



Trinity In Touch

MAY 2020

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Mission

Our Mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Vision

Seeking to be an inclusive faith community that compels us to extend God's love in our neighborhood and world.

Core Values

Diversity & Inclusiveness:

Seeking to affirm every person as a child of God.

Scripture, Tradition, Experience and Reason:

Searching for truth in our faith community.

Peace & Justice:

Striving for positive social change in our neighborhood and world.

Trinity United Methodist Church

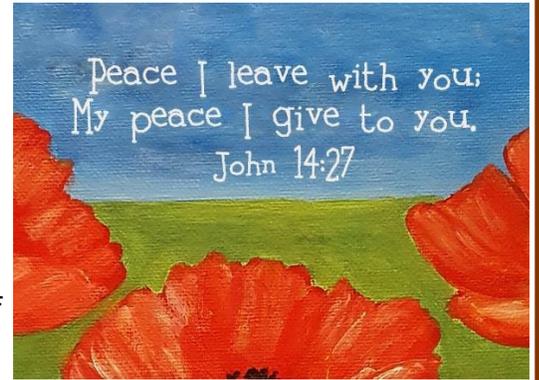
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Dear Trinity Friends,

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” John 14:27

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ...

Be still, and know that I am God! ... The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” Psalm 46:1, 10a-11



Easter is the Great Fifty Days. The season celebrates the promise and hope God gives to the world in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Resurrection is the good news the world, and we, need during these days of global pandemic. In the midst of fear, death, and uncertainty Easter tells us that death does not get the final word. Easter celebrates the God who raises the dead. Yes, disease and death are real. They continue to be part of life. We must take them seriously and do all in our power to protect our health and the health of our neighbors. But Christ comes to us in our homes like he did to his friends on the day of resurrection and says, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21).

The following paragraph from my teacher, Laurence Hull Stookey, helps me. I hope it helps you:

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is that unique act in which the intersection of time and eternity becomes evident. The resurrection is a means by which God reveals another dimension of existence at work in our midst. The Lord's victory over sin and death is a demonstration of the divine presence in a world we have viewed from too limited a perspective. It is God's word to us that there is more to reality than we can see through a telescope or under a microscope. Even after the discovery of that empty tomb in Jerusalem, we are to look at reality through an entirely different kind of lens: the lens of God's extraordinarily powerful presence in the midst of sin and death (Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church, page 34).

In the resurrection God gives power to become children of God (John 1:12). In the resurrection “from Christ's fullness we have all received grace upon grace” (John 1:16). Christ sends us to live as resurrection people who give hope and peace to the world by loving and serving in the world God loves.



I'm looking forward to the day when we will all gather as a congregation in the sanctuary to proclaim the promise and hope of resurrection. Let's live and serve as an Easter people.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Pastor Steve



THANK YOU

Much appreciation to Karen Urquhart for creating dozens of masks for our Trinity Family. We've distributed upwards of 100!

CONGRATULATIONS!

...On the birth of Braden Matthew Hall, April 5, to proud parents Stephanie & Matt Hall, grandparents Steve & Sue Sundheimer, and great-grandmother Margaret Terlip.

CONDOLENCES

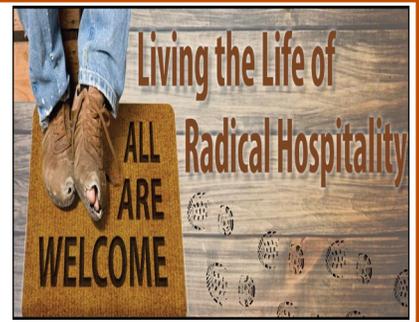
... To the family of Joyce Slykhouse who died April 3.
...The family of Walter Whitman who died April 12.

GRADUATES

Do you have a high school or college graduate at your house? Let us know so we can honor them! Send a picture and details to Betsy at office@grtumc.org.

HOSPITALITY STATEMENT

Trinity UMC celebrates the diversity of the human community and affirms the sacred worth of each person as a recipient of God's love and grace. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we declare ourselves to be an open and inclusive congregation and welcome into full participation all persons regardless of gender, race, national origin, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status or economic condition.



EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES & UPDATES

To have news listed in the **June/July Trinity in Touch**, submit your content to the church office at office@grtumc.org on or before **Monday, May 26**.

FAMILY CAMP 2020

In keeping with Health Department concerns and State calls for social distancing, we have decided to cancel Family Camp 2020.

We have had several discussions with Lake Michigan Camp staff and they recommend that Memorial weekend would just be too soon to make preparations for our event. This year's deposit will be saved for Memorial weekend 2021 at Lake Michigan Camp.

This is a tradition for Trinity that stretches over 40 years and is very dear to all of us. We just do not want to put any of our church family or camp staff in harms way. If you have submitted payment with registration, we will return to you shortly.



Until 2021

Keep Michigan UMC Camping in your prayers as they discern whether children/youth camping can be offered this year. This will be a very difficult time for them financially.

See you in 2021!

Nichea Ver Veer Guy,
Discipleship Pathways Director

LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP AT TRINITY

These weeks of isolation and social distancing have helped me and the worship planning team learn how to provide worship online. I'm thankful beyond words for Randy Burghart, Jane Van Hof, Andrea Gay, Matt Rossmiller, Jeff Rundhaug, Stephanie Myers, and Karen & Jim Urquhart for their music leadership. Randy has proven to be a skilled video producer! Special thanks to Paul Hillman for teaching Zoom skills and helping members connect to our worship. Finally, thanks to Matt Rossmiller and Paul Hillman for co-hosting the weekly Zoom worship.



Our experience with streaming worship has convinced us that we need to continue live streaming when we return to worshiping in the sanctuary. We will make the necessary investment in equipment needed to do it well through our Trinity UMC web site at grtumc.org.

This means we need a team of Trinity members to run the live stream camera, sound, and computer systems each Sunday. If you are interested in serving on the Trinity Live Stream Team, please contact Pastor Steve or Randy Burghart.



TRINITY MISSION NEWS

This year Missions is designating the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) as the sole recipient of **TRINITY'S EASTER OFFERING** because UMCOR really needs resources now to assist vulnerable communities in the United States and around the world to fight the coronavirus.

UMCOR has been working with health boards, medical professionals, disaster management coordinators and faith leaders to prevent the spread of the virus. Grants are being made to local partners to equip them to serve others with knowledge and supplies. Learn more about what UMCOR is doing to use its local presence to minimize suffering:

[UMCOR Coronavirus Response](#); [UMCOR Facebook Page](#); [Global Ministries](#)

UMCOR has launched a giving campaign, "Sheltering in Love," to assist in their coronavirus work. You may give to UMCOR through the Trinity website Give Now link on our home page. All giving to UMCOR in May will go to the "Sheltering in Love" campaign unless the giver communicates otherwise.

MAY CARING COINS recipient is *Habitat for Humanity Kent County*, building long term homes, communities, and hope.



SPECIAL OFFERING GIVING

November giving included the Thanksgiving offering as well as the yearly food ingathering.

- *GVSU Wesley Fellowship*: \$355.50
- *Church World Service*: \$265.50
- *Clark Benevolent Fund*: \$267.00
- *NECM & SECOM Ministries* each received \$187.50 as well as 17 grocery bags of non-perishable foods.



December giving included the Christmas offering and Heifer Inc. donations.

- *United Methodist Community House*: \$718.88
- *Refugee Family*: \$551.88
- *Heifer Plate Giving*: \$656.89
- *Heifer Coin Banks & Animal Gifts*: \$904.09

Thank you very much for your concern for brothers, sisters, and neighbors no matter where they are in the world. May our gifts show the compassion and caring of the living Christ to all who benefit from them.

ENDOWMENT GIFT

Dick and Louise Thomas were long time members of Trinity. They were both very active in many areas of the church. After his retirement, Dick spent many hours working at Trinity on his own. Often, if you stopped by the church, Dick would be tinkering or repairing something that wasn't quite right.

Louise passed away about 10 years ago and Dick moved to a retirement home. If you visited him there, his room would be full of stuff he was repairing for people. Dick passed away last year, and consequently the church has received a generous check from his estate for our Endowment Fund. His legacy will live on into the ages as the dividends from this investment will help keep the church and it's fixtures in good order, just as he did in real life!

God Bless! Lynn Francis, Chairman Endowment Fund



POLICY GOVERNANCE BOARD CHALLENGE

As we journey the uncharted waters of uncertainty I am drawn to the navigational term Dead Reckoning. *Dead reckoning is the process of determining one's current position by using a previously determined position, and advancing that position.* Simply stated we know where we are based on our past, and our present both of which guide us toward our destination.

There is no better time than today to check our position and focus on our destination. Our strength is drawn from past experiences of faith and fellowship with our Trinity family. Our destination is "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." How do we get there? By increasing our faith, confirming our hope, and perfecting one another in love.

*Making disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation of the world.*



Today is the time to take action, to call our family, friends, neighbors, or someone who may need a friendly voice. Let them know that you care for their wellbeing. Ask them if there is anything they need and how you can help. If you are unable to help, call someone who can. Make a difference, a call and a prayer may be all they need. It is time to let your faith shine and to work on perfecting one another in love. Today let's focus on making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Randy Hamstra,
Policy & Governance Board Member

REFLECTIONS- MEAL SERVING AT ST. ALPHONSUS

This past March 3 was the Tuesday evening for Trinity UMC Missions to serve a meal to the homeless people who come to St. Alphonsus each week. This year I felt I could walk and carry food without lameness or pain.

The people start gathering before 5pm, so we take their order and serve their desired beverage of tea, coffee, lemonade, white or chocolate milk, or water. Steve and I had a row of four tables. The man at the far table was alone and remained alone the whole meal. His body language was saying, "I want to be alone." Their dinner plates had moist, tender chicken breasts with stuffing and gravy, green beans, roll with butter, mandarin oranges, and cake for dessert.

The middle table's first diner was a man wearing a thick, tattered, soiled jacket. He seemed to know a number of other men and chatted with them. His hands were stained black, which an effort with soap and water at the hand sink in the kitchen only took off the top layer. Three men and a woman eventually joined him, but he was the one who lingered, so I sat down for a chat. His sister's garage is where he sleeps at night. The black hands, maybe from computer ink, were from looking for whatever in a dumpster. He, like most of the men, ate with his jacket on. He was hungry and somehow acquired three extra rolls to finish his meal.

A man at the third table was quite conversant about difficult war days in Viet Nam, better days than being homeless, and saying, "It's tough out there." He told about living in a tent, the sense of community among the homeless, and their sadness of losing a friend. Tears ran down his cheeks a number of times.

When delivering a plate of food for a late-arriving man, I gave him his plate and picked up from a guest who had finished and departed. Green beans were left on this plate and the new man said, "We won't waste them. I like green beans." He put them on his plate. They seem to share and not waste.

Many varied thoughts have gone through my head since serving a meal at St. Alphonsus. Above all, prayers are for the hungry and homeless of our city and prayers that we, as a society, can do better for these people. Clarice McKenzie, Missions



OPEN YOUR HEART
TO THE HUNGRY AND HOMELESS



COMMUNITY MINISTRIES UPDATE

This year our program was turned upside down and inside out overnight. With a couple months to go in our school year program we couldn't gather, and our programming had to shift overnight. We took on the challenge and immediately started to reach out to our families after the "stay at home" order was initiated.

Within two days we were making a round of calls to our students and families to make sure they were OK, especially as businesses started to close down. We then updated all our contact information as we work with a very transient population. We connected with these families, and within a week we sent out \$100 gift cards to the families to use for immediate needs, as well as a "Thank You" card for being a part of our program this year. We also informed families they can reach out to us if they get in a difficult situation and we will follow up. We also connected with the Principal at Congress to find out info about at-home schooling plans and how that would look moving forward. We relayed to the Principal that Trinity has diapers to donate and can secure gift cards for families in need. Every week we've had multiple requests and needs that have arisen and we are helping to support these community families. We have also gotten the Congress Principal connected with the East Hills Council of Neighbors Executive Director to help share information and communication with local community members. This is an ongoing process, but we have helped create avenues for communication that will be needed throughout this crisis.

We also have been a part of community leaders joining together for weekly calls with the Micah Center and the Kauffman Interfaith Network, and are partnering with them to build a system to purchase food from Feeding America to help our friends at the Hispanic Center of West Michigan with a way to provide food for families in need. We've also learned there are students at Aquinas College who have to stay on campus during this crisis and have contributed to a fund that helps support those students to help keep them safe. Matt Witkowski, Community Ministries Director

MICHIGAN ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPECIAL SESSION

The Michigan Annual Conference met at Albion College for a special session this past March 7 to decide whether to send a proposed plan for the split of the worldwide UMC, known as *Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation*, to the 2020 General Conference for legislative consideration. The Protocol was developed by a group of church leaders representing traditionalist, centrist, and progressive perspectives in response to differences over the status of LGBTQ persons in the life of the church.

The Philippines Episcopal Area and the Sierra Leone Annual Conference also planned to submit requests to send the Protocol to General Conference. Michigan is the only US Annual Conference which chose to hold a vote on sending the Protocol. The Michigan vote ensured that the petition, if approved, would be submitted to General Conference if the Philippines and Sierra Leone were unable to submit their request by the deadline for proposed legislation. During the special session, members of the Michigan Annual Conference were allowed to comment on the issue, however no amendments to the Protocol were allowed under Michigan Annual Conference rules.

Comments for supporters included that it was time to move forward and end the harm the divisiveness is doing to the UMC and local churches; the split presents the Wesleyan tradition of social justice; and traditionalists would be happy for the new start. Comments in opposition included that General Conference 2019 settled the issue and the amount given to those leaving the UMC is not equitable. Other comments included whether the post-split UMC would be a center-progressive church and concern over impact on local churches if key members leave. There were several expressions of desire for continued unity between parties beyond this issue.

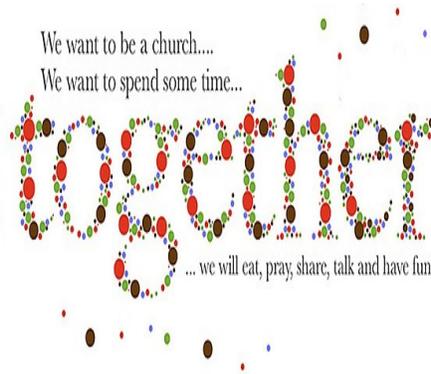
Out of 1,019 votes, 91% voted to send the Protocol to General Conference. Bonnie Czuhajewski and Kip Smalligan attended as Trinity's Annual Conference representatives, and both voted "yes" on the petition. General Conference, new date yet to be determined, will now consider the petition. It can be amended at that time.

Kip Smalligan,
Trinity Lay Representative



MONTHLY MEETING NIGHT

MAY 18- *Cancelled*
 June 16- *POTLUCK*
 NO JULY MEETING
 August 18- *SPRC*
 Sept. 15- *Memorial & Endowment*
 Oct. 20- *Missions/Church & Society*
 Nov. 17- *Nominations*
 NO DECEMBER MEETING



POSTPONED

Michigan Annual Conference & General Conference 2020 have both been postponed. New dates yet to be determined. Stay tuned!

HOW I'VE BEEN SPENDING COVID-19

Being the parent of four adult children has its challenges. One is that they are spread out over the US. Emily working at UVA Medical Center in Charlottesville, Virginia. Ethan and his wife, Suz, are living in Berkeley, California and working for city governments. Drew is living in Grand Rapids but often works on the road (this week Wisconsin), and Zach and Mary are here in GR.

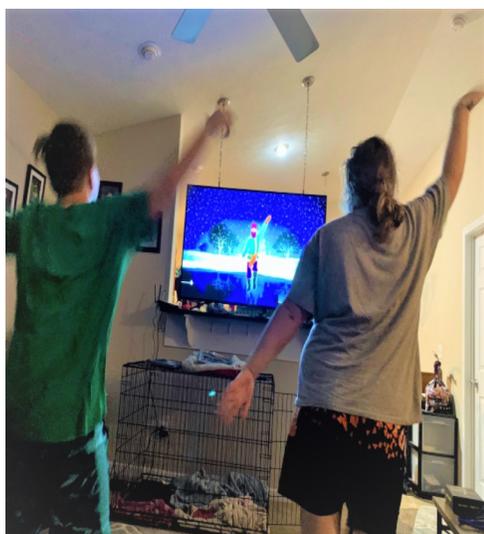
So, what nurtures my soul during this pandemic has been our weekly meet ups on the internet when we chat, get up to speed on life and play games. To hear their laughter, acknowledge their fear and talk through "how it goes" is such a gift. You never stop worrying about your children, and at times like this when you feel so very little control over life, more so. I am grateful for the extended community that embraces these children from afar and reassures them on a daily basis. That is God at work. That is what God is asking of us. To be the extension of compassion for others is what "being the church" is all about. For now, GAME ON!

I am getting pretty good at this!

NICHEA VER VEER GUY



KATIE ORENT busy making Easter cards. *Our Trinity folks appreciated receiving them, Katie!*



- Walking dogs
- Yoga
- Painting
- Game night
- Skip-Bo
- Cards
- Disney quizzes
- “Just Dance” videos
- Reading
- Watching TV
- FaceTime friends & family
- Calling friends & family
- Cleaning & organizing house
- Shopping & running errands

ANDREA GAY



MORE... HOW I'VE BEEN SPENDING COVID-19

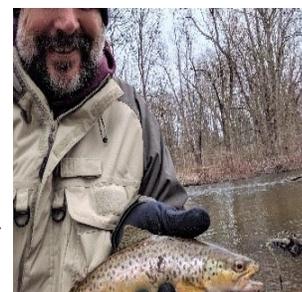


I remember our staff meeting when the schools closed and I told my colleagues I would need to work from home on Tuesday and Thursday because both Laura and I work and were trying to figure out a way to juggle two jobs and schoolwork for Kasen at home. We figured out a general plan of action and started to put the plan in place for two weeks until we were in another staff meeting and Gretchen Whitmer ordered the "Stay At Home" order. We left the staff meeting with a quick game plan to figure out how we would communicate and still be able to get the work of the church done, including weekly worship, music, children and family ministry, general day to day office tasks, and community engagement initiatives. I remember going to the local grocery store and getting a large amount of groceries not knowing how long this "new normal" would last.

Since being home we've had twice weekly staff meetings and many other ZOOM meetings with trainings from the Michigan Conference, Community Ministries Initiatives, Community Partnership Meetings, and Professional Development Opportunities. This has been a very different way of working that has been productive, but I surely miss seeing my friends and co-workers on a daily basis.



Since working at home gives you a bit more flexibility, I have been able to tackle some new projects, such as building two large raised garden beds, building garden food areas around the shed, and learning more about the plants, natural trees and shrubs I used in deer habitat projects I'll be working on this summer. These are all new interest areas for me and have really energized me by getting excited about learning something new I can continue after the order has lifted.



I know I can work from home for longer if needed, but I do enjoy all the people I get to see in my job and being in LIVE community with other. I hope the rest of the Trinity UMC family is learning and growing during this time as well while staying safe. That's My Story During COVID-19. **MATT WITKOWSKI**

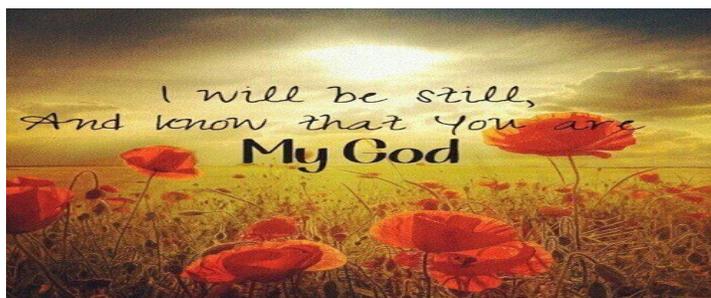
All I can think of is back to 5th grade with Miss Weeda (yup- that really was her name!) and our first writing assignment for the fall, "What I Did During Summer Vacation." The more current twist on that is, of course, "What I Did During Covid-19." So, what *have* I been doing?

Reading, walking, Face Timing with grandkids, texting with sisters, watching devotionals on social media (something I rarely take the time to do), ZOOM meetings (LOTS), writing out cards, answering email, baking, delivering goods to parishioners, watching movies.

With that said, through it all my mind continues to reflect on "Be still and know that I am God" as I've spent a significant amount of time perched on my couch looking out the window at the beautiful woods in back of my house. When researching the "Be Still" verse from Psalm 46:10, I was reminded that it's not so much about meditation and listening, but *releasing, giving up control, surrendering, dying to self*. While God expects me do my part in adjusting to this new normal, I need to forget about the rest! Worry, uncertainty, and not knowing what the next day will bring- are simply not necessary.

When I look back on this time in my life, I hope I'll remember God's hand in it and be thankful I didn't have to figure it all out, fix, or control, but simply "Be still and know that I am God." Timeless and comforting words. **God's got this!**

BETSY WEEMS



CREATIVE KIDS

Nichea Ver Veer Guy, Discipleship Pathways Director, mailed packages to all Trinity families, which included a plain cut-out of a Flat Jesus. The children were asked to color Jesus any way they would like, followed by a picture with him and something they have enjoyed doing while at home.

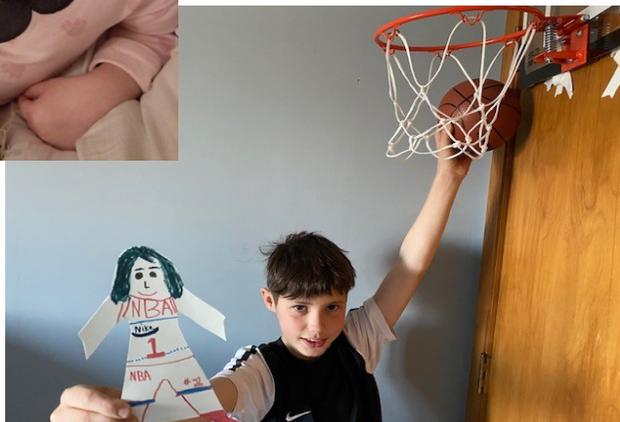


Fiona Thue displays her creation!

It is important to know that God is with us through this crisis. Seeing Jesus the way that makes us feel loved is also important. This helps children to understand that concept and give them a way to articulate that compassion. We love our Trinity kids!



Anya Hinline thought Flat Jesus needed to be with the yard flowers from her backyard.



Auden Enrico enjoying b-ball with his new friend.

EASTER PEEPS YOUTH CHALLENGE

Congrats to the Lafferty boys who took this challenge to the next level! Hayden and Quentin decided they wanted to learn how to make cakes, so they found a video, studied it, and nailed it with their décor. Fabulous job!



GOD LOVES YOU-YOU ARE ENOUGH



For many of us, we are in week six. Six weeks of having our children home from school. Six weeks of worshipping at home. Six weeks of uncertainty and unknowns. Some have been working from home. Some are essential workers (thank you!). Some are home with many more uncertainties.

Over the last six weeks, I have been blessed to hear from many working in children's ministry. They are asking about what to do now and looking ahead. And while there are still many unknowns and uncertainties, the two things I am finding myself saying over and over is, "you are enough," and "extend yourself and those around you lots of grace."

To parents

You are enough! You are trying to figure out working (at home or outside the home) with schooling at home and being a short-order cook along with all the normal responsibilities of adulting. If being at home with the kids all day was already your norm, this is still different - no playgroups or playgrounds (among all the other things). It is ok to give yourself a break so that you can be a "good enough" parent. Our kids need to know they are loved and have their basic needs met.

Reach out if you need help (while maintaining physical distancing). Give yourselves, and your children grace. Many of us are experiencing grief, and that looks different depending on the day and depending on your age. As e-learning is starting, kids may go through another round of grief - the reality that they won't get to go back to their physical school building this year and see their friends and teachers.

Your church may be sending home activities and Bible lessons and ways that you can form faith at home. Try to incorporate these practices in your family's life, not as just another thing to do, but as a way to build and continue your firm foundation on God.

Say a prayer before meals or as you brush your teeth or read a Bible story before bed. Go on a nature scavenger hunt, and thank God for the beauty you see in your world. Try a new spiritual practice like praying in color or prayer beads or prayer walks or one of the many other creative ways that your family can be in connection with God. You always have been and always will be the primary faith-former of your child/children. Embrace that not as another thing to do, but as a blessing. And when the days are too much, extend grace. Parents, you are enough.

To Christian Education/Children's Ministry Leaders

I have spoken with many of you over the last several weeks for encouragement and ideas. I know you miss the kids in your church. I know some of you have been able to Zoom or Facebook Live or connect in another way. Seeing one another's faces is important if you have that ability. Continue to focus on relationships. Make a phone call or send a card. Now is also an excellent time to focus on the essentials - focus on relationship over content. For some of you, all this technology is new. Practice with it. Extend yourself grace. Even the top tech people stumble sometimes!

I know we have missed palm parades and Easter egg hunts. We are grieving that this may not be a typical summer. We aren't sure if we can have VBS this summer or maybe it will just look different. Give yourself a moment to remember that you are enough. Whatever you need to do this spring and summer, give yourself and those around you grace. I know you are doing the best you can with what you have. You are enough.

To kids

You may be enjoying every moment of this time at home! Or you may miss your friends at school terribly. Your emotions may be all over the place! You may love your parents and be tired of them at the same time! Be gentle with yourself. Try to be gentle with your parents and siblings and pets. It's hard to be in the same space with one another for long amounts of time. Reach out to your pastor, or kids ministry leader, or Sunday School teacher from church, or your teacher from school, or your friends. Remember, you are loved.

To all

Be gentle with yourself, give yourself grace, take a break when you need it (even adults need a time out sometimes), and remember that you are enough. God loves you. Reach out to a friend, your church, or a helpline if you need it. Check in with a neighbor or family member. Pray. God loves you, and you are enough.

Rev. Kathy Pittenger
Children's Initiatives Coordinator, Michigan Conference