

# ELY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*"The Little Church With the Big Heart"*

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**Parish News**

**March 22, 2024**

## A Note from Pastor Craig

Several days ago I noticed a major snowstorm had appeared on the Ely long range weather forecast. One of the first things I do each morning is to check its upgraded status - is there more or less snow than the last time I checked? My jaw dropped Wednesday morning to see could receive an entire foot of snow between Sunday afternoon and Wednesday morning.

I want to touch briefly upon two important topics in this note; first, the upcoming Holy Week/Easter worship services and second, an important thought as we go through the transition of my upcoming retirement and the arrival of our new pastor in June.

**Holy Week/Easter Services:** The birth of Jesus and his resurrection from the dead are the two central events of our faith. Both are necessary and complement each other. God enters our existence as one of us in the birth of the Christ-child, God's own self in human form. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day, God defeats and overcomes the powers of evil and death. In doing so, God begins a New Creation and opens to us the opportunity for a transformed life, in union with Him, that never ends.

The Last Supper, Jesus Arrest/Trial/Crucifixion, and his Resurrection complete his earthly ministry. During Holy Week we walk with Jesus and his followers through these events in real time. I encourage you to attend our Holy Week service, Thursday, March 28 at 7:00 and Easter Sunday worship, March 31 at 10:00.

**Preparing for our New Pastor:** Our church is going through three transitions at one time: first, a change of pastors; second, new people in a number of important leadership positions on the Ad Council; and third, remodeling of the fellowship area in back of our church. Three major changes all happening at once.

Six months or so before these transitions began, I witnessed a noticeable moving of the Holy Spirit among individuals in our church and the congregation as a whole. We are learning more about our individual relationships with God and also being drawn ever more deeply into our life together with Christ.

Last week I read something Zena Hitz wrote that pulls this together in an important way. She writes:

*"Augustine says that our ability to love one another depends on our capacity to learn from one another. That suggests that we learn in order to love. If this were so, learning would be not for its own sake but for the sake of cultivating our capacity to love. It might be the only means or one among many - but either way, it would be secondary to the value of the bond we form with one another." ("Lost in Thought: The Hidden Pleasures of an Intellectual Life" by Zena Hitz. p. 111.)*

Hitz isn't referring to romantic love or the love friends have for one another. She is referring to the love God showers upon us and instructs us to share with one another. The relationship between learning and loving a pearl of great price.

*(Continued on the next page)*

(A Note from Pastor Craig - continued)

In learning from one another, we increase our capacity to love God and one another. We also grow in our ability to learn for our own sake. This becomes the inward and outward movement of spiritual and intellectual respiration.

I am grateful to God and each of you for opening yourself to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. I encourage all of us to learn from one another. What we know together is deeper than what we know alone. Our learning *from* and *with* one another will bring an ever-richer, ever-deeper life with Christ and one another. This was wonderful to see at our Ad Council meeting this past Wednesday (March 20).

To use Emily P. Freeman's language - it's the best way for our church to leave the present room we're in, journey through the hallway of these three transitions, and enter a new room with a new pastor in June.

God's grace is with you and will be with you always! Pastor Craig

### Two Holy Week Announcements

**Holy Week Services:** Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday when we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem riding on a colt. Maundy Thursday (or Holy Thursday) commemorates the Last Supper Jesus shared with his twelve disciples. Good Friday marks his arrest, trial, crucifixion, and death. Easter Sunday, of course, is when we celebrate his resurrection from the dead.

Our Holy Week Service will be at 7:00 on Thursday, March 28th. The service will include Holy Communion and a narration from the Gospel of Mark of Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

**Palm Sunday Potluck:** Our church is having a potluck immediately following worship on Palm Sunday, March 31st, to which everyone is invited!

### Coming to Be

From infinite longings  
finite deeds arise.....

But in these dancing tears,  
what is often withheld can be found:  
our strength.

The poem to the left was written by Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke sometime between 1902 and 1906. Rilke was intensely religious, but not in a conventional Christian way.

This poem recognizes we are born with deep spiritual hunger for something beyond ourselves; typically a thirst for God and human friendship/community.

This desire is only partially satisfied in this life, which may leave us feeling discouraged, experiencing the "dancing tears" Rilke refers to. However, he also affirms the withheld longings turn out to be our strength. Rilke's words here are not platitudes, false consolations, but rather affirmation that our unfulfilled longings, our weaknesses, turn out to be what the Apostle Paul refers to: "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14)

## The Ely United Methodist Church

### *Prayer Wall*

March 22, 2024

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.

#### John 15: 7 (NIV)



*"Jesus said, If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."*

#### We lift up the following in prayer...

- **Logan Loe** – Please pray for Logan Loe who has been diagnosed with Crohn's disease.
- **Bob Sandilla** – Erin Moravitz's best friend's brother, Bob Sandilla, has multiple myeloma blood cancer and had 2 strokes and an embolism shower at the base of his brain. His lungs have collapsed and he is intubated. His vitals are good, but no movement as yet. Bob is married with 3 children. Please pray for Bob's recovery and his family.
- **Linda Lee Tikkala** – Linda Hane's friend, Linda Lee Tikkala, is hospitalized with heart issues. She is currently stable. Pray for successful treatment.
- **Bonnie Berglund** – Bonnie fell and has a hairline fracture in her left shoulder. Pray for comfort & healing.
- **Peggy Koschak** – Paula Mattila's sister, Peggy Koschak, has a bad cold requiring her to go back on oxygen. Please pray for healing.
- **Kris** – **Update: Kris had her eye removed and is hospitalized for severe pain. Pray for comfort and healing.** Lisa Porthan's mother, Kris, will have one of her eyes removed due to a childhood injury.
- **Derwood's family & friends** – **Update: Lisa Porthan's uncle Derwood passed away.** Pray for comfort.
- **Dick Reinhardt** – Vicki Wagner asked for prayers for her brother Dick Reinhardt, for multiple health issues.
- **Curt Laine** – **Update: Curt Laine has started treatment for his cancer at Mayo.** Susan Laine's husband, Curt, has been diagnosed with cancer of the lymph node behind his tonsils.
- **Keith Rue** – Keith is suffering from ocular shingles. Pray for patience, strength and relief from pain.
- **Shane** – Continued prayers for Shane, a friend of Zach & Jacob Rue's, in his battle with cancer.
- **Tyler** – A friend of Bryan Rusco who had an unfortunate accident requiring surgery. Pray for healing.
- **Gary Starzekic's family and friend's** – Butch Diesslin's sister, Nan Starzekic, lost her husband, Gary. Please pray for comfort for Nan and her son J.T. and the extended family.
- **A.J. Bolden** – Linda Hane reported that A.J. Bolden, son of Linda's friend Kelly Bolden, was hit by a car shattering his leg. Pray for healing and comfort.
- **People of Gaza** – Pray for people in Gaza remembering the 32,000 women & children who have been killed.
- **Mike Loisel** – **Update: Mike is still in hospital but will start rehab once he is over his cold.** Paula Mattila asked for prayers for Mike Loisel who has had a very bad car accident breaking numerous bones. He has had 2 surgeries already with more to follow but is in good spirits in spite.
- **Lisa Porthan's father & mother** – Lisa's mom & dad are struggling with the progression of his Parkinson's.
- **The Russia / Ukraine conflict • Political Unrest in Africa • The Military, Humanitarian & Political Crisis in the Middle East** – Pray for a world-wide lasting resolution, safety of the people, and peace.

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.