

The Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of
Hillcrest United Methodist Church

August 2020

From Pastor Kerry

Covid at the Clears and Baby Sullivan

What a month (okay what a year, but who's counting!) After months of hearing about Covid—the dreaded Coronavirus—it made an appearance in the Clear household on June 28. Morgan awoke that day, the same as any other day, although she felt a bit tired. She thought nothing of it since she had been up late the night before. About half way through the first service she began to feel weak and when she stood up at the end of service, she felt dizzy. By the time we arrived home after church, Morgan had a 101.2 degree temperature. That is how quickly she went from being symptom-free to showing those tell-tale Covid 19 symptoms.

I began showing symptoms on Tuesday and Heidi on Wednesday of that same week. How did we get it? Where did it come from? We'll never know. What we do know is that we limited our circle of contact and wore masks in public. But we still got sick—probably from someone who was sick but showed no symptoms.

Our family is blessed—none of us had to be hospitalized for Covid. We have been surprised by some of the symptoms. In our starkly divided and divisive country, all we hear from the media and the politicians are talking heads, spouting off statistics, test data, number of positive tests, number of deaths, mandates of why masks should be worn, rebellion to wearing masks because we should be free to do what we want to do. In none of the "reporting" and "analyzing" have we heard the real stories of people who have fought the Covid fight. So, yes, we were surprised when the virus caused cognitive issues like difficulty finding the right words to say, or doing silly things like dumping coffee on stir-fry. We were surprised when our "mild" case of Covid had us in bed due to fatigue. We were surprised when we lost the ability to smell. We were surprised by the chest pain that inspired a trip to the ER for me (dr. said it was a combination of ligament pain from the Covid and a case of bacterial pneumonia trying to capitalize on the weakened immune system).

Nothing was more surprising than Heidi's elevated blood pressure. Up until Covid, her blood pressure had been great. Once Covid hit, her blood pressure averaged around the 150/100 range! The doctors wanted to induce labor on two separate occasions, but decided to wait until 37 weeks, if possible.

Heidi's induction was scheduled to begin on July 19. It was slow going; her body wasn't ready to labor, and Sullivan wasn't ready to be in position to be birthed. We were fine with slow—no reason to rush the process.

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Then Heidi's face began to look puffy and she began to have palpitations of the heart. We called the nurse to check her out and the heart monitor was reading between 30 and 110 bpm. The nurse, bless her heart, said, "Oh, that looks unusual" and made a call. Next thing we knew there were 25 medical personnel in the room and another group in the hallway they called the Rapid Response Team, "just in case something goes wrong." It was not beyond me that having a hallway and room full of people meant that something had already gone wrong.

After some conversations between the personnel, they determined to take her for a cesarean. "Don't worry," they told me, "The baby is doing great." Gee, thanks. I had to stay behind as they wheeled her out of the room to the Covid floor to do the surgery since the symptoms they were seeing were attributed to Covid complications. Sullivan was brought to me about an hour later, but Heidi had to stay with the Covid specialists in case she deteriorated any further. Twenty-four LONG hours later, we were reunited.

Thankfully, Heidi's heart does not appear to have suffered any permanent structural damage. The cardiologist says that the event occurred because the Covid 19 virus somehow blocked the magnesium and potassium from flowing through the heart like it should. Apparently this is something that has been happening with Covid patients.

Sullivan Lloyd Clear was born on July 20, 2020, at 20:45 (8:45 p.m.). He weighed six pounds and twelve ounces and was nineteen and three-quarters inches long. Thanks be to God for his safe arrival.

Jeremiah 30:17 says

"But I will restore you to health

and heal your wounds,'

declares the Lord,

'because you are called an outcast,

Zion for whom no one cares."

Having Covid definitely has the feeling of being an outcast. But you all have helped us see that even in our isolation and our trouble, we are far from being outcast. You have lifted us up in prayer, offered assistance with shopping and cooking, and shared in many ways that you are with us. Several of you checked on our children, talked with them, and helped them feel connected during a scary time. Thank you! I hope you can use our story to help spread the truth about Covid; it is more than a statistic. It is a virus that is affecting real people. We have come out okay—blessed even. More than once the medical staff said, "You look great for having Covid." For that, we are grateful.

Pastor Kerry

Bless the Lord, oh my soul! And all that is within me bless His holy name!

He has done great things; He has done great things; He has done great things, bless His holy name!

Andraé Crouch

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Lifestyles Class

The following devotional from *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young may be of encouragement during this time of partial isolation and concern related to COVID:

Keep Your Eyes on Me!

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

"Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand." Psalms 73:23

"Keep your eyes on Me! Waves of adversity are washing over you, and you feel tempted to give up. As your circumstances consume more and more of your attention, you are losing sight of Me. Yet I am with you always, holding you by your right hand. I am fully aware of your situation, and I will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear.

Your gravest danger is worrying about tomorrow. If you try to carry tomorrow's burdens today, you will stagger under the load and eventually fall flat. You must discipline yourself to live within the boundaries of today. It is in the present moment that I walk close to you, helping you carry your burdens. Keep your focus on my Presence in the present." – Sarah Young

In the first Sunday worship message in the series "Nothing Shall Separate Us," Charles Mwale spoke on focusing on God . . . keeping our eyes on Him. Nothing separates us from God. Pastor Kerry then spoke on our relationship with God . . . we are debtors to God, who gave us the gift of life and the gift of salvation. We celebrate this gift, acknowledging that we belong not just to ourselves, but to God. Nothing separates us from God!

I believe that's what Sarah Young is saying also. When we get discouraged because we can't go places like we did in the past, we can't worship together, we can't see our friends, it is important that we "keep our eyes on God!" Nothing shall separate us. He is always with us, holding our right hand. So, at times, when Satan tempts us and we are so discouraged we want to give up, remember that God is faithful and won't let us be tempted beyond what we can bear. He will provide a way out . . . He is with us . . . nothing shall separate us!

Thank you to everyone for your prayers on behalf of others in our class and in our church. Even though we aren't together in class, we are still bound in Christ's love and our prayers are still heard. Praise be to God for his blessings upon Jane Hershberger, Sue Grieb, and Pastor Kerry and family!

God bless,
Patty

"To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart." —Eleanor Roosevelt

"If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere." —Frank A. Clark

August's Mission of the Month SonSet Solutions

SonSet Solutions is a mission based in Elkhart. They work with partners around the world by providing them with technology that helps them communicate the love of Jesus in their local context. Technology provides us today with an unprecedented number of ways for engaging people in conversations about who Jesus is and what he has done.

Hundreds of other organizations are also reaching out to their neighborhoods, cities, and countries with God's message of hope. Many of them depend on technology to carry out their mission. But, they may not have their own engineer, IT specialist, or troubleshooting technician. Every year, SonSet Solutions stands in the gap for more than 100 different ministries spread across the globe. It is our privilege, by way of technical assistance, to help put feet to the visions of our ministry partners. We are equipping them with tools, information, and support services that will help them be effective. In 2019, we had 168 partners in 65 countries.

Our research and development over the years has led to manufacturing and repair of radio station equipment, the development and production of things like our solar-powered SonSet® radio, our satellite, remote, water monitors (SonSetLink™) and our Solar Media Broadcasters. These things provide inroads to share the gospel worldwide.

Any loose change in the offering will go to SonSet Solutions.

Thank you,
Missions Committee

A note from Julie: I'm excited about this month's mission. Several of the SonSet missionaries attend my home church. They are wonderful people with a heart for the Lord. Their ministry is unique in the way they combine technology with reaching people for Christ. Some of you might remember that Jean and John Anderson spoke to Primetimers last year about SonSet Solutions. If you aren't able to give financially, I know they would appreciate your prayers!

Staff Parish Relations Committee

Our committee thanks all of you for praying for Pastor Kerry and Heidi before, during, and after Heidi's hospital stay and the birth of Sullivan Lloyd Clear. We welcome their adorable little Sullivan to our church family! Please continue to pray for complete healing for those in their family who had the virus. We trust the month of August will be a good one for them!

Scoutmaster Minute

by Ronn Foster

Recently a Scout came up to point out what another Scout was doing incorrectly. One thing I have learned about conflict is to have all parties involved meet to air out their grievances. As I brought the two together, they began to talk it through. The Scout who was being reported acknowledged what the other had accused him of but insisted there were multiple ways to do something. He went on to explain how and why he performed the task. In the end, the 2nd Scout was able to perform the task, only in a different way.

Later, I asked the first Scout which way was better. Was it his way, or the way the other Scout did the task? He replied that it really did not matter because, in the end, the task was completed. He was correct in that statement. Both were able to complete the task. I then ask him what he learned from the situation. His response was right on target. "I should worry about myself and less on what I think others are doing wrong."

Where else have we heard this?

Matthew 7:3-5 says "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Is there a part of our lives where we are ignoring our own sins, but pointing out the sins of others? Before being quick to point out the issue of another we must ask ourselves, "Have I removed the sawdust from my eye?"



cooperation with this matter.

Most of our families have returned or will return by September, and we're adding some new children! 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 for your patience and

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

—Lori Loucks, Director

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

HILLCREST WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Circle of Friends Stamping Ministry

I sure would like to get back to normal! But what will normal be?? Meanwhile, I have been designing new cards, especially Christmas cards. I am hoping the Crossroads Bazaar will still be able to take place because this is where we sell a lot of our greeting cards. So, hoping that will happen, I continue to design new cards.

I have put a few newly designed cards in the card rack at church. If you need a card, please take a look. Please leave any money in my mailbox there at church. I have also made a couple of house calls to people who didn't want to get out. If you would like a special house call to look at cards, please let me know. I will be glad to come. Thanks again for your support. It is very much appreciated.

—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

Sleeping mat #37 was donated to Guidance Ministries in July. (G.M.'s Pastor Lori King has assured me that there still is great need for more mats.)

I'll notify you if we're going to be able to get together in August. In the meantime, these are ways that some of our people are keeping active during the pandemic:

- Trimming tops and bottom seams and flattening out used plastic bags.
- Cutting the flattened bags into 2-1/2" strips.
- Looping strips together and winding the looped strips loosely into balls.
- Crocheting strips into 3 foot by 6 foot sleeping mats, using a large crochet hook (size N).

Any one of the above services is very helpful to us.

Continue to drop off and pick up supplies in the storage room located just to the left of Hillcrest's kitchen, or call me if you'd like for me to pick up what you have finished. Bev Slaughter will welcome balls of strips for the mat she is crocheting.

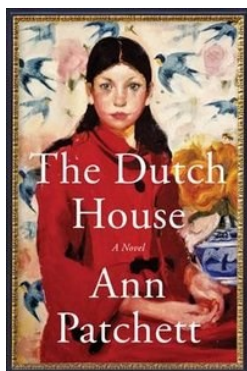
My sincerest thanks to all who have contributed so much to this service project. Stay safe and healthy, everyone! Until we meet again, God bless you all.

Martha Sims

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Hillcrest Women's Book Club
 Thursday, August 27, 6:00 p.m.
 Diane Lewandowski, Leader



The Dutch House
 by Ann Patchett

If you have read one of Ann Patchett's previous books, you are already prepared to enjoy *The Dutch House*. Her ability to compassionately tell a story of the mixed relationships in a family is well known. The latest book does not disappoint, as does not the audio version by Tom Hanks...readers can't lose!

NPR's book critic said this: "Patchett's eighth novel is a paradise lost tale dusted with a sprinkling of *Cinderella*, *The Little Princess* and *Hansel and Gretel*. Two siblings, Maeve and Danny Conroy, bond tightly after their mother leaves home when they're 10 and 3. Home is the eponymous Dutch House, a 1922 mansion outside Philadelphia that their father, Cyril, a real estate mogul, bought fully furnished in an estate sale as a surprise for his wife in 1946, when Maeve was 5. The house, built by a Dutch couple who made their fortune in cigarettes, is grand, with an ornate dining room ceiling, six bedrooms on the second floor, and a ballroom on the third floor. His wife, Elna, hates it, aesthetically and ethically. After she flees, ostensibly to India to devote herself to the poor, her family suffers, as if "they had all become characters in the worst part of a fairy tale," Patchett writes."

With that as the background, the reader is invited, through Danny's telling, to hear "the rest of the story." A wicked stepmother, loss, forgiveness, growth...the details play out with the amazing house always in the background, holding or hurting its inhabitants.

It's a story the reader does not want to leave until finished and then it does not leave the reader who cannot help but think how he or she would be in similar circumstances.

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

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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.

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: August 21

August Birthdays

2	Bob Whitmer	11	Allen Nord
6	Denise Hensley	14	Kate Ferro
9	Mark Gledhill	21	Jami Franks

August Anniversaries

20 Terri and Robb Longacre
24 Sharon and Mike Schafer
28 Cindy and Jim Heim

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

Going With the Flow

Faced with the sudden move to livestreamed church services, many pastors and worship leaders had to learn new technology quickly during the pandemic. As they were "winging it," bloopers and bobbles added levity to the tense time.

For instance, a fake tree fell on a drummer while a worship song was being broadcast from Georgia. After getting too close to a candle, a vicar in England had to pause to extinguish flames from his sweater. And several preachers appeared on screen with cartoon-like features after inadvertently turning on social media filters.

"This wasn't planned," wrote the pastor about the falling ficus, which didn't cause injury but quickly went viral. "But God used it to bring laughter to the hearts of many. For that, we are thankful."