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Are we there yet?

It is almost a year now since the world closed because of the pandemic. And I am sure you will agree with me in concluding that the changes that happened to the world made us feel that many years have passed. I certainly feel that I have been pastoring for a long time...no complaints there for sure. Our life has become the cycle of ambivalence of being in a fast and snail pace, and the cycle does not seem to end. I sometimes feel like a hamster in a wheel...no matter how fast I run, I am not getting anywhere...I feel like I am not accomplishing anything.

It is fact that the last 11 (almost 12) months have been very challenging. Personally, it has been a roller coaster for me, in terms of experiencing high and low emotions – and yes, all in sudden surges and dips. To share my personal story, my high points were 1 – finishing my masters’ degrees and being recognized 3 times, 2 – becoming a Licensed Local Pastor, 3 – being appointed to my first congregation, and 3 – getting married to my partner of 4 years. The low points were 1 – not being able to celebrate my graduation, 2 – not able to travel to UAE to see my siblings (they are now safe back in the Philippines, and still not able to see them for 7 years now), 3 – celebration of my wedding was cancelled, 4 – not seeing friends and love ones from the Philippines because of the postponement of the General Conference, 5 – my father contracted (but recovered) CoVid in late October, not able to celebrate holidays with my parents, and they had to see me get married via Zoom.

The world experienced a lot of low points. On top of the hardship that brought to all of us, we heard/read natural disasters happening around the world. I made a quick search, and this is what I found:

These are the 10 deadliest natural disasters of 2020

1. January - March 2020: Australian Bushfires Kill at Least 478 People
2. November 2020: Hurricane Eta Kills At Least 150 People in Central America
3. August 2020: Flash Floods Kill More Than 150 People in Afghanistan

Be a part of the worship service

Email Pastor Riva at leadpastor@communitymethodistchurch.org for details.

Nancy's Niche

Love as God's GPS

The way of love will show us the right thing to do, every single time. It is moral and spiritual grounding--and a place of rest--amid the chaos that is often part of life. It's how we stay decent in indecent times."

--Bishop Michael Curry (*Love is the Way*, p. 27)

As I write this, China, the United Arab Emirates, and the USA are all celebrating their Martian adventures. Minnesota has a new vaccine enrollment website. And our winter weather will start a warming trend. But my family members in Austin and Dallas are still dealing with the aftermath of freaky freezing weather there, still needing to boil their water after going through several days of flushing toilets with snowmelt. Minneapolis is gearing up for the trial of Derek Chauvin in March with worries about violence on the streets and young democracy protestors in Myanmar are facing crackdowns. So Episcopal Bishop Michael Curry's subtitle for his book *Love is the Way* is resonating with me--"*Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times.*"

This Lent, Bishop Curry's book is being read across the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. He sincerely believes that only love can change the world. In his view, love is not a feeling or sentiment, "Love is a firm commitment to act for the well-being of someone other than yourself" (14). He compares love to a GPS system--where love tells one where to go, what to do. In basic terms, tuning in to God's GPS means that we ask ourselves if what we are about to do is just about "me" or is it about "we"? As he asks, "Does this decision serve only my unenlightened self-interest, or does it

(*Nancy's Niche—Continued on page 8*)

Mission:

To bring people into Christian Community, in order to grow in God's love, as demonstrated by Christ, for the transformation of the world.

Vision:

We are a welcoming, diverse Christian Community, reflective of our neighborhood, actively working to serve our community through our demonstration of God's love. We want to Reach others through God's love, Grow in faith with God's love, and Send people out with God's love.

CUMC's Statement of Reconciliation:

Community United Methodist Church of Columbia Heights believes that we are all children of God, individuals of sacred worth, created in God's image with our many differences, and that God loves all people. We recognize that God's love is not limited by boundaries. Therefore, we welcome and affirm people of all ages, races, ethnicities, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations, socio-economic statuses, physical capabilities, or mental abilities.

We believe that prejudice, hatred, or discrimination directed toward any individual or group is contrary to the life, spirit, and teaching of Jesus Christ. We have vowed to accept the freedom and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice, and oppression. Therefore, we shall work to eliminate prejudice and discriminatory practices within ourselves and our community, and to show God's grace. We proclaim ourselves a Reconciling Congregation and welcome all who seek a relationship with God.

Adopted 11/3/2019



Set your clocks ahead before you go to bed Saturday, March 6. Daylight Savings Time starts early in the morning on Sunday, March 7!



- Joanie Anderson 3/06
- Duane Daehn 3/09
- John Rusnacko, Jr. 3/09
- Stephanie Bordewick 3/09
- Margie Kottom 3/13
- Shirley Fenn 3/14
- Aspen Donnelly 3/14
- Gavin Forga 3/17
- Rondine Mehling 3/20
- Lennis Bentrud 3/21
- Paul Donnelly 3/25
- Martha Snipstad 3/27
- Anna Lexvold 3/28
- Donald Orvis 3/30
- Angela Forga 3/30

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Watch for the update next month, as we were missing the information to update you this month.

Covid-Vaccine Connector

Here's the link so you can sign up to get notified when it's your turn to get the COVID-19 Vaccine. We want you to be healthy so we can visit each other soon! <https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/connector/>

Community Meals Resume in March!



The church will be offering drive-thru meals, on the 2nd. and 4th Monday of each month. The time that we will be handing out meals to members of the church and the community will be from 5:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. Walk-ups can also receive a meal as well. There is no cost for the meal but we will accept a free-will offering.

Welcome Fred Carter as cook when this happens. Fred was a cook back in Texas when he was in High School. He started out as a dishwasher, busboy, short order cook, breakfast cook, and dinner cook. So cooking has been a passion of his for many years. Recently Fred was approached by Anna Lexvold and was asked if he wanted to take over the responsibilities of Jim Reinholdson. He accepted the offer and studied for the exam and took the exam on 2/3/21. Recently was notified via email that he had successfully passed the exam and is now am a ServSafe Manager. Fred is really looking forward to serving all that come to the Community Meals, as well as working with the members of the meal team and all the volunteers that will help in meeting the needs of the community.

- Fred Carter

March is Food Share Month

Though the pandemic continues about us, the need for food continues. This year, bring your donations for SACA to the church parking lot entryway on Tuesdays, Wednesday, or Thursdays during March. We'll make sure they get to SACA.

Thank you for continuing your care of those around us.

Winter Meal Program



Every Meal is excited to expand food access during the winter months through community partnerships. December through March (while supplies last).

The New Brighton Community Center (400 10th St. NW, New Brighton, MN 55112) is proud to partner with Every Meal to provide FREE meal bags full of 4-5 pounds of nutritious, non-perishable food including a variety of fruits, vegetables, proteins, grains, and entrees.

Meal bags are free for all families. There are no qualification requirements and no contact information will be collected. Simply pick up a bag in the front entry of the New Brighton Community Center while supplies last. Learn more at www.everymeal.org/winter.

UMCOR Sunday

March 14 is UMCOR Sunday. Please consider sending your financial gifts to UMCOR. Our gifts for this will fund the administration, so that other donations can be used fully. Here's the link:

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/umcor-sunday-ministry-article>

Ways to Give Your Financial Gifts

There are two options for e-giving:

- 1) Via smart phone (Android or Apple): The **Give+** app. The apps are available from the appropriate places.
- 2) Via our [webpage](#), which will direct you to a secure-site.

On our webpage are video examples of both these e-giving options.

- 3) And you can continue to give via checks and mail. Send them in to:

Community UMC
950 Gould Ave NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55421

Thank you. We appreciate your support.



From the UMW Corner

It's wonderful to be using the church space for small groups once again.

The UMW will be holding a drive by bake sale in place of our salad luncheon - so hope to greet many at the door or at your car. The bake sale will be open on **March 27th from 9-12.**

Remember the Eve Circle has changed their meeting time to the 4th Tuesday of the month at 2pm. Watch the bulletins for place and topic --March 23rd at 2 p.m.

UMW is meeting on March 3rd at 11 a.m. in the John Wesley room. The agenda will include finalizing the bake sale and dispersing monies on hand.

Hope to see you in person soon.

- Anna Lexvold

Church Gift Shop

If you wish to buy items from the church gift shop, contact Pat Good (phone 651-348-6688). These items can be picked up on Wednesday mornings at 11 A.M.

Masks and Future Worship

When the time is right for us to worship together (safely distanced) at the church, we would like to offer masks to those who may not have brought their own.

If you feel you could donate masks, please bring the masks by the church on Wednesday mornings.

Thanks for helping us keep God's children and our brothers and sisters safe.

Share and Care

Remember your friends and family in need of support at this time. Call or email Barb Miller (763-788-8071, bem3966@comcast.net) if you need prayers for a loved one. Contact Anna Lexvold (763-572-1437) if you know of someone who needs on-going support from the Care and Share team.

Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Inclusive Community

Pastor Nancy

When Pastors Riva and Nancy were appointed to CUMC last July, the Minnesota Annual Conference invited them to step into a Cross-racial/Cross-cultural Ministry Program--not only with one another, but with the congregation too. Remember how from the start, Pastor Riva offered the gift of her Filipina benediction--first in Tagalog and then in English. Throughout this year, Riva has shared from her culture with stories, delicious food, her identity and wisdom. We celebrate that our Annual Conference is committed to the Spirit's gift of diversity, ministries of reconciliation and racial/cultural justice, and the multi-cultural embodiment of the Body of Christ. We are on a journey of mutual learning.

This year, there are 4 other congregations in our cohort who have joined together with CUMC. A cross-racial/cross-cultural appointment is when a clergy person is appointed across racial/ethnic and cultural lines and the pastor(s) and the congregation work together to live out the good News of Jesus Christ in their ministry context. With a world of changing demographics and changing congregations, cross-racial/cross-cultural ministries support the strategic mission of the UMC to grow in love of God and neighbor, reach new people and heal a broken world.

The first year of this program involves a learning covenant process for a small team of congregational members invited by Pastors Riva and Nancy. Participants include Jan Johnson (team point-person), Fred Carter, Rondine Mehling, James Bordewick, and Veronica Johnson. We will meet once a month online with the leader of this program, Rev. Dana Neuhauser, who is a deacon appointed to New City Church, in Minneapolis, as the Minister of Public Witness. Dana brings a heart for racial and environmental justice and a passion for nurturing disciples. She is also a Qualified Administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and a trained intercultural competency facilitator. We will get to

Core Team Update

Les Johnson

One thing the pandemic has given us is time to re-think some of the things we are doing or take for granted. For the Core Team and our Pastors, this has allowed us to examine how we are functioning and to look at ways we can improve as a church organization. Over the last couple of months we have been dealing with decisions about how to manage "church" in a remote way and with other administrative decisions. We have also been looking at how we can be more effective in our leadership. So, with the help of our Pastor Riva, we are refining our definition of the Core Team and how we manage the activities of the church. Based on feedback from church members one of the biggest changes is to address how we manage missions, outreach, worship, and other areas that were managed by standing committees in the past. I won't go into all the details here, but as we move forward we will be putting much more attention in those areas and be reaching out to people to lead and participate in these important aspects of our church life.

So, stay tuned for more details as we move forward through these difficult times toward a new future and a new focus on how we "do church".

know one another and explore what "inclusive community" means for our small group and write a covenant to support our cross-racial/cross-cultural learning. Our District Superintendent Dan Johnson will also meet with us, and we will meet with the other church cohorts on occasion as well.

This initial part of the program will go until the end of 2021. The next phase in 2022, we will bring our learning to the congregation as we continue to work together in ministry.

(Pastor Riva—Continued from page 1)

4. October 2020: Earthquake and Tsunami Kill 117 People in Greece and Turkey
5. May 2020: Cyclone Amphan Kills More Than 85 People in Bangladesh and India
6. August 2020: Hurricane Laura Kills 77 People in Louisiana and Texas, the Dominican Republic and Haiti
7. January 2020: Flash Floods in Indonesia Kills 66 People
8. January 2020: Earthquake kills 41 People in Turkey
9. January 2020: Volcano Eruption in the Philippines Kills 39 People
10. November 2020: Typhoon Kills 42 People in Philippines

Additionally, here in our own 'backyard' (Minnesota) we witnessed the murder of George Floyd fueled violence in different states and even some countries as the reality of racial injustice is deeply ingrained in our society and our lives, on top of the murders of BIPOC that are happening. Then, we heard about the deadly attack in the country's capital because of the false narrative with the goal of dismantling the democratic process of this country. All of these problems were topped by the death toll in the pandemic that cannot seem to end. We always here that we need to flatten the curve, but are we? As a foreigner of the US, I would say that the only high point was electing new leaders that offers hope in the challenges that are before us.

I feel like we are in a very bumpy, dusty, hot/humid and very restraining, in other words – uncomfortable ride that never seemed to end. I just want for this long and uncomfortable ride/drive to end. I have become like a kid who constantly asks 'are we there yet?', and then after a short time would ask again – 'are we there yet?' ...at the same time, I am also the adult with the kid who repetitively asking...I am so close to having a meltdown.

Unfortunately, there is not much to do...and a meltdown, no matter how close it is, is not an option. I simply have to carry on, continuing this tiring and agonizing ride/drive. I know that some of you maybe in that place, too. In a way, I feel comfort that I am not alone – that we are all in this together. I hope that like me, you are also comforted with that thought. That no matter how distressing our journey is, we are in this together. In this predicament, I would like to offer you the comfort that I find in the Scripture – particularly Deuteronomy 31:6 (NRSV) – 'Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you'. These words were spoken by Moses to the people of Israel who are experiencing the tiredness from walking in the wilderness to get to the Promised Land. They are losing hope because their leader, Moses, is very old and would not be able to continue the journey. The people of Israel were by all accounts losing all of the hope that they can muster. The only comfort that they have are the words that God is with them.

There is no way of knowing when this arduous journey will end. The answer to the question 'are we there yet?' is unknown. We can pretend that we are okay in everything that is happening around us, or not, either way, there is no telling when we will be able to go back to how are lives were before the pandemic, or not. The answer to the question, 'are we there yet?' is no. We are not there yet, and we do not know when we will get there but let us not forget that God is with us. We are travelling, albeit comfortable, that God is with us...and that can be a source of comfort.

Enjoy the warm up!

Blessings,
Pastor Riva

(Nancy's Niche—Continued from page 2)

somehow serve the greater good" (26)?

Bishop Curry invites us to consider the Apostle Paul's famous love-passage from 1 Cor. 13 in further clarifying whether we are acting in terms of "me or we". But I'd like to paraphrase Paul's words with a twist in terms of what love is (the *via positiva*), rather than what love is not (the *via negativa*):

- Try to extend your patience. (13:4a)
- Try to recognize others as having wisdom too (13:4b).
- Try to catch yourself before insisting on your own way (13:5).
- Try to respond with consideration rather than criticism (13:6).

As Curry points out, the letter to the Corinthians was written originally to a congregation facing challenges, quite different than the usual wedding context. (Though avoiding criticism of one's partner is a good thing too!) So this Lent, maybe we could try out Bishop Curry's love-wisdom as we reflect on how we could embody love more fully in our congregation. If you find yourself at some point thinking any of the following, try shifting "me" to "we" (or "us" or "our") and see what happens:

- "This is what I want to do."
- "This is my tradition."
- "This is my church home."
- "This is what is good for me in worship."
- "Only I can do this because 'I know what is best.'"

Tech support ministry

If you think you need help in checking out your electronic devices as you participate in our virtual service, send us office@communitymethodistchurch.org or leadpastor@communitymethodistchurch.org a note and we can send someone to come check it out for you (following safety guidelines and protocol).



What changes do you notice in your thinking and doing when you come at things more from a we-mindset?

Bishop Curry's writing is personal, confessional, honest and empathetic. He knows what it is like to lose and grieve, and also "rest in God's hands" (43). He shares his own challenges growing from a me-mindset to a we-commitment, ultimately for the sake of life on our planet. Avoiding the sentimental, he believes that love is fierce--it's a verb and an action "with force and follow-through" (19).

This Lent, as we follow Jesus' way of love, on his journey to Jerusalem, let's see if we can practice the discipline of love. And join us on Sunday mornings at 9am on zoom, or Wednesday in the Bible Study at church to talk more about Bishop Curry's Love is the Way.

Emergency Phone Number

Please call **612-757-7115** if you have an emergency that cannot wait until the office phone is checked.

Consider Serving on Core Team

Dear Beloveds of Community UMC,

As 2021 is moving along, it is time for our faith circle to look into the transition that we are about to experience. One of the most notable transitions that we are about to embark is the change of the folks who are serving in the CORE Team. For those who are unaware, the CORE Team is the leadership team of Community UMC. It is composed of individuals who are serving in a three-year term to facilitate the 'operating businesses' of the church together with the Pastor/s and the Staff. The current CORE Leadership Team was elected in 2018 through a Charge Conference, and the term will end on June 30, 2021.

To make the transition smooth and easy, we will soon have a Church Conference – date to be announced later, to elect the next group of folks who will serve in the leadership roles in our congregation.

I am writing this note to invite you in a prayerful discernment about the leadership of Community UMC. Here's how:

1. Meditate and contemplate – consider if you would like to serve in the CORE Team. Do not worry about the position at this point. We will discern it together.
2. Email me – leadpastor@communitymethodistchurch.org to signify your intent between midnight of February 15 – noon of March 31, 2021. All of the emails will be confidential. This will give me and the Nominations Team ample time to converse, pray and discern with you. Members of the Nominations Team will be announced later.

The first year of my appointment is challenging, but I am grateful that you were all there to support me. It is my hope that we will continue to support each other as we navigate the journey of being the church that God is calling Community UMC to be.

Blessings,

Pastor Riva

March Calendar

Wednesday, March 3

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Book Study (Wesley Room)
- 11:00 a.m. UMW Meeting (Wesley Room)

Sunday, March 7

- 9:00 a.m. [Adult Sunday School \(Zoom\)](#)
- 10:00 a.m. [Worship – Worship Broadcast \(FB\)](#)
- 11:00 a.m. [Zoom Fellowship](#)
- 7:00 p.m. Children's Sunday School

Monday, March 8

- 5:30 p.m. Community Meal (Drive Thru)

Tuesday, March 9

- 6:30 p.m. Core Team Meeting (Zoom)

Wednesday, March 10

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Book Study (Wesley Room)

Sunday, March 14

- 9:00 a.m. [Adult Sunday School \(Zoom\)](#)
- 10:00 a.m. [Worship – Worship Broadcast \(FB\)](#)
- 11:00 a.m. [Zoom Fellowship](#)
- 7:00 p.m. Children's Sunday School

Wednesday, March 17

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Book Study (Wesley Room)

Saturday, March 20

Newsletter Deadline for April issue

Sunday, March 21

- 9:00 a.m. [Adult Sunday School \(Zoom\)](#)
- 10:00 a.m. [Worship – Worship Broadcast \(FB\)](#)
- 11:00 a.m. [Zoom Fellowship](#)
- 7:00 p.m. Children's Sunday School

Monday, March 22

- 5:30 p.m. Community Meal (Drive Thru)

Tuesday, March 23

- 2:00 p.m. Eve Circle

Wednesday, March 24

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Book Study (Wesley Room)

Thursday, March 25

- 7:00 p.m. Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Inclusive Community (Zoom)

Friday, March 26

- 9:00 a.m. Packaging Cookies for Bake Sale

Saturday, March 27

- 9 a.m.—noon UMW Drive Through Bake Sale

Sunday, March 28—Palm Sunday

- 9:00 a.m. [Adult Sunday School \(Zoom\)](#)
- 10:00 a.m. [Worship – Worship Broadcast \(FB\)](#)
- 11:00 a.m. [Zoom Fellowship](#)
- 7:00 p.m. Children's Sunday School



**COMMUNITY UNITED
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REACH, GROW, SEND WITH GOD'S LOVE

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<http://www.communitymethodistchurch.org>

Lead Pastor Riva Tabelisma
Teaching Pastor Nancy Victorin-Vangerud

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Easter Lily Order Form— and Memorials Donations

We will be offering Easter Lilies to those you would like to purchase one in Memory of, or Honor of loved ones. If you would like to order a lily please submit the order form below to the church office, or call Karen Schneider, 612-269-9924. Orders must be received by **March 22** with your payment. Checks should be made to:

Community United Methodist Church.

You also have the option to donate the amount of the lily to our Community Meal fund in memory or honor of your loved ones if you prefer to donate and not actually receive a lily.

Your lily can be picked up at church on **Saturday, April 3** between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m.
The cost per lily is \$9.00.

Number of Lilies: _____ Amount Paid \$ _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Given by: _____

