



The Steeple

July 2020



PASTOR'S PAGE

We live in an age of fake news. We can be forgiven for wondering which news outlets are telling us the truth. Which website, which TV network, which newspaper gives us reliable information, helping us to separate fact from fiction?

Particularly in regard to the current pandemic, we're all aware of widely different viewpoints about how serious it is, where it came from, and especially whether I need to protect myself and others from it and how best to do that. Some people are wearing masks, avoiding large crowds, and practicing social distancing. Others are not concerned about doing any of that and believe it's safe to live as we did before we heard about the virus. Still others are convinced that wearing a mask is positively harmful, that it interferes with God's plan for giving us air, and is more likely to make you sicker.

If you're hoping I will give you guidance on all this, I'm afraid you're looking in the wrong place. I have very little understanding of science. Mostly I just "know" what I see on TV, what I hear on the radio, and what I read on websites and in newspapers.

Who, then, is likely to really know what's going on? If we can't trust the media, if our leaders at various levels of government enact conflicting policies and model differing behaviors, whom can we trust?

I'd suggest talking to someone who works in the health care field—especially someone who has some professional training and works at a hospital or a nursing home. Do you know someone like that? Most of us do.

Why not ask that person some serious questions? "Is it really true that more people in their twenties and thirties are now getting sick from the coronavirus than we heard about in March?" "Are lots of people actually dying from this virus, or is it all just exaggerated?" "Do some health care facilities have a dramatically different record of controlling the spread of the virus than other facilities do?" "Do the various precautions we hear recommended truly slow the transmission of the virus, or are those so-called experts just getting worked up over nothing?" If your friend works in California, Texas, or Florida, ask: "Are your hospitals there filling up again?"

Meanwhile, you may be wondering: When will we be worshiping in our sanctuary once more? And again I have to tell you I don't know. At the moment I'm writing this, it's safe to say that most of the leaders of our congregation don't feel it's safe to do that yet. However, a detailed plan has been worked up for how to do it safely when the time comes. I've sent the current draft of this plan to our new district superintendent, Rev. Megan Stowe, and she will tell us if she sees any problems with it. The church council hasn't voted on whether to approve it yet. Nevertheless, if you're curious about what it says at this stage, let me know and I can send it to you.

FROM OUR LAYLEADER



Do you know what time the birds wake up? They wake up at 3:30 am. I know this because I am an early riser and while I usually wake up at 4:00 am, it isn't unusual for me to be awake to hear the birds beginning their day. As I lie in the dark, thanking God for another day, the birds are chirping, and it is a peaceful way to start the day.

The contrast between those moments and the rest of the day is stark. I turn on the news to hear how much hate and virus plague us today. People are dying, starving, some face financial ruin, problems are everywhere, the political scene is wild. How do we maintain our sanity in the world today? With all the uncertainty surrounding all our activities, we can't count on past experience to help us know what to expect.

In such times as these, God is the only thing we have left we can truly depend on. So in the quiet of early morning, when the birds are singing, it is a reminder of the beauty God has created and where we can turn for strength.

Mary Lou



CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS

Prayer for: Carol Brunelle, Carol Szulc, Eunice Mittler, Harry Thomas, Beth Dietz, Pauline Kiakis, Samantha Snopek, Adele Reynolds, Bev Pead & Family, Doug & Dee Brooksbank, Frank Hudgik, Dave Fanaras, Tom Deren, Tim O'Donnell, Vinnie Deitner, Darlene Dout, Stafford Bent

CASSEROLES

Eight casseroles were delivered in June to Kate's Kitchen. Casseroles will be delivered at 9:30 a.m. on July 26. If you need your casserole picked up call Ann 695-1212 or Carol at 575-1491 and make arrangements for your casserole to be picked up curbside. Thank you to Carol Deren for delivering them.

The July-August issue of *The Upper Room* has arrived at church. If you would like one, call me and I can deliver a copy to you as long as you are not too far away.

Peter Milloy 413-310-5027

STEEPLE LIGHTING



The Steeple is lit during the month of July in memory of Don McConnell, 20th anniversary of his passing, Love Betty, Vickie and Lee. If you would like the steeple lit for one month, the fee is \$25.00. Forms are in the back of the sanctuary or call the church office or you can email the office at churchoffice@thesteepelinthefalls.org. More than one person/family may participate.



IDEAS - What Can I Do?!

In looking through old articles from our newsletter I found “What Is Your Gift?” and it started me thinking about what can we do to help our church - our church family - friends - our church building.

Every time I call someone who I haven't seen in awhile, which is almost everyone, the person I talked with is so happy that I called. They appreciated being remembered. I've even been told my contacting them helped bring them back to God and our church. It also helps me feel closer to God. I recommend that you take five minutes and give someone you haven't seen lately a call.

But some people are looking for other ways to help our church. If you would like to help around the building there are many things that need attention and most will only take a small amount of time, especially if you bring another family member along to help. What can you do? The sidewalk outside the office door needs grass pulled up from between the stones, it needs to be swept (the ants have spread sand around and it is slippery), some weed need to be pulled, the kitchen refrigerator could be cleaned, also the kitchen counters and maybe the stove and ovens. You can always dust. If you will do one of the inside church building items call Ann (413 695-1212) or Peter and we can let you in.

Ann

What Is Your Gift & How can we help ?



Everyone has a special talent that is often hidden or goes unutilized. Sometimes it gets lost in the delivery or is not yet even discovered. It is important that we help each other find our own special talents. Often people don't realize that they are good at something until someone tells them. We're not talking miracle type healings, but simple everyday things like making deviled eggs or planning an upcoming event. A talent does not need to be some earth-shattering feat to be important; it can be anything. The best part, everyone has at least one.

When we take the time to look inside others and ourselves these special talents can be found. Once they are found they can be shared. Then, no longer are they talents, but a special gift. Any time you or others share themselves and the special things they can do, it is a gift. A gift to everyone it touches and effects. A gift that is better than any that can ever be purchased. But somehow, these are the gifts that are often the ones never given.

God put us here to do his work, yet we often get caught up in our own lives and don't have time. In today's world everyone is too busy to share themselves, so they send gifts and money in their place. Financially, it keeps the church going, but what about the church family? Remember the song

*“I am the church, you are the church,
we are the church together. All of the people
all around the world. Yes we are the church
together!”*

And that is just it. Together we are the church. Without each other the church family would not exist. And without sharing ourselves, our church family will not be nourished and will not continue to grow. It's time we start sharing gifts. It's time to help each other and ourselves by discovering the hidden talents. It's time to find out what your gift is!

PRAYER

O God,
We are —
health care providers,
clerks and lawyers,
engineers and waitresses
teachers and students
children and parents,
farmers and artists
sinners and saints
We are
young and old
lay and clergy
wealthy and poor
over-indulged and
underserved
strong and frail
hopeful and dejected
We are
summoned ...
to cast out evil
to cure disease

to go to the lost
to proclaim good news
We are
confronted ...
with a pandemic
with racism
with too many instances of
police brutality
with corruption and
abuses of power
with empire that cares not
for the least
but for self-preservation
We are
the baptized
given authority, bestowed
with gifts ...
to live and lead in this time
of uncertainty
to eradicate racism in all its
manifestations
to heal the environment

to be present in the world's
suffering
Grant us
humility to learn and
unlearn
wisdom to relearn and
retool
the will to change
the ability to serve in a
digital age
Hear us
our pleas
our confessions
our hopes
our desires ...
we pray in the name
of our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ. Amen
*By Bishop Sudarshana
Devadhar*
Scriptural Reading:
Matthew 9:35-10:8

The link to the service on Sunday is: <https://www.facebook.com/TheSteepleInTheFalls>



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Return address service requested.