We Do Not Do This Alone

Sunday will be nothing like Easter last year (see picture). Sunday our safety team will not be parking cars on the grass and up and down the lane at 5050 REC Dr. For the first time in our 17 years together when the truth “Christ is Risen!” is boomed out, the preacher will not hear your thunderous response, “He is Risen Indeed!”

Yet, this may be one of the most memorable and authentic Easter celebrations we have ever experienced. The very first Easter was not in a crowded sanctuary. There were no new outfits, lilies, no liturgical responses, or songs of praise. On the very first Easter only a few women ventured out. The disciples were locked in their house. They were afraid. It was dangerous for them to come out.

When the women came from the tomb with the news, the disciples wanted to believe that Jesus had risen. But it seemed too good to be true. They were living in a time of such despair and such fear. If they left their homes their lives and the lives of their loved ones might be at risk. Could a miracle really have happened? Could life really have won out over death? Could this time of terror and fear really be coming to an end?

Alone in their homes they dared to believe that hope was possible, that the long night was over and morning had broken, that God’s love was the most powerful of all. Eventually, they were able to leave their homes. When the fear and danger had subsided, they went around celebrating and spreading the good news that Jesus was risen and love was the most powerful force on the earth.

This year, we can experience a taste of what that first Easter was like, still in our homes, daring to believe that hope is on the horizon. Then, soon, when it is safe for everyone, when it is the most loving choice, we will come out, gathering together, singing and shouting the good news that God brings life even out of death, “Christ is Risen!” “He is Risen Indeed!”

Friends, every seat in thousands of sanctuaries will be vacant Sunday, yet, Easter is not canceled. Christ has rolled away the stone of the dark tomb, he is no longer physically separated from his people. He has set himself free and is in every room of every home and every other square inch of the world. He is uncontainable and though we need to be separated, his very presence accompanies us.

It is Easter friends. In the name of Jesus, our risen Lord please know this, “We do not do this alone!”

“Christ is Risen!” “He is Risen Indeed!” and we shall never be alone again. Hallelujah, Amen.

Pastor Mike Morgan

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I Cannot Do This Alone

By Dietrich Bonhoeffer

O God, early in the morning I cry to you.

Help me to pray

And to concentrate my thoughts on you;

All: I cannot do this alone.

In me there is darkness,

But with you there is light;

I am lonely, but you do not leave me;

All: I cannot do this alone.

I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help;

I am restless, but with you there is peace.

In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience;

All: I cannot do this alone.

I do not understand your ways,

But you know the way for me….

Restore me to liberty,

And enable me to live now

That I may answer before you and before all people.

All: I cannot do this alone.

Lord whatever this day may bring,

Your name be praised.

All: Amen

Connecting in a Time of Distance

In the midst of a lot of change and disruption, good things are happening! Along with those of you who are reaching out to others in amazing ways, I would ask you to consider this method of consistently and effectively reaching out to others in our church family:

1. Think of 3 people you miss seeing: someone you sit near on Sunday morning, have coffee with in The Center, attend a class or group with, or connect with in some other way.
2. Commit to calling, texting, emailing or sending cards or letters to these 3 people regularly.
3. Stay connected with these 3 people.

Note: If you don’t have good contact info let me know and I’ll help you get connected.

Great bonds and relationships are bound to happen that will last long after our time of physical separation is behind us. Please help our church family stay connected in this simple way.

Vicki Standley
vstandley@marionmethodist.org

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.

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

Joys and Concerns

Deaths:
April 4: Milton Arnold, husband of Onalee Arnold
Administrative Update
John Terry

The current situation of closing our buildings is providing a very positive opportunity for us. We are taking this opportunity to update The Center by stripping off the old wax and re-waxing the entire floor. We are taking a similar opportunity in the Sanctuary to move all the chairs and clean the carpet. With no one moving through the building, this process will be simplified and very thorough.

The Stewardship committee thanks everyone for their continued generosity. Your gifts and offerings make everything we do possible, from live-streaming services, to Bible studies via Zoom, to virtual palm parades and much more.

Enclosed with the letter this week are two envelopes. One, as mentioned in Pastor Mike's letter, is for your Easter offering. This envelope can be easily placed inside of the white envelope with any other gift or offering and returned to the church.

NEW Bible Studies
Through Zoom Starting Soon!

Join us for these upcoming Zoom Bible studies starting soon. You can find the full description of each study 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.

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
Easter Offering 2020

We never expected this.

We, in the developed world, truly did not ever expect a worldwide pandemic in our generation. We did not anticipate the spread of an unseen enemy that would cause so much havoc physically, emotionally, culturally, economically.

In January as Kelsie, Simon and I dreamed and schemed Lent in the Chapel at Carnegie we looked through various resources that could “center” our congregation for 7 weeks. COVID-19 was not in our sphere of knowledge. It seems providential now that among Simon’s resources was the prayer “I cannot do this alone” written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer seven decades prior.

Clearly God has hit the target of our souls. We all know in these days of “Physical Distancing” we cannot do life alone. Even the most introverted among us crave person-to-person human interaction. Like you I look expectantly towards being physically together in worship, conversation, classes, anywhere!

The simple truth is that human beings cannot do life alone, nor are we made to. The God who is holy community; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, desires humanity to be a holy community. In community, it is always important for those who have ability to help those who do not have ability.

Because of this truth, even in these difficult economic times, I ask you to be the church and through your generosity assist some who help being in community. With COVID-19 squarely in our vision, we boldly help two interdenominational ministries (we were essential in founding) that build community among populations in our city that yearn for it:

- **Marion Cares** reaches to students in the Marion and Linn-Mar Schools through sharing Christ and offers various learning and life skill programs to help them develop as people.
- **Marion Senior Living Community**, located on Highway 13, for help with their programming and specific special needs.

The 2020 Easter offering might not set a record for dollars contributed but, knowing you, I expect it will set records for generosity of spirit!

Rev. Mike Morgan

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Good Friday Live Streamed Friday, April 10 at 7:00 PM
www.MarionMethodist.org/Watch-Live

Our Good Friday worship experience is designed for in-home participation, and will be most beneficial if you can gather these things in your home ahead of time:

- Notepad and pen(s)
- 3 nails (any size)
- Small cup(s) of salty water for each person worshipping with you
- Bowl of Water

Blessings to you this Holy Week.