

WHITEWATER MENNONITE CHURCH

April 5th, 2020

PALM SUNDAY

BULLETIN UPDATE

FROM THE PASTOR's Desk:

- ❖ Bible Reading: Monday, April 6: Numbers 24-25, John 3, Psalm 71
Video overview of John from the Bible Project. For subtitles, click CC" on the bottom right of the video screen.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-2e9mMf7E8>
- ❖ Current Covid-19 updates, Manitoba Health's website. <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/>
- ❖ Here is a story with graphics that explain the 'why' of quarantine and social distancing.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/corona-simulator/>
- Boissevain Ministerial: - Suggesting 9 am prayers for health, community, nation, world.



'Unprecedented' part 1.

That's what many of us have said about the current situation. I've said it. But is it? Our memories, as Late-Modern consumer capitalists, are pretty short. (So short, they can foist new fashions and fads onto us with the changing of the season.) Our elders don't much tell *the stories*, *the stories* only go back a generation, and our youngers don't often ask and listen for them. But plague and pestilence have swept through communities from as far back as recorded history. In our Bible read through, we read (or will read) in Numbers 14, 17, 25 of plagues killing the wandering, rebellious Israelites. Multiple times in a single generation. Almost one hundred times, the NRSV speaks of plague or pestilence in the OT. Plague and pestilence, *reshech* and *deber*, accompany the LORD's terrible appearance in Habakkuk's theophany vision (Hb 3:5). That appearance wrought a *salvation* for the LORD's anointed so terrifying that the prophet's bones rot (Hb 3:16) and he composes some of my favorite lines in the entire canon. A different kind of stiff-necked, determined, stubbornness: faith.

"Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines;
though the produce of the olive fails, and the fields yield no food;
though the flock is cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation.
GOD, the Lord, is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and makes me tread upon the heights.
(Hab. 3:17-19 NRS)

Salvation is not an easy, traumaless rescue--for God either. Pray for it.

(Hints are already present in our Numbers reading. And, SPOILER: Palm Sunday is not the high point of the Christian story.)

Neither is communion with God a safe, tame experience. But, pray for it.

(Again, see the Israelites' experience in the wilderness. God is long suffering, but no pushover.)

The prophet affirms "I will rejoice," "I will exalt" (in both the sense of a future action and in the sense of a commitment to act) because "God is my strength. . . he makes my feet like a deer's, and makes me tread upon the heights."

The prophet's own present strength is God's own strength. In the language of Genesis (1:30, 2:7), Ezekiel (37) or John (3:5-8, 20:22) his very breath* comes from God. May even be, God's own ever present Spirit. Our situation is precarious and certainly tedious, but not unprecedented... Admit it, all of it. Whether you're as frightened or bold or grimly assured as the prophet Habakkuk, God is closer to you than your own breath. Salvation is already wrought, here and, best of all, coming. If you're already bubbly and joyful in this moment, *please* share your good pleasure with a neighbor over the fence, through the screen door, by a phone call, or video chat.

*"breath", "wind", "spirit", "Spirit" are all the same word in Hebrew (*ruach*) and Greek (*pneuma*).



Stewardship: Please drop offering envelopes in **Peter Neufeld's** mailbox. Bills need to be paid.

PRAYER, PRAISE, BLESSINGS & REFLECTION

- Health, healing, comfort: **Brenda Neufeld** (Jake & Anne's DIL)
- Milestones: **Zane Heide, Natasha Heide, Heather Goertzen**
- Be on the look-out for a **Pen Pal** connection coming soon.
- Communicate with residents @ **Evergreen & Westview** via I-Pad.
To make arrangements and connect: **Westview** - 204 534 2455, **Evergreen** - 204 534 3337
- Praise & Thanks: CMU Outtatown Discipleship Group arrived home from Guatemala.
- Thanks to health care staff, RCMP, EMT's, store cashiers, gas pump attendants and many others whom are dealing head on with covid-19 situations.



- ✚ April: 9 ~ Maundy Thursday, 10 ~ Good Friday, 12 ~ Easter
- ✚ Return to normal church scheduling is directly related to government guidelines.

COMMUNITY AND YONDER:

- Ω For Services, Sermons & other, visit: MCCa <https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/worshipservices>
MCM <https://mennochurch.mb.ca/>
CMU Spring @ CMU, Friday, April 3: cmu.ca/springatcmu
- Ω Church Building Committee Mar, 1960, began the initial planning for new church to be built in Boissevain.
Peter Cornelson, George G Fast, Jake J Heide, Jacob P Dyck & Peter Franz
- Ω **APTN Documentary - First Contact Australia:** series that shines a light on a deep divide by taking a group of six non-Indigenous people, from different walks of life and with strong and varied opinions, and immersing them into Aboriginal Australia for the first time. <https://www.aptn.ca/firstcontactau/>

Anyone who has grown mentally, physically, or spiritually knows that growth is not found in comfort." Unknown

A PRAYER FOR HEALING

As Voices Together is undertaking permissions work (seeking copyright contracts) in this period between January and June, we offer a song and a worship resource that may speak into the disorientation of these days of COVID-19. The following excerpt from the forthcoming Voices Together "Worship Leader Edition" frames some of the gifts received when worshipping with voices from the past:

"Connecting with the past in worship today is a way to remember God's faithfulness to all generations. It is a way to join our local communities with a vibrant church that has followed Jesus in diverse cultures and circumstances. It is a way to keep the struggles of the present in perspective. Recognizing God's faithfulness throughout a history marked by constant change can free us from a fear of change and a fear of the future."

Everlasting God, On You I Call is a new song adapted from a (13-stanza) song by Annelein of Freiburg, a 16th century Anabaptist, martyred for her faith in 1529. Susan Dengler adapted Annelein's text in 2019. Voices Together pairs these words with a new tune (ANNELEIN'S PRAYER) by Anneli Loepp Thiessen. May Annelein's prayer offer comfort and sustenance as we abide in God's love in these chaotic days.

Prayer for Healing is a new worship resource written for Voices Together by the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee.



Everlasting God, On You I Call

ANNELEIN'S PRAYER 9.8.8.8

C maj7 Am9 Dm7 Gsus G C maj7

1 Ev - er - last - ing God, on you I call. Oh, may I
 2 Un - to you, I raise my wear - y soul. In tri - als,
 3 When I walk through death, I am sus - tained. I know you'll

Am9 Dm7 Gsus G E E/G# Am

nev - er turn from you; and keep me in your
 I am in your care. In sor - row, tor - ture,
 al - ways be my guide. E - ter - nal God, I

C/G F C/E Dm7 F dim7 C

grace and truth, my strength and shield till life is through.
 fear, and want, still I'm as - sured that you are there.
 cry to you. For - ev - er keep me by your side.

Text: based on the writings of Annelein of Freiburg (present-day Germany), 16th c.; Susan Naus Dengler (USA), © 2019 Susan Naus Dengler

Music: Anneli Loepp Thiessen (Canada), © 2019 Anneli Loepp Thiessen

Prayer for Healing

Individuals may choose to join the leader in speaking any or all of the lines in bold.

Leader: Great Physician,
 you touched the lives of the sick and the troubled;
 your hands rested on bodies in crisis;
 your words soothed broken hearts.
 We call on you today, O God,
 because we need your healing.

People: When we have pain, bring relief.
 When we are disoriented, bring clarity.
 When we confront disease or brokenness, bring healing.
 When we wait for tests or news, bring patience.
 When we live with barriers, bring courage.
 When we are bound by addiction, bring freedom.
 When illness separates us from others, bring friendship.
 When we cannot make ends meet, help us.

Leader: You are with us in loneliness, bringing comfort.
 You are with us in despair, bringing hope.
 You are the God who cares and heals.