



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Reflection for the Week

From “An Examen for Times of Illness” by Vinita Hampton Wright

Physical illness, whether chronic or acute, can render us too distracted and exhausted to keep up with normal activities, among them prayer. Not only do pain, other discomforts, and fatigue sap our physical resources, but they also put a strain on our interior resources—our emotions, our ability to think, and our spiritual attentiveness. . . .

Step 1: See yourself in God’s presence, bathed in God’s loving gaze. I’ve found it helpful to huddle on the bed and, rather than dwell in self-pity, imagine God looking down on me as a parent gazes with compassion on a child who is hurt. I curl up, cry or whimper if that’s what I feel like doing, and pray something like, “Lord, I feel so bad!” This might sound like self-pity, but when it is directed to God, it becomes a statement of faith in God’s concern for us.

Step 2: Bring to mind one bright, good thing from the past 24 hours. When we feel horrible, we’re tempted to see only what is horrible in life. This is what the enemy of our human nature wants us to do—descend into total negativity. But in the past day, the sun has shone into your room, or you’ve had a moment or two of relief, or another person has done something kind, or . . . Your memory of the good is a weapon against despair. Think of that good thing and say, “Thank you, God. I know that wonder and beauty and goodness continue to do their work.”

Step 3: Ask God to show you something you can improve. I say “improve” because it does not help to pile condemnation on yourself while you’re suffering. And Jesus made it clear that sickness is not God paying us back for our sins. If you remember an angry remark you made to a family member, you might identify that as sin and make it right. But ask God to show you anything that’s in your power that might help. Are you trying to do more work than your body will allow right now, and is this causing you anger and frustration? Have you refused the help offered by family, friends, and colleagues? Would it help if, instead of reading the letters of St. Paul, you spent a few days in the Psalms? Would you rest better if you shut down e-mail and social media two hours before trying to sleep? Alternately, your “improvement” may be as simple as repeating the phrase, “This is not all up to me,” throughout the day, because you tend to think that you must fix everything and feel guilty if you don’t see results.

Step 4: Anticipate what you will need tomorrow. There’s another medical procedure or a long drive to the physical therapist, or the medical paperwork must be faced. Look honestly at the challenges—or, to keep it simple, one particular challenge—coming up and place them before God, asking for specific help.

Step 5: Thank God for the divine love that surrounds you and holds you up, in whatever way it manifests. Sometimes, this is pure discipline, because you don’t feel loved. You may feel that God is ignoring you or has forgotten your situation. But try to say, “Thank you. I believe that you love me; help my unbelief.” <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/an-examen-for-times-of-illness/>

Prayer Concerns

Marly Van Berkum's sister
Bob and Leone Eidsmoe
Mike and Deb Timblin
John Dilenschneider
Tia Iddings
Mike Rozembajgier
Frank Oppenheim

Larry Shaver
Katherine Trautman
Chris Schwerin
Mark Schmedinghoff
Greg Gregerson's Dad
Greg Johnson
All "Essential Workers"

Keep the Connection -- Join us on "Zoom"

Todd Siefker will be sending out an invitation link right before each event.

6:30 pm Wednesday 3/25/20 – Todd is leading a Lenten Study

9:30 am Sunday 3/29/20 – The Admiration Series

This week: Chapter 4 of *The Heart of Prayer*

(Pastor Al Hohl will join us again on April 8th)

10:30 am Sunday 3/29/20 – Sermon, Discussion & Prayer

EASTER LILIES

The worship committee has ordered Easter Lilies for the Easter Season. Since it looks like we probably will not be able to celebrate Easter at the church, we are offering these lilies to those who would like to have them in their home. The cost is \$20.00 each and we will see they are delivered to you. You can either send a check to the church office or pay with the Tithe.ly app that is linked to STTP.

Remember to Support FCUCC Financially During this Time!



During this time, our bills continue to come in. You can help us by mailing in your check or setting up an automatic payment from your bank. **You can also contribute through a simple app called [Tithe.ly](http://get.tithe.ly).**

Tithe.ly is our online, app and web-based giving system. Tithe.ly is convenient because it:

- Accepts debit, credit or bank account info
- Can be set up for a one-time payment, or automatic regular payments
- Can be changed at any time (there are no contracts or commitments)

Go to <http://get.tithe.ly> to sign up online or download the app on any iPhone/Apple or Android device.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

1. This virus is contagious but, so far, it's not as deadly as other world outbreaks (MERS, SARS, etc.). 80% of people will only have mild cases, if they get it.
2. To stay healthy, follow flu prevention tips (below)

3. Don't panic — start to prepare, instead

4. Be smart about travel

5. PLEASE stay home if you are sick or have any of these symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, headache, stuffy/runny nose, fatigue, muscle aches. This is very important, so you don't spread the flu or Covid-19 throughout the congregation.

When it comes to taking care of ourselves, there are some things we can all think and do:

- Practice basic hygiene. That includes:
 - 20-second hand washing and wash often. That's a long time and it's as long as singing "Happy Birthday" 2 times through, or "Baby Shark" up through the Daddy Shark verse. Regular soap and water are fine; you do not need to use anti-bacterial soap.
 - Sneeze or cough into your elbow or tissue (then throw the tissue away).
 - Do not touch your face (eyes, nose, mouth).
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces and frequently touched objects – for example, remember to wipe your counters with soap and water.
 - Sanitize your doorknobs at home daily.
 - Avoid contact with people who are ill.
 - **Stay home if you are feeling in any way ill.**
 - Have a supply of easy-to-cook foods and cleaning supplies.
 - Have a supply of any prescribed medications.
 - You can watch this 15-minute video about how to prepare for and prevent this virus:
https://www.npr.org/2020/02/27/810016611/coronavirus-101-what-you-need-to-know-to-prepare-and-prevent?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20200301&utm_term=4432890&utm_campaign=best-of-npr&utm_id=4996822&orgid=309
 - Here are some facts about how the virus does and does not spread:
"Surfaces? Sneezes? Sex? How the Coronavirus Can and Cannot Spread"
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/health/coronavirus-how-it-spreads.html?referringSource=articleShare>
 - There is a non-threatening video about the virus for children at:
https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20200301&utm_term=4432890&utm_campaign=best-of-npr&utm_id=4996822&orgid=309

An Update on the Dowell Baum's

Contrary to Sunday's Announcement, Molly, Ryan, and the kids are residing in Albany, New York together and actively hunting for a house to buy. Molly is applying for a student/pastor position and must interview online. Molly's mom Jean recently visited from Kansas during spring break but has returned to Kansas and is in quarantine. Sorry for the misinformation.

- Ruth Holder

Church Directory Update

Our leadership team would like to make sure we have the correct contact information about everyone so that you receive church communications, especially during this time of the pastoral search. And we would like to have an emergency contact as well (in the unlikely event that something happens to you while you are at church).

We would also appreciate knowing your favorite Scripture and hymns so we can be sure to use them in Sunday Worship

The form for the directory is attached to this week's email and on the church website at www.1stcongregationalucc.org. Please fill out the form and email it to Maddie, the church secretary, at office@firstcongregational.net.

New Moving-On Box Needs

Bath Towels/Hand Towels
Children's plastic drinking glasses
Potholders
Toilet Bowl cleaner/brushes
Can Openers

Church Office Hours

Mon-Fri 1pm-5pm

Church Contact Information

712-239-3385

office@firstcongregational.net

www.1stcongregationalucc.org

Church Staff:

Rev. Dr. Anne Dilenschneider, Interim Pastor

605-906-5404 (cell)

leadwithsoul@mac.com

Maddie Schwerin, Church Administrator

Todd Siefker, Intergenerational Coordinator

Rick Darrow, Organist

Nate Hettinger, Choir Director

office@firstcongregational.net

tsiefker@gmail.com

darrowpipe@aol.com

hettingern@morningside.edu

The “Straight to the Point” Deadline is Monday at Noon!