

# Shepherd's Voice



May 2020

## ***“This isn’t normal - but these feelings are common”***

By Pastor Scott Searl

Just last week I said to my mom, “Well, at least it isn’t the middle of winter.” It was warm and the sunshine felt good. I looked forward to my twice daily walks. It was time to listen for the honking geese, the noisy ducks and the very loud cardinals. But today, it’s snowing... again! I’m less inclined to even step foot outside, let alone go for a long walk. All I can do is look outside, sigh and offer a mental, “bummer” as my body sinks a bit. I’m feeling grief in significant ways even over small things like the weather.

The way we are living is certainly not normal. Staying home for such extended periods of time. Carefully bringing in groceries, washing our hands every hour! Video meetings dominate the workday for many. Boredom and restlessness fill the days for others. Frantically figuring out what to do with kids has left many exhausted. What I’ve heard almost universally is a sense of grief. It’s the feeling that something has been lost, but we’re not sure exactly what it was. Our freedom? Our financial security? Our daily rhythm and routine. Maybe even the loss of loved ones. The loss of hugs and handshakes and the daily interactions of life with your barista or neighbor. I feel it in my shoulders and neck. A tension that feels a bit like stress but more achy. And a sense of being weary and tired often. For me it’s grief and mourning. There is much that has been lost. And it would seem that whatever comes next will not be the old normal.

One remarkable discovery that I’ve had, reading a book titled, “Disaster Spiritual Care” is that loss of belief, or doubts about faith or questioning God’s love is so common during disasters that the most trusted diagnostic tool in mental health (DSM-V) has a whole category titled, “Spiritual Emergency” outlining the multiple ways that disasters often precipitate crisis of faith. It’s common to feel lonely. It’s common to feel a loss of God’s presence. It’s common to experience doubt, disbelief and even anger with God in times of disaster. If you’re grieving a loss of a sense of faith you are not alone. Your feelings of grief, loss of faith, loneliness or stress is quite common.

I’ve watched even my most faithful pastor friends admit that they had such a difficult time with Easter this year. Some even posted the day after Easter they are still fearful, anxious and afraid like Mary, Mary and Salome who find the tomb empty on that first Easter morning. If you’ve not felt like sounding the trumpet or shouting alleluia, you are in good company. If you’re feeling isolated, lonely and anxious, you are not alone. And, it’s perfectly okay to feel this way.

***Pastor’s Message continued on page 6***

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Deacon	Brian Henning
Faith Community Nurse	Kaye Wothe
Administrative Assistant	Shawn Wacholz
Building Manager	Blair Prax

#### Church Council Members / Officers:

President	Todd Biewen
Vice President	Julie Luers
Treasurer	Steve Hanneman
Financial Secretary	Julie Luers
Secretary	Adam Driscoll
Service	Nate Lichty
Worship & Music	Allie Jensen
Building & Facilities	Peter Barott
Learning	Joan Dillon
Growing Relationships	Robin Beck
Caring	Gretchen Marble
LMCC	Open
Evaluation	Chris Polston

#### Telephone & Voice Mail Extensions:

Worship Times	1
Directions	2
Shawn Wacholz	11
Pastor Scott Searl	12
Pastor Sherri Lawrence	13
Brian Henning	14
Blair Prax	15
Emergency Message Mailbox	24
Kaye Wothe	25

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## KIDS MAKE US SMILE

By Pastor Sherri Lawrence

As I sit, staring at my computer this morning, I'm wondering what I am going to write about for the SOTH newsletter. Admittedly, I have been putting this off, not in the mood to write, not knowing what others will be writing about, not wanting to talk about COVID-19.

I looked over at my bookshelf and the light was shining in on a picture of my dad and Emily when she was about 2 months old. The joy in his face of holding his granddaughter is evident and it made me smile. My dad loved kids, especially his grandkids, loved helping them, making them laugh and being silly with them. He had this special way about him that was kind and gentle, yet humorous at times. Dad taught me the value of relationships, of how to treat and respect others, of how to listen and learn from others and his love for children of all ages.

During our on-line worship, Pastor Scott has stated that one of his favorite moments is when we all say the Lord's Prayer together at once, seeing all of the families faces popping up on the screen. I agree, but want to add that it brings me joy when the kids get a chance to say hi to one another. I'm not sure what it is that makes us smile when we see children's faces laughing and waving at each other on the screen, but I love it. I think we need that right now.

It has been a blessing to me to be able to continue to hold Confirmation class during this time. Even though I don't know the kids all that well yet, it's wonderful to see their faces, to hear their laughter, to hear them talk about school, homework, missing their friends, about different things that they have been doing and to hear them connect with one another. I am learning so much from them and I give thanks to God for each one of these students and for the parents who have them go on-line.

We will get through this COVID-19 isolation and we will be together once again, seeing the kids run around, laughing and waving to us in person. But in the meantime, join us on-line so that you can see these kids and smile! And please know that if you need anything, to talk or laugh or cry, I am here for you.

Peace to you,  
Pastor Sherri



## PRESIDENT'S POST: A Chalk Talk on Goodness

By Todd Biewen, Church Council President

Have you ever been present for a chalk talk? I've been through many in my day. A chalk talk is when a coach brings his or her team together to explain the plan for the upcoming game. I remember how my basketball coaches used the chalk to draw a basketball court, the baseline, the lane lines, the arc at the top of the key, and the free throw line. They could do this in about three seconds; this was the easy part. Then they would use the chalk to diagram the plays of the other team and explain how our team would defend against them. Our coach would also write the jersey numbers of the other team's players and remind us who on our team would guard each of their players. I enjoyed watching all of my coaches use the chalk and I learned a lot about the finer points of the game from each of them. Later, I would coach basketball for more than 20 seasons and I became pretty good at using the chalk myself, but over time, chalk boards started to disappear. Mostly, I used erasable markers on a small, lap-sized white board.

Now, in these days of physical distancing, chalk is making a big comeback. On my daily walks I've been seeing a lot of sidewalk chalk talk in the form of words and art. If you've been out and about in your neighborhood, I have a hunch you've seen it too. If you haven't been out walking, and I know some of you can't or don't choose to venture out, let me tell you there are some wise "coaches" of all ages out there. These coaches have taken up their chalk to share their perspectives on this whole COVID-19 thing. Yes, chalk of every color is being used, hearts are the most common shape, and these are the phrases I'm seeing most often:

*stay healthy*  
*take care*  
*be well*  
*believe*  
*hang in there*  
*we're in this together*  
*praying for you*  
*we will get through this*  
*God loves you*  
*goodness rules*  
*keep the faith*  
*spread love*

The most impressive single use of chalk I've seen was on a driveway where a multi-hued cross was outlined and filled-in with at least 8 colors, and it must have been about 12 feet by 25 feet. It was very beautifully done and I wanted to take a picture but I didn't have my phone with me.

### *President's Post continued*

In this strange and challenging time, what can we take from all of this chalk talk, me and you? What should we make of all of this creativity and effort, drawn and written in red and yellow and pink and green, purple and orange and blue? I think we can take from this what is right in plain view in front of us. People are good. People care. Love is abundant. And...we are all in this together.

A coach might say it this way: we're all on the same team, everyone on the team is equally important and valued, there is no starting five and there is no one at the end of the bench, every life matters just the same.

Where is all of this love coming from? Do you ever think about this question? What is the source of all this goodness? That's an easy one to answer. We know the source of goodness. So many have taken up the chalk to spell it out for us, on our streets and in our neighborhoods. It's clear that so many know the source of all that is good. And we are among them. We don't need a coach to diagram it for us. We've known it all along. It's in our heart. And we know how it got there; it was put there by a power that is beyond our understanding.

Yes indeed, we know from where goodness comes and we can rest in that peace.

In gratitude for being a part of this community of faith...peace to all of you.  
Todd

*Continued above*





## DAILY DEVOTIONS

This is a good time to have a daily devotional to keep you grounded. Here are a couple suggestions for free, well written email sources:

From Luther seminary:  
<https://www.luthersem.edu/godpause/>

From Augsburg: <https://go.augsburgfortress.org/christ-in-our-home-email-subscription>

If you do not use email and would like a printed copy of “Christ in Our Home” devotions please call Shawn at the church office (952-935-3457) to have one mailed or left for you to pick up.

## WoSOOTH BOOK CLUB Summer 2020

Sunday, May 31st, 4pm  
“This Tender Land” by Wm Kent Krueger

Wednesday, July 15th, 7pm  
“The Island of Sea Women” by Lisa See

Wednesday, August 19th, 7pm  
“A Woman Is No Man” by Etaf Rum

## BREAKING POINT, THE SEQUEL: Who do you want to be during COVID-19?

By Emily Koski, Music Director

I thought I had reached my breaking point back on quarantine day 9. In my mind, the precautions were excessive, the hype was out of control, and I could not *stand* the idea of being trapped in the house another minute! That night, I made a Costco run, read some news stories and realized that I had to stop fighting it and buckle up because we were in it for the long haul.

After that, I thought I had turned the corner and would be able to move on. But I soon discovered there would be multiple breaking points for this gal. A couple weeks later, the irritability and full-on monotony set in: Making food. Cleaning up food. Distracting the kids before more food. Trying to be productive. Having nothing to do. Realizing everyone is out of clean socks. Having *laundry* to do. Not *wanting* to do laundry. And on and on and on... So, I did what any other self-respecting zombie person would do. I busted out some tried and true self-soothing techniques.

**Self-soothing technique #1: Binge-watching my “stories.”** I almost never binge-watch TV, because I’d rather catch up on sleep. But in these desperate times, I cozied up to Netflix for hours at a time to relax. **It did not work.** Turns out kids wake up at the same time every day no matter how late I stay up, so I was just tired and cranky.

**Self-soothing technique #2: Eating my feelings.** As one who overly delights in sweet treats, I was sure that eating my feelings would help. While it was super delicious, ultimately, **it did not work.** AND I gained a couple pounds in a matter of days, which irritated me even more.

Then I started to panic. This is not who I am! I’m usually motivated by challenges. I can often find ways to trick myself into making even the nastiest tasks or situations into something fun: How quickly can I do X? How long can I go without doing Y? When I’m done with Z, I’ll reward myself with a fun activity!

But during this sequestration, I’ve been struggling to stay positive and motivated, which makes me anxious and frustrated, which creates downward spiral. The night of my breaking point, the sequel, I literally typed into Google “I hate myself during COVID-19.”

Dark, right? I didn’t even look at the search results and instead decided it was time to resume my early morning walks and figure this out. While walking the next day, I began thinking: **Who do I want to be right now?** And more than that, how do I want my family, friends and colleagues to remember who I was during this time?

- Do I want to judge what others are doing, or do I want to assume positive intent and give everyone the benefit of the doubt?
- How do I want to treat my body?
- How do I want to interact with the family I *am* able to be with every day?

*Continued on page 5*

## Breaking Point continued

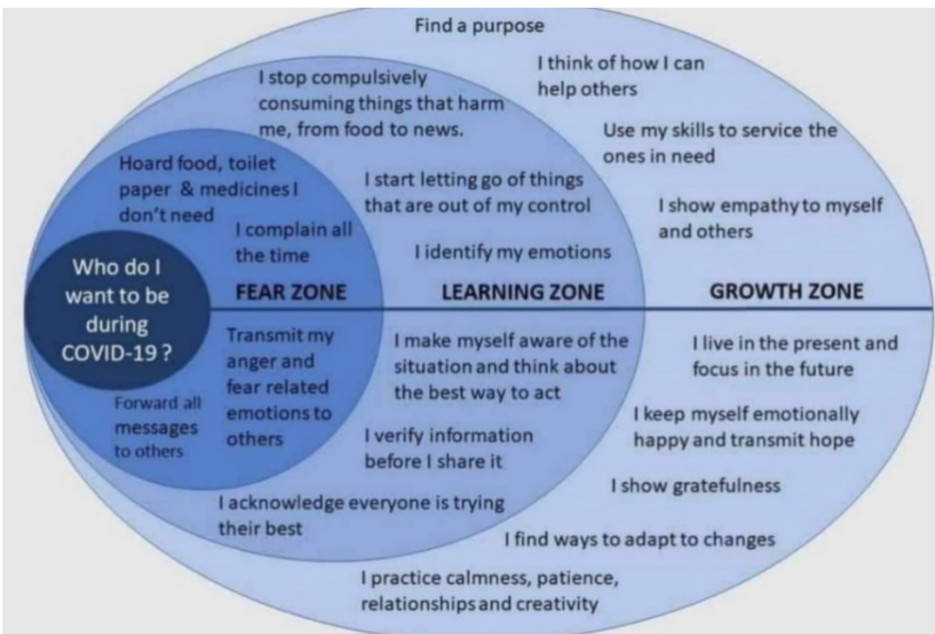
Around this time, a colleague shared this image that she found on Facebook\*. When I saw it, everything clicked. This was exactly what I had been wrestling with since the beginning, neatly organized in a chart! (It's the little things.)

I was finally able to articulate that I was SO over being in the **fear zone** (my first breaking point), but I wasn't quite fully embracing the **learning zone** either, as exemplified by my overconsumption of treats and Netflix.

What this visual really gave me was the answer to my question during that early morning walk: Who do I want to be? Turns out, I want to be firmly and gracefully in the **growth zone**: Finding a purpose, helping others, showing empathy, practicing gratefulness and more.

I don't yet know exactly how I'm going to get there or feel confident that I won't be confronting "breaking point, parts III & IV" sometime soon, but I'm so thankful that I can now articulate where I want to be. Oftentimes, that's the first step.

If you're at breaking points 1, 2, 3 or more, I hope you'll also find some ideas in this chart as you try to determine for yourself: **Who do you want to be during COVID-19?**



\*This is the closest image credit I could find: <https://blauberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CIRCLE-COVID-19-Safety-Health.pdf>



## WAYS TO HELP

We've received a number of calls wondering what to do with the \$1200 checks people have received. We have a number of options.

- 1) Consider making a special gift to our partners at Tapestry. Make a check out to Shepherd of the Hills with Tapestry in the memo line.
- 2) Consider making a special gift to ICA for rental assistance. Go to [www.icafoodshelf.org](http://www.icafoodshelf.org) to make a direct contribution.
- 3) Consider making a special gift to help a family at SOTH. Contact [pastor.scott@sothchurch.com](mailto:pastor.scott@sothchurch.com) if you'd like to support a member of our congregation.
- 4) Consider making a special gift to Shepherd. We were not able to take advantage of the PPP loan program. We anticipate a decline in giving as we are away. A special gift will help ensure our staff and ministry are well supported during this time.

# Staff Reflection

## Christ is Risen continued

Christ is still coming. We know that the incredible power of God's love is working on us all and that something miraculous is coming. I'm not sure what it looks like yet and it might seem like bad news for those of us with power and privilege. But, Easter is coming and the tomb we find ourselves in will be empty one day and with trumpets sounding out and hymns of praise sung together, we will proclaim that the Kingdom is come and that Christ is truly risen in our presence. Peace be with you in this continued time of Lenten confession and sorrow.

## Pastor's Message continued from page 1

I'm reminded in this that we can't make meaning out of grief and loss in the moments that it is happening. Even Jesus had to sit in whatever darkness the tomb held for two nights. At the same time, I feel there is something hopeful about allowing the grief to just be for a while. There is something healing that needs to take place and you can't and shouldn't rush. Know that there are many who are sitting in what feel like tombs waiting for sunshine and Easter. You are not alone. Jesus is with you in your grief. Jesus is with you in your mourning. Jesus is with you in whatever you are feeling. This is not a normal time, but the feelings are common, and Jesus has experienced them all. For you and with you!



## CHRIST IS RISEN ... BUT LENT REMAINS

By Deacon Brian Henning

I was looking forward to Easter. I was looking forward to Holy Week as I do every year. Something you may not know about me is that Good Friday is actually my most favorite day in the Church year. For me, Good Friday is what it is all about; the foundation of our faith are the events of Good Friday. Plus, the pomp and circumstance, the symbolism of the liturgy, and the music and the words are all just so meaningful to me. As I said, I was looking forward to Holy Week.

Then, on the Tuesday of Holy Week I received the call that my Grandmother was found unconscious and was taken to the hospital. Over the next 45 minutes a conversation that went from the question, "what's going on," quickly turned to, "we're going to lose her." It was unbelievably shocking. And just like that, she was gone. For the first time ever, I missed all of Holy Week, even though I felt more like one of Christ's disciples more than ever on Tuesday.

Easter came and went and Lent is suddenly over. But, it stills feels like Lent to me. It's hard for me to tell if this is true because of the events of Holy Week in my family or if it is because of everything else going on. I was hoping that Easter was going to be a feeling of triumph. I couldn't wait to proclaim that Christ is Risen and that nothing else was going to matter. I couldn't wait to hear the hymns that we know so well and feel the presence of the resurrected hope in the midst of the gloom and darkness. Well, I don't know about you, but while I may have proclaimed Christ is Risen, I still feel deep in the trenches of Lent.

We live in challenging, unprecedented times. How many times have you heard that phrase? No matter what we may have proclaimed and no matter what that proclamation used to mean, we still dwell in the times and they are hard and upsetting. I realized that even though we have proclaimed the empty tomb, we are still in a place of confession and preparation for Easter. We are still in a place where we are learning the things of which we should confess and we are learning what it might truly look like to live in the Kingdom of God in which Jesus spoke so much about in those parables. We are still in Lent no matter what the Church calendar may say.

I believe that we are being called to confess. We are being called to continue to self-examine and to take a hard look in the mirror. We are called to discover what the Kingdom is actually about. And most importantly, we know that the hope of the empty tomb and the Risen

*Continued above*





## THE PARABLE OF THE LONG SPOONS

By Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse

Usually after the high of Easter, it feels like we often spin into the many busy aspects of spring; the weather warms up, and we start dreaming of summer. This year feels different due to the pandemic. While there certainly are silver linings to some aspects of this shelter at home, there are also many, many things we are all grieving and have lost for an unknown length of time or maybe forever.

As many of you know I am, overall, a big fan of author, social worker, teacher Brené Brown. During the pandemic, she has started a podcast called, “Unlocking Us.” In one of the episodes, she interviews well-known author and grief researcher, David Kessler. Kessler, who co-authored books with the famous grief author, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, has recently published a book on grief called, *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*. (I highly recommend listening to this podcast!!) In Kessler’s book, he tells “The Parable of the Long Spoons.” In the parable, a person is ushered into the gates of hell. He finds things are made of gold, there are beautiful lush gardens everywhere, and he can smell a wonderfully aromatic meal. He arrives at the dining hall and all the people are pale, emaciated and crying out in hunger. He realizes their spoons are so long they cannot get them to their own mouths to eat, so they are starving. Then he is led into the next room and told it is the dining room of heaven. Here it is also beautiful, and the smell of food is wonderful. He finds people using similarly long spoons, but they are feeding the one across the table from them and getting fed in return.

Kessler talks about how, when we are in crisis, if we do kind things for other people even when we also feel in need, we get as much back in return during the process. Similar to what we know about gratitude practices, acts of kindness help our mental and physical health, our overall wellbeing.

One last thing. You notice in the parable the long spoon is used to give and to receive. Sometimes we are good givers but struggle to receive help. Receiving allows the other person to experience the heavenly joy of giving. Please accept their gift.

With this in mind, we have been, and will be, looking for more ways than ever to serve one another and others in our community as a way to help us move through grief and make meaning of all that has been lost in this pandemic. We know the difference between heaven and hell is not riches; it is how we treat one another, especially in times of crisis and change.

Wishing you long spoons to share with and receive from others,  
Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse

## FABRIC MASKS

There are fabric masks for those who need them, contact Kaye Wothe (952-250-2566) to learn how to add to our mask supply or get a fabric mask.

## ADVANCED DIRECTIVE

The COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder to make sure you have an Advanced Directive complete. If you need forms or assistance please let Kaye Wothe know.

## MENTAL HEALTH CONNECT

### HOW DO I CONTACT A NAVIGATOR FROM MENTAL HEALTH CONNECT IF I NEED HELP?

Call 612-312-3377 and ask for Mental Health Connect staff or call 952-212-8051 to reach a navigator directly.

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
500 Blake Road South  
Edina, MN 55343

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