

From: Melanie McMillion mc1000000@aol.com
Subject: Midweek Message from Pastor Susan
Date: March 25, 2020 at 12:25 PM
To:

MM

Mid Week Devotional and Announcements, March 25, 2020

Dear friends in Christ, during this time of limited ability to connect, I thought I might put out a mid-week devotion and announcement page each week on Wednesday. Your feedback is most welcome! Pastor Susan

DEVOTION: Negative Capability and Psalm 46

Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
'Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.'
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

I first happened upon the term "negative capability" when I was studying poetry in college; this term was coined by the Romantic poet John Keats. It refers to the capacity to live with uncertainty without becoming irritable. I was struck by this notion at the time because it was so unlike me, and several decades later, it is still so unlike me! I have low negative capability; living with uncertainty does indeed make me irritable. And anxious!

All of us are having our negative capability capacity stretched to the max right now. Living with this Covid-19 pandemic is virtually a test case for how much uncertainty and ambiguity we can bear without losing our temper, our civility, or even our minds. We don't know how this pandemic will play out. We don't know how long it will take to play out. We don't know if we ourselves or someone we love will get sick with the virus. And if they do, we don't know how severely ill we or they will get. We don't know to what extent the measures to prevent the pandemic will ravage our economy, our cultural institutions, our government, our societal

structure, even the church. We don't know what the world will be like when all of this is over. There would seem to be very little, in fact, that we do know!

At such a time, we find reassurance and comfort in the words of Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble; therefore, we will not fear..." The Psalm uses some graphic images to describe worldly turmoil: mountains shaking, the earth changing, nations in an uproar, kingdoms tottering. One way or another, must us feel like our world is shaking, all is changing, and things as we knew them are tottering on their foundations. And yet we are given this powerful promise: God is our refuge. God is our strength. God is a help in trouble, in the immediate moment of the present time. In real time, God strengthens us, shelters us, and helps us---all of that regardless of the level of turmoil in the world.

How can we know this? I'm reminded of something "Mr Rogers", the Presbyterian minister and television personality, once wrote: When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, **my mother** would say to **me**, "Look for the helpers. You will **always** find people who are helping." Seeing people helping us and others is the way we see God at work, God helping us and others. That kind of love-in-action is always inspired by God and is an encouraging witness to God's presence among us and God's will still being done. Within our church and community, people have stepped up to offer to deliver groceries, to assist with health concerns, to check up on others(see announcement from Dr. Anne Skadberg below). Within our church, we are seeking to continue to find ways to connect with those of all ages, through podcasts, zoom meetings, mailings, and whatever other creative ideas we can imagine. Places like the CHUM center in Duluth, the Two Harbors Food Shelf, the warming center for the homeless in Gloria Dei, are still doing their important work in spite of hardship. As are hospitals, clinics, grocery stores, delivery people, truck drivers---so very, very many helpers! Businesses locally and nationally are switching over to creating masks or ventilators, the government passes a bill to pass along economic assistance, the whole world shares knowledge about the pandemic and efforts to curb its impact. Again, so many helpers! We are among those helpers as we mostly stay put, as we observe social distancing, as we check on our neighbors, especially those who are vulnerable, as we pray for the helpers and all of our hurting world. This all becomes one of the ways God is our helper, our strength, and our refuge---we become Christ's hands and feet in this difficult time. Times are challenging; but God is always good. We might chose to follow the advice in the last paragraph of the psalm: "Be still and know that I am God." Take time to be still and to reflect on how God is still God; God is still stronger than anything the world can throw our way; God is still our refuge and strength, a source of calm and patience, as we deal with uncertainty, as we enlarge our own negative capability. Much is uncertain, but God's love is absolute!

Prayer: Holy God, help me to be still and know that You are God. Replace my irritability and my anxiety with patience and trust. Bless every one of the helpers in our world today, and may we be among them. Amen.

ANOUNCEMENTS

KNIFE RIVER PRAYER LIST:

In need of healing: Veronica Persons, Susan Anderson, Elsa Keeler, Becca Kuechle, Les Bolen, Corrinne Sutherland, Fred Wright, Reid Carson, Kayla Davidson, Archie Moore, Pastor John Reppe, Gary Swanson, Faith Swanson, Seth Goodnature, Pat Hovis, John Wojciuk, Audrey Goplin, Jerry Anderson

Grieving: Dustin and Penny Campana, for baby Cooper (Dustin is the brother of Amber Campana Chrysler; she and her husband, Tyler Chrysler, joined our church, but moved to the Iron Range several years ago)

Serving in military abroad: Austin Morreau, Britton Harris

Long Term Concerns Sue Sigel, Laurie Jackson, DeWayne and Maurine Rubedor, Jason Russo and family, David Pierce, Ian Moon, Pat Hanson, Pat Levenske, Dani Mattson, Lyle Northey

and family, David Fricco, Jan Moon, Pat Hanson, Pat Lovenski, Dan Mattson, Eric Norbury, Leif Zmolek, Kane Bolen, Aspen Winbigler, Deb Allert

NO SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES AT CHURCH THIS WEEK

Look for mini-worship podcast, posted and emailed Saturday.

You should also be receiving a church newsletter, they were mailed out today.(Wednesday)

REMEMBER THE HUNGRY

March is Food Share month for local food shelves, with gifts matched by state corporations.

Please remember to donate food or money to our Food shelf.

LSS LUNCHEON

Lutheran Social Services luncheon that supports the youth.

If you would like to attend this luncheon on May 7th, please let Sharon

Shelerud, sharonmn@aol.com, know. This is a fun event at Greysolon Ballroom that supports a great cause. We will meet at Church at 10:45 to car pool. Check in is at 11:30, with lunch served at noon. The event is free. Donations are accepted for helping youth reach their potential.

COVID-19 COMMUNITY EFFORTS..UPDATE FROM DR. ANNE SKADBERG

If people have questions about symptoms, and aren't able to readily access that information from their own provider, I am happy to try to help them. phone 834-5901 or 340-6485.

If people become ill, and therefore shouldn't leave their homes, and are in need of supplies/groceries contact Laura Stone and she will coordinate with others who have offered to help, obtaining those supplies and getting them to the people. 834-4916.

Additional note from Pastor: David and Linda Grong can also get groceries or supplies, 507-828-9611

OFFERINGS

Please remember to continue to support the church through your mailed in offerings! P.O. Box 218, Knife River, MN 55609

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!