

Dear Friends,

A while back, someone asked a great question: *Is there any way we might use our Covid isolation as a kind of intentional spiritual retreat?*

Yes! I said. And the Spiritual Formation subcommittee (of Christian Ed.) is now ready to help facilitate that. First, a little groundwork:

On spiritual retreats, people create and enter a time of prayerful awareness of God's presence, a presence that opens us to peace, direction, and hope, whether we're experiencing sorrow, pain, or celebration. While both prayer and scripture reading figure into retreat experiences, prayer means more than sitting with our eyes shut, heads bowed, and minds full of words asking God to do certain things. And engaging scripture reading means more than reading a passage and expecting to feel or know something new each time. Those approaches to prayer and study are really more about power and control than nurturing a humble, loving, and responsive faith.

The point of committing ourselves to "prayer" and "study" is to set our hearts, minds, and bodies in postures of receptiveness to the holiness swirling at the core of our being, and to recognize and love that same holiness in other people and in the world around us. Like all spiritual disciplines, retreats are part of a way of life. (Richard Rohr calls it *the contemplative life*.) Contemplation cannot be separated from the life of faithful action in, with, and for God's Creation.

Through spiritual retreat, we open ourselves to a deeper, more intentional, and more personal participation *with* God and, as we discover God's presence permeating all things, *in* God.

If you'd like to experiment with intentional retreat, I invite you to join us in using a book entitled Celtic Treasure: Daily Scriptures and Prayer by J. Phillip Newell. Using art, scripture readings, and simple prayers, the book provides a structure for helping us to enter a time of contemplation each day. By design, the structure is somewhat loose to allow for silent prayer and reflection. Because of that, some who are interested might want to ask a partner to talk with each day (phone calls, Zoom, FaceTime, or face-to-face if you can do that safely). In addition,

those who would like to and can, will be invited to join a weekly or bi-weekly Zoom meeting to talk about our experiences.

If you'd like more information, call or email Pastor Allen (423-444-9460, allenhuff63@gmail.com) or Deb Burger (828-553-7545, cerdeb@gmail.com) If you know you want a book, please let Allen know ASAP. (Cokesbury's shipping is a bit slower during Covid.) The books are \$22 each, new from Cokesbury. If you want to find a used one online, that would be great. (Still, please let me know you plan to participate.) When everyone who is interested has a book, we will begin scheduling the group Zoom meetings.

God's blessings and peace be with all of you.

Pastor Allen

The \$64 Question: *When will we resume public worship?*

The ERT has completed the survey and compiled the results. 95 of you participated. THANK YOU!! At its earliest convenience, the session will hold a special called meeting to hear the results and begin making decisions about how to proceed. As a teaser to communicate one safety measure that the vast majority of you wants to see in place, I share the following tongue-in-cheek-but-serious piece written by Greg Brown, pastor of Holy Comforter Episcopal Church in Charlotte, NC. Enjoy...

1 Covidians 12:1-11

Now concerning the wearing of masks, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that in the time before Covid, we were enticed and led astray thinking that we were not responsible for one another's health. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the spirit of love ever says 'masks be cursed!'; and no one can say 'masks are a really good idea for everybody!' except through a spirit of love.

Now there are varieties of masks, but the same spirit of wearing them; and there are varieties of mask wearers, but the same virus; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same precaution that must be shown to everyone.

To each is given a manifestation of a mask for the common good. To one a mask is given through our mask makers, and to another a purchased one online, or in a store according to the same spirit of protection. Some fashion one after watching a video on YouTube, to others...they already had some. The knowledge of needing to wear one according to the same spirit, to another faith that the same spirit will improve health and save lives.

Another receives the gifts of healing by this generous spirit, to another this seems no less than the working of a miracle, another prophecies that we'll get through all of this sooner by observing these loving

precautions, to another the discernment of figuring out how all can get one, to another the knowledge that a mask hides all kinds of mouths and tongues, to another the understanding that those mouths and tongues are still there, behind those masks.

All these are activated by one and the same spirit, and we hope to allot to each one individually just as they choose.

So be it.

Because loving our neighbor as ourselves is the crux of it. When we wear a mask, we are saying that we love and care for ourselves, and that we love and care for our neighbors. If our neighbor is sick (and perhaps doesn't even know it yet) our masks help protect US. If WE are sick (and perhaps don't even know it yet) our masks help protect OUR NEIGHBOR...it is a tangible and visible manifestation and practice of our LOVE.

June

Monica Moore	3
Jim Bollman	4
Hal Knight	8
Jonathan Webb	8
Gary Burkett	10
Sherrell Lyon Jr.	10
Bill Kirchner	14
Carol Baird	15
Diana Moore	17
Fred Sauceman	19
Jim Rhein	20
Kathie Dameron	20
Ginger Hixson	24
Corinne Parnell	25
Hannah Fair	25
Tim Winter	26
Roger Cash	27
Kathy Scheu	28
Dawn Heaton	30
Evelyn Adams	30

Prayer Lists:

Church Members:

Evelyn Adams, Pam Dunn, Wilma Florence, Hal Knight, Charlotte McDonald, Jeri Paolini, Jill Sauceman, Bob Scheu, Richard Schwerdtfeger, Cheryl Smith, Tony Smith, Beverlee Wightman

On-going Prayers for Members:

Summer Buchanan, Sara Nan Byrd, Betty Correll, Joseph Dykes, Alisa & Barbara Goolsby, Elizabeth Hoss, Cherry Smith, Larry Smith, Ruth Verhegge

Church Prayer List of Family & Friends and Relatives

Faith Griffey and son-Cooper Brook Adolf (granddaughter and great-grandson of Jim & Charlotte Pahrís, Delbert Elliott, a friend of the DRC, Audrey Sinisi (related to the Comer family), Bobby Yarber (friend of Rebecca Comer)