

Health & Wellness
February 9, 2021

Heart Health

Every February is **Heart Health Month!** Eating healthy, limiting fat intake, maintaining an exercise regimen, drinking less coffee and more water are all well known strategies in keeping a **Healthy Heart.**

Two strategies that are gaining greater recognition can be essential in keeping the ole' ticker ticking- **Gratitude & Self Care.**

Gratitude is a spiritual practice with physical benefits. Take time every day to consciously and vocally recognize those moments, people and events that have occurred throughout the past 12 hours that have brought greater awareness of God's presence in your life. Gratitude soothes the mind and the heart.

Self Care is another discipline that will give the heart the time and space necessary to be receptive to the call of God and the plans God has for you. Exercise and adequate sleep are essential but so are **good boundaries.**

Boundaries allow for time to pray, to meditate on scripture and to consider your primary relationship with God. In order to make time and space remember to be selective in the type and amount of **information** that is consumed. "**TMI**" or **Too Much Information** can also be a threat to maintaining healthy boundaries! You have the right and responsibility to make healthy choices about what goes into your body & mind and what goes out!

Always remember to see your doctor, keep track of your blood pressure and take your prescription medications to stay on track for a healthy heart.

CoVid Vaccination

Please check with the local County Health Dept as well as the Ballad Health website for updates. **Please take advantage to get vaccinated.** We look forward to the day we can all be back together again!

Carol Jernigan, **Ballad Health Faith Community Nurse**, is available for transportation to and from medically related appointments, phone calls and safe home visits. Call 901-485-4280 or the church office for appointments. I have been fully vaccinated and have monthly testing for CoVid-19.

Soup Ministry

Team members of the Health & Wellness team continue to support congregational members with phone calls, cards and monthly visits to provide a warm smile and a bowl of homemade soup. If you know of someone that would appreciate a visit, please contact Carol Jernigan.

Lenten Meditation

Wednesday, February 17th marks the beginning of the Lenten season. Last year we had a walking devotion, **Walking to the Cross**.

If you are interested in a walking meditation please contact me at misselaine57@yahoo.com or Kelli in the church office.

Another ancient walking meditation tool is the **labyrinth**. Included in this month's newsletter is an illustration of the famous Chartres Cathedral labyrinth and instructions on how to use as a finger labyrinth. Stay tuned for the possibility of visiting a local labyrinth this spring.

Another meditation tool being offered this year is a devotional booklet

The Poetry of Lent: A Lenten Companion to Mary Oliver's "Devotions"

Every journey needs a guide - and what better guide to the 40 days of Lent than the beloved poet, Mary Oliver?

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, Oliver is widely celebrated as an accessible, insightful observer of the natural world, the life of faith, and the interplay between the two. Imagine a six-week journey with Oliver at your side, illuminating ancient passages of scripture; provoking bite-sized meditations on key Lenten themes; and pointing toward everyday practices for individuals, families, and congregations. All you need is this devotional, a Bible, and a copy of Oliver's wonderful collection, *Devotions* (the poems can also be found online).

If you prefer not to buy Oliver's book, copies of those poems will be made available. Please contact the church office if you would like a printed copy of this devotion. To find out more visit the Salt Project visit

<https://www.saltproject.org/the-poetry-of-lent/the-poetry-of-lent-a-lenten-companion-to-mary-olivers-devotions>.

Instructions on how to use as a finger labyrinth:

Walking the Labyrinth

The labyrinth is a divine imprint found in many cultures around the world. The labyrinth has only one path so there are no tricks to it and no dead ends. The path becomes a mirror for where we are in our lives. The rhythm of walking, placing one foot in front of the other, quiets the mind, relaxes the body and refreshes the spirit. Walk it with an open heart and an open mind.

There are three stages to the walk:

Releasing *Walking into the labyrinth*

Start with your finger at the entrance of the labyrinth and follow the path as it leads around to the center.

This is the time to quiet the mind, let go of the details, distractions and extraneous thoughts. Open your heart to feel whatever it might feel. Become aware of your breathing. Relax and find your natural pace.

Receiving *Standing or Sitting in the Center*

When you reach the center, allow your fingers to relax in that center as long as you like.

This is a place of reflection, meditation and prayer. Receive what is there for you to receive.

Returning (Reflection) *Walking out of the labyrinth*

When you are ready, have your fingers follow the same path back out, following your own natural pace.

Walking out, integration of your experience can occur. You take back out into the world that which you have received.

Each labyrinth experience is different. You may feel nothing or have a powerful reaction. Sometimes a labyrinth experience won't make sense or release its meaning for months after a walk. Whatever occurs, listen to your heart and take all the time you need. The above description is only a thumbnail sketch. You provide the bigger picture.

