

Parish News • September 3, 2021

Members and Friends of Ely United Methodist Church,

Greetings from Pastor Craig!

Two days ago, I turned the page of my calendar from August to September and the first month of fall is bringing along with it all kinds of noticeable changes in Ely.

A few people are mentioning how hummingbirds are no longer coming to their feeders, so presumably are beginning their migration south. I've noticed a significant uptick in the presence of blue jays, both in numbers and the amount of activity, which also I've been told is a sign they will migrate soon. Some of the blue jays appear to be this year's hatch.

The weather forecast for the next ten days has a distinctly early-September feel to it. We have officially entered what weather people call "meteorological-fall," which includes the three months of September, October, and November.

Another school year begins in Ely on Tuesday. Harvest Moon and the Ely Marathon are just around the corner.

But before jumping past Labor Day weekend and the ending of a subdued Minnesota State Fair, I want to pause for a moment to acknowledge the many workers we rely upon, often without even noticing it. For instance:

- A week ago, I had a problem with internet service at the parsonage. A cheerful Midco technician arrived a couple hours after I had texted back and forth with a customer service representative and my service was restored in short order.
- Earlier this week a cheerful United Airlines customer service representative answered my questions regarding a travel voucher I had from when my trip to Spain set for September 2020 was cancelled by the pandemic.
- Recently I had a wonderful meal at an area restaurant that employs a whole host of gracious workers who are very good at what they do.
- Mail is delivered to the church and my home six days every week.
- Miners, truck drivers, mechanics, and technicians of all sorts routinely provide essential services.
- There are an assortment of stores and businesses here in Ely that provide a variety of goods and services.
- There is a hospital, clinic, assisted living facility, care center, ambulance, fire department, police department, and a host non-profit organizations here in Ely should we need their services.

- There is a wide array of white-collar workers who provide professional, clerical, legal, computer, and accounting services of all kinds.
- The houses we live in and the roads we drive on were built and are maintained by skilled laborers.
- The refrigerator humming in my kitchen was made in factory that employs many workers. The food in it is produced by a host of farm and factory works.

Well, you get the picture. Our lives would not be possible without individuals doing all kinds of work here in Ely and beyond. Our thanks to each of you.

Item #1: Monday of this week a group of parents in our church met to make plans for Sunday School and Confirmation for the 2021-2022 school year. Last year we put things on hold when schools and everyone else were also scrambling trying to figure out how to keep existing programs functioning.

Nobody really knows what effect the pandemic will have on how churches function. The Facebook live-stream of our worship service has been a life-saver, allowing our congregation to worship together virtually when we were unable to gather together in-person. It has also opened our worship service to people in town unable to attend and those living in other places. This has been a heartwarming and unexpected development.

The flip side is our in-person worship numbers now are between one-half and two-thirds of what they were before the pandemic began. Other pastors and laypeople report the same thing. What does this mean for the future? I don't know.

Optimists suggest the pendulum is swinging and will settle out in the next year or so to more or less where it was before. Pessimists say that the pandemic has been an accelerator, steepening the already-existing, decades-long slide of worship attendance and church vitality in the United States.

Here's a summary of where my heart is: Ely United Methodist Church remains what we've been for over a century, *"The Little Church with a Big Heart."* The cross and flame denominational logo on our hymnal signifies who we are and what we stand for – we are a fellowship of people, following Jesus, growing in faith, with hearts warmed by the Spirit, and sharing his light and love with the community of Ely and beyond.

Our church leadership and I will work with you in the months and years ahead to keep this vision going whatever life looks like with this or any other virus, or any other reality in our community and beyond.

We miss those of you who haven't yet come back to worship in person. I wholeheartedly understand this is something that is a personal decision for you and your family. Since March 2020 each of us have made a whole host of choices to balance health safety with keeping life as normal as possible. It will be

wonderful if and when you join us again in-person, but between now and then we rejoice each time you join us online.

Item #2: During our Sunday School meeting we discussed a number of options for when to meet and how many classes to have based on our children's ages. We also visited at length about ways parents can best learn from each other what works for them in growing in their own faith, since much of children's learning about God happens at home.

For now, we'll continue to meet on Sunday morning during the worship service as in the past, beginning on Sunday, September 12th.

Item #3: A member of our church asked me if the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has set up any ways for others to assist in helping people to recover from Hurricane Ida, which has devastated portions of the Gulf Coast and New England. UMCOR has sent an initial grant to Louisiana, but hasn't yet set up any other ways for United Methodists to respond to the disaster. I'll pass along any additional information as it becomes available.

Item #4: This Sunday is Communion Sunday. Those of you worshipping at home can take communion with us by having bread and grape juice handy.

Item #5: This week's Prayer Wall is attached or included.

Here are some words of benediction from Paul's letter to the *Ephesians 3:14-21*. My Dad photocopied these words and then tucked into a flap of a handmade devotional book.

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

God's grace and peace be with you,
Pastor Craig

The Ely United Methodist Church

Prayer Wall

September 5, 2021

This is a guide for prayer this week. The *Prayer Wall* is a reminder of those needing prayers during devotional times. Thank you for dedicating some of your personal prayer time to lift up these requests.

Mark 11: 24



"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

We lift up the following in prayer...

- **John & Karen Trimble** – John had a heart valve replacement a few years ago, his heart stopped and is headed to Mayo
- **Daryl & Gary Felder** – Pray their home in Mississippi is safe as it is in the heart of hurricane Ida
- **Bruce Wishcop** – Bruce, friend of Bob & Pat Olson, had a heart attack and had to have bypass surgery
- **Marj Markwardt** – Marj broke her other leg (femur bone) this past week
- **Steve Matthews family & friends** – Steve passed away suddenly from a heart attack. Long time summer attendee, please be in prayer for his wife Sheila and his family & friends.
- **Matthew Wernet family & friends** – **Update:** Matthew who was in a drug induced coma from COVID passed away.
- **Jerelyn Montgomery and Brett Janeksela** – **Update:** Jerelyn and Brett are home and doing fine after kidney transplant!
- **Tyler Olson** – Bruce Olson's son is hospitalized for treatment for a blood clot in his lung
- **John Podominick** – **Update:** Vicki's brother John is having issues with kidney stones and has developed an infection
- **Bonnie Berglund** – **Update:** Moved from her son's home back to her home in Ely
- **Allysa** – Jade's friend & her mom, Kristin, were in a car accident and her mom had a back injury
- **Adean Anne Turner's family & friends** – Lucy Diesslin's aunt, Adean Anne, passed away recently
- **Loren Barnes** – Lucy Diesslin's brother & Ella's husband needs to relocate to a safer residence
- **Ella Barnes family and friends** – **Update:** Lucy Diesslin's sister-in-law passed away shortly after being placed on hospice
- **Don Markwardt** – Don had hernia surgery this past week. Pray for healing
- **Dan Waters** – **Update:** Moved from Miller-Dwan to his home and doing well with his recovery
- **All the Fire Fighters and their families fighting forest fires in Ely and elsewhere**
- **All essential health care workers exposed to the COVID-19 virus**

We include all the United Methodist Churches and Pastors, both active and retired, in our MN UMC Annual Conference as we work in extraordinary ways to keep our congregations and communities free from infection by the COVID-19 virus.

Prayer requests are compiled from our church prayer chain, from our Sunday morning church congregation using the prayer request forms located in the pew welcome pads, and the North Star District Prayer List. Prayer requests will remain on the Prayer Wall through four weeks unless removed earlier because the prayer is known to be no longer necessary. People may ask that prayers be renewed on the list for subsequent 4-week periods. The Prayer Wall is finalized each Thursday for the Sunday morning service.