

MIDWEEK DEVOTION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

FEBRUARY 24, 2021

DEVOTION Whiplash

Throughout the time of this global pandemic, I, like most people, have moved through different emotional/mental/psychological reactions ranging from fear to gloom to optimism and so on. At this present time, I have discovered another reality that I'm thinking may resonate with many—I have a significant case of whiplash. According to the Mayo clinic website, “Whiplash is a neck injury due to forceful, rapid back-and-forth movement of the neck, like the cracking of a whip.” From what I understand, it's a painful and debilitating condition, though not generally permanent nor fatal. That's pretty much an accurate description of where I'm at. Except that my whiplash is of that emotional/mental/psychological nature and involves the “rapid back-and-forth movement” not of my neck, but of my psyche, as I careen wildly between hope and discouragement. Perhaps you can relate?

There *is* much that is hopeful! Numbers of cases and deaths continue to fall, both regionally and nationally. More people are vaccinated every day. With proper precautions in place, we see gradual re-openings and increases of activity in everything from schools to retail to government to churches. All of this is hopeful news, and I personally can't get enough of it!

But there is also news that remains discouraging. Our national death toll topped 500,000 this week, a tragic reality of grief and suffering for millions. We also know that our vaccination efforts are slower and more sporadic than we had hoped, and that it is unclear when all can become vaccinated—or if all will choose to do so. Furthermore, there is a tremendous lack of clarity about what freedoms immunity will actually confer, as we hear conflicting evidence about the possibility of still spreading the virus once immune, or becoming reinfected one's self—to say nothing of the coronavirus variants that are cropping up. There is so much we don't know, and that means we must remain vigilant, and all of this becomes wearying and disheartening and discouraging.

On top of all this, we also have entered a new phase in this pandemic: the limited availability of the vaccine is creating a gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” in terms of the opportunity to gain immunity. Prior to this time, none of us had the privilege of being vaccinated and building up immunity in that way. While all of us were impacted differently by the pandemic, there was that over-riding equality. Now all of that is changed, as some are able to be vaccinated and others are not. Factors involving profession, age, persistence in calling or checking online, weather delays, and sheer dumb luck are all at play in receiving a vaccination. But that means we're not all on a level playing field anymore! Which easily breeds envy or resentment or guilt. We will want to be very aware of being sensitive to the situations of others in this regard and to not discriminate on this basis. Gatherings of family or friends or organizations must adapt to this disparity and find ways to not leave anyone out or judge others for their choices or circumstances. This will call for significant maturity on our parts, and frankly, many of us have used up our emotional maturity reserves some time ago!

So what are we to do? To again quote the Mayo Clinic website: “Most people with whiplash get better within a few weeks by following a treatment plan that includes pain medication and exercise.”

How does that translate for us? What are the spiritual equivalents of pain medication and exercise? I can only suggest we keep at doing what all of us have been doing all along. Keep praying—communing with God does increase our peace and lessen our anxiety. Keep being active—spend time walking or skiing or snowshoeing, discovering wonders in the Creation about us. Keep caring—maintain cautions for the sake of others, but make calls or send texts and find ways to connect with others, shovel driveways or volunteer at the food shelf. Keep trusting and hoping—because there is hope! God is good, and that goodness is being expressed through so many people and ways that are slowly bringing about an end to this pandemic. Whiplash generally passes and so, at long last, will this pandemic and our time of transitioning out of it. *There is hope*, and hope will have the final word over discouragement!

In Christ, Pastor Susan

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

KNIFE RIVER PRAYER LIST

In need of healing: Veronica Persons, Susan Anderson, Elsa Keeler, Becca Kuechle, Les Bolen, Fred Wright, Reid Carson, Kayla Davidson, Archie Moore, Pastor John Reppe, Faith Swanson, Seth Goodnature, Pat Hovis, Sarah Monaghan, Melyssa Bloom, DeWayne and Maurine Rubedor, Bill Crandall, Ella Jackson, Miranda and baby David Jackson, Blair Raycraft, Del Hubbartt, Susan Hubbartt, Phil Berge, Harriet Dahl, Sara Ojard, Amy Hatton-Walters, Carol Carlson, Tom Gould, Dick Sigel, Gail Safstrom, Diane Friebe, Dave Olin, Kevin Roby

Grieving: family and friends of Glenn Dent (Michael Dent’s father)

Long Term Concerns: Sue Sigel, Laurie Jackson, David Pierce, Jan Moon, Pat Hanson, Dani Mattson, Lyle Northey, Leif Zmolek, Kane Bolen, Aspen Winbigler, Deb Allert, Peggy B., Corine Sutherland, Dennis Swanson

OPPORTUNITIES THIS WEEK

Today, Wednesday, February 24-Midweek devotion and announcements sent

6:00 PM-Lenten evening study(see below)

Sunday, February 28: Virtual Worship

10:00 AM -Annual meeting! (see below)

Monday, March 1-Lenten email study(see below)

Tuesday, March 2: 9 AM - Lectio Divina/Dig Deeper online

Wednesday, March 3-Midweek devotion

6 PM-Lenten evening study (see below)

Upcoming; Sunday, March 7- 10 AM-Council Meeting

KRLC Annual Meeting for Feb. 28 - 10 a.m.

Go to www.zoom.us

Click on Join Meeting

Enter

Meeting ID 857 8772 0043

Passcode 776246

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING- SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 10 AM

Because of the Coronavirus, our meeting will be held virtually this year, with the link sent out well in advance. Our intent is to include as many as possible on zoom. The information needed is printed above, plus you will receive an email from Melanie with the direct link.

We also hope to include those who do not have such internet access, and so votes by email or telephone call are also allowed, up to an hour after the Zoom portion of the Annual Meeting is concluded. The reports have been sent out, so that everyone has a chance to review them. They have been emailed to all on our usual list and sent by postal mail to those who usually receive their bulletins and sermons that way. The content of the meeting will be brief, as recommended by the Synod: elections and budget will be the main items.

SMART TEAM/COUNCIL UPDATE

In February, our Council passed two important recommendations from our Smart Team. These recommendations were made –after thoughtful deliberation and considerable discussion--as a result of the greatly reduced number of cases of Covid-19 both statewide and in our area, the greatly reduced positivity rate of the virus in the state and in our area, and the increasing number of those vaccinated in our state and area. These recommendations, made by the Smart Team and approved by the Council, are as follows:

Recommendation 1: We recommend that our church building be once again open to use by small groups of 10 or less under the precautions set forth in earlier approved recommendations, including safe distancing, wearing masks, signing in, using hand

sanitizer, no food consumed or kitchen use, meeting downstairs in lower level and using that door whenever possible. This would take effect Feb. 21.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that we proceed on the idea of in-building worship starting up again the Sunday following Easter, April 11, under appropriate precautions and guidelines similar to those of recommendation 1, but allowing for greater numbers. If this is approved by the council as a tentative goal, then the Smart Team, the Worship Committee, and the Tech Team will all go ahead and make concrete plans to be provided to the council by the March 7 meeting for further discussion. This recommendation also allows for funerals and Holy Baptisms for groups of 25 or less to occur, as had earlier been adopted by the Council, prior to the surge of the virus in November and December.

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THESE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Here are some things that we will be considering as a Smart Team, a Worship Committee, a Church Council, and a congregation as we move forward with these recommendations: we will need to find and train ushers specifically for this time of transitional worship; we will need to find a way to continue our online worship services for those unable to attend; we will need to determine safe arrangements for seating in the sanctuary; we will need to find the best ways to slowly phase back into activities like hand shaking, coffee fellowship, children's involvement, and so on.

FURTHERMORE, if the situation changes and coronavirus numbers begin to surge again, we will immediately step back from these recommendations.

ABOVE ALL, KEEP IN MIND:

*Our initial worship experience will NOT be just like worship had been prior to March of 2020. We will be masked, distanced, unable to sing hymns, unable to share coffee time afterwards. We need to have realistic expectations and be patient with the process that over time will eventually and safely allow for all of those wonderful things we so miss!

*Many will not feel initially comfortable with returning to in-building worship, and that is completely understandable and, in some cases, wise! No one is going to be judged for the choice they make, and no one is going to be overlooked! WE WILL CONTINUE to provide online worship services for those unable to attend in-building. These online services will also likely be different at first as we figure out how to do things differently. Again, patience and more realistic expectations will be essential!

LENTEN STUDY OPPORTUNITIES:

Wednesday Evening Lenten Book Study on Zoom Meeting at Six

There is still plenty of room and time to join the study of **Plenty Good Room: A Lenten Bible Study Based on African American Spirituals** by Marilyn E. Thornton and Lewis V. Baldwin. The first of six **one-hour meetings** is **February 24th**. If you can't join right at **6:00 pm**, that is okay. During the meeting, we will visit, listen to spiritual music and reflect on the reading (seven pages/week). Past Lenten studies at Knife River Lutheran Church included a simple soup supper. In that tradition, participants are welcome to eat dinner during the Zoom meeting.

The book is available in paperback and in Kindle format from AMAZON (\$9.99). Barnes & Noble at the Duluth location estimates delivery time to be less than two weeks. Local booksellers may also be able to order the book

If you are interested in joining the Zoom meetings, please send e-mail to randi.alreck@gmail.com or text to 218-349-3788. The Zoom ID and password will be sent to you.

LENTEN STUDY FROM LYLE NORTHEY

Due to the pandemic, we will not have in-person Lenten Bible studies, but 4 revised lessons on the Gospel of Mark will be available to anyone who wishes to receive one. Ash Wednesday begins early this year, February 17th, and our first of four will go out on Monday, February 22nd with the others on the three succeeding Mondays. If interested please send Lyle Northey (northneys@frontiernet.net) your desire to have a copy sent to your e-mail box.

NEW OPTION FOR ONLINE OFFERING

We are now offering the option to submit your weekly offerings online. Simply click on the link on the church's home page that states "NEW: Make online donation here via Subsplash" and watch for the link on upcoming YouTube videos. Make a one-time donation, or set up a recurring offering that allows you to support the church even when you're away.

PHOTO REQUESTS FOR ONLINE WORSHIP

We are asking people NOT to submit pictures of children without parents' permission. It is also important NOT to submit pictures from magazines, websites or sources that may be under copyright or ownership of others. Original photos preferred. Thank you!!

WHO ARE WE MISSING?

We are attempting to cast our net wide in sending out these emails, along with postings on Facebook and our church website. Additionally, we are sending snail mail copies to those who are without online resources. If you know of someone we are missing, please let us know, so we may include them too!

MASK MESSAGE FROM JOANIE LEE We continue to make masks, and realize that masks wear out from wearing and washing. Please don't hesitate to ask for replacements. We have plenty. Contact at joanielee14@gmail.com

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