

LIVEWIRE

Hillside United Methodist: December 2020

Pastor's Ponderings...

How Long?

How long will you forget me, LORD? Forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long will I be left to my own wits, agony filling my heart? Daily? How long will my enemy keep defeating me? Look at me! Answer me, LORD my God! Restore sight to my eyes! Otherwise, I'll sleep the sleep of death, and my enemy will say, "I won!" My foes will rejoice over my downfall. But I have trusted in your faithful love. My heart will rejoice in your salvation. Yes, I will sing to the LORD because he has been good to me. Psalm 13:1-6

How long... I find myself asking God that quite frequently these days. How long do we have to wait to get back to in person church? How long until I can invite people over to my house? How long must I keep saying NO to my kids about doing anything? How long will people keep dying that were perfectly healthy? How long will it take for a vaccine? How long!!!!

The psalm above was written during the 50-year period the Jewish people were in exile. The Babylonians burned their city, destroyed the temple, killed the leaders, and moved the people to another country. They waited 50 years before they could go back to their homes and rebuild their church. That's a lot of waiting.

The Israelites waited and wandered in the desert for 40 years before getting to the promised land. They complained a lot; complained about not having the food and things they needed when they wanted them, complained about the leadership, complained about the rules in place that kept them safe. Hmmmm, sounds a bit familiar. Sometimes I think our kids are handling this pandemic better than us adults. My 14-year-old daughter pointed out to me that Anne Frank lived in a cramped space for 2 years. Couldn't go outside. Couldn't play with friends. Couldn't go to school. That puts things in perspective. But, I bet Anne Frank had some bad days and asked God, How long?!

And now we begin the 4 weeks of Advent. A time of WAITING! More waiting. Seems like we are always waiting, doesn't it? Even when there isn't a global pandemic, as Christians we are constantly living in the, "here and now, but not yet," way of life. Right now, there is hardship and great loss, yet God gives us hope when we see kindness and people doing amazing things to love others. People are homeless and dying on the

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January 2021 Livewire deadline is **Wednesday, December 23rd**

streets, yet CHUM and so many other organizations are working tirelessly to solve the problem and care for those on the margins. *“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*

This year, we won't be able to gather in person each Sunday to celebrate the four weeks of Advent and the themes, Love, Peace, Joy, and Hope. I invite you, and encourage you to place candles on your kitchen table and still practice this spiritual tradition. The Advent wreath was originally a German and Scandinavian home devotional practice used to mark the four weeks of Advent. Families would light a candle for each past week and the current week at their dinner or evening time of prayer. The configuration of candles, whether in a line or a circle, did not matter. Neither did the color of the candles. What mattered was the marking of time and the increase of light each week in the face of increasing darkness as the winter solstice approached.

As we continue to wait, for the time when we can gather in our beautiful sanctuary again, for the time we can go out to lunch with a friend, for the birth of Jesus Christmas day, and for the day when all will be right in the world, on earth as it is in heaven, as we wait, we stay strong through prayer, through reaching out to others, through reading God's words and remembering the promise that God is with us, Immanuel.

Your Pastor,
Cynthia



COVID UPDATE Our church building is closed for 3 weeks to be in compliance with Governor Walz and Bishop Ough's guidelines.

Bishop Ough's Letter follows the "red" guidelines:



State order for all people to shelter at home, with only essential businesses permitted to be open. Infections are rising, and hospital capacity is a concern.

Church buildings are closed. Specifically, this means:

Churches should worship online only.

Pastoral care visits should be done by phone or online.

- Staff, leadership team, ministry team, youth group, and other group meetings should be done virtually.
- Weddings and funerals should be postponed if at all possible. Outdoor weddings and graveside services can be conducted provided no more than 10 people are gathered and those present follow social distancing guidelines and family units remain at least six feet apart from one another. These gatherings should be live streamed when possible to allow greater participation.
- Church volunteers should cease activities that require them to leave their homes.
- Having a few people record or live stream worship from your church sanctuary is permitted. If you do this, be sure everyone in the building follows social distancing guidelines and that the number of people does not exceed 10 in compliance with Minnesota Department of Health recommendations.
- Clergy can leave their homes in order to do essential work that cannot be done remotely; they should remain at home and connect with people virtually whenever possible.

November 19, 2020

Staying safe, turning the dial to red

Dear Minnesota United Methodists,

I am alarmed and frightened. The coronavirus pandemic is out of control in Minnesota and most of the country. Our hospitals are overwhelmed. Our front-line health care workers are exhausted. The Minnesota Department of Health told faith leaders in their most recent call that when you gather with others outside your home, you are not just at risk for exposure, you can expect to be exposed to COVID-19. That is how rampant the community spread currently is across our state.

As you might know, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Wednesday announced a four-week shutdown of bars, restaurants, entertainment venues, and fitness clubs, starting Friday, Nov. 20. Weddings and funerals are permitted, but wedding receptions and post-funeral gatherings of any size are not.

Although in-person worship is still permitted, it is strongly discouraged by health officials and thus we are turning the dial on our Phased Re-Gathering Plan back to red. I ask that all churches return to virtual worship if you have not already done so, that all clergy and staff work from home, and that in-person activities in our buildings be limited to pre-schools, daycares, and emergency relief activities.

I urge you in your personal life and activities to re-double your efforts to keep people safe and help suppress the community spread of this terrible disease. Wear a mask. Stay home. Do not gather for Thanksgiving beyond your immediate household. There is no room for delay. Now is the time to act. Now is the time to set aside our personal and political preferences for the common good. Now is the time to lead the way.

The Minnesota Department of Health is reporting increasing numbers of new cases daily. Here are some sobering statistics for our state:

- In May, we were averaging 800 new cases a day. Today, it is 8,000.

Dakotas-Minnesota Area

- It took us six-and-a-half months to reach 100,000 cases. It only took six weeks to reach the second 100,000, and we are on a path to surpass 300,000 by Thanksgiving. We are in a snowball.
- There are cases in every county in Minnesota and we are averaging a 30 percent positivity rate across the state. That means in a group of 10 people, three are likely to have COVID-19. A 30 percent or higher rate of community spread is considered high risk.
- In just two days, on Monday and Tuesday of this week, nearly 200 persons were admitted to hospitals statewide due to COVID-19. Our hospitals are reaching maximum capacity, and our healthcare shortage is growing due to staff persons being out sick after contracting the virus.

The next six to 12 weeks will be critical, according to Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota and one of the nation's leading infectious disease experts.

Group and family gatherings have been the most significant source of the spread of COVID-19 in recent weeks. We have the power to help change the trajectory of the pandemic in Minnesota. Doing no harm, acting for the common good, and protecting the most vulnerable among us is how we love our neighbors. We can give rise to the light in the midst of the darkness of this disease.

So, I am making a difficult ask. Advent and Christmas is a season when we most want to gather, but this year, we need to be a light to others to by continuing to worship at home and online, and limiting our personal activities to what is absolutely essential.

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We can do this hard thing. We can do it because we do not rely on our own strength and capacities. We rely on the promise made real in the incarnation: God is with us. The birth of the Christ child we celebrate this season proclaims that. So now we live it.

Thank you for all the ways you are continuing to be creative in ministry and faithful to our call to heal a broken world!

Bishop Bruce R. Ough
Resident Bishop
Dakotas-Minnesota Area of The United Methodist Church



If you have an emergency please call Pastor Cynthia on her cell at 218-260-3114. If you cannot reach her, please contact Carole Hawkinson 218-345-6874 or Carolyn Dahl 218-727-6342. They usually know how to find your pastor!

Men's Fellowship and Bible Study

Hillside men's fellowship and Bible study group has been meeting since October every two weeks. We will take a break in December to abide by the Bishop's and Governor's guidelines. Hoping we can get back together in January! All men are invited to participate.

Ways to Serve at Hillside

Are you looking to get more involved at Hillside? Our Nominations Team is looking for people who wish to serve a term on one of our teams; Finance, Trustees, Staff Parish Relations, Worship, Christian Education, and Missions. If you are interested please talk with Pastor Cynthia or Carole Hawkinson.

December Sunday Worship

We will continue to hold joint online worship services with First UMC. The link can be found below, also on Hillside's Face-book page, and Pastor Cynthia sends an email out on Saturday with the link included. Watch the service as it goes live online at 10am Sunday mornings, or go back and watch whenever you have time. We no longer will have the Hillside parking lot open Sunday mornings.

December 6 – **Second Sunday of Advent, the theme is Hope.** We will share in the Lord's Supper during this service.

December 13 – **Third Sunday of Advent, will feature our virtual Christmas Pageant** with kids and adults from Hillside and Coppertop.

December 20 – **Fourth Sunday of Advent** – A visitor from ancient days will tell their story with us this Sunday!

December 24 – **Christmas Eve** – filled with lots of Christmas music, and all the traditions. The service will first premiere at 4pm – but then you can watch it any time after that fits into your day.

December 27 – This Sunday you are in for a special treat with a service provided by the staff at the **Minnesota Conference Office.**

YouTube Link to find the Sunday online worship services:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCA47ISATrUsyV7xJ8b4cWww>

MISSIONS – HILLSIDE ADVENT/CHRISTMAS GIVING

During the month of December, we will be collecting items to give to Union Gospel Mission, CHUM, and Harbor House. These are items they have requested, and with our help, they can provide for those who are struggling and in need. Let's be generous this Christmas season and MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Items to Donate or Contribute Towards

Week 1 – ending Dec. 6th: unwrapped new toys and/or gift cards

Week 2 – ending Dec. 6th: hats/mittens/scarves/coats

Week 3 – ending Dec. 13: cereal or any food items

Week 4 – ending Dec. 20: socks and underwear

Ways to Give

- Bring donations to church and put in the bins outside of the parking lot doors.
- Drive up to the main entrance of church after worship on Sundays (Nov. 29, Dec. 6, 13, 20) 11am-noon to drop off your donation from your car
- Order on-line and have donations delivered to the church
- Make a financial gift for the item(s)
- Call/e-mail the church and ask for your items to be picked up (from your porch)



CHRISTMAS OFFERING

This year's Christmas offering will be given to the Salvation Army HEAT Share program. HeatShare is a program that provides emergency utility assistance for people with no place left to turn. The program is funded in part by Salvation Army donors and by local utility companies and their customers. Funds are typically used to pay for natural gas, oil, propane and electricity. The program has provided more than \$40 million worth of assistance to over 150,000 households since 1982. Annually, about 4,700 households receive an average of \$370 to keep their homes warm.

Year after year, requests for assistance are typically greater than the available resources, so Salvation Army relies on donations to continue to help those in need.

STEWARDSHIP – STAY THE COURSE.

Thank you to everyone who has turned in "estimate of financial giving commitment" cards for 2021. If you haven't turned yours in yet, please do so as soon as you are able. It will enable us to better plan for our mission and ministry in 2021. Extra copies of both forms are available if you need one. Just email or call the church office.

FINANCIAL GIVING FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER		
AMOUNT NEEDED PER MONTH		\$7,701.00
October 30	giving	\$ 1,535.00
November 6	giving	\$ 1,615.00
November 14	giving	\$ 1,949.00
November 20	giving	\$ 760.00
		\$ 5,859.00
Balance		-\$1,842.00

Thank you for your gifts to CHUM .
Your gifts feed your neighbors, shelter and support people experiencing homelessness, provide dignity through advocacy and compassion, and give hope for a changing future.



CHUM Christmas Eve Vigil Online

Tuesday, December 24th At noon.

The CHUM Christmas Eve Vigil is still happening! It will be virtual this year so you can participate at your home. This vigil provides an opportunity to remember those who have died in the past year who have also spent much of their lives homeless or advocating for those who are homeless. This is a sacred moment in time when we pray and remember those beautiful people. Pastor Cynthia will send a link on email, and post on Facebook Christmas Eve.

CHUM Contact Information:
Administration 218-720-6521
CHUM Center 218-726-0153
Food Shelf 218-727-2391
chum@chumduluth.org, www.chumduluth.org

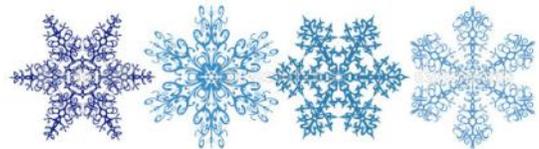
Loaves and Fishes

For the November Loaves and Fishes meal, we had a twenty pound turkey donated . So we supplied a Thanksgiving meal for the Dorothy Day House the second Tuesday of November. Along with the turkey, we gave stove-top dressing, instant mashed potatoes, gravy mix, canned cranberries, frozen mixed vegetables, rolls, butter, and milk. Jello, cranberry sauce, mandarin oranges, miracle whip and cool whip were used for a salad. Diane Boris made a large pan of pumpkin bars for desert.

The staff and men really appreciate what we do for them.

Blessings from Carolyn Dahl

Please remember to keep the homeless and the hungry in your prayers. Thank you for the cash donations so we can continue to do the mission project.



Many Thanks to All of You who Give Your Time, Your Spirit and Your Resources:

- To the women who provided a meal to Loaves & Fishes in October
- Everyone who has donated to Chum's food shelf through HUMC the last few months
- To all those who quietly give to our church and community.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Online Service

You, and your family and friends are invited to a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service that premieres at 4 pm, December 24th, but then you can watch it any time after that at your convenience. It can be found on the same YouTube page and FaceBook Page as our regular Sunday services and Pastor Cynthia will send an email with a link that same day. There will be a message, Christmas music, including singing along to Christmas carols, a children's message and lighting of candles. Please join us for this special worship service that celebrates the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.



Please Keep Us in Your Thoughts & Prayers

Joyce Benson's Family, Tim McLoughlin, whose brother John died, Dee Johnson, who moved into a new home, Chris Christensen, Marge Dahl, Derry Gilberg, Barb Kent, Clareen Suomala, along with our men & women in military service and their families. We especially pray for everyone's physical and mental health during this pandemic and those affected by extreme weather disasters.



Hillside UMC Book Club

The Hillside UMC book club will be meeting the second Tuesday of each month.
ZOOM 7:00 p.m.

If you would like to join the book club, please call Sandra Wilmot (218) 348-2712.

December's book is "Friends from the edge" by Heather Ballgame

Tuesday, December 8, 2020 7:00 p.m.

Happy December Birthday to Hillside Friends!

4 Joanne Holmes
5 Sandee Hendrickson
8 Doug Wendland
9 Bob Gonhue
9 Rod Olson
13 David Leland
14 Christine Lindgren
18 Amanda Pederson
19 Linda Tomasek
31 Julie Manisto
31 Sue Patullo



If you don't see your name here, please call the church office so we can add you to the list. 727-4257

Hello my fellow Hillsideers;

Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who is sending in their financial giving to the church. It makes a big difference and we are grateful for your generosity. We understand that some of you may be experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic. Please let us know if you are struggling to pay bills and buy needed supplies. We are family, and we are in this together. Give what you can, help where you can, and also ask for help when you need it.

Blessings to all of you, and be well.
Julie Manisto, Your Finance Chair

Administrative Council Meeting Minutes: November 3, 2020 via ZOOM

Online Attendance: Carolyn Dahl, Diane Boris, Jim Leland, Carole Hawkinson, Julie Manisto, Sandy Wilmot, Pastor Cynthia

Carolyn opened the meeting with a devotion titled Encourage and Build. Then she gave the opening prayer.

Secretary's Minutes: The secretary's minutes for October were reviewed. One change was made. There will be garland decorating the front door of the church at Christmas. A motion was made by Carole and second by Julie that the minutes be approved. Motion approved.

Treasurer & Financial Report: The Treasurer's report was reviewed as of the end of October. There was \$7,200 in bills this month and \$6,570 income came in. We still haven't heard if the CARES Loan has been forgiven. We received \$20 for a teacher's gift card. Pastor Cynthia will buy the gift card.

Stewardship: Letters went out for pledges for next year. There are six back so far.

Pastor's Report: The Halloween event was really fun. It was non-stop cars from 4- 5:30pm. In addition to the candy, stickers and cards with a Hillside link to Sunday Service were passed out. There were many thank you's from the parents for providing a safe way to trick or treat this year. Pastor Cynthia did the annual boundaries training for clergy online. There is a meeting with the United Methodist clergy every week for clergy to support each other. We need to keep the clergy in our prayers. This pandemic is hard of them, as it is for us all. There were 5 men in the Men's Group today. There will be a virtual Christmas Pageant for kids and youth with members of Hillside and 1st church. We took the rainbow flag down, because it keeps breaking from the wind and can no longer be repaired. We encourage prayers for our nation and for voters that they can go safely and vote. Nominations are coming up for next year's chairs of committees. We need people in SPRC and Finance. We no longer have a Mission committee and Worship is not needed right now.

SPRC: The SPRC team met and went through the yearly form due to the conference office about Hillside and the Pastor are doing. The form was submitted and the team will meet with District Superintendent Susan Nienaber on November 8th at 3PM online through ZOOM to go over the form.

Trustees: Dan Holte's house was sold. One recipient of his money said no to selling the house at a lower price than the appraised price. The Boy Scouts filed for bankruptcy in August. This shouldn't affect us, as we don't have a boy scout troop right now. We have 18 cub scouts. Because of COVID, the pack couldn't recruit this year. There is someone parking their car, camper and boat in the parking lot of the church on the other side of Piedmont Avenue. One item was towed away. If the others aren't moved, they will be towed away also. The person won't answer the door so we can talk to him about it. The furnaces have been serviced.

Mission: Loaves & Fishes is the only ongoing mission right now. In November we will be sending the ingredients for a turkey hot dish. We will have a drop off at the church for hats, mittens and jackets on November 21, 10am to 12 noon at the church for Union Gospel Mission. We will collect toys for Union Gospel Mission in December.

Worship: Last Sunday, 500 people tuned in to hear the service online. We are still phoning people every week. Some people like to talk, others don't. We need to pray for Joyce Benson, who is going downhill every day and Dee Johnson who is recovering from a stroke and will be going to an Assisted Living facility.

Other: The next meeting will be December 1st at 7PM via zoom. Pastor Cynthia prayer gave the Closing prayer. Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by
Diane Boris, Ad Council Secretary