The Second Pandemic?

From the beginning of the spread of the coronavirus I admit being more concerned for the “second pandemic” than COVID-19.

COVID-19 is terrifying. It has shown us again the equality of humanity. This virus does not respect ethnic, country or continental borders. In the eyes of the world, we’re all different; in the eyes of the virus, we’re just the same. It will contaminate anything, anywhere. It is an indiscriminate killer.

We are all equal in creation; “So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27) In our living we are all part of the ONE massive human family. The level of melanin in our skin, the language we speak or our culture means nothing in the eyes of a contagious disease.

COVID-19 is terrifying. It has shown us again the fragility of human life. Well over half a million people have contracted it, thousands have died and more will. It is a threat and it reminds us that human life is fragile. The Psalmist writes; “The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like the flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone and its place remembers it no more.” (Psalm 103:15-16)

My prayer in response to seeing the equality and fragility of human life is that we each will not take our lives on earth for granted. The Psalmist also writes; “Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12)

Our fragility and equality allow COVID-19 a terrifying place in the history of the world, a giant place, a slot that will shape our generation and possibly the one to follow us. What would possibly concern the pastor’s heart more than this?

I prefer not to overstate things and intend to be sensitive and it seems clear a second pandemic is likely. We are facing COVID-19 together, the warnings, guidance and news is literally everywhere. No one in the world is unaware of the virus that is wreaking havoc with our lives. It is obvious.

What is not obvious is what is going on inside of each one of us. In our suffering, in the pain of losing a loved one, we are completely equal – weak and without answers. Our rhythms are broken and even though we may have really nice places in which to seek shelter during the world health crisis there is a lot going on inside of us. Some of it is awesome – we are growing deeper love for our families, God and the many blessings we have. Some of it is very difficult – anxiousness, depression, worry, stress bud like spring flowers.

The “second pandemic” will be fueled by our preexisting conditions being exasperated, choices we make, and the simple fact that we cannot control our own lives. This pandemic will consist of emotional, spiritual, mental health crises to name a few. Frankly, I am praying as much for this as I am the deadly disease that is shaping our world right now.

For sure the church is stepping into the COVID-19 pandemic – feeding children, blood drives, worship services and a great deal of caring for each other and the important holding fast to personal and communal health guidelines. Now, we need to plot how we will step into the second portion of this.

Pray right now regarding how you will deal with your own issues and how you will respond to those you know and love who are going to be hurting.

Open your mouth. We are going to need to talk about how we feel. This may be step 1 of your healing. Open your ears, others really will need to talk about how they feel. This may be their step 1.

Look after yourself. Enrich your spiritual life. Get closer to God. Engage with the programs and groups the church is hosting. There is great strength to be found there. We are going to need every resource we can gather to step into this; get right with God.

Yes, I am concerned about the second leg of this journey and yes, I fear for some of you and yes, by God’s guidance and the power of his strong hand, in time I believe we can help each other faithfully through it.

I am praying, aching and yearning for you.

Pastor Mike Morgan
Pastoral Care Corner

Several weeks ago, we were told to stay home and many of us began working at our kitchen tables, stores and restaurants closed, and there became fewer things to do outside our homes. So I began a list. If you’re like me I thought this would be a great time to clean some closets, go through boxes of photos, fill out that paperwork to make things easier for our kids to find our important info – oh and get my work done too.

Now almost a month later, ask me how much of that I’ve actually done - NONE of it!! The photo boxes are still on the closet shelf, just where they were a month ago, the closets are still waiting to be cleaned and the paperwork hasn’t even been printed out.

Even though there are fewer places to go, and fewer obligations outside my pastoral care work and our online services, I have accomplished nothing on my lists. Do I feel guilty? Sometimes, but honestly like many of you I’ve heard from, the motivation is just not there. And honestly, that’s okay. I am coming to the realization that God may be telling me to use this time less for projects and more for drawing closer to him. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you, James 4:8 ESV

One day recently I sat on our back steps and listened to the birds chirping, saw the grass greening up, my perennials starting to poke their heads through the ground and felt the warmth of the sun on my face and it was glorious. I wasn’t thinking about my list of unmet goals but rather how wonderful God’s creation is and how much he must love us to provide all these beautiful things for us.

From here on out, I’m committing to spend my spare time less on closets and photo boxes and more on my relationship with God and coming to know and love him more deeply. If we do anything in this weird time, let’s commit to praying at 6:18, following an online devotional, reading one of the Gospels, whatever it will be that draws us into a deeper more lasting relationship with our Lord and Savior. The closets will wait but the relationship we build with Jesus now will last an eternity.

Blessings, Vicki

Prayer Requests

1. To submit a prayer concern, request or praise, please use the Prayer button at the end of the weekly email or on the church website, www.marionmethodist.org.
2. To be on the email prayer chain to pray for others, email Vicki Standley, Director of Pastoral Care at vstandley@marionmethodist.org.

Joys and Concerns

BIRTHS:
April 4: Noraleigh Grace, daughter of Dillon and Emily Fawcett. Grandparents are Ron and Jan Fawcett
April 5: Parker Allen Miller, son of Jordyn Redmond and Andrew Miller. Grandparents are Jim and Stacey Redmond.

How to Share a Video on YouTube:
- Click on the video that you want to share
- Below the video you will see 3 buttons
  - Like, Dislike and Share
- Click on the share button and a screen with options will open up
  - Copy the YouTube link and add it to an email
  - Facebook will open up your account so you can write a message before you share to your personal page

Truth: Timeless or Trending

Our upcoming sermon series examines foundational Christian theology (what we believe about God) and doctrine (a set of beliefs that dictate religious expression). We believe that our church faces two critical moments in history: 1) the response to the COVID-19 crisis and 2) the dilemma within the United Methodist Church to define holy sexuality. When facing key moments like these, understanding what we believe is critical in shaping our response. The world is open to the gospel in ways we have not seen in our generation and yet we face deep division within our denomination.

As Christians, how we see truth and what we claim as truth shapes our response to the challenges we face. We need to know now more than ever who God is, how we relate to God, and how our faith in God impacts our interaction with the world. This sermon series will look at concepts like the authority of Scripture, the Trinity, the historical Christian Creeds, the covenant promises of God, original sin, holiness, freewill, salvation, human dignity, gospel culture, marriage and sexuality, and mission.

In times of questions and doubt, we look to God – the source of all truth. Our hope is to unpack these topics in approachable ways and provide many ways for us as a congregation to discuss and engage these ideas together. We pray that God might open up new opportunities to share the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to those that have never heard or those who have walked away from the church. Join us as we explore this question: is truth timeless or trending?
Administrative Update

John Terry

Marion Methodist remains committed to keep people safe and healthy during this pandemic. We believe it is necessary to proactively help our congregation and others see that this is a profound health crisis at many levels. To demonstrate our commitment, we are not scheduling any new events in any of our church facilities before September 15th, except those that are useful to the physical health of our community; i.e. blood drives, food collections, et.al. This will remain our policy until significant changes and freedoms are given to us by appropriate health agencies – Iowa DPH, WHO, CDC and others.

We will walk cautiously, and because we are all new to this, we don’t truly know outcomes that might emerge. All current weekly activities are transitioning to digital media using Zoom, live streaming and YouTube. Those that don’t transition easily to a digital format have been cancelled; Chancel Choir, Handbells, and the 19:14 Puppet Troupe.

Your church staff is meeting (via Zoom) weekly during this period of uncertainty and the scheduling of activities is constantly being evaluated. New ideas and ways to leverage our digital platforms are discussed weekly, many have been implemented. Several events were scheduled prior to the start of our pandemic response, those events will be evaluated on a monthly basis and adequate notice will be given to those involved prior to the event.

LIVESTREAM SCHEDULE

**Wednesday Nights at Marion Methodist**

- **6:00 pm**  Christian Education Lesson for Children (and Parents) led by Dani Showalter, Director of Children’s Discipleship
- **6:30 pm**  Pastoral Message and Bible Study led by Pastor Mike Morgan
- **7:30 pm**  4:12 Student Ministries led by Kelsie DeReus, Director of Youth and Connectional Missions and 4:12 Leadership Team

**Sunday Morning**

- **10:15 am**  Live Worship with Children’s Education Moment

Watch online at www.marionmethodist.org/watch-live or subscribe to our YouTube Channel www.YouTube.com/MarionMethodistChurch

Join Miss Dani for a story on Saturday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings on Marion Methodist’s YouTube page at 7:30 pm.

Links to all our current and past Children’s Education Lessons, Take Home Sheets, and additional resources can be found on our website at www.MarionMethodist.org/ChildrensEducation. Check back often for updates!
NEW Bible Studies Through Zoom Starting This Week!

Join us for our new Bible studies starting on Thursday April 16th and Monday April 20th. Register today and find a full study description at www.MarionMethodist.org.

“Finding God Faithful” by Kelly Minter Thursdays at 2:00 PM Starting 4/16/20 led by Vicki Standley
This Women's Bible Study traces the path of Joseph's life in the Book of Genesis to observe how God's sovereignty reigns, even in our darkest moments. Watch the study video online and join in the Zoom meeting for group discussion.

“Psalm 40” by Sarah Mae Thursdays at 7:00 PM Starting 4/16/20 led by Gina Klein
In this Women's Bible Study, examine Psalm 40, ask honest questions of yourself and the Bible, and learn how to stay faithful to God amidst painful and hard times. Trace the thread of joy and purpose that comes from delighting in the Lord and the healing that only He can bring to His children. Watch the study video online and join in the Zoom meeting for group discussion.

“Christian Beliefs” by Stephen Eye Mondays at 6:30 AM Starting 4/20/20 Led by Pastor Mike Morgan
In this Men's Bible Study we will look at how Christian beliefs are vital to Christian living. They are the foundation of your relationship with God - and even with others. So... what do Christians believe? In this Bible Study, Stephen Eyre introduces one by one twelve key tenets of the Christian faith.

“Truth: Timeless or Trending” Sermon Discussion Study Mondays at 8:00 PM Starting Monday 4/20/20 led by Simon Campbell
In this study you will dig deeper into the sermons you hear each Sunday. Join us in this study guided by the sermon discussion questions provided each week by Pastor Mike, Simon Campbell, and Kelsie DeReus.

To register go to www.MarionMethodist.org or email Jen Digmann at jdigmann@MarionMethodist.org. Jen will be in touch with you about getting a book for your study and access to videos.

*indicates those who have served during the crisis

**Stewardship**

Alternative ways to give during this time

1. Mail offering to:
   Marion Methodist Church
   1298 7th Avenue
   Marion, IA 52302

2. Give online at www.MarionMethodist.org/give

3. Text offering to 319-313-5359
   Include $ Amount and ministry code

**Text to give Ministry Codes:**

Operating Budget Text GEN
Transform Campaign Text TRANSFORM

Upper Room
Marion Methodist knows that many people in the congregation use the Upper Room Devotional as their daily time with God. The new issues have arrived. If you are able, please come to the church on Monday from 10 am - 12 pm and they will be inside the doors on the West Side. If you are unable to come to the church building please contact Karen Schmitz at kschmitz@marionmethodist.org and we will make arrangements to get the next issue to you.