What are we Learning from COVID-19?

I was descending from the attic of a home one hot summer Iowa day. I was covered with sweat, fiberglass and of course years of attic dust. The company I worked for had all kinds of ladders, safety gear of every kind, all of which I kept stored neatly in the truck for this simple job.

I was 18, the attic access was right above the washing machine and a man of my age and strength could stand on the edge of it and easily pull themselves up. The descent did not turn out to be so effortless. It should have been, it just wasn’t.

Covered with all that I mentioned previously, as the descent began, the battery-operated drill slipped out of a sweaty hand. Greatly desiring it not to crack the porcelain washer lid, I stuck out a foot to catch it – which I did – right at the edge of her top glass “Knick knack” shelf. Hearing the shelf break, I pulled my foot back releasing the drill to break the remaining two and causing me to slip through the hole at an increased speed. To my credit, the washer lid did not chip, but it did not hold my full weight either.

This debacle drew a crowd – kids, dogs, the homeowner and in about 10 minutes my boss, the company owner. A half hour of apologies later and of course some promises to make it good, we walked towards our trucks. At the end of the driveway my boss turned to me and simply said: “Well Mike, did you learn anything?”

That question is something that must always be placed before us - in – around and certainly after an experience don’t you think? T.S. Eliot famously wrote; “We had the experience but missed the meaning.” During these days, without parallel in our lives, of COVID-19 I am constantly looking for the meaning of the experience. I plan to share a few of my findings in the next few issues of the Marion Methodist.

One thing I have learned – we are not in control.

We love to be in control. We love to be the masters of our own destiny. The reality of COVID-19 is that more than ever we CAN control significant parts of our lives. We can control whether we are following hygienic and governmental guidelines for keeping ourselves and others safe. We can control our bodies, our habits, the spending of our hours.

But we cannot control the big picture. Control of the world by humanity has proven to be an illusion. That bubble was popped by “coronavirus”, a word now in our lexicon that before was unknown to most. We have “sheltered at home”, we have met by ZOOM, and worshipped on YouTube and still, “hotspots” of the virus are being found daily.

What are we to learn from this? If we are not in control, who is?

Interestingly, claiming THIS is something we can control. When we lose control of certain things or realize just how little control we have, it’s easy to start doubting and worrying. It doesn’t always occur to us, but it was God who wired us to have little to no control over certain things. In these days of COVID-19, God is teaching us an important lesson about faith when we have no control.

God is always in control. The Bible teaches us there is nothing beyond the control and will of God here on earth. God even controls what refuses to submit to Him. He controls the waves, storms, viruses and seas. He controls our resources. When we lose control, we are to find hope in knowing that a God who loves and cares for us and who deeply cares about our welfare is in control.

When I began writing this, I planned to insert a few scriptures to “show” you how you can know God is in control but, that would not really help you find the meaning in this experience would it? So, rather than the pastor telling you, please email him, mmorgan@marionmethodist.org, and tell him the scripture(s) that give you assurance, that God is in control of even this. I look forward to hearing from you.

Pastor Mike Morgan

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Pastoral Care Corner

In late April, I’m typically covering Caring for Caregivers and Self Care/Compassion Fatigue in my Wednesday night Care Ministry classes. Caregivers are at it 24/7 without letup and our care ministry team cares for them and others in our church family creating a potential for burnout and fatigue. Articles and statistics emphasize the importance of self-care for caregivers, finding ways to lessen tension and provide relief while caregiving. Seems easy – take 5-10 minutes a day for yourself to read a book, take a walk, visit with a friend. But with the unrelenting demands of caregiving, carving out 5 minutes in an impossibly busy day seems unsurmountable. Are you working and teaching at a kitchen table that has become a schoolroom/office/art space and have a family room that’s now a game room/exercise/play area? If so, finding 5 minutes to breathe seems like a joke, let alone sitting down to read a book or text a friend.

Maybe you’ve seen the reminder about oxygen masks on an airplane. In an emergency, if the masks drop down, grab that mask and put it on your face so that you’re able to take care of those around you. Self-care is just that; considering your needs so that you can care for others. If you’re stressed to the max, unable to give yourself even 5 minutes, you’ll soon feel exhausted, resentful, stressed and your physical and mental health may suffer.

Back in the 80’s there was an ad for Calgon bath salts with the tag line “Calgon, take me away”. The tv commercial showed a woman relaxing in a tub full of bubbles while chaos reigned outside the bathroom door. Maybe you’re not into bubble baths, or able to buy Calgon anymore, but find your “Calgon, take me away” moments. Gift yourself with 5 minutes to journal, or read a devotional (there are 5 minute devotionals – look it up!). Take 5 minutes to text a friend, call someone you’re missing, paint your nails a fresh new color or go out on your front porch. Just sit and breathe. You’re creative – how would you like to spend those 5 minutes?

If that works a few times, increase it to 7 minutes, then 10. Who knows? Your family, spouse, dog or cat might appreciate the time you’ve given yourself when you become more relaxed, rested and refreshed. Let me know how you’re spending your 5 minutes and how it’s going. Let’s all learn from each other!!

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

DEATHS:

April 16: Cristine Short, sister of Dean Baughman

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

Marion Methodist Students

This week, Grinnell College notified the Board of Directors of Summer Games University that they are closed to outside groups for the summer. Because of this Summer Games this summer has been cancelled. Many pastors, youth leaders, and students are grieving during this time. They yearn to be all together at this amazing camp but cannot.

Students you are loved and you are cared and prayed for.

In this time, our students have faced a lot of disappointments, especially our seniors. For some, this is the first time they have experienced this amount and severe disappointments. While our youth are prone to technology and at ease in this world, many are grieving for the things they are missing. Church I urge you to reach out to the students you know: many don’t know how to act or feel in this time. Please pray and love on our youth. They are grieving as many of us are.

Church, 4:12 we will get through this together.

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Administrative Update
John Terry
The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law on March 27th, 2020. This over $2 trillion economic relief package supports our commitment to protecting the American people from the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19.

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) was established as part of the CARES Act. The PPP is implemented by the Small Business Administration (SBA) with support from the Department of the Treasury. This program provides small businesses with funds to pay up to 8 weeks of payroll costs.

The PPP funds are administered as a forgivable loan. The loan requires a “good faith” certification that the funds will be used to support ongoing operations, retain workers, and/or maintain payroll or make mortgage, lease, and utility payments. The loan is forgivable (i.e., doesn't require repayment) if the church employed the same number of people (or more) during the loan period as they did in 2019.

New to the SBA, and important to Marion Methodist, is that nonprofit organizations are eligible to participate and qualify to receive PPP loans. This brings into question the potential issues of faith-based organizations accepting federal money. The CARES Act was signed into law to financially help American businesses, including faith-based organizations, to maintain staffing levels and continue providing goods and services. The government recognized that, possibly more now than ever, faith-based organizations support the American people in ways that the government is not equipped and not allowed to. The CARES Act, as its name suggests, is an attempt to fund groups that provide care and support and not to use this as a hook to influence the missions of faith-based organizations like Marion Methodist.

Marion Methodist has applied for, has been approved, and funds are in place at Farmers State Bank, for our PPP loan. This PPP loan will cover approximately 2 months of our payroll expenses. The PPP loan will improve the ability of Marion Methodist to navigate the uncertainty of the financial future that is before all of us, at home and in the workplace.

City COVID-19 Task Force
Marion Mayor Nick AbouAssaly has selected our Reverend Mike Morgan to serve on the City of Marion COVID 19 recovery Task Force. Please pray for our Pastor as he serves us and our community in this way.

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
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

Children's Discipleship
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!
JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER RAISED

Luke 8:54-55 But he put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, Little girl, arise." Then her spirit returned and she arose immediately.