

ELY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"The Little Church With the Big Heart"

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Parish News

March 10, 2023

A Note from Pastor Craig

Three Items to Keep in Mind - in chronological order

Easter Lilies: There are only two more Sundays to purchase Easter Lilies by signing up in the rear of the sanctuary at church. The price is \$16.00.

You may take the lily home with you following Easter worship.

Potluck: There will be a potluck following worship on Palm Sunday, April 2nd. This is our first potluck since the pandemic began.

Put this on your calendars, watch for more information as Palm Sunday approaches, and plan to attend!

Holy Week Service: Holy Week, which is the interval between Palm Sunday and Easter, includes both Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples and his arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

Our Holy Week service at 7:00 on Thursday, April 6th will capture and commemorate those events and will include Holy Communion.

Greetings! "Mother Nature" hasn't decided just yet if our March weather will be more like lion or a lamb. So far it's been pretty mild, but since one never knows about the weather, I won't travel even to Virginia without first checking both the weather forecast and road conditions. This unpredictability is part of the vexation (and fun?) of this time of year.

Since last Wednesday, when I returned from my private retreat at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, MN, I've found myself once again reflecting often on the Book of Psalms in the Bible.

I've known about the Psalms since I was 8 years old. Our third grade Sunday school teacher asked us to open the Bibles we'd recently received to the middle. Most of us found we had turned to Book of Psalms. Psalm 117 is the 595th chapter in the Bible, which is also the middle chapter of the Bible's 1189 chapters. It is also the shortest chapter in the entire Bible.

The Book of Psalms is the "prayerbook of the Bible." I also like to think of it as the "heartbeat" of the Bible. I know it becomes this for me a little bit more all the time.

Jesus was intimately familiar with the Psalms and they were a big part of the language he used when he talked to the one he called "his Heavenly Father." The words "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" that he cried out as he was dying on the cross are first sentence of Psalm 22. He chose these already-existing words to express himself in this most personal of moments.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the brilliant young theologian put to death by the Nazi's in 1944, wrote a slim volume on the Psalms entitled: *Prayerbook of the Bible: An Introduction to the Psalms*. The editor writes in the book's introduction that "In pondering the Psalms Bonhoeffer both encountered the power of God *and experienced the passion within his own heart.*" (Italics are my emphasis.)

Wow - that's a compelling and powerful statement, isn't it?! Isn't this something that we are all hungry for in our lives - "to encounter the power of God and experience the passion within our own heart?"

Bonhoeffer, for his own part, had this to say about the Psalms, writing these words to his parents from his prison cell: "I read the Psalms everyday, as I have done for years; I know them and love them more than any other book." (Continued on page two)

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A wide number of commentators note that as we pray the Psalms we find they “put into words the many moods we have in our relationship with God - love and heartbreak, joy and sorrow, and (that) as we pray them we find they are the community’s pathway to God.”

What Bonhoeffer also sensed is completely new to me - he found the Psalms expressed the special presence of Jesus. Because he knew Jesus prayed the Psalms often, Bonhoeffer felt Jesus praying alongside him in all the complexities of Jesus’ own life: Christ “alive, enjoying blessings, suffering, and even crucified anew.”

At St. John’s Abbey the monks gather at 7:00 a.m., noon, 5:30 and 7:00 p.m. to pray their way out-loud each month through all 150 Psalms and other readings. The monks sit across from each other in two groups either chanting or speaking these words back and forth slowly to each other, pausing in between Psalms. It’s a mixture of quiet and the recalling of these ancient words. I experienced their depth and power during my brief time there. I encourage you to makes the Psalms more fully a part of your life. Pastor Craig

Recent Gift of Additional “Our Faith We Sing” Hymnals

We sing most hymns on Sunday morning from the red hardcover United Methodist Hymnal in our pews, which has a copyright of 1989.

The United Methodist Church has published two additional supplements since: a black softcover (*The Faith We Sing*), copyright 2000, and the green softcover (*Worship & Song*), copyright 2011. Our church purchases a copyright license annually to photocopy songs from these two hymnals and other Christian songs as well, to include as printed inserts in the bulletin.

We’ve recently received about forty copies of *The Faith We Sing* from the Crane Lake Chapel. They are no longer using the hymnals and gave these to us as a gift. This means we’ll no longer need to photocopy songs when we sing from this hymnal. We’re not going to add these to our hymn racks in the pews, however, because there isn’t enough room. Rather you’ll receive a hymnal with your bulletin to return following the service. Every four to six weeks I’ll include one of these hymns in our worship service for us to sing.

A photo of the cover of our new *The Faith We Sing* hymnal is attached at the end of this *Parish News*.

The Ely United Methodist Church

Prayer Wall

March 10, 2023

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.

Psalm 17: 6 (NIV)



"I call on you, O God, for you will answer me: give ear to me and hear my Prayer."

We lift up the following in prayer...

- **John Baur's family & friends** – John passed away on March 2nd. Pray for comfort and peace for his wife, Robin, and his family and friends.
- **Forrest – Update: Forrest contracted pneumonia following hernia surgery and in the ICU in Tulsa, OK. Pray for recovery.** Linda Hane's brother, Forrest, had double hernia surgery. Pray for a quick recovery.
- **Nancy Starzecki** – Butch Diesslin's sister, Nan, fell and broke her femur requiring surgery. This was shortly after returning home from the hospital for shoulder replacement surgery.
- **Ted John** – Janice Tessier's daughter, Christie, reported that Ted John is having a biopsy for cancer.
- **Missy Ciriacy Roberts family & friends** – Pam Turnbull reported that Missy passed away last week.
- **Ruthie Ryberg** – Sheila Shultz's childhood friend, Ruthie, has been transported to Duluth with COVID. Pray for a complete and quick recovery.
- **Don Ingerson** – Don has been diagnosed with bladder cancer & had surgery on March 9th. Pray for recovery.
- **Cole Martin – Update: Cole is seeing a neurologist regarding his headaches and arterial stenosis.** Paula and Nick Mattila's grandson, Cole, who is a college student, is having migraines. He was diagnosed with arterial stenoses (narrowing of the arteries) and is receiving high blood pressure treatments.
- **The Russia / Ukraine conflict** – Pray for a world-wide lasting resolution, safety of the people, and peace.
- **All essential health care workers exposed to the COVID-19 virus and the Delta & Omicron variants**

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 Friday Parish News and Sunday morning service.

The Faith We Sing



The
Faith
We Sing