



## *The Pastor's Ponderings*

We appear to be in a new Season of Covid-tide like the seasons of the church vary in length and focus, this new season is taking some serious getting used to.

Maybe at first it was a little bit exciting, having to figure out all the workarounds. Or at least it was new.

The shine of newness has definitely rubbed off now as we enter August and our 5th month of Covid-tide. Even the season of Pentecost/Ordinary doesn't last THAT long.

We figure it won't last forever, but it certainly is lasting longer than we first imagined or believed.

So, during this time of drastic difference what has changed most for you? Is there anything good?

Are you an introvert or home body who doesn't mind alone time? Or an extrovert who thrives on interaction? Either way are you missing the amounts and kinds of human interaction we have been used to in your lives? Are you aching for hugs and handshakes and high fives? Missing your grandkids lap-time? Pining for visits with friends and family?

Or perhaps you find yourself easily irritated and with a much shorter fuse than BC? Or maybe you are finding that the tears flow way too easily these days...

Are you missing live sports, and going out for dinner with your sweetheart or with friends? Are you missing church services the way they were before - inside the sanctuary, with lots of live music and singing, passing the peace, handshaking and greeting, praying out loud, and all together in one place? And what about taking communion together? Passing the tray from one to another or standing together at the communion table?

Is online worship and interaction just not satisfying for you? For some it has been a boon. They love attending worship in their PJ's, with their cup of coffee or tea.

Others I have heard from find it sterile, and some say it makes them even *more* lonely. Still others find it to be OK, well made, but just not what they want or need.

Some don't have internet access to watch worship on Sundays or our daily devotions, and some don't have DVD players to even watch later on. (We can help with portable loaner DVD players with built in screens, just call the office or call me!)

Last week I wrote about some of the ideas come up with by the team of church leaders appointed to look into the possibility of returning to indoor worship. It was decided that we weren't quite ready for the commitment to returning indoors, especially with school beginning so soon and the potential outbreak following all the exposure of teachers and students. (Please be praying for all teachers, administrators, cleaning and meal staff, and, of course, the children and youth).

We talked about offering a Sunday School class recorded live and offered on Zoom weekly. Dave and Anne suggested *The Universal Christ* by Father Richard Rohr. Would that interest you? Will you let us know if it does? Do you have other suggestions for books or Bible topics? We are open to your ideas!

Last week someone suggested perhaps we could consider a drop-in Communion time, where individuals could come by to pray and meditate, light a candle and spend time at the Lord's Table.

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Someone else suggested a short weekly outdoor prayer and Communion time at the Labyrinth, or under the trees, or under the portico if it rains.

Another friend suggested we ask Roanne and our musicians to offer Zoom Hymn Sing along! Or a Bible Bingo or Trivia night on Zoom. Jamie has been looking into ways we can watch movies together from our own homes. Or what about an outdoor movie night in the parking lot?

And what about ideas for Covid Safe community service opportunities? As Christians, we need to be serving others in Jesus name! What might our friends without houses need when winter comes?

There have been two outdoor masked and distanced social events ( fireworks and chimney swift watching). What else would be fun?

Maybe safely distanced river walks or hikes? A masked walking meet-up at Mingo or Trail of Tears or one of our own nearby conservation areas?

I continue to offer masked outdoor porch or deck pastoral visits. Pastoral visits can also happen by phone or Facetime, Skype or Zoom!

We have so many options.

What can we offer to meet the needs of your spirit?

How can we offer you more of a sense of the community that we all miss so deeply?

The church continues to be both open and alive during this strange time of isolation. The doors may be "closed" but Christ's Church has never been about the building, has it?

God is with us my beloved. And we are Christ's Church! I pray that the Holy Spirit stirs up our spirits to serve and find new ways to be the church together.

With so many prayers and so much love for you!

From your pastor,

*Elaine*

### **Has Covid Life got you Stressed Out?**

Try this trick from *Faithful at Home*, written by Tracy Black and published by our own Chalice Press.

#### **The Butterfly Hug**

The butterfly hug is a calming and grounding technique created by therapist Luciana Artigas after Hurricane Pauline struck Mexico in 1997.

It's a simple technique that can help children (and adults) relax and find peace. It utilizes the proven practice of tapping meridian points used in acupuncture and EFT tapping.

The author learned about it when she was struggling to manage her own anxiety and panic attacks and she found it to be a useful tool for my children to find focus and rest.

In researching this technique, she learned that Ms. Artigas developed this technique after one of the young children she was counseling asked, "Who will embrace me after you are gone?"

Determined to come up with a way for children to feel accompanied in their trauma, Ms. Artigas and her husband developed the butterfly hug.

The butterfly hug is a great reminder to children

(and adults) that there is nowhere we can go where God is not with us. With practice, children can learn to practice the butterfly hug without the aid of a parent or guide. And of course, so can you!

(continued next page)

**(The Butterfly Hug, continued)**

How To

1. Say, “The psalmist says this about God, ‘Suppose I had wings like the dawning day and flew across the ocean. Even then God’s powerful arm would guide and protect me.’ Or suppose I said, ‘I’ll hide in the dark until night comes to cover me over.’ But you see in the dark because daylight and dark are all the same to you.’] Psalm 139:9–12 CEV]

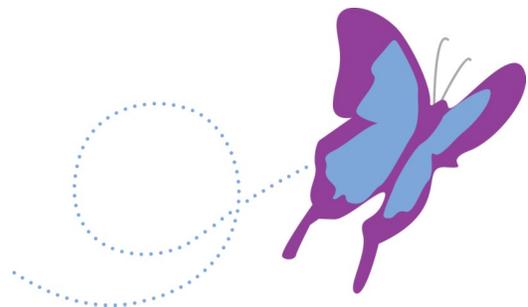
This passage reminds us that God is always with us, in darkness and in light. Let’s ask God to be near to us and to help us find calm and focus.” Guide your children through steps 2–8.

2. Sit or lie in a relaxed position.
3. Take a couple of deep breaths to begin to calm down and relax.
4. Cross your arms across your chest so that your fingertips rest just under your collar bone. Fingers should point more toward the top of the head, rather than the side of the body. Thumbs can interlock, or not, depending on what is most comfortable.
5. Gently close eyes, or softly focus ahead.
6. Alternate tapping fingers, left and right, at whatever speed feels most comfortable.
7. Continue to breathe deeply while tapping, left and right. Keep tapping for at least three minutes.
8. Either end the butterfly hug naturally (when the children feel calm and ready) or by saying “Thank you, God, for peace. Help us to feel peace whenever we feel worried or unsafe.”

- Though this practice is listed as a ceremony for after a natural disaster, it can also be used as a spiritual practice for children who struggle with rest and worry. Remember that it takes patience and practice.

Variations

- Take turns leading the Butterfly Hug.
- Sing a song or say a prayer or Psalm to the beat of the tapping wings. Singing is a great way to control breath and reduce stress.





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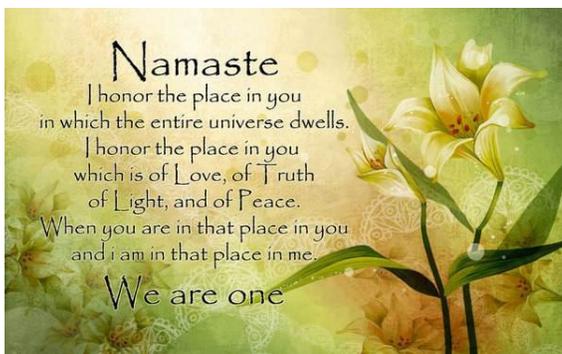
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**Namaste**

I honor the place in you  
in which the entire universe dwells.

I honor the place in you  
which is of Love, of Truth  
of Light, and of Peace.

When you are in that place in you  
and I am in that place in me.

We are one

The Intent for August 9 Medita-  
tion/Centering Prayer group is

Namaste: the word is usually used as a  
salutation. The word has several mean-  
ings, but basically means *the spirit in me  
recognizes the spirit in you.* It can also  
mean *I bow to the spirit in you.* In a  
physical meeting, the person saying Na-  
maste puts their hands in a prayer posi-  
tion over their heart, says "Namaste",

**Please Sign up in the church office to be a worship leader reading scripture, celebrating the offering or Communion.** For the next 3 Sundays (August 9, 16, & 23), those roles will be recorded; some parts of the service can be done as audio files recorded on the phone. Communion is recorded on Wednesday afternoon to early evening in the sanctuary. If we are able to return to worship on August 30, those roles will be "live and in person"! **Contact Elaine or sign up by calling the office.**



Do not be  
*anxious*  
about  
*anything.*  
Philippians 4:6



John & Deborah Browne, Luther Hunt, Mark Faith, Bill Cox, Joe Robb Blattner, Susan Spooler, Carol Gleason, Liz Meyer, Debbie Bradley, Dawn Knoderer, Kim Farrar Frank, George & Helen Amick, Iris Likens, Pat Murray & Wally Allstun, Ed Sheridan & Nita Brackin, Pauline Filla, Martha D., Mary Hendrix, Ken Bohnsack, Wayne Piker, Kim Wells Schott, frontline workers, Felicia Fox, Henry S., Carol Poynor, Family & Friends of Debbie McCormick, relatives & friends serving in the military, all who are hurting, lonely, and afraid.

**Do you have someone to add to our prayer list? Please inform the church office or fill out a form found at the back of the sanctuary.**