

Ely United Methodist Church
305 E. Camp Street
Ely, MN 55731

The fish



ELY U.M.C. 1892....

THE FISH

The Fish is a publication of the Ely United Methodist Church. The sign of the fish was formed by two people. The first drew a curved line of no significance, perhaps with his or her toe in the sand. But when the other person added an inverted curve, the fish was formed and two Christians had indentified each other in the days when to be Christian was anathema. In this paper we draw lines with the hope that in your response the faith will be more clearly seen by all.

A Note from Pastor Craig

My, oh my, how quickly things can change! Only a month ago we were waiting for the end of winter, daydreaming about jumping into all the spring activities we had planned. Now much of this is on hold as we “self-isolate,” watching the news for how fast COVID-19 is spreading, whether there will be further restrictions, and when medical treatments and a vaccination will be developed.

I heard David Brooks on TV the other night describe what he calls the “split screen” reality he sees right now, where one screen shows policy-makers in Washington struggling to define and execute coherent steps forward to combat the virus. On the other screen are citizens acting to keep themselves safe, while helping each other. Apparently there haven’t been reports of people fighting one another in stores; instead we are finding ways to volunteer.

I am noticing another split screen: Urban areas where the virus is spreading rapidly and cities are shutting down, with empty streets and shopping centers versus Ely, where many businesses are closed, less people are out, but for those who venture forth, life appears almost normal and the virus seems far away. This, however, may very well change.

Bishop Bruce Ough has now requested United Methodist Churches in Minnesota, regardless of size, suspend all gatherings in their buildings **through May 10th**. If you would like to listen to the Bishop’s most recent and earlier messages, go to www.minnesotaumc.org and look for COVID-19 content.

There is another article in this newsletter that will mention specific ways we are trying to keep our life as a church as normal as possible even though we are unable to gather together. In other words, how can continue to be “the little church with a big heart” between now and when we are able to worship together again?

For now I want to encourage each of us to slow down, pay attention to each and every thing you do, reach out to others

by phone, text, *FaceTime*, or email, and “be still and know that God is God.”

I am assuming that sooner or later the first confirmed case of the virus will reach Ely. Even before it does, it will be your habits and choices that will keep you healthy. I am finding I have deep-seated habits of touching my face often and being within six feet of people when talking to them. Lately I have been washing my hands so often they are starting to chap and I have to use lotion on them.

Sunday, the 22nd, I called two college friends I haven’t talked to in a long time. Both conversations lifted our spirits. Why don’t we do this kind of thing more often?

Many people will get sick with COVID-19 and some will die. Our lives are being disrupted. The economy is suffering badly, some people are now unemployed, and some businesses will fail. So there are realities to be concerned about and for which to take precautions.

Nevertheless, we don’t need to allow free-floating anxiety to overwhelm us. Martin Laird suggests in *“Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation”* that most of what causes us anxiety are thoughts and feelings that have no real, lasting substance. The things we worry about are like stormy weather pressing into Mr. Zion, the hill in Jerusalem that symbolizes God’s solid presence in the world. When we sit in stillness and trust, we see that what is truly real is God’s presence in us – that Christ lives in us and we are free to let life be as it is in any given moment.

The Lord bless you and keep you. If you have questions or are having “cabin fever” from being shut in please call the church (218-365-3355) or parsonage (218-365-3716) leaving a message if necessary. I’d love to visit with you on the phone.

Pastor Craig

Contact Information and Office Hours for April 2020

Church Office: (218) 365-3355

Parsonage: (218) 365-3716

Email: elymethodist@elyumc.org **Website:** elyumc.org

For this month, Pastor Craig is planning to be in the church office from 9 AM to 11 AM on Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Dates to Remember

- **Sunday, April 5** – Palm Sunday (No Service)
- **Thursday, April 9/10** – Maundy Thursday/
Good Friday (Tenebrae No Service)
- **Sunday, April 12** – Easter Sunday (No Service)
- **Sunday, May 17** – All Church Pot Luck (Services Begin)

General Announcements

- Pastor Craig will prepare Sunday sermons as usual and preach them from the pulpit in our Sanctuary each Sunday morning. They will be posted on our church website either Sunday evening or Monday morning at: www.elyumc.org. Go to the “About Us” tab to access the sermons. Each week while we are not having in-person services, there will also be a few announcements/updates.
- We decided not to include an April Calendar in this newsletter because we are unsure at this time whether any of the regularly scheduled worship services, committee meetings, group meetings and gatherings will be held in April. As events are scheduled in April, announcements will go out through our email list, our

website, and individual phone calls.

- We have established a church gmail account. The address is elyumc.elymn@gmail.com. (Notice the period in the address.) We plan to send out a short list of “Parish News” items weekly; announcements to help us stay in touch with one another. If you would like to be part of this email list, please send an email message to the above address requesting to be included. Note: all emails will come out as a “blind carbon copy” to keep your email address confidential. With their permission, Pastor Craig will also pass along updates with news from people he visits with in our congregation, both in Ely and across the country.
- If you don’t have internet access and would like to receive what goes out via email, please call the church office and we’ll make sure you get a hard copy, whether in the mail or dropped off at your house.
- If you have needs for transportation, to run errands, or anything else, please call the church office, leaving a message if necessary. We have a group of people who will be able to help you out.
- Pastor Craig will continue to keep office hours at least for now. Please call the church (218-365-3355) or parsonage (218-365-3716) leaving a message if necessary with any questions or concerns, or just to talk.
- Pasty production is currently scheduled for April 20th and 21st, however, since product must be ordered during the first week of April, a decision as to whether we will produce pasties in April will be made during that week. We will send out an announcement whether we will or will not produce pasties in April once that decision is made.
- Our goal is to be able to continue the ministry of our church as much as possible while we’re not able to

gather together face to face. While we're playing this by ear, we're open to your suggestions.

- Most of our expenses continue though we're not able to gather. We recognize some of your income streams have been significant affected. As you are able, please continue to forward your financial contributions to the church, either mailing them to the church at 305 East Camp Street, Ely, MN 55731 or dropping an envelope through the mail slot.

“The peace of the Lord Christ be with you. May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you wherever he may send you. May He guide you through the wilderness and protect you through the storm. May He bring you home rejoicing at the wonders He has shown you. May He bring you home rejoicing once again within these doors.”

IN TIMES LIKE THESE¹

Late in 1943, Ruth Caye Jones, mother of five and wife of a busy pastor, was reading 2 Timothy 3:1, which says, “In the last days perilous times shall come” (KJV). As she read the Pittsburgh papers, saw the World War II casualty lists, and watched the slow progress of Allied troops moving up the boot of Italy, it seemed that perilous times had already come. Rationing was hitting hard; discouragement was everywhere. How long could people continue in times like these?

Ruth took out a small notepad from her apron pocket and started writing some words. A melody came to her as she wrote. She had not formal music training, and she wasn't trying to do something to make herself famous, but it was the right song for the right time. Soon people around the world were singing it.

Years later, when she watched a Billy Graham telecast and heard George Beverly Shea sing it, tears came to her eyes and she said, “I can't believe I had any part in writing this song. I just feel that God gave it to me, and I gave it to the world.”

In times like these you need a Savior,
 In times like these you need an anchor;
 Be very sure, be very sure your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

*This Rock is Jesus, yes He's the One;
 This Rock is Jesus, the only One!*
 (1 & 2) *Be very sure, be very sure
 Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!*
 (3) *I'm very sure, I'm very sure
 My anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!*

In times like these you need the Bible,
 In times like these O be not idle;
 Be very sure, be very sure your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

In times like these I have a Savior,
 In times like these I have an anchor;
 I'm very sure, I'm very sure my anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

Written by Ruth Caye Jones

¹ *The Complete Book Of Hymns*
 By William J. Peterson & Ardythe Peterson
 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
 Carol Stream, Illinois
 Copyright 2006

Community Bible Study **Thursdays: 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

Chris Maroni, PhD, a native Elyite and former Mesabi Community College professor, is holding a weekly community Bible Study at our church. The focus is on the *The Birth of the Christian Church from 33 CE to 200 CE* (CE = Christian Era). The study is held on Thursdays from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM upstairs in the back of our sanctuary or in our Fellowship Hall depending on attendance. This study is continuing and open to anyone who is interested. Attendance during this COVID-19 scare is a personal choice.

Ray Gass Memorial

As recognition of the ministerial services Ray Gass provided to our church, on behalf of our congregation, we sent a bud vase with daisies, Ray's favorite flower, to his memorial service. The congregation is invited to send a donation if they wish to the Ray Gass Sponsor Campership Fund. Send donations directly to Mrs. Ray Gass, Campership Fund, 609 Teacup Sp Court, Winter Garden, FL 34787.

Administrative Council - Minutes Wednesday, March 18, 2020 • 7:00 PM

Call To Order: Chair Dan Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Attendees (8): Dan & Beverly Johnson, Mark & Margie Olson, Craig Haberman, Linda Hane, Donna Rusco, Jay Tomlinson.

Opening: Dan Johnson read from *The Complete Book of Hymns* by William J. Petersen and Ardythe Petersen the hymn and the inspirational experience leading Ruth Caye Jones to write the words and melody to "In Times Like These," so appropriate to today's challenges. Pastor Craig read a poem titled "The Peace of Wild Things" by Wendell Berry from his book called *Collected Poems*. He then opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes: In discussion of the February 2020 Ad Council Minutes printed in the March *Fish*, Beverly Johnson pointed out that the Maundy Thursday date reported as April 19 should have been April 9, and Margie Olson said the Memorial Fund books should have been included in the Annual Audit report. Margie Olson made the motion to approve the minutes as amended. Beverly Johnson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Treasurer's Report: Mark Olson presented the February 2020 Treasurer's Report. Receipts & disbursements were \$8,424.60 & \$8,793.55, respectively. Ending balances were:

Undesignated Funds \$17,590.28; Building Fund \$4,384.44; Memorial Fund \$10,065.21; Parish Health Ministries \$340; Gift of Giving Project \$7.81. Motion to accept by Beverly Jonson, second by Linda Hane. The motion was approved.

Jay Tomlinson pointed out that our ad in the Echo should be reviewed as it was missing some information. Pastor Craig and Jay will review the ad and make appropriate changes.

Dan Johnson requested the number of *Upper Room* booklets be increased by at least 5 additional copies.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Board of Trustees:** Margie Olson reported that they have not met since the Ad Council's last meeting, but that the floor in the basement needs replacement tiles in some places. She also mentioned that the cracks in our parking lot need to be addressed. She will also remind BJ Rusco about fixing the drainage pipe from our church to the main sewage line. Pastor Craig commented that there is a problem with the telephone line at the parsonage and he will contact frontier to get the problem resolved.
- **Finance:** Beverly Johnson pointed out that while we have the utmost trust in all our congregation members, 2 of the 3 recording secretaries should be the only counters of the offering receipts. Should there only be one present on any given Sunday, the Finance Chair should be asked to fill in.
- **Pastor-Parish Relations:** Sheri Rue, acting chair for Jeanne Tomlinson, has been updated with the chair's responsibilities. No other report.
- **Worship:** Due to the COVID-19 gathering restrictions, church services have been canceled for at least the next two Sundays. Unless there is a change in state and church directives regarding gatherings, no palm branch or lily orders for Palm and Easter Sunday services will be taken.
- **Outreach:** No report.

- **Visioning:** Jay Tomlinson reported for chair Rich Floyd that the Visioning Committee assigned Keith and Sheri Rue along with Pastor Craig to outline steps to encourage congregation members to share their personal spiritual moments either verbally during the worship service or through other methods such as printed in the Sunday bulletin, *The Fish*, posted on the wall like *Vine & Branches*, or in some other format. Church members are encouraged to submit articles to *The Fish*.

Rich assigned “*I find it easy to tell other Christians about my feelings*” as the next statement from the Natural Church Development Survey for the committee to focus on. Discussion led to replacing the word ‘feelings’ with ‘life.’

The committee confirmed the next All Church Pot Luck was scheduled for May 17th.

Addressing the question of scheduling a new study group for the fall, Linda Hane presented three possible programs: *Unfailing Love; No More Excuses; and I'll Push You*. The committee recognized the on-going Thursday Community Bible Study, *The Early Church from 33 CE to 200 CE*, as a very worthwhile study program leading the committee to being open to additional study programs as the spirit moves them in the future. More research into these possible study programs is required.

- **Education:** No report.
- **Nurture & Membership Care:** No report.
- **Parish Care Person:** Donna Rusco reported prayer shawls were given to Jeanne Tomlinson and Jeri Walburg.
- **Memorial Fund Task Force:** No report.
- **President UMW:** The March UMW meeting has been canceled due to the Covid-19 gatherings restrictions.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Web Site Information and Structure:** The committee Chairs have been asked to review the content pertaining to their committee on the web site and suggest any changes or updates. Pastor Craig’s sermons are now being posted on the web site. The most recent 10 sermons will be available on the web site. Pastor Craig suggested we could have an on-line ability to make offering payments to the church through [tithely](https://tithely.com) on our website and on smart phones. Mark Olson, Beverly Johnson, Pastor Craig and Jay Tomlinson will investigate how to make it so.

2. **EUMC Facebook Site:** Ginny Nelson is the EUMC Facebook administrator. The Ad Council suggested that the Visioning Committee develop a ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ for the Facebook page.

3. **Church Pictorial Directory:** Due to the current Covid-19 state and community restrictions, this project has been postponed until 2021.

4. **Status of the August Ecumenical service at Semers Park:** The Ad Council confirmed that the Ely United Methodist Church will not hold a service on Sunday, August 9th and encourage our congregation members to attend the Ecumenical service at Semers Park in conjunction with the multi-church Pot Luck. Pastor Craig will be out of town that Sunday as well.

5. **Status of the sewer line repair:** Covered under the Board of Trustees report above.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **COVID-19 preparedness plans:** A three page document from Bishop Bruce R. Ough and Reverend Cindy Gregorson, Director of Connectional Ministries, outlined the recommendations of the Annual Conference to the United Methodist churches in Minnesota. 1) The Conference has asked that all churches suspend in-person worship services through the end of March. 2) Postpone or cancel all non-essential small group meetings or gatherings in our church during this timeframe. The Ad Council confirmed that there will be no in-person church services or choir practices through the end of March at our church and possibly further into the future. Pastor Craig will

maintain office hours during this time.

The Thursday Community Bible Study will continue and attendance is a personal choice. The tables and chairs will be sanitized and hand sanitizer will be made available to all who attend.

Our church will develop an email directory of all congregation members for the purpose of developing a weekly 'Parish News' update to keep all informed of weekly concerns. This news is intended to be short, concise, in bullet form to insure information is distributed. Those members who do not have email will be on a call list.

Offerings can be mailed to the church, dropped off in person or through the mail slot, and we are investigating a form of direct deposit through the web site and an app on smart phones.

The decision whether to offer April Pasties will be made during the first week of April when the product needs to be ordered. Pasties is a food service to the community much like going to the grocery store so the decision will depend any on further COVID-19 restrictions.

2. Donation for the Ely Area Food Shelf (Mar 16-18 is food shelf week): Margie Olson moved that we donate \$100 to the food shelf, pointing out that the donation will be tripled to \$300 from state aid. Beverly Johnson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Correspondence

1. Northern Lights: A letter of thanks was received from the Northern Lights for our donation.

Items of Information

1. March 2020 Pasty Report: 608 made; deposits: \$3,682; cost: \$1,213.98. Net Income \$2,468.02.

2. Ray Gass Memorial Service: Our church sent a bud vase with daisies, Ray's favorite flower. The congregation will be invited through an article in *The Fish* to send a donation if they wish to the Ray Gass Campers Sponsorship Fund.

3. Next Meeting: April 15, 2020 at 7:00 PM (Pending further Covid-19 restrictions)

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM with a unison reciting of *The Lord's Prayer*.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Tomlinson acting Secretary for Jeanne Tomlinson

THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS²

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light, For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Written by Wendell Berry

² *Collected Poems*
By Wendell Berry
North Point Press
New York, New York
Copyright 1984

Psalms 34: 18

***The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and
saves those who are crushed in Spirit.***

Prayer Wall

This is a guide for prayer this month. Our *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 5: 3

“In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice, in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.”

We lift up the following in prayer...

- **Butch Diesslin** – Recovering at home from shoulder replacement surgery
- **Linda Williams** – Recovering in St. Mary’s from surgery to remove tumors
- **Kayla Tedrick** – Home, recovering from back surgery to replace hardware
- **Jeanne Tomlinson** – Rehab at Miller-Dwan from Guillain Barre Syndrome
- **Toni Floyd** – Lobectomy surgery successful, hospital recovery, then at home
- **Jeri Walburn** – Recovering at home from knee replacement surgery
- **Zach Rue** – Recovering from a serious back injury while sledding
- **Don Kess & Family** – The passing of Becky Kess
- **Those who have contracted the COVID-19 Virus and Family Members**

We include all the United Methodist Churches and Pastors, both active and retired, in our Minnesota United Methodist Church 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.

The Ely United Methodist Church Ash Wednesday Service

Held on February 26, 2020 • 7:00 PM

The church season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which reminds us we are all sinners and one day we will all die. The black ash cross on our forehead is a grim sign we are “spotted by our sins,” and we are those who “are dust and to dust we shall return.



But we also recognize Easter waits for us on the other end of Lent. Then we will rejoice and proclaim that through Jesus’ resurrection God has overcome both sin and death.

If you were unable to attend the Ash Wednesday service, Pastor Craig’s meditation can be found at: www.elyumc.org. Select the “About Us” tab, click on “Sermons,” then select February 26, 2020.



Photos by Suzette & Lily Tedrick