

Notices 3-27-2020

Dear friends

As everyday changes how we live our lives, we hope to bring news of our WLCC faith community that helps you feel connected in these surreal times.

Please remember that during this crisis, our church is operating as best possible. That means the Norma and Donna are still doing their regular jobs, and Aaron is continuing to prepare for the coming Easter season. It is only fair to continue to pay them. Thus, while our expenses are reduced, they are not eliminated. Please plan to mail your pledges or contributions to: West Lebanon Congregational Church, 18 Maple St. West Lebanon, NH 03784 Attn: Collector. That preserves your confidentiality by allowing Norma to immediately direct the envelope to the appropriate person. Also if you use electronic banking you may have your contribution sent directly to the WLCC from your account. We have been fortunate thus far in the WLCC. Let us pray that continues.

We the leaders of the church continue to look at ways to bring you a worship experience in these difficult times. We now have a stay at home order here in NH that lasts past the Easter season. While we will not be able to join together we are looking at different ways to bring us together using technology.

On Wednesday, March 25 a portion of the trustees and deacons did a Zoom meeting after both Tom Kahl and Nan Reed participated in one earlier that day with other NH Conference churches discussing different remote types of services they are trying. Though there were challenges using Zoom, but it was relatively easy. We also talked about other ways of using platforms like Facebook Live and YouTube videos to record some portions of the service along with music which would include both audio and video. We are also looking at doing a Zoom service for Maundy Thursday.

I received a suggestion of putting the flowering cross out. The idea is to have people come by on Easter and decorate it with flowers, so that by end of the day it would stand in glory. We would then put the picture up on the WLCC website and Facebook page.

The men's group is trying out a Zoom meeting this Saturday at 9 am. We eagerly await how this has worked.

Please know we are working to expand our worship offerings, as we will not be meeting again until after May 4. Also know Norma is here and can be reached by phone(603.298.8096) or email at office@westlebcongo.comcastbiz.net for needs and concerns as well as news to be passed along to our church members. We particularly want to know any ideas you have on how we can better reach out to communicate and help each other in these challenging times.

We hope you find this weekly sharing informative and uplifting, and please let us know any ideas on how they can be improved.

Faithfully yours
Nancy Simpson
for the church leaders

The readings for this week are
Psalm 130, Ezek 37:1-4, Romans 8:6-11, John 11:1-45

Below please find some pieces of the liturgy from Thom Schuman, one of the resources I have used for our recent services, for this Sunday.

Call to Reconciliation We are fearful in these moments, and so lose faith; we wonder what tomorrow will bring, and so lose our trust in God; we see and hear (and share in) hurtful deeds and angry words, and so lose our humanity. So, let us wait for God's mercy and grace, as we come with our prayers for forgiveness, saying, **Unison Prayer for Forgiveness** **We are scared, God of our lives. There, we have admitted it. Our days are spent in isolation, even when we are with family. We wonder if you are with us or, like Jesus, are you taking your sweet time to come into our emptiness. We stand behind the stones of fear and worry that have been rolled over the opening of our hearts, leaving us in the shadows from which we can see no live. Yet, the good news is that you are indeed with us, God of our days. Yet, the good news is that you have come, Jesus our Brother, to weep with us and over us, to roll away those stones, to call us into life. Yet, the good news is that you cradle us in your peace, Spirit of Gentleness: rocking us to sleep on troubled nights; opening our eyes to the grace of each morning; filling us with the love and hope we can share with everyone around us. Yet, the good news is still good news, and so may we trust, believe, hope, and live as your people. Amen.**

Is there a word for us this day? As we live through these days?

now,
it is no longer
an exegetical puzzle
to be solved in our study;
it is no longer a periscope
with which to wrestle;
it is no longer a (really)
long reading to get through;
it is no longer a story
we blow the dust off every 3 years.
now,
it is our story;
now

it is about us;
now
it is us inside that
dank, dark tomb:
stinking of fear,
wrapped in the bands
of loneliness;
blinded by the handkerchief
of weary worry.
now,
we hope,
we pray,
we yearn,
we listen
for just a footstep,
just a tear dropping on the ground,
just a whisper of Jesus
pacing before the stone,
growling in his spirit
in anger and frustration,
before he cries out,
in hope and joy and life,
"come out!"
now,
we are not casual bystanders;
now
we are Lazarus
waiting . . .
God in Community, Holy in One. Amen

Affirmation of Faith (based on Psalm 130)

We believe in God:
who hears our cries when we find ourselves
sheltering from the fears around us,
who hears our voices from the hollows
of our worries and longing,
who pays close attention to our words,
who does not dismiss them as being of no consequence
We believe in Jesus:
who does not carry around a notebook
to write down every foolish mistake we make
or all those hurtful words we offer to others,
but who gathers them up like so much dust
and scatters them to the wind,
inviting us to join hand in hand
in the dance of forgiveness and grace.

We believe in the Spirit:
who teaches us the patience
we need to wait;
so that in the waiting,
we would learn to hope
that we are not alone in days
of worry, of uncertainty, of loss;
so that in the hoping
we might discover the gift of watching
for the signs of grace in the songs from balconies,
for the wonder of life in neighbors reaching out to us,
for the serenity that comes in the quiet of night.
And, in the watching,
may we see you coming to us:
God, overflowing with steadfast love;
Jesus, with armfuls of grace like bouquets of flowers;
Spirit, whose peace is the power which sustains us in these days.
Amen.