



The Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of
Hillcrest United Methodist Church

July 2020

From Pastor Kerry

I found this Upper Room prayer that is appropriate for what's been happening lately in our country.

Pastor Kerry

Here Lies Love:

A Litany for a Community Encircling the Grave of Someone Whose Life Was Tragically Lost
By Osheta Moore

I'm sitting in a dark room listening to Yo Yo Ma and crying over the death of another Black teen I saw on the news—this one for playing his music too loudly. I'm remembering the teen boy in my community who was killed in a drive-by shooting and how the kids at the center where I worked grieved so deeply for him. I'm angered by migrant children dying of thirst and homeless people dying of exposure. I'm confused by the death of a mother whose daughters are still toddlers. I want to honor these lives by grieving their deaths well, but I'm overcome. I'm trying to remember Jesus—not only as the crucified one but also as the victor over sin and death.

In reality, grief is always breathtaking and core-shaking. Grief takes us completely out of our depth—no matter how much we try to prepare. Wearing sackcloth and ashes, lamenting and fasting, pausing and praying feel like the only appropriate responses. How do we carry our grief to Jesus when it's embedded in our soul?

As followers of Christ, we are not in uncharted territory. Jesus warns us, "In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!" (John 16:33). He reminds us, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live" (John 11:25). When grief comes, I want to acknowledge this truth while also not rushing to the solution of my pain too quickly. I don't want Jesus to be victor quite yet. I want to know that he sees and shares my grief. So I think about the death of his beloved friend Lazarus and how he himself wept. I think about how death moved the Savior to tears.

I wrote this litany to remind us that though we lay our loved ones to rest and we feel a myriad of emotions, not a single one of them is foreign and unseen by Jesus. So take heart, friends. Let's gather close to our people and proclaim the goodness of our God in spite of our loss.

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ONE: Jesus, you can empathize with us as we grieve. You, Lord, have sat with the trauma of loss. You know the anger, sadness, and confusion that comes when death visits your loved ones. You know because you wept for the loss of your friend. Weep with us today, Lord. We trust in you to meet us in this space. Remind us that we are not alone.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, bring us comfort.

ONE: Lord, teach us the power of lament, and give us courage to weep with those who weep. Surround us and those who have been shaken by tragedy with love and community. Give us new resolve to love ourselves and others fully.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, bring us connection where this death has brought senselessness.

ONE: We do not want to be lost in this grief and overwhelmed by the depths of our despair. We want to hear you calling us to a place of rest. Help us, Jesus, to nestle into the safety of your wings.

ALL: Give us ears to hear you whisper "I am here" to our broken hearts.

ONE: Jesus, our minds swirl with memories of our loved one. We cannot forget their laughter and their vitality. We cannot imagine life without them. We are stunned by the vulnerability of the body, the brevity of our time together.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, bring us comfort. We trust you to work all things together for our good.

ONE: Jesus, our Prince of Peace, true source of wholeness, true bringer of Shalom. Our world is violent, and violence delights in inflicting wounds of suffering and grief. In spite of this, you have called us to be peacemakers. With wounded hearts, you welcome us into your work of binding the wounds of this world.

ALL: Wounded Healer, we choose to partner with you. Help us to be the community we need. Show us how to bear one another's burdens.

ONE: Jesus, our humble King, you are victorious over sin and death. For the joy of true connection with those whom you love and for the joy of reconciliation, you endured the cross. You faced death head on, and you won. Love prevailed, bringing joy from despair.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, and bring us victory over death. It will not overcome us because you have reclaimed the grave for life.

ONE: Show us how to take up our crosses. In surrendering our pain to you so that you can truly connect with us. In not ignoring the depth of our suffering so that your Spirit may guide us back to healing. In resisting hatred, revenge, and division by seeking reconciliation.

ALL: We commit ourselves to you.

ONE: Let us join you in conquering death and all its effects. May we, in the wake of this tragedy, remember the presence of our empathic Priest, the healing love of our Prince of Peace, and the unmatched victory of our humble King.

ALL: Amen

Lifestyles Class

A devotional from *Jesus Our Great Hope*, by Thomas Nelson, may be of encouragement during this time of partial isolation and concern:

He Heals

"I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you." 2 Kings 20:5

"Jesus overcame the world, and He promised that we can overcome it too. But sometimes we really don't feel strong enough to overcome anything. Sometimes we experience life-changing personal losses that leave us feeling downhearted, discouraged, or worse. When we do, we should remember Christ's assurances, and we should remember that God stands ready to protect us. When we are deeply troubled, we must call upon God, and then in His own time and according to His own plan, He will heal us.

Are you anxious? Take those anxieties to God. Are you troubled? Take your troubles to Him. Does your world seem to be trembling beneath your feet? Seek protection from the One who cannot be moved. The same God who created the universe will protect you if you ask Him . . . so ask Him."

Even though our class is still unable to meet in person, we can still be of encouragement to each other by calls, notes, and prayers. We are very blessed to be bound through the love of Jesus Christ and our amazing Father. I'm taking a tutorial on Zoom meetings and will be working with Pastor Kerry to get everything set up so our class can hopefully be able to meet virtually sometime early in July. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

A friendly reminder that "when you're worrying, you're not praying, and when you're praying, you're not worrying." I promise better days are ahead, and we will meet in person again some day. Keep the faith and trust in the God who created the universe to protect you!

Blessings,
Patty



Preschool enrollment has started, and we're getting some responses. We continue to service the needs of our childcare families as best we can. Again, we're asking that the general public ages 65 and over stay out of the building while the children are here, per guidelines given to us by the Family and Social Services Agency. Thank you again for your patience and cooperation with this matter.

Please continue to pray for wisdom, health, and strength for us.

—Lori Loucks, Director

July's Mission of the Month
Team Fox of Michiana

Team Fox of Michiana, an offshoot of the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, was created for independent teams to raise funds for this very important research.

There are Team Fox members all over, and the Michiana team helps find treatments and someday a cure for the many patients in our area.

Team Fox is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization which depends on donations from individuals and businesses of all kinds. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the Team Fox Michiana (Squires) fundraiser will not be held this year. With the virus increasing in numbers in our area, the funds usually donated will not be raised. Last year \$20,000 was raised; since all proceeds go to the all-important research, funding is really needed at this time.

Let's give generously to this important mission that touches the lives of so many individuals in our area. Any loose change in the offering will go to Team Fox Michiana, MJF Foundation.

Thank you,
Missions Committee

Please note: there is no "Serving in Worship" chart for July because the Trustees will be taking care of the necessary responsibilities during our reopening period.

Staff Parish Relations Committee

Please remember Pastor Kerry, Heidi and family as they continue to lead our church during this unprecedented time. The online worship services have been so uplifting, and we sincerely appreciate the time and talents of the members of the Clear family, Charles Mwale, and Mark Gledhill, who have been involved in the online Sunday services and weekly devotionals. We are so blessed to have Pastor Kerry, his family, and our Hillcrest staff who have provided spiritual guidance and encouragement the last few months. Please let them know we appreciate all of them through your notes, cards, and continued prayers!

God Bless,
SPRC Members

Scoutmaster Minute

by Ronn Foster

Summertime is finally here!! I love summertime. It is filled with all sorts of smells and tastes. One of my favorite foods of summertime is a fresh salad from the garden. Too good!

I like to add some radishes for pepperiness. Maybe some cucumbers, tomatoes, bell peppers, onions, cheese, croutons, carrots, egg... Sorry, I digress. To top the whole thing off I like to add a little homemade vinaigrette. Find some good balsamic vinegar and add a little olive oil, garlic, and herbs. Wow!

Now, imagine if the salad was only lettuce. It would still be good, but not as good as it could be. Society is the same way. We, as people, are good. However, we are better together. Every person has a purpose and value.

1 Corinthians 12:15-19 tells us:

If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore of the body. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body?

Though we are all different, we are equal, and part of society. A perfect balance if you will. A society that misses any culture is worse off.

Soon the Boy Scouts will require all Scouts to earn a Diversity merit badge to become an Eagle Scout. One of the requirements is likely to include studying a culture different than one's own, or the contributions to society from another race/culture.

Ask yourself this question: How have I benefited from cultures other than my own?

July Birthdays

6 Corrie Bartell

Antonio Purciarele

8 Henrietta McCaul

10 Tracy Donati

12 Donna Simmons Mast

20 Fannie Miller

Nancy Rowe

28 Chris Ferro

30 Ryan Wireman

July Anniversaries

3 Heidi and Kerry Clear

Please let the office know if your special day was missed.

HILLCREST WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Circle of Friends Stamping Ministry

Friends, I am still designing new cards for this year; now I am working on Christmas designs. We sold out of all our Christmas cards last year, so the designs will be all new. I have had only one gal come occasionally to do special orders. Otherwise we do not have enough room to "social distance" for all the girls to return.

I am going to be putting new cards in the card rack at church. If anyone needs cards, please take what you need and leave the appropriate amount in my mailbox. All cards are \$3.00. I'm putting you on the honor system. Hopefully the second half of 2020 will be better than the first half. Without your support we cannot donate to various missions within Elkhart. Please continue to pray for our group and our nation.

—Marilynn Anson

The Mat Makers

(Sleeping mats for the homeless made from plastic bags.)

2nd Wednesday each month

9:00-app.-11:00 a.m. in the HeBrew Café

Martha Sims and Mary Herschberger, Co-Leaders

Our 35th and 36th sleeping mats were donated to Guidance Ministries in June. Sincere thanks to all who have contributed.

Let's continue to work at home in July, instead of getting together once a month. Choose which part of the process you prefer to contribute:

- Trim tops and bottom seams and flatten out used plastic bags.
- Cut flattened bags into 2-1/2" strips (and recycle the scraps).
- Loop strips together and wind loosely into balls.
- Crochet strips into 3 foot by 6 foot sleeping mats, using a large crochet hook--size N.

You may drop off and pick up supplies in the storage room located just to the left of Hillcrest's kitchen. Please be sure to wear a mask when in the building.

I'm also willing to pick up what you've finished and bring you supplies if you prefer.

Thanks to all who help with this valuable service project. Stay safe and healthy, everyone!

Martha Sims

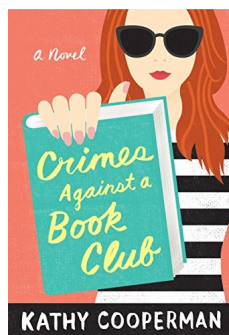
(574) 264-9740 (home) or 596-4918 (mobile)

simsville3537@comcast.net

Hillcrest Women's Book Club

Thursday, July 30, 6:00 p.m.

Diane Lewandowski, Leader

*Crimes Against a Book Club*

by Kathy Cooperman

A Hillcrest book club member suggested we might read something lighter, something for a summer in semi-isolation, something warm about friendship....and featuring a book club. So, we offer *Crimes Against a Book Club*.

The below review is from Good Reads.....it's accurate based on the reading the first few chapters!

Best friends Annie and Sarah need cash—fast. Sarah, a beautiful, successful lawyer, wants nothing more than to have a baby. But balancing IVF treatments with a grueling 80-hour workweek is no walk in the park. Meanwhile, Annie, a Harvard-grad chemist recently transplanted to Southern California, is cutting coupons to afford her young autistic son's expensive therapy.

Desperate, the two friends come up with a brilliant plan: they'll combine Sarah's looks and Annie's brains to sell a "luxury" anti-aging face cream to the wealthy, fading beauties in Annie's La Jolla book club. The scheme seems innocent enough, until Annie decides to add a special—and oh-so-illegal—ingredient that could bring their whole operation crashing to the ground.

Hilarious, intelligent, and warm, *Crimes Against a Book Club* is a delightful look at the lengths women will go to fend for their families and for one another.

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All readers are welcome to participate in the Hillcrest Book Club meetings. We talk and laugh, like and dislike the books....but we listen to all opinions! A fun hour on a Thursday evening in the Hillcrest welcome center (narthex). (While that statement is usually true, in these times we are "talking" by email. Join us by checking out our email addresses with Diane.)

L.I.F.T. (Ladies In Fellowship Together)

1st Tuesday of each month – 9:00 a.m.

Perkins Restaurant (107 N. Pointe Blvd., Elkhart)

As you know, L.I.F.T. is temporarily suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions. We will let you know when we're able to meet again in person.

—Gloria Griffith

Hillcrest United Methodist Church

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Diane Lewandowski

Staff Parish Chair:

Patty Moore

Trustee Co-Chairs:

Gari Lewandowski, Harry Sims

Hillcrest Community Childcare Ministry:

Lori Loucks, Director

574-266-7427

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WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship

10:30 a.m. HeBrew Café fellowship

11:00 a.m. Adult Studies

12:00 p.m. El Refugio Church

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

AUGUST NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: *July 17*