. They become the new normal.

For the most part, we Americans have always seemed to be isolated from harm here at home. We are willing to endure inconveniences and even some mild discomfort for the sake of a diet or an adventurous vacation, but when it is not our idea it can be a totally different thing. I remember 2001 when 9/11 invaded our sense of security and how we all were all pushed out of our comfort zone. How dare they or anyone strike out at us on our home soil. Something that so many other people in countries around the world endure was an injustice that had never occurred in our history or memory. Now an invisible invading army is within our borders. What has happened? How can we retaliate against an unseen invading virus.

How do we navigate something we have never faced before? As concern arises, many are asking if this is the new normal. For now it is. The good news is that this will pass. It may take some time, but with all of us supporting each other and following the guidelines to protect ourselves and others we will get through this together. As for me I am using my time at home to sort, rearrange and clean out drawers, cabinets and closets that have been off my radar for too long. I am digging in my yard and repotting plants. I'm walking my dog a little longer and taking in the beauty that is just outside my door. I am making phone calls to friends and texting others just to check in. I am meditating and sending healing thoughts and love to those who are ill and those who care for them.

If this new way of being brings out more awareness and care for each other, more sharing and compassion, then we have learned that we can only get through things like this together, and that is a good thing. Time passes, and this too shall have its day and another new normal will arise in the wake of this crisis. Perhaps we will all emerge a bit more grateful, a bit more conscious of all we have, and a bit more compassionate knowing we were and are all more alike than different. After all... we are all human beings sharing one beautiful precious planet together.

Times of Isolation

By Mary Wales (Sydney, Australia)

During times of isolation whether through illness, bad weather or whatever it is always difficult to not be anxious to be out and about. However, during this time of self-isolation there is a resignation of that is how it is and the importance to self and others of doing this. The internet and communication via that medium has made the world smaller but very welcomed to stay in touch with others especially family.

This week, I have given myself the task, though to call it that would be totally wrong, to write to my nine grandchildren and tell them I love them and I am so blest that they are part of our family.

I am really struggling, with both fear and anger at this time.

By Dr. Betsy Williams

Fear of losing friends, people I love, my partner, friends I have known for over 20 years. Older people and especially my aboriginal patients. I am back working in an aboriginal clinic in Whyalla now, a little less than 100 kms from where the aboriginal women's clinic was in Port Augusta. Aboriginal patients in Australia carry some of the highest burden of chronic disease of all people in Australia and perhaps even world-wide. Diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, skin and lung infections, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, mental health issues, and repeated loss and traumatic events in their lives. They will be the first and most numerous victims in Australia of this virus.

Angry because the health system in rural South Australia has been deteriorating over the past 20 years. All clinical care is essentially centralized in Adelaide, 400 kms away. With the building of a 3 billion dollar hospital in the city at the expense of country hospitals. Now specialists who even visit in the country are few when years ago they were resident in the regional centers. Equipment has been removed and many small hospitals have been converted into nursing homes. GPs in rural areas are left with no resources, no specialists to whom to refer patients, and limited ability to transfer patients to Adelaide. Whyalla's "regional hospital" has a total of 4 or 5 ventilators to cover a region of over 60,000 people, scattered across Eyre Peninsula and Outback South Australia on farms and properties.

Restrictions in Australia are growing by the day. Flights have been cancelled. Travel restrictions mean that we cannot travel between states, much less internationally. We are not even supposed to leave our house unless we have "essential business". Swimming pools, gyms, conferences, meetings, classes, cafes and restaurants and even pubs are all closed. We are told to keep a distance from others of at least 1 1/2 metres. Over 88,000 people lost their jobs yesterday when all of this was announced. Supermarkets have shortages of milk, flour, rice, tinned goods and even toilet paper and tissues. No one trusts what will happen next and everyone is stocking up, fueled by fear.

I don't know what is happening to my kids in Cambodia. Fortunately, the disease is milder in younger people. But tourism has dried up completely in a country that normally sees 4 million people visit per year. My kids doing work in the hospitality sector are all losing their hard earned jobs and therefore, their income. In addition, as most of the South East Asian countries depend almost entirely on China for goods, there are serious shortages, no safety net, no welfare, no economic incentives, only the specter of starvation with lack of any medical care for those afflicted with this virus.

So I am afraid and powerless. I am swamped with anxious patients as the virus is now just reaching Whyalla. GPs and specialists who fly in fly out are no longer able to come to Whyalla, leaving those of us who are resident in Whyalla to cover their patients. I feel trapped by the travel restrictions, the inability to swim at the pool or go to meditation classes or even have a coffee with friends. How much I used to take for granted. Now they are saying this will be the case for at least the next 6 months, as we are only just now entering the seasonal flu season.

One day at a time is all I can do. Accept my fear, anger and powerlessness as understandable in these circumstances and give myself some self-compassion. Meditate regularly and when I can't sleep. Take what exercise I can and work out on my yoga mat. Remember that we are all in this together and at least be kind. There is so little that any of us can do about this virus and the devastation it could cause. We can only work with ourselves.

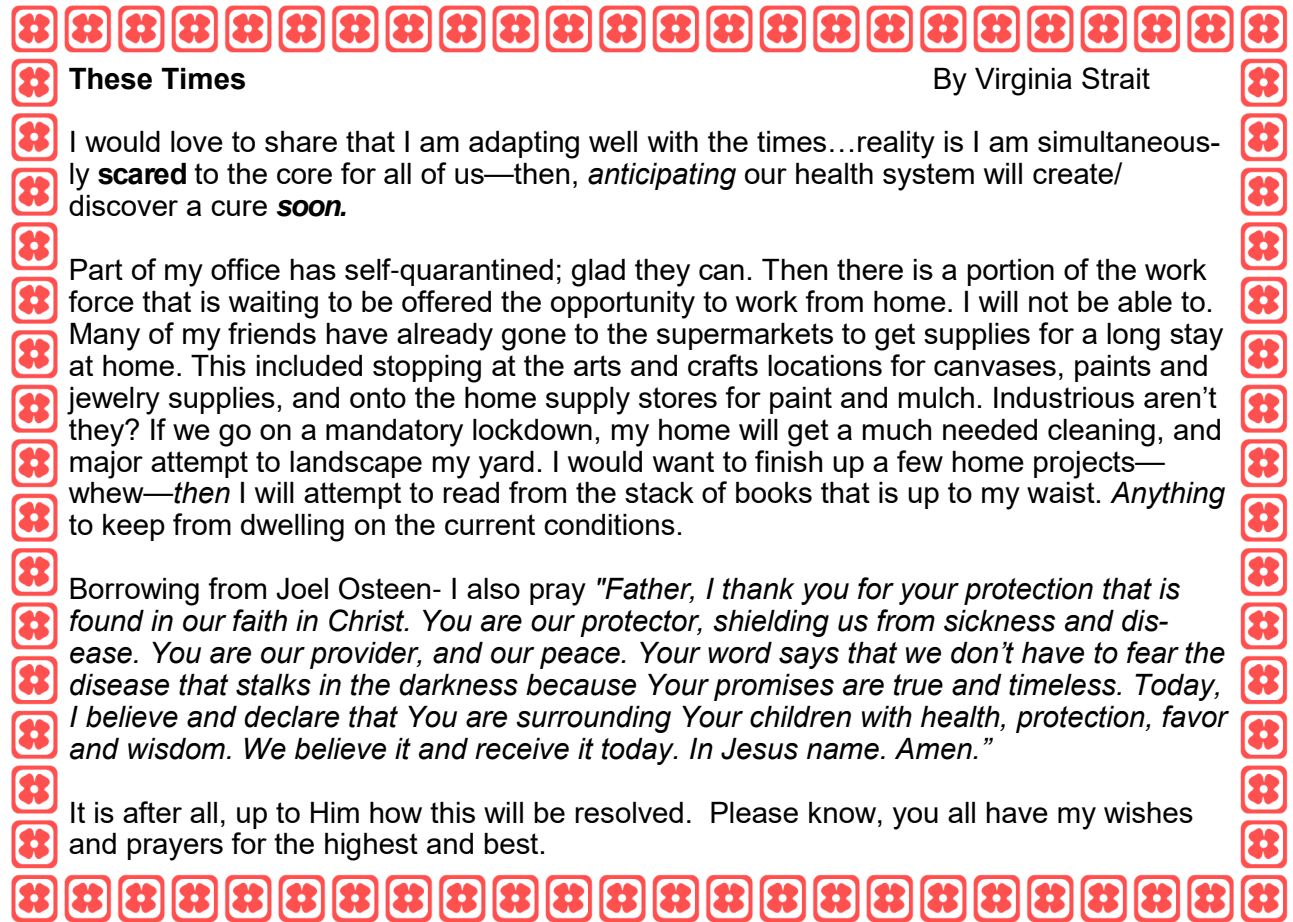
"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way. When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom." Victor Frankl

Decade Day/Evening

For over fifteen years, Decade Day has become one of the most treasured of our Stone Circle rituals. It celebrates all women's lives and birthdays, but in particular, those who are entering a new decade. This ritual embraces the passage from one decade to another and looks to the joys, challenges and wisdom, that comes as we learn and grow, as a privilege to be celebrated. The women already in a particular decade are the ones who welcome their sister into that new rich period of their lives with the dignity, grace and the blessings that await them.

This year, on February 7th, Jill Munzial offered her home and hospitality to us for this wonderful ritual. Two ladies were present to experience this beautiful ritual passage. We honored Joyce Mansheim and Sonia Diaz with our wishes that they embrace their new decades and all the richness it can provide them. Sonia's two daughters also each celebrated entering into new decades.





These Times

By Virginia Strait

I would love to share that I am adapting well with the times...reality is I am simultaneously **scared** to the core for all of us—then, *anticipating* our health system will create/discover a cure **soon**.

Part of my office has self-quarantined; glad they can. Then there is a portion of the work force that is waiting to be offered the opportunity to work from home. I will not be able to. Many of my friends have already gone to the supermarkets to get supplies for a long stay at home. This included stopping at the arts and crafts locations for canvases, paints and jewelry supplies, and onto the home supply stores for paint and mulch. Industrious aren't they? If we go on a mandatory lockdown, my home will get a much needed cleaning, and major attempt to landscape my yard. I would want to finish up a few home projects—whew—*then* I will attempt to read from the stack of books that is up to my waist. *Anything* to keep from dwelling on the current conditions.

Borrowing from Joel Osteen- I also pray *"Father, I thank you for your protection that is found in our faith in Christ. You are our protector, shielding us from sickness and disease. You are our provider, and our peace. Your word says that we don't have to fear the disease that stalks in the darkness because Your promises are true and timeless. Today, I believe and declare that You are surrounding Your children with health, protection, favor and wisdom. We believe it and receive it today. In Jesus name. Amen."*

It is after all, up to Him how this will be resolved. Please know, you all have my wishes and prayers for the highest and best.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Stone Circle operates as a nonprofit entity whose presence seeks to enhance the feminine milieu for women of the 21st century. We truly rely on the generosity of friends and those who participate in programs.