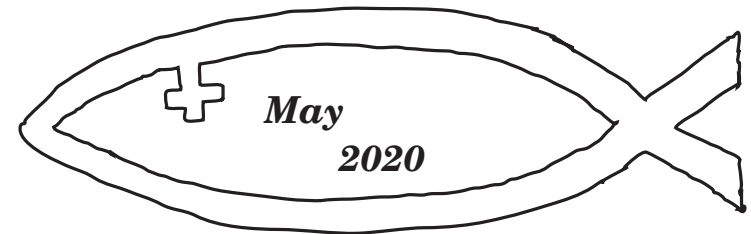


Ely United Methodist Church
305 E. Camp Street
Ely, MN 55731

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

Greetings! I'm writing this on Saturday, April 25. The sun is shining brightly, there isn't a cloud in the sky, and it's going to be sixty degrees outside today! Looking at the ten day forecast, it's obvious that spring is here!

And it couldn't come at a better time, could it?! Because, even though we recognize social-distancing is necessary to protect our neighbors, health-care workers, and ourselves, March and April have been two extremely difficult months. I think we've all had our moments of going stir-crazy – what I've heard old-timers refer to as “cabin fever.” So it's going to be marvelous to get outside into our gardens, to sit in our driveways and visit with other people – all at a safe distance, of course. Stay tuned...

Previously Bishop Ough asked us to suspend all church activities through May 10th. As I listened to Governor Walz's press conference on April 22, my guess is our bishop's next announcement will extend these restrictions of activities in our building again. We'll see...

I know how hard this is for all of us. I am not keeping office hours anymore, but go into our church building several times a week. Each time I walk into the sanctuary my spirits sag. It's so hard to be in the same place where just weeks ago we greeted each other with exclamations and wide smiles, where we sang hymns with joyful hearts, where we left each week after services and coffee fellowship with our hearts, minds, and spirits alive and in the right place for the upcoming week.

We're told that in the early weeks following Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, his followers “devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42) This what Christians have been doing ever since; this has been the pattern of my life as long as I can remember.

Except we can't gather together now. We can call each other on the phone. Those of us who have computers and Wi-Fi can participate in an interactive video Sunday School class. But we can't gather together for fellowship, for breaking of bread, and for prayers.

With warmer weather, we're going to figure out ways to host some outdoor worship services and other gatherings. (See a note later in this newsletter.) But even then, it will be some time before we're able to return to worship and other activities in our church building.

Some five hundred or so years before the birth of Jesus, the twelve tribes of Israel experienced a similar dislocation, which lasted for several hundred years. During portions of this time they were unable to gather in any semblance of what they were used to. The Psalmist cried out: “How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?” (Psalm 137:4)

Out of this experience comes the resounding voice of the prophet Habakkuk: “The righteous shall live by their faith.” (Habakkuk 2:4) Or as Eugene Peterson translates: “But the person in right standing before God through loyal and steady believing is fully alive, really alive.”

All sectors of our society are strenuously laboring to bring us through this horrible pandemic as safely and smoothly as is possible. It won't be immediate and it won't be without pain. We are working to keep our church's ministry as vital as possible.

In the meantime Jesus is our North Star. Our faith and our love for each other will give us what we need to live through each week and month of our present ordeal – and until we meet again.....

With my love and care,

Pastor Craig

Contact Information and Office Hours for May 2020

Church Office: (218) 365-3355

Parsonage: (218) 365-3716

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

Pastor Craig is not keeping office hours through this time of

sheltering-at-home, but he does go into our church building several times a week.

Pastor Craig will be visiting Sioux Falls from Sunday afternoon May 3rd through Saturday May 9th to help his family there. He will respond to emergencies in his absence by phone. In order to contact him, please call Sheri Rue at 507-456-2499. Pastor Barb Hegfors here in Ely has agreed to be available as well.

He will be going from a situation of quarantine here to the same in Sioux Falls. Also he has planned his visit in careful coordination with our Pastor Parish Relations Committee and in consultation with Governor Walz's stay at home Executive Order.

First Steps in Planning for the Future

- On Wednesday, April 29, our Worship Committee will have a computer-video-conference meeting to review what we are doing to keep the ministry of our church going. We will consider any adjustments and/or improvements to enhance our present activities.

We will also explore future options for worship and other gatherings outside before we're able to gather together inside again. This is a priority for us because there just isn't anything like in-person, face-to-face gatherings; especially for people in our church without computers, Wi-Fi, and Smart-phones. All future planned gatherings would include safe social-distancing measures.

The committee will forward a report to our Administrative Council for their consideration. Pastor Craig will pass along all new information, changes and updates to all through the weekly *Parish News*, direct mail or by phone. (See Below).

- Pastor Craig will continue to prepare Sunday morning sermons as usual and preach them from the pulpit in our Sanctuary each week. They will be posted on our church website and available each Sunday morning at: www.elyumc.org. Go to the "About Us" tab to access the sermons.

- We have established a church gmail account. The address is: elyumc.elymn@gmail.com. (Notice the period in the address.) We are using this 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, dropped off at your house, or by phone, if necessary.

- 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.

- As mentioned earlier under the title of **Contact Information and Office Hours**, Pastor Craig will not be keeping office hours during this "shelter-at-home" Executive Order from Governor Waltz. Please call the church (218-365-3355) or parsonage (218-365-3716) leaving a message with any questions or concerns, or just to talk.

- 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.

- Thank you for your ongoing financial support for our church even when we're unable to gather. Your donations are necessary to keep the ministry of our church going. Most of our expenses continue though we're not able to gather. We recognize some of your income streams have been significantly 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.”

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

Chris Maroni, PhD, a native Elyite and former Mesabi Community College professor, has been 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 currently postponed until further notice, but once restarted, it is open to anyone who is interested.

Our Children International Ministry

Our most recent letter from our sponsored child, Lizzbeth Pamela Lux Bamac, says she thanks us for sponsoring her. She tells us she is studying and like numbers. She likes sports class. She tells us that she likes to play dolls and toy dishes. She is a happy girl and she is thankful with God because she has two big siblings that love her very much. She would like to know us in a picture because she is very excited.



IN TIMES LIKE THESE ***from Gail Haney***

As we have been inundated with information about the COVID-19 flu pandemic, I recalled that my grandparents lived through the 1918 flu pandemic, and I searched through the family journals I have looking for information about that pandemic.

My grandfather, Elton Gordley, was a farmer who was seldom ill. Perhaps that was the reason he was the “Go-To-Man” when anyone in the neighborhood needed someone to vaccinate or give medicine to their sick animals or euthanize those animals that couldn’t be saved.

In 1918, the flu was so bad in the neighborhood that Elton was called on to serve his neighbors throughout his farm community. Elton would care for his wife, Laura, and their two young boys, Herb and Ronald. After he did his chores, he would head to their neighbors to take care of their immediate needs. Whether it was chores, food, medicine, or digging graves for those who had died, Elton was there to help. He even hauled children to the cemetery in his car.

He slept on the sofa for several weeks, but he never succumbed to the 1918 flu that killed so many in the United States. I hope you have a neighbor like my grandfather who will meet your needs whenever and however you have a need.

Highlights from the *Parish News*

March 27, 2020

- Bishop Bruce Ough, in response to the Covid-19 virus, has requested United Methodist Churches in Minnesota suspend all church activities in our buildings through May 10, 2020. You can find more information at www.minnesotaumc.org. Furthermore, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz has issued a “Stay at Home” Executive Order for Minnesotans. More information is available online and in newspapers regarding the particulars of this action.
- Pastor Craig will continue to prepare and preach Sunday sermons and record them. They are available on our church website under the “About Us” tab. This Sunday’s sermon won’t be avail-

able until Monday March 30, but beginning with Palm Sunday (April 5), the Sunday sermon will be available Sunday morning so you can continue to worship on the Lord's Day. Beginning next week the Parish News email message will include scanned copies of the music hymns from our hymnal and a sound recording of them as well. This means along with listening to the Sunday sermon from our website you can sing or follow along with the hymns.

- From Arlene Childers (Monday – March 23, 2020): Arlene has had a good winter. She will have a lens replaced on March 23 from cataract surgery years ago. Then she will travel north with Shelly and Joe (daughter/son-in-law) to Washington State. She will come back to Ely when the snow is gone, if travel is permitted. She has had a wonderful time this winter traveling with Shelly/Joe to visit family in California and watching Elijah play Little League.
- From Dick/Mary Taylor (Monday – March 23, 2020): Dick/Mary are doing fine. They are being careful not to travel out now. They are connecting with their grandkids through social media but are chomping at the bit to see them face-to-face. They look forward to traveling to the North Arm this spring, when they are able.
- From Bobbi Gruwell (Tuesday – March 24, 2020): Bobbi is staying in and getting used to the new experience of ordering groceries and picking them up curbside without having to get out of the car. She is being very careful about not going out where there will be other people. She's had a good winter, but it's been cloudy there almost all the time. She is well and her family is well. She has lots of blooming flowers and her backyard is a bird sanctuary. She seems to have a wonderful take on this horrible situation: *"Good things come out of bad. Maybe in the end we will end up being a wiser and kinder people. What I find is good for me is what allows me to give joy to others."* Bobbi is hoping to travel north to her place on Moose Lake, because it's what brings her joy, but she's not sure if and when it will be safe to travel.
- From Glenn and Nancy Krause (Friday, March 27, 2020): *"We were going to drive up to Ely last Sunday just to go to church, but then they were all cancelled. We hope to be up to the*

cabin and attending church in mid-May. We miss the Ely people and church. We're doing fine, but staying in the house. Glenn is recuperating well from hernia surgery earlier this winter. Thank you for your prayers. We pass along our greetings. Blessings to you – stay safe and healthy."

April 3, 2020

- Our email group is up to forty-three members/friends of Ely United Methodist Church. Please email me at this address if you would like to send greetings/updates on how you're doing. Also feel free to recommend others get on this list by having them email this address! elyumc.elymn@gmail.com
- Ely UMC former pastor Ray Gass died February 16, 2020 after an extended illness. The following is a note from his wife, Linda, to the Ely UMC Church Family. *"The children and I want to thank you for the lovely bouquet of daisies you sent for Ray's memorial service. The first corsage he ever gave me was made up of daisies so it really touched my heart. His service was uplifting and so many spoke of their love and admiration for Ray. The Ely church is the church of our hearts. We love you all. Sincerely, Linda Gass and Family."*
- From Don and Marj Markwardt (Thursday, April 2, 2020): They are at home in Hoyt Lakes and getting along fine. They miss everybody at Ely UMC. They sound just like themselves to talk to them on the phone.
- From Bonnie Curnow (April 2, 2020): *"Hi, everyone! I am doing well. I miss you all. I love you so much. Stay healthy."*

April 9, 2020

- Bishop Bruce Ough passed along a brief Easter message to churches in the Minnesota Annual Conference. The video can be accessed at the first URL address at the end of this sentence. A print version is available at the second URL address.
<https://vimeo.com/405850119>
<http://mnumc-email.brtaapp.comfiles/2020+easter+message.pdf>
- Have you had inspiring, uplifting experiences during this time we've been apart? Have you read something that helped to carry you through a day? If so, would you reply to this mes-

sage or give me a call passing along these unexpected blessings that have come your way, and we'll include them in next week's edition of the Parish News. This sharing is one way we can inspire one another. Please email me or call me at church (218-365-3355) or the parsonage (218-365-3716), leaving a message if necessary. I'd love to hear from you.

April 17, 2020

- The May/June edition of The Upper Room devotional booklet is available in the rack in the narthex of our church. Stop by the church to pick up your copy. Or you may call me (218-365-3716) or Jay Tomlinson (218-235-1879) and we'll deliver a copy to you.

- Beginning this week we will have an interactive video Bible study Sunday mornings at 9:00, using the Zoom computer platform. So far thirteen people have expressed interest. You need high speed internet access to participate. If you're interested call me and I will see if we can get Zoom up and running on your computer, tablet, or phone so you can join in on Sunday mornings. *(We had 18 participate this past Sunday. As we add more to the group, we can break the study into smaller groups.)*

- Appreciation from Jeanne Tomlinson: *"These past couple of months have been a very new experience for me - not only being suddenly struck with a debilitating health condition that came out of the blue but also facing months of recovery. However, through it all I've been showered with cards & calls & prayers - and even a beautiful prayer chain quilt - showing love & concern & support from so many members of this amazing congregation. Thank you all so much! Being a part of this church has been one of the many great blessings in my life. It will be so wonderful when we can once again gather to worship - and I'll be able to thank each of you in person."* (Jeanne is home now after spending 15 days in the Neuro Trama ICU at St. Mary's Hospital and 43 days in the Miller-Dwan Rehab Center, Duluth, due to contracting Guillain-Barre Syndrome. She is recovering at home and doing remarkably well!)

- Update from Arlyn Soderfeldt: Al Soderfeldt is doing well and in good spirits. Residents at Carefree Living take their meals in their own rooms rather than eating together in the common dining room. They are able to walk the hallways for exercise. The

day I talked to him he had started with a blank tablet and plans to begin writing regularly again. He appreciates the opportunity to be a listening ear to fellow residents, a chaplain of sorts. Once a pastor always a pastor!

- Our church has purchased two hundred single serving communion sets. If we are still living under restrictions not to gather together when the weather warms up, we are hoping to host an outdoor worship/communion service in an area parking lot. Our Worship Committee will plan this service in coordination with our Administrative Council to ensure that we provide for safe social distancing, whether people choose to sit in lawn chairs or stay in their vehicles. Stay tuned for further announcements.

April 24, 2020

- The nature of the Parish News email is going to change slightly as updates from one another slow down because there is less to report. Now my focus is assisting us to re-calibrate our lives for what looks like a longer haul ahead. I am, however looking for items to encourage, inspire, and give strength for the journey.

- Reminder, Pastor Craig prepares a Sermon each week which is posted on our website so that it is available for Sunday morning. Go to our website and look under the link "About Us" for the Sermon. Pastor Craig also provides in the weekly Parish News a Scripture reading and hymns/songs with the music and words to go along with the sermon. Both "sheet music" and audio recordings are included for your inspiration for each song, whether you sing along or listen.

LITTLE THINGS

*A little deed, a little smile
A bright "Hello" makes life worthwhile.*

*A little word of earnest prayer
May drive away grief and despair.*

*A little praise, a kindly act
May keep a breaking heart intact.*

By Walter J. Kent