



The Breezeway

The monthly newsletter of Northwood Presbyterian Church

April 2020

The worst of times...or the best of times?

These are trying times for most of us. People are becoming sick. People are losing their livelihood. People are losing money. People are losing their self-identity. People feel isolated and lonely. These are days of uncertainty and change, that are uncomfortable at best and downright devastating at worst. But, as Charles Dickens was quick to point out in *A Tale of Two Cities*, the worst of times is accompanied by the best of times. How will history record these days? Will these be days of horror and suffering, or will they be days when we witness people rising to new heights of self-sacrifice and care for one another? Will these be days when people socially distance themselves and turn to higher levels of individualism, or will they be days when we increase our appreciation for the good gift of friendships and families? Will these be days of turning inward, away from the needs of other peoples and nations, or will they be days when communal spirit and recommitment to the common good prevail, allowing us to live together as global partners?

I believe we are seeing signs of both these responses. Our actions, our compassion for others, our reactions are the responses that will create the future. To a large degree, together we have the power to choose, through our actions, this future. However, only time can tell the ultimate response. In this moment, these ARE the worst of times and the best of times.

Someone recently said to me, "Who would have thought, a year ago, that we would be where we are today." True, yet I also find myself feeling blessed to be part of the Northwood family in these trying times. I see us caring for and keeping in contact with each other more, even as Betty and I were so pleased to receive a call from our caregiver last Saturday. I see us reaching out to each other and doing new things, like streaming worship services and "Zooming" meetings, which we never would have done had it not been for the tiny but mighty Coronavirus. I see us regaining a sense of identity as the people of God, in this place, and renewing our sense of mission to God's world as followers of Christ.

Times have changed and, in many ways, not for the better. But I am blessed to be here, sharing my life with you, in these times. I thank God for each of you, and I pray for God's protection and peace for all of us in these best and worst of times.

Blessings ,

Pastor Dick

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ZOOM how-to on the Mission Presbytery YouTube Channel. And while you're there, be sure to hit "Subscribe"!

Keeping Up While We're Staying Apart

Always Ready with a Joke

Everyone knows Cecil Wright is always willing to share a joke with anyone who wants to listen. He passed on the few here to appease his fans until we are back in the church building together. Thanks, Cecil, and we look forward to more laughs together. See you in the Narthex.



First, this from Phyllis Diller: I don't know how you feel about old age but in my case, I didn't even see it coming. It hit me from the rear.

There were students attending nursing school and they had a break every morning at 10:00. On the break, two students went outside for a walk. A pigeon flew over and pooped right on one of the student's head. The other student said "Be real still, I'll go get some bathroom tissue." After she left, the student who got hit said, "Now why is she doing that?? That pigeon will be a mile away when she gets back."

A man was standing on the corner waiting for the light to change and a dog was there. Another man walked up and said to the first guy, "Does your dog bite?" "No," replied the man. The newcomer reached down to pet the dog. The dog bit him. He yelled, "I thought you said your dog didn't bite". The man said, "That's not my dog."

At a small church on a Sunday morning, the minister said, "Everybody who wants to go to heaven stand up". Everybody stood up except one man. The minister went to the man and said, "When you die, you don't want to go to heaven?" The man said, "Oh, when I die! I thought you were making up a bus load to leave right now."

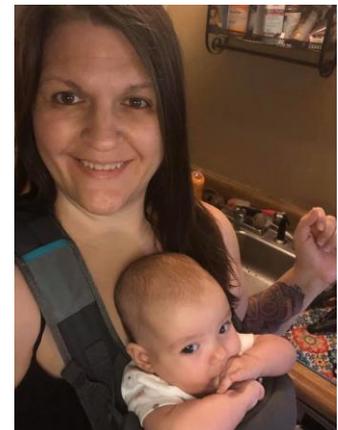
And finally, an oldie but goodie: What is black and white and read all over? The newspaper.

Good Things from the Kitchen

Greetings from the Roberson kitchen! As the days go by, each one often filled with more fear and uncertainty than the one before, I have found myself spending a lot of time here... in the kitchen. With all of the madness surrounding this pandemic, we found ourselves in the same boat as many of you; worried about having to "quarantine" or "isolate" as a family for long periods of time and wondering if we were prepared to do it successfully. So, we did what everyone else did and made the trek to our local H-E-B, braving mostly empty shelves and long lines, and getting whatever made sense for us as a family while trying to be mindful of the families coming in behind us. NOT an easy task! We managed to make it out of there in one piece, but with a basket full of items we don't necessarily use on a regular basis. It was time to get creative! What can I do with this can of creamed corn? What exactly is this container in the back of our freezer? Can we still eat it? Do we want to? What can I stretch with rice? And, so it began.

What started off as a way for me to simply provide meals for my family – often feeling like an episode of "Chopped" – quickly started to transform into something else. Something bigger. I've often said that cooking is my love language. Being able to prepare a meal for a sick friend, or as a way to say "thank you" to a neighbor, or sending my husband to work with his favorite homemade snacks to help ease him through the long, rough shifts he has, or reaching out to people I know are struggling with food insecurity, makes me feel like I am ministering to the people I love in a meaningful way. So why would now be any different? In fact, isn't RIGHT NOW the perfect time to remind people that they are loved and not alone? Indeed, it is. In our kitchen, this has translated into delicious family meals, loaves of banana bread being dropped off in neighbors garages, care packages being safely dropped off to my grandmother, fresh produce making its way to my in-laws, and so much more. Sending love out into the world through food!

While all of this comes to you from our kitchen, I fully understand that it may not be the same for many of you, and that is totally OK! If these scary times have taught us anything, it is that people are inherently good. Just look around you! Sure, there's that one guy buying all of the toilet paper, and maybe that lady you saw at Walmart took all of the



hand sanitizer, but what you may have missed while focusing on that is the person who took eggs out of their basket to place in someone else's. Or, the conversations in the lines stretching down the aisles, conversations full of kindness and a genuine sense that we are all in this together. And, make no mistake... we ARE in this together.

We are faithful. We are resilient. We each have a love language to speak. Now, more than ever, that love needs to find its way out into world, and I promise it will make its way back to you.

From my kitchen to wherever you are, I send you all of my love and light.

Jennifer



Random Thoughts

While Martha Sherrod was out exercising in her neighborhood, her mind was keeping busy too. Martha wrote, "Lots of thoughts have been rolling around my head lately as I spend lots of time at home."

☀ Man, my house is small...good thing I am small too or I would get claustrophobic.

☀ Wow, there's a lot of dust bunnies under my couch. Do I vacuum them up or start a B and B for them and charge them by the night?

☀ Day time TV is really funny. (So that's what's up with the Kardashians! Who knew? Whoa there, Dr. Phil. As a fellow counselor

I'm just sayin' slow your roll!! We'll all be all right!)

- ☀ A completed crossword puzzle is a joy in and of itself no matter how it gets done.
- ☀ Connecting on social media is fantastic! But I never realized how much I miss seeing people in person.
- ☀ Laundry is a lot easier lately...only "home" clothes, no "good clothes I wear in public" clothes.
- ☀ I met more of my neighbors on my daily walks than I knew I had! I hope I will continue to wave to them when we all get back to our busy lives.
- ☀ I miss the Day School kids like crazy! I'm looking forward to a bonus "First Day of School" when we get back on schedule.
- ☀ Thankful beyond words to be able to worship online!! I love all the comments that popped up during the live-stream service. Can't be that chatty when we worship in person, now can we??
- ☀ One of my favorite quotes, "A bird sitting in a tree is never afraid of falling, because its faith is not on the branch but in its own wings." Our awesome God and our faith community give us more strength that we can even imagine and equip us to weather any storm.

DAYS
FOR
GIRLS
INTERNATIONAL



A project to make masks for caregivers has Northwood women busy washing, cutting, and stitching cotton fabric. Days for Girls fabric is being re-purposed for the masks that will be used alone or as covers to extend the life of commercially produced masks. Patty Clark, coordinating the effort for Northwood, puts a bag with fabric and directions on her front porch, a socially distanced delivery system. Please call Patty if you are able to help.





Beam Me Up, Patty

Owen Duggan, Music Director and lecturer in Sacred Music at Our Lady of the Lake University

Well goodness, here we are. We have officially stepped into the virtual world. Beam me up, Patty! Patty Clark is the producer of our new Sunday service live stream. (We all have to be nice to her because she's in charge of the camera.)

You might be interested to know what we're feeling when the 'red' (recording) light goes on. The first thing that goes through your head is you wonder whether you've buttoned up your collar correctly. Then you have to pretend that there really are people out there, which there are of course, and smile at the empty pews. Feeling just a little bit silly.

The next thing is you wonder what they can hear. Now you are in Ray Tolbert's hands, trusting that his wiring isn't picking up the local country station at the same time, or that the mics are so live they can pick up your stomach grumbling.

Fortunately, Dick, like most pastors, seems pretty confident in the limelight. But there is always the possibility of a gaff or malapropism coming out of one's lips and shooting down the instant pipeline of the internet to homes all over the world. Well at least homes as far away as Castle Hills. But we shoulder this inevitability with a certain stoicism and our camera smiles. And I'm not even going to bring up the possibility of one of us playing a D chord instead of a C because it could throw Deborah off her game.

At the end of it all we are grateful. Grateful for the means to have the technology, for the chance to share the excitement and the experience with you all, and for the amazingly positive feedback we've been getting. Thank you showing up online and letting us know you're out there.

Keep praying and singing and sharing the stream with family and friends. We're going to get through this together. And who knows? Maybe we'll keep streaming even after we all come back to church. That could be a great outreach possibility for us, an opportunity heretofore unexplored. It's all good. As long as Tommy and I remember to button up our shirt collars.

Session Highlights

During the Session meeting on March 24 (conducted through video chat on Zoom), members first concentrated on our ill members with an update on how each is faring. There are church members helping – from a distance – with errands and phone calls. Congregational Care maintains contact with all our members.



Some PW circles will be using Zoom as a way to meet this month for Bible study. Prayer groups are also meeting with Zoom. The Nominating Committee has a slate of nominees to be placed before the congregation and Session for the upcoming class of elders and for next year's Nominating Committee. Elizabeth Hewins reported that an outline for the Mission Information Form has been created and the report is moving forward. Approval from those in Presbytery will be necessary before we can start the search for our next pastor. Pastor Dick proposed that we need to create a Safe Church Team for events like fire, active shooters, pandemic, etc. and it was approved. The Day School is closed, as is the church building until April 25. Services on Sunday mornings will continue to stream live on Facebook.