



Becoming God's Beloved Community. Changing Lives. Transforming Communities.

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THE SPIRE

FROM PASTOR LUANA

Scripture tells us that after Jesus was baptized by John in the River Jordan, he went out into the wilderness for 40 days. Those are the 40 from which we model Lent! At the end of those forty days, when Jesus was hungry from fasting, he was approached and harassed by the devil. The story is found in detail in Matthew and Luke and mentioned in Mark. Although we traditionally call this story the temptation of Christ, there seems to me to be no indication that Jesus was tempted to accept the Devil's offer, more like he was being harassed and he remained vigilant in the face of the Devil's shenanigans.

Does it feel a little like we have been in Lent since we started Lent in 2020? Our last worship service together, in person, in the sanctuary, was March 15, 2020; almost a year ago. As a recent tweet put it: *I hadn't planned on giving up so much for Lent.*

Lent is typically a time of austerity where we deny ourselves to better understand the ways Jesus denied himself in the desert, and in the ways he offered himself to us on the cross. But, we have already had a year of austerity! So this Lent might look more like spiritual self-care than self-denial. With a vaccine being administered (albeit slower than hoped) and warmer days ahead, it seems like we might be at the end of our time in the desert. But remember, that's when the devil harassed Jesus, and when people are typically most vulnerable.

So, this is a time for vigilance, and for spiritual self-care (and emotional and physical self-care too!) It might be time to *give up* sweets, but be sure to *add* something good for your body, like broccoli! It's a great time to increase the times you pray each day. It's a good time to be mindful of, and beguiled by, the beauty of a snowflake. Or maybe time to learn a breathing prayer, do extra stretching each morning, or to [walk our new Labyrinth](#). It's a great time to [read and study scripture](#) each day. It's a perfect time to reach out and tell someone how much they mean to you and to just check in on people you love. Be good to yourself and to others. And if you are being harassed, if there is a voice telling you that you can't do it, a voice telling you take advantage of others, telling you to test God, tell that voice *not today Satan*.

Again & Again, God meets us where we are, when we need God the most. Join us in our online worship as we lift up hope and God's amazing grace. Together, and with God, we'll get through the wilderness.

Blessings,



Staying Safe During Covid: Wear Your Mask Properly



by Mary Ann Scharf, RN Ed.D. Faculty Emeritus,
College of Nursing, Seton Hall University

With several new strains of the corona virus circulating in Great Britain, South Africa, and now New Jersey, it is more important than ever to wear a mask!

Your mask must fit tightly, covering your nose. Surgical masks will have a wire in the top edge so that you can squeeze the mask around your nose. This will also prevent fogging of glasses. The mask must also cover your mouth.

The safest mask is the N-95. However, since these masks are in short supply and are needed by health care professionals taking care of those who are very sick with COVID-19, other masks are recommended for the general public. The next safest mask is a blue surgical mask. These masks are disposable and should only be worn once then discarded. Cloth masks are safe, especially if they are made with two layers that

are closely woven. Safer still would be to wear two masks. During the peak of COVID in the spring, 2020, I wore a cloth mask over the surgical mask. The cloth masks can be washed and reused. Other loose coverings such as a scarf or bandana are not very effective and should not be worn.

While wearing your mask, do not touch your face or mask. If you have been exposed to the coronavirus, it is on the outside of your mask. If you touch your mask, and then your face, you have contaminated yourself and risk infection. When removing your mask, touch only the strings to the ears, not the mask itself. Paper masks should be discarded after use. Cloth masks should be washed after use. Any surface that you put your mask on should be considered contaminated.

Wear masks when you are outside your home or car or exposed to other people. If someone in your household is sick with COVID, you and the infected person must wear masks and stay at least 6' apart at all times. Confine the infected person to one room or bedroom and use separate bathrooms. Clean all touched surfaces frequently. Wash hands often.

Wear your mask even if you have had a COVID vaccine shot. There are still people who have not had the vaccine and can be spreading the coronavirus even without showing symptoms. Stay safe! **WEAR YOUR MASK!**

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES IN MORRIS COUNTY

Pastor Luana is working with the Morris Area Clergy Council's new initiative to evaluate the availability of mental health resources in Morris County, and to advocate for services where and when needed. By all accounts from professionals who serve this population, these issues are on a steep rise in Morris County. Sadly, many who desperately need help are unable to seek out the services they need due to problems such as stigma, cost, transportation, knowledge of available services, etc.

They want to hear your stories, work with those who provide services and advocate for more support where needed. Confidentiality and anonymity are strictly observed. You can access a short survey here: <https://forms.gle/mA69YjE9xaU35jRaA>

Lent begins on February 17, 2021, and our Adult discipleship development program will be doing a six week Lenten study entitled, ***Roll Down, Justice!***, written by Faye Wilson and featuring the music and reflections of Mark A. Miller. The series poses the following questions to believers:

What are you prepared to give in order to have a closer walk with God?

What can you give in order to embrace anew the work of justice?

Mark Miller has written a collection of songs, lyrics, and music, which remind us of the work we have to do. We all learn in different ways and this study calls us to sing to ourselves and to each other the call that we each have to do to "seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God." Carry the commitment to care - to bring about justice in God's world - as a song in your heart: *Roll Down, Justice!*

Roll Down, Justice! is based on six songs that will help guide our discussions:

- * Session 1: Child of God
- * Session 2: How Long?
- * Session 3: I Dream of a Church
- * Session 4: I Choose Love
- * Session 5: God Has Work for Us to Do
- * Session 6: The Day is Coming

This series begins on Sunday, February 21st at 9 am at <https://us02web.zoom.us/>



CONNECTING IN WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP

ONLINE WORSHIP & ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

Each Sunday we provide relevant and reassuring online worship experiences for you! Our full pre-recorded worship service can be found on our website at

<https://morristownumc.org/english-service/>

Our worship service is also broadcast on the Public Access channel of the Altice/Optimum Local Cable, channel 21 at **3:00 p.m. on Sundays**. Look for an email on Sunday morning with:

- ⇒ The Worship Guide including all hymns and prayers, as well as questions for reflection and prayer suggestions
- ⇒ Link to Adult Sunday School on Zoom
- ⇒ Pre-recorded worship
- ⇒ Link to Zoom Coffee Hour

IN MEMORIAM: RUTH BOWSER

Ruth Olive Bowser

March 11, 1925 - December 7, 2020

Ruth Olive (McClish) Bowser passed away peacefully in her sleep at the age of 95.

She was a wonderful wife, mother, sister, aunt and friend to all who loved her.

Ruth was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio and married Don Bowser in 1948. They were blessed with over 50 years together and had three children. They relocated twice. One move was to Morristown, NJ where they were extremely active in the Morristown United Methodist Church. She found working at the Morris County Library extremely fulfilling because of her love of books and reading.

Ruth and Don made the decision to retire to Sun City Center, FL in 1991.

While there, she was involved in many activities - volunteering at the Lapidary Shop along with helping in many areas at their United Methodist Church.

Ruth moved to Brookdale Skyline, Colorado Springs, CO shortly after her husband passed away to be closer to family. Ultimately, she moved to Forest Ridge Senior Living in Woodland Park, CO. She was always loved and received exceptional care by the wonderful staff.

She is survived by her children; Pamela (Robert) Powell of Belton, MO; Donna (Steve) Frick of Divide, CO and Richard (Diane) Bowser of Morristown, NJ. She also leaves behind 5 grandchildren, 6 great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Due to restrictions imposed during this difficult time, interment will be held at a later date at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to a charity of your choice in her memory.

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LABYRINTH WALK

Morristown UMC has been gifted a 24-foot canvas Labyrinth!

The Labyrinth is set up in the sanctuary and was dedicated on Ash Wednesday. It will be open on Sundays in Lent from 10a-3pm by reservation in 30-minute time slots. (The link for reservation is in this Spire's email.) Since the Labyrinth is new to many of us, we will have "Labyrinth Ushers" standing by on Sundays to assist you in your experience. Music will be made available, booties to cover street shoes, and any questions you have can be addressed. The Labyrinth will also be available by appointment to accommodate everyone's schedule. Again, to assure everyone's safety, anyone entering the building must have their temperature taken and sign in.



SING WITH US!

Easter Virtual Choir (for EVERYONE!)

Have you done your video yet?

We're singing hymn #308, "Thine Be the Glory" as a Virtual Choir for Easter.

Everyone in the congregation is invited to sing along.

See the link in this Spire email for instructions!



PRAY WITHOUT CEASING...

PRAYERS OF JOY & CONCERN

- For those **experiencing unprecedented severe winter weather conditions** in the South, especially Texas, may they receive the faith and strength that only God can provide.
- For **elected officials and world leaders**, that they may always work for peace and justice, especially for immigrants, the poor, and downtrodden.
- For all those who **work for peace and justice in our world**, that they may see good results of their work.
- That God may give us the **grace to show kindness in caring for one another** as we remain challenged by COVID-19.
- That **people everywhere receive the patience, vigilance, and understanding** necessary to keep us safe during the current surge of COVID-19, even as we gratefully await the distribution of the vaccine.
- For **All** who are sick with and recovering from the COVID-19 virus
- For **David Beach**, who was an interim pastor at MUMC, has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. David and spouse Maxine, a who served as Dean at Drew Theological School, now live in Florida.
- For **Pat, brother of Phyllis**, who has been hospitalized and is being treated for COVID-19.
- For **Jack Scharf** is having diagnostic testing for pain and abnormal blood test results.
- For the **Deleg Family** whose apartment building was damaged by fire last week
- For **Kevin** as he recovers at home from his latest spinal surgery
- **Les and Arden** as Les continues to recover
- Carol F.'s friend **Dave** is having a very difficult recovery from a stem cell transplant for leukemia
- **Chris**, a dear friend of Kristi M's, as she cares for her mother who is suffering from identity loss due to Alzheimer's Disease

Please email prayer requests and updates to Pastor Luana at lcookscott@MorristownUMC.org or text 570-832-0542. If you would like to add a name to the printed, published prayer list, please call the church office at 973-538-2132 or email our Office Manager, Regina at RHeater@MorristownUMC.org



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RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK