

Parish News • Friday, October 23, 2020

Ely United Methodist Church Members/Friends,

Greetings! The ground is white and it appears as though winter has arrived early. According to the forecast the snow will be with us for a while, but I hope we have a nice thaw sometime yet in November. How about this: The snow stays through deer season for optimal tracking, but melts the middle of the month and doesn't return until after Thanksgiving?

I know we've had a lovely fall, but it would sure be nice if we get a break before snow and ice season comes to stay.

Item #1: Quarantine following my positive test for Covid-19 ended yesterday. I'll still venture out in public only cautiously for the time being and will wear a mask when I'm around people or in stores, which is what I'd been doing anyway before becoming infected.

I'm grateful my physical symptoms were mild. They mostly ended on Saturday, October 17th, but I continued to have a slight, but troublesome mental sluggishness and pressure that moved around within my head until the past day or two.

Thank you for your prayers and other expressions of support. The mental part of being sick with this virus was really difficult.

Item #2: Sunday, November 8th is scheduled to be the first worship service back in our building. Our return is being delayed as we work through some final technical issues with our new equipment that will allow us to simultaneously live-stream worship services on Facebook Live for people participating in our worship services online at home.

The additional time will also be seventeen days of extra padding beyond when the information from the Centers for Disease Control suggests I can safely be around other people. Along with everyone else I will wear a mask the entire time I am in the building for our worship services.

Watch for important details about our in-person worship services in Parish News, two weeks from today, on November 6th.

Item #3: Our church held Confirmation Sunday on Sunday, September 13th. Matthew Johnson, Lauren Olson, and Lily Tedrick were confirmed during an inspiring outdoor service following a two-year confirmation program. Teachers for the confirmation program were Keith and Sheri Rue and Pastor Craig. It was an experience the six of us won't forget.

Here are thank you notes received by the church from the confirmands; some were addressed to me, some to the church.

Matthew Johnson: Thank you so much for teaching me all about the Lord and his disciples! It was a very fun journey and certainly an eye-opening experience! May God be with you always!!

Lauren Olson: Thank you for your time to come in and teach Lily, Matthew, and me so much about the Lord and the Bible. I am so thankful for the personalized Bible the church gave me and I have already found so many verses that speak to me and will help me through life when I need it the most.

Lily Tedrick: Over the years of growing up in the church I have gotten to know each and every one of you very well and I am extremely grateful that I did. Each and every one of you has a very special spot in my heart. I cannot thank my church family enough for everything they have done for me since I was baptized years ago. Without all the Sunday morning services, Sunday School, and beautiful choir songs I would not be the person I am to day. Thank you beyond words for teaching me the amazing ways of God. Thank you for everything! God bless you all.

Item #4: Here is a summary of our church's finances as of the end of September 2020.

- Our Undesignated General Fund Balance is \$36,715.81.
- Our Building Fund balance is \$4,397.31.
- Our Memorial Fund balance is \$11,354.42.

- We still owe \$5,803.59 for our technology upgrade to live-stream services, which comes due when the project is completed.
- We received a \$9827.00 Payroll Protection Plan loan from the first government stimulus that will most likely be converted to a grant.
- The Minnesota Annual Conference granted all churches in Minnesota a three-month health insurance and pension “holiday,” funded from reserves that saved us \$4063.08.
- We will most likely be without pasty income for the year so the extra cushion is necessary.

In summary, your faithful donations have made a huge difference. Thank you so much!!

Item #5: Please find attached this week’s edition of Home Touch, the devotional resource forwarded by Judy Lightower, the North Star District Parish Nurse.

Item #6: Please find attached the Prayer Wall for this Sunday.

I will out of town from Thursday, October 29th through Tuesday, November 3rd. The next Parish News will be Friday, November 6th.

Hear now these words from Psalm 121.

“The Lord will keep you for all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore.”

With my appreciation,
Pastor Craig