



# Buffalo United Methodist Church

March 2020

1000 30<sup>th</sup> Street NE  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402



## The Slow Work of God

by Bishop Laurie Haller

*Above all, trust in the slow work of God.*

*We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.*

*We should like to skip the intermediate stages.*

*We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.*

~Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "The Slow Work of God," excerpted from *Hearts on Fire*

Lent is upon us, [receiving] ashes on our foreheads as a sign of our mortality. Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. When I think back over my life, I wonder why it's taken so many years to figure out that God works slowly but surely. Other days, it seems like just yesterday that I was a little kid, yearning for the next stage of my life to unfold. Impatient as I often am, I am learning to take one day at a time, relishing each moment.

"Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them to the top of a very high mountain. He was transformed in front of them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Jesus. Peter reacted to all of this by saying to Jesus, 'Lord, it's good that we're here. If you want, I'll make three shrines: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.'" (Matthew 17:1-4 CEB)

... The cloud of mystery that envelops Jesus and the disciples also wraps me in wonder. Who is this Jesus, anyway, and what claim does he have on my life? How is the slow and transforming work of God growing in me?

*And yet it is the law of all progress  
that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—  
and that it may take a very long time. ~Teilhard*

"While he was still speaking, look, a bright cloud overshadowed them. A voice from the cloud said,

"This is my Son whom I dearly love. I am very pleased with him. Listen to him!" Hearing this, the disciples fell on their faces, filled with awe. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus." (Matthew 17:5-8)

Jesus has already told his disciples in Matthew 16:21-23 that he is going to Jerusalem where he will suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and legal experts and that he has to be killed and will rise on the third day. But Peter takes hold of Jesus and says, "God forbid, Lord. This won't happen to you." Jesus then says to his disciples, "All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross and follow me."

*And so I think it is with you;  
your ideas mature gradually - let them grow,  
let them shape themselves, without undue haste. ~Teilhard*

Jesus is already preparing his disciples for all that is to come. It is a slow but necessary work, and Jesus needs to gradually bring them along the journey to the cross. I can only imagine what it must have been like for Peter, James, and John to hear the voice from the cloud reassuring them that this Jesus is, indeed, God's son and that they need to listen to him.

The liturgy of Ash Wednesday reminds us that, as Christ-followers, we are called to mark the forty days before Easter as a time of sober reflection.

**I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent:  
by self-examination and repentance;  
by prayer, fasting, and self-denial;  
and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word.  
To make a right beginning of repentance,  
And as a mark of our mortal nature,  
Let us now kneel before our Creator and Redeemer.**

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Don't tell anybody about the vision until the Human One is raised from the dead." (Matthew 17:9) This mountaintop experience is not the end but the beginning of a journey, the slow work of God that will not be easy and will not be forced. Invariably, we, like Peter, James, and John will have to head back from the mountaintop down into the valley where the power of the cross is the source of our light and our salvation.

*Only God could say what this new spirit  
gradually forming within you will be.  
Give our Lord the benefit of believing  
that his hand is leading you,  
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself  
in suspense and incomplete. ~Teilhard*

How will we shine God's light into our world? How do we wander right into grace and embrace it instead of fussing, fuming, and fighting? How does God want to transform us right now, here, today? And what will grace make of us tomorrow as the slow work of God unfolds?

**Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life. Amen.**

[Bishop Haller's complete essay, which includes photos of the El Camino pilgrimage walk in Spain, is available on her online blog *Leading from the Heart*; a link to her blog can be found on Buffalo's website, [buffalounitedmethodist.weebly.com/](http://buffalounitedmethodist.weebly.com/).]

## **Celebration of Life Bud Sundberg**

Everyone is invited to be at the Bertram Township Hall on Saturday, March 28 (2 to 5 p.m.) and remember Bud Sundberg, who passed away last year on November 19. Bud and his wife Sheila Gatewood, members of Bertram UMC, have been supportive of many events at Buffalo. They participated in Buffalo's Thursday's neighborhood potlucks and Sheila still comes to these monthly gatherings. Sheila is a member of UMW and was a great help to Becky Durand during Don's illness.

## **March Special Offering**

This year's UMCOR Sunday, previously known as One Great Hour of Sharing, is officially set for March 22. The special offering enables the United Methodist Committee on Relief to support worldwide ministries of food, shelter, health, and peace.

UMCOR makes real Christ's extravagant grace in the world by prayerfully working with communities overwhelmed by natural or man-made disasters. UMCOR builds on the strengths of what is already available in a community and actively involves the people affected in recovery efforts in activities such as:

- Mobilizing trained volunteers who are already living in the community.
- Purchasing emergency supplies and food from local merchants.
- Channeling funds through trusted partners who are already on the ground.

Recovery is a long-process for individuals and communities. For 80 years UMCOR has worked with communities to train leaders and address infrastructure concerns, climate change, and environmental degradation.

## **World Day of Prayer**

### ***"Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action"***

We will be celebrating the World Day of Prayer at Buffalo United Methodist Church on Friday, March 6 at 9:30 am. An international ecumenical Christian laywomen's initiative, the World Day of Prayer is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. A continental breakfast will be served, followed by a program featuring the country of Zimbabwe. Please plan to join us and bring a friend.

## **Justice for Our Neighbors**

On Tuesday, March 24, the UMW will be serving supper at Lovely Lane United Methodist Church for people involved in Justice for Our Neighbors, a nonprofit organization that provides free, high-quality legal services to low-income immigrants throughout the State of Iowa. Students from area colleges help with interpreting. A hot meal is appreciated by the families, especially those with children, as well as the lawyers and students involved in the program. If you would like to assist with this meal, contact Judy Hackney, 393-0188.

# March 2020

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
1 Worship Service (8:45 am) Communion Sunday <i>First Sunday in Lent</i>	2	3 Mission of Hope: Assist Bertram UMC with noon meal	4	5	6 World Day of Prayer (9:30 am)	7
8 Worship Service (8:45 am) <i>Daylight Savings Time begins at 2:00 am</i>	9 Spic 'n Span Church Cleaning (9:00 am)	10	11	12 Neighborhood Potluck (11:30 am)	13	14
15 Worship Service (8:45 am) <i>Third Sunday in Lent</i>	16	17	18 Administrative Board Meeting (4:00 pm)	19 UMW (9:30 am)  <i>First Day of Spring!</i>	20	21
22 Worship Service (8:45 am) <i>Fourth Sunday in Lent</i> UMCOR Sunday	23	24 Justice for Our Neighbors Supper (Lovely Lane)	25	26 Taizé Prayer Service (7:00 pm)	27	28 Pancake Breakfast (7-11 am)
29 Worship Service (8:45 am) <i>Fifth Sunday in Lent</i>	30 Popping Corn at Garfield (8:00 am)	31	<p>You are not a human being in search of a spiritual experience. You are a spiritual being immersed in a human experience. ~Pierre Teilhard de Chardin</p>			

## March Birthdays

20 – Pastor Kathryn Newhall  
24 – Barb Crawford  
27 – Allison Hall

## Queen Char!



Char crowned Queen at the  
Hiawatha Care Center's  
Valentine Party

## Spic and Span Ladies Cleaning Day at Buffalo

We start sweeping, scrubbing, and vacuuming at 9 a.m. on Monday,  
March 9. No previous experience or special skills required.

## Neighborhood Potluck

Our monthly potluck will be on Thursday, March 12, beginning at 11:30  
a.m.. There is always plenty of food and good conversation.

## United Methodist Women

Join us at 9:30 a.m. on March 19. Pastor Kathryn Newhall will present the  
lesson after a short business meeting.

## Garfield Elementary School: Valentine Treat Bags

Thanks for the treat bag donations. The "backpack kids" really enjoyed  
the goodies.

## **Calendar of Upcoming Events at Buffalo**

March 6: World Day of Prayer (9:30 a.m.)  
March 9: Spic 'n Span Church Cleaning (9:00 a.m.)  
March 12: Neighborhood Potluck (11:30 a.m.)  
March 18: Administrative Board Meeting (4:00 p.m.)  
March 19: UMW Meeting (9:30 a.m.)  
March 26: Lenten Taizé Service (7:00 p.m.)  
March 28: Pancake Breakfast (7-11:00 a.m.)  
June 11 & 12: Annual Rummage Sale  
July 25: Ice Cream Social

First Nations Drum Practice: alternate Thursday evenings, beginning about 5:00 pm. Everyone is invited to join the group for these sessions.

### **Buffalo Gals Popcorn Popping Team of Iowa Popping Corn at Garfield**

In February the efforts of the great BGPPTI at Garfield raised \$105.50 for HACAP. Special kudos to the team's all-star lineup: Pat Ferguson, Carla Lindball, and Chris Gochenouer. After a night of "dancing by the light of the moon," the next Buffalo Gals Popcorn Popping Team's popcorn popping marathon will be on Monday, March 30, beginning at 8:00 am.

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## **Prayers and Pancakes Two Community Outreach Events**

### **Taizé Prayer Service**

The Lenten Taizé-style service of prayer and reconciliation is scheduled for Thursday evening, March 26, beginning at 7:00 p.m. This will be our fifth candlelight service featuring short scripture readings and spiritually uplifting music. A reception, hosted by the UMW, will follow our hour of communal prayer, singing, and reflection.

### **Pancake Breakfast and Bake Sale**

On March 28, we will be serving pancakes (along with eggs, sausage, coffee, juice, and milk) from 7 to 11 a.m. Breakfast is free but donations will be used to benefit Waypoint. Their building is unusable because of a water main break that caused major damage. RADA products and homemade noodles will be available at the bake sale.

*Please invite friends, neighbors, family members, tax collectors, and anyone else you know for these two spring events.*

