



Lisbon United Methodist Church

14 School Street, Lisbon Falls, Maine 04252

May 2020

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From Your Pastor.....

A New Normal?

On a recent trip over to Winthrop to check on our home there, Verne and I stopped into Hannaford. We are doing a pretty good job at keeping the grocery trips to a minimum but there always seems to be something we run out of or need for a recipe. After Verne parked, I donned my new “gear”....i.e. One of the masks I had sewn for us and a fresh pair of gloves. We chose a good time to shop as I didn’t need to wait in line but did wait, of course, for the employee to tell me it was safe to enter for no one was exiting. I took my sanitized cart and then began to shop—paying close attention to the arrows that charted my course in the one-way aisles. Once the items were purchased, I put the plastic bags (no using your own reusable one right now) into the truck, returned my carriage to the corral, and got in.

Once inside, I peeled off the gloves and mask and then used hand sanitizer—just to make sure. A lot of work?? Of course it is. I know that you are doing the same. This ritual has become our “new normal” and that’s okay because it keeps us and others safe in the midst of this horrible pandemic. How long will we have to do this? We have no idea but I think we all know that it may be for a while. This is a stubborn virus that may not go away anytime soon. The longer we do our part to stay home and also wear this gear and keep our distance when we’re out, the better off we will all be. We will help to “flatten the curve” to keep others, ourselves, and those we love safe. We are extremely fortunate to live in Maine; our state with its dense population has not been as hard hit as other areas of our country.

For us as a people of faith, this pandemic means finding a “new normal” in worship, in our study groups, and in our meetings. It means relying on the

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telephone to keep in touch. It means receiving worship materials for “at home” worship and then calling someone on a Sunday morning so that you can listen and participate as they log into Facebook and watch your nervous pastor “go live” with the incredible help of her production manager (aka Verne!). But, most of all for us as a people of faith, it means knowing that God is with us-in all of the newness.

Throughout the Scripture, God reminds His people not to be afraid and assures them of His presence. God is our strength in the midst of this virus that we don’t understand; God is our guardian as we learn new ways of being and doing. God offers us assurance in this unsettling time: “Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you.” (Isaiah 41.10)

I pray you will hold fast to God’s promise, that you will be well and be safe. We’ll get through this. We’re Mainers after all but, more importantly, we’re believers who know that our faith is far stronger than all of the inconveniences of the “new normal”.

I’m very anxious for the time when we will all safely gather in worship in our beautiful sanctuary. Oh, what a celebration that will be! In the meantime, you are in my thoughts and prayers.

God’s blessings,

Pastor Elizabeth

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Prayers of Sympathy

Our church family mourns the passing of Cynthia Bonsey on April 24th. Cynthia served LUMC in many ways through the years and was, in these later years, an important member of our Thursday morning Bible study group and a dear friend to Pam Wolfe. In addition, she taught and shaped the lives of so many children in our community as an elementary school teacher.

We kept Cynthia and her family in prayer in the two weeks of her hospitalization. Now we remember Sue, Theresa, Joanne, and Mike and their families in their grief. May countless memories bring them strength in the days and weeks ahead. Cynthia’s life will be celebrated when it is safe for us to gather together once again.

Evening Circle

Goodness, I miss seeing everyone and I know you all feel the same way. Just a little update, even though we haven't had public suppers for March and April, our group has continued to support the church budget with our monthly pledge of \$450. We had to dip into our savings to do this, but felt it was important to continue as long as we can. Hopefully, when it is safe to open our church for activities, the public will be very generous and come support us. Until then, everyone be safe!

Carolyn Jones, President

Nurture Committee

Happy spring everyone! Hope you're doing well during this very strange time. We miss you all and pray for your safety. We want to share with you that the Easter candy originally planned to be used for Breakfast with the Bunny was donated to LACO for their clients instead. Thank you to all who had donated. Hopefully we'll see each other again soon.

God Bless,

The Nurture Committee

Finance Committee

Any other year, LUMC would be right in the middle of our yearly stewardship campaign. Due to the uncertainty and stressful times that so many are experiencing, the finance committee has decided to forego the stewardship campaign for this year.

On behalf of the finance committee, I would like to say thank you to our family and friends who have continued to send in their weekly pledges, utilized the website to make donations or pay pledges, and those who have made gifts for specific items. We are most grateful for the continued prayers for our church. While social distancing is preventing us from gathering for worship we still have bills to pay and we appreciate your continued generosity. We hope you are able to maintain your current level of giving, but if that's not

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possible we certainly understand. Please call Monica McCusker so that she can update her records

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the finance committee members.

God Bless,

Trudy Duval

Plant Sale

Not knowing when the Stay at Home order will be lifted, our annual plant and bake sale which was to be May 30th is being cancelled. During these times when we need to stay home, you'll have plenty of time to spruce up your own yards. Visit Bushes' Bushes, Landscape World, Longfellow's, Sunset Farms, Mid-Coast Growers and Skillins' Greenhouse, for all your lawn and garden needs. They will surely appreciate your business.

News From the Financial Secretary

First of all-THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Many of you have continued to send your pledges and monetary gifts to the church while we've been socially distancing due to CDC protocols. Some have even used the church's new online donation option for contributions by credit/debit cards!

The chart that Greg shared with the finance committee shows the amounts for monthly and annual expenses and income. Normal income averages about \$6,000-\$7,000 a month, which is below the amount needed. In spite of the current situation, we've done well for the months of March and April. March receipts for operational expenses were \$6,336 and April (to date) have equaled \$7,331. These figures include online giving total of \$3,257 for March and April (to date). This is wonderful! Other special donations for Easter (\$135) and monies from Conference (\$1,355) received during this time were not included in the figures as pledges, although all will be used for paying the operational expenses and Mission Shares.

Payments and donations by check can be mailed to the church. They are being deposited weekly. Special thanks to Dean Logan for his help with processing the checks

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and making the regular bank deposits. If anyone has questions about donations, please call me at 754-9569.

Stay well and watch out for each other.

Sincerely,

Moncia McCusker, Finance Secretary

LUMC Website Update

If you haven't already checked out the church's website, please do so! I have been adding information on the few activities that have been taking place within our church community and encourage you to take a look often. Currently there are links to the recent live stream worship services that are recorded on Facebook. If you don't have Facebook, you can access the worship bulletin and the accompanying presentation slides on the "Worship" page of the website.

Invite family members and friends to visit the website. One never knows when they may have the need for some spiritual fulfillment and could find the worship materials helpful. Or they may be called to donate to a mission activity that is being sponsored by one of our church committees. This venue and our Facebook presence are our best modes of offering discipleship to the local community and beyond-especially during the current pandemic lockdown.

As always let me know if you have information to be added to the website. www.lisbonumchurch.org. You can call me at 754-9569 or email at public_relations@lisbonumchurch.org.

Thank you!

Monica McCusker

Blessing of Breathing

Submitted by Sue White

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That the first breath will come without fear.

That the second breath will come without pain.

The third breath: that it will come without despair.

And the fourth, without anxiety.

That the fifth breath will come with no bitterness.

That the six breath will come for joy.

Breath seven: that it will come for love.

May the eighth breath come for freedom.

And the ninth, for delight.

When the tenth breath comes, may it be for us to breath together,

and the next, and the next, until our breathing is as one,

until our breathing is no more.

-Jan Richardson

**Tuesday Night Study: Finding Peace in an Anxious
World** (Edited by Erin James-Brown. Copyright 2020 United
Methodist Women)

The Serenity Prayer

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God, Grant me the Serenity

To accept the things I cannot change

Courage to change the things I can

And the wisdom to know the difference. Amen

Introduction:

Anxiety comes in three steps; worry, anxiety, and fear. Worry is that thought you can't stop circling around in your brain. Anxiety brings a physical response; headache, sleeplessness, upset stomach, ect. Fear is the actual reluctance to do something. This study uses the Serenity Prayer and the book of Proverbs to provide spiritual and practical ways to deal with anxiety.

Examples of anxious situations can be found in scripture. Notice the stories and what happens at the end of each story.

Luke 2:41-52 tells of how Jesus was "lost". Mary and Joseph looked for him, finally finding him in the temple. Think about how anxious moments the parents had. Finding Jesus must have been such a relief!

Luke 22:44 takes place in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus' sweat was like drops of blood. God prepared Jesus for the acceptance of the thing he could not change.

Luke 1:1-13 tells of how Jesus met the devil in the wilderness. Jesus found the courage to love himself as a beloved child of God.

Mark 4:35-41 tells of the storm in the boat that panicked the disciples. Jesus awoke and calmed the disciples.

Chapter 1: Serenity

Take a few moments and think about what gives you peace. Is it nature? Stillness? Beautiful art? Calming music? These are the things that can help you gain serenity. This peaceful state of mind can bring you closer to God. Know that you are not alone as you seek serenity. In these trying times most people feel anxiety of some sort. Try to step away from the noise of the world and go to your peaceful place. Read Proverbs 3:21-26. It says, "Do not be afraid, for the Lord will be your confidence." How do we know God is in

our lives? Notice the community of care around us, read scripture, pray, listen to the wisdom of others.

How do we increase serenity? Here are some ways to help:

Breathe prayers: Find a phrase or word that brings you peace. Focus your breath and think of the word(s) as you breathe deeply. I found this works when I have insomnia.

The Examen: This is a way to reflect on your daily life. You can find a quiet place to review your day in your mind, keep a journal, or speak aloud. Share your thoughts with God. As you do this, become more sensitive to where the Holy Spirit is moving in your life. It might help to structure your time by inviting God in, thinking about what you are thankful for, reviewing the day, and putting it all in God's hands.

Chapter 2: Acceptance

Serenity and acceptance ground us in the idea that God, God's creation, and God's sovereignty is what guides and comforts us. God helps us stop trying to manage everything and listen to God. Proverbs 3:5-8 tells us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart....it will be a healing for your flesh and refreshment for your body."

Try this welcoming prayer to help lead you toward acceptance:

FOCUS, FEEL, SINK IN: Allow what you are feeling about what is happening sink in without judgement or attempting to change it.

WELCOME AND NAME: Whatever you find, welcome it in words. "Welcome fear", "Welcome pain", "Welcome confusion."

LET GO AND LET GOD: Once you have felt, welcomed, and named the experience you are having, begin to release it. You can try deep breathing, movement, writing it down and burning it, or throwing it away, or say words like, "I let go of my desire for control" or "I let go of my desire to change what is happening".

Chapter 3: Courage

Courage takes daily practicing of trust, discernment, and resting in God. Read Proverbs 4:20-27.

Verses 21-22 tell us that God's words must become embedded in our souls. Be attentive. Listen.. Do not let them escape. Keep them within.

Verse 22 says "God's words are life!" Find scripture that has meaning for you. Psalm 27:14 Hope in the Lord! Be strong! Let your heart take courage! Hope in the Lord!

Verse 23 tells us that life comes from vigilance So true in this time of crisis. With God's help we guard our lives.

Verse 24 tells us to put away crooked and devious words. What we say matters. Also, what we listen to matters. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know". Anxiety can cause us to be quiet or to lash out.

Verse 25 tells us to look forward. Keep our eyes on the cross, and Jesus will lead.

Verse 26-27 tell us to keep on the straight path. Don't get distracted by evil. Anxiety can be paralyzing. These verses tell us to keep it simple. One step at a time.

Kataphatic Prayer

This is a perhaps unfamiliar word that just means to use words, images, or songs to speak to God. It focuses on positive association of what God is.

NAME FOR GOD: Choose a word for God that is meaningful to you. Picture God in relation to that word. Silently repeat the word in your head. Embrace your image

GOD IS.....Consider how GOD is like a mother, father, creator, ect.

GOD IS NOT.....Consider how God is not like any human image, or like the image you were thinking of.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE: God is beyond our understanding. God is like a mother and is not like a mother. (or whatever imagine you have)

Chapter 4: Wisdom

Proverbs 9:10 THE fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom , and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

The interplay between knowledge and fear leads to wisdom. Think of all the wisdom you are gaining each time you feel afraid. Fear keeps us alive and safe. Read Proverbs 2;1-11 for the path of wisdom. Here are the highlights:

Christians work for wisdom but it is God who grants wisdom. Christians build a tolerance for disappointment but maintain determined hope. Wisdom is a practice in which we participate, but it is a gift granted by God. Wisdom doesn't do away with anxiety, but provides tools to manage anxiety.

Labyrinth Prayer

The labyrinth is a sacred place set aside for you to reflect, look within, pray, and negotiate new behavior. You can make a circular walking path, (chalk on your driveway), or use a labyrinth image, using your finger to trace your path.

1. Entering: As we walk toward the center, we release cares and concerns, emptying and quieting ourselves before God. We seek wholeness and healing.
2. Centering: As we reach the center, we pray and meditate seeking clarity. We remain as long as we wish.
3. Returning: As we walk out on the same path, are empowered by the Spirit to be more authentic in ourselves and in our service to the world
4. Other ideas: Walk in prayer, Walk in focused reflection, Walk in silent reflection.



“The Lisbon United Methodist Church welcomes, nurtures, and serves all people with the love of Christ”

Lisbon United
Methodist Church
14 School Street
Lisbon Falls, ME 04252

Sunday Worship Service~9:30 a.m.
Rev. Elizabeth J. Bachelder Smith

Experienced people are ready to provide nursery care for infants. Please speak with a greeter.

Office hours:
Monday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Thursday 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.
Other times available by appointment

Friday is the Pastor's Sabbath Day

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