It seems that every ad on television these days has something to do with the pandemic. And of course, the news is about nothing else. We’re probably even getting tired of people saying, “We’re all in this together.” (Even though it is a comforting thought and helpful reminder.)

I saw a commercial recently with Oprah Winfrey talking about how “creativity is ongoing.” And that really hit me. If any of us is wondering where God is showing up in these times, that surely is one of the most obvious places. We speak of God as our Creator, so it should come as no surprise that God is still speaking today through all forms of creation and creating.

The commercial highlighted people making masks and murals and numerous other things I can’t remember (because my brain isn’t working quite as well right now). And that really hit me. If any of us is wondering where God is showing up in these times, that surely is one of the most obvious places. We speak of God as our Creator, so it should come as no surprise that God is still speaking today through all forms of creation and creating.

The commercial highlighted people making masks and murals and numerous other things I can’t remember (because my brain isn’t working quite as well right now). And I thought about all the other things we’ve seen that speak to creativity. We see major industries overhauling their workplaces to make ventilators, face shields and items they never imagined they’d be producing. We’ve watched videos of drive-by birthday greetings. Teachers have devised creative ways to keep their students engaged in on-line learning and communities have found new ways to help people in need. And churches are worshipping in new ways.

As politicians argue over whose to blame and who goofed up, I think God is surely smiling right now at how people are carrying on and how “creativity is ongoing.”

God be with you till we meet again!

Janet
We ask you for prayers for Laurie Schalliol in the passing of her father. Both of her parents have passed away in the last 4 months.

Remember in prayers the family and friends of Chuck Lockyear, who was Hal’s roommate at Elmhurst College and for a brief time was the executive of a local nursing care facility. During that time he attended Zion and brought his music/clarinet skills to church with him. Chuck died a week ago of pancreatic cancer.

Please pray for Anthony, a co-worker of Tom, who is struggling.

Prayers are needed for Eleanor, a friend of Beth Green, who suffered a stroke.

Pray for Nancy and the rest of the Philabaum family in the passing of Rob.

Please pray for safety and well-being for Shakira, Josh, Tom, Mark, Michael & Chris Taelman, Michelle, Rick, Marcie, Matt, Laura and others as they are required to go to places of employment. Hal Brueske continues treatment. Please pray for his health and healing.

Donna Wagoner needs prayer for general health concerns and issues with her foot.

Pray for the Koepe’s as they determine when to travel home from Arizona.

Michelle Cain continued healing for her eye.

We pray for those who have been isolated for weeks due to restriction of visitors at assisted living and other health care facilities and their families including Judy Waldo, Bob Schroeder, Helen Bentzen, Jim Kowatch and others.

Roger Hintz has continued health issues.

Please pray for all those who work in health care including: Keri Niedbalski, Ann & Lowell Markley’s son and daughter-in-law, Marcie Muhlbeier, Fred Goldstein, John & Cathy Bair’s children. Hugh Hedman (Carol & Brian’s son), Sheri Philabaum AND ALL those who work in health care from maintenance and IT to all sorts of therapy to doctors and nurses.

Pray for those who are at added risk who work in emergency management, the grocery industry and others that are deemed essential businesses.

Pray for all those who are most vulnerable to this virus.

Pray for the stress being caused by isolation and lack of income.

Pray for the leaders of the world as we face the global pandemic: local, regional, country and global leaders.

Pray for a love of our neighbor.

April 24, 2020  Zion UCC Prayer List

FINANCIAL REPORT

March 15, 2020
Weekly Operating Expenses:  $3420.00
Operating Offering: $2130.00
Building Fund: $135.00
Building Use: $180.00
Undesignated Memorials & Gifts: $240.00
March 22, 2020
Weekly Operating Expenses:  $3420.00
Operating Offering:  $1322.00
Building Fund:  $10.00
Undesignated Memorials & Gifts:  $25.00
March 29, 2020
Weekly Operating Expenses:  $3420.00
Operating Offering:  $630.00
Building Fund:  $10.00
April 5, 2020
Weekly Operating Expenses:  $3420.00
Operating Offering:  $580.00
Building Fund:  $610.00
April 12, 2020
Weekly Operating Expenses:  $3420.00
Operating Offering:  $1145.00
Building Fund:  $10.00
April 19, 2020
Weekly Operating Expenses:  $3420.00
Operating Offering:  $2727.00
Building Use:  $100.00
Building Fund:  $10.00
Undesignated Memorials & Gifts:  $100.00
April 26, 2020
Weekly Operating Expenses:  $3420.00
Operating Offering:  $8580.00
Building Fund:  $135.00
Undesignated Memorials & Gifts:  $50.00

MAY BIRTHDAYS

2  Lynn DeCocker
10  Melanie Nellis
17  Sarah Kereszterti
22  Ann Markley
23  Marcile Sellers
23  Patty Troeger
29  Shelby Forsythe
29  Michael Geglio
30  Cathy Bair
30  Callie Oneese

Janet’s contact information:
Phone - (224) 735-1073
Email - jboyd@zionsb.org

Pray for:
Autumn Arndt
Bette Gilmore
Lynn Kucela
Liam Meece
Robert Meece
Bob Schroeder
Pat Sloan
Stayton family
Judy Waldo Parson
Worship Ministry Meeting, Monday, May 4, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. on Zoom.

The Elders Meeting, Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom.

For Zoom information for each meeting please watch for an email that will contain a Meeting ID and a Password. If you have questions email zionsb@zionsb.org or call Linda Kowatch at 615-485-6126.

Tom Whipkey for starting the Sunday morning live stream.
Worship Ministry met through Zoom to plan Sunday morning worship services.
Kyle Walterhouse for lining up special music each week and for being the production manager in organizing all the pieces and putting it into a wonderful service.
Sue Taylor and Beth Green for working on finances.
Roy Raymond for continuing to do the bookkeeping, bill paying and deposits.

Thank you to Beth Green and Nancy Philabaum for checking into the office on a regular basis.

Property Ministry Update

New look in the sanctuary and fellowship hall. New audio visual equipment has been installed in the sanctuary and fellowship hall. We want to thank Hal Brueseke, Beth Green and Rick Muhlbeier for coordinating with Lifestyle Consulting for this project. The money used for this project was designated from the building fund.

Unity Gardens

Our Unity Gardens are being cleaned and readied for planting. Helen Geglio and volunteers are out there on a regular basis. Mulch is being spread. Rhubarb is coming up. The other beds are cleaned and some planting has been done. Mike Geglio has planted his hops.

We could use more volunteers in the garden.

Sunday Morning Worship Access

If you have Facebook you can access the worship service each Sunday at 9:30amEST on Zion's Facebook Page.

If you don't have Facebook check your email each Sunday morning for an email from Zion. In that email there will be a link for you to click on to watch the video of the service. You can use that link anytime!

If at anytime you have questions or trouble, you can email zionsb@zionsb.org or you can call Linda Kowatch at 615-485-6126.

Zion UCC Wednesday Night Zoom Group

Members of the congregation expressed a desire to gather via the internet to pray, study and fellowship. On Thursday, April 2 the first meeting of the Zion UCC Zoom group convened. We were thrilled to be able to see and talk with congregation members. It was really fun to see one another again!

We decided to gather using Zoom every Wednesday at 6pm. It was also expressed that this group wanted to connect on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. So the planning began. We met on Wednesday, May 8 and reflected on the phrase “And your will be done.” The Maundy Thursday gathering was complete with communion and stripping the altar. The Good Friday Service incorporated a Stations of the Cross video created by St. Peter’s UCC, Carmel, IN.

The newly formed Zion UCC Wednesday Night Zoom Group continues to meet each Wednesday at 6pm. If you have internet, download Zoom on your computer. You do need to have Zoom downloaded on your computer and have a camera and microphone on your computer, iPad or tablet. Email zionsb@zionsb.org that you would like to join the Wednesday night group and we will email you the information. If you need assistance, please don’t hesitate to email and we will do our best to help get you set up. Who knew Zoom would be a tool used by God to keep the Zion UCC family connected?!
We have made application through TCU to the Government Assistance program to help continue to make payroll. We did not receive funds from the first issue of money. We are hoping for money for the second issue.

We are also working on a grant from Center for Congregations Introducing the Connect Through Tech grant! This is a one-time grant opportunity for Indiana congregations. The Connect Through Tech grant is for Indiana congregations to purchase new technology resources to provide your congregational life offerings remotely (worship, education, pastoral care, spiritual formation, holiday celebrations, etc.). We hope this grant will help our congregation to stay connected through technology during this time of sheltering in place and beyond.

Zion is still making payroll and regular expenses. Please remember to make your regular donations so we won’t have to continue to use reserves.

Elders’ Notes

We will be having an Elders meeting in May. This meeting will be via Zoom and held at 6:00 pm Tuesday, May 12th.

Likely topics for the agenda include:
- treasurer report, pastor report, congregational meeting
- how we will transition back after the quarantine is lifted
- what should we do to celebrate our reopening?
- determining who the Elders will be reaching out to during the ongoing quarantine.

Sunday Morning Worship

When the announcement came from Pastor Janet and the Elders on March 12th that due to the Covid-19 Virus we would not be able to gather for worship on Sunday, I don’t think any of us thought on April 30th we would still be under a “stay at home” order from the governor and that over 200,000 of God’s children around the world would lose their lives. But this is where we find ourselves today and Zion UCC continues the legacy of Sunday morning worship.

On March 22nd Tom Whipkey wanted to just sit in the sanctuary during our normal worship time as he missed gathering at Zion for worship. While he was there Tom went “live” on Facebook and several members from the congregation saw his “live” posting and started to comment. The church was gathering again. Tom continued to go to Zion the next two Sundays ring the bells, show us the stained glass windows, the fellowship hall and the altar. He led us in the Lord’s prayer. Through Tom God was faithful to answer the prayer of blessing Zion and continuing the gathering of believers.

Zion UCC found itself the week of Easter wondering if there would be an Easter Celebration this year. Once again God was faithful. Members of the worship team and congregation came together and the first pre-produced worship service was premiered live on Facebook Easter morning. Zion members were able to take communion from their homes on Easter Sunday. For those who don’t have Facebook, a link was sent via email for them to watch it at their convenience.

Since Easter Sunday the worship team continues to create a Sunday morning worship service that premieres on Facebook at 9:30a and also can be watched at members’ convenience through the link provided in email each Sunday. While we cannot wait to worship in the sanctuary, we still can continue to worship together through the internet.

Special thanks to Kyle Walterhouse for being the one that takes all the worship pieces and puts them together into a service. Kyle is also responsible for all the special music through which we all have been blessed. Thank you to Tom Whipkey for getting us started and continuing to welcome everyone each Sunday. Thank you to the worship team and other congregation members who have contributed to the services. Thanks be to God for providing a way to continue worship at Zion UCC!

In Memory Of

Donor Name

Edmay deBruyn
Jon Gaul
Marianna Weaver
Cosimo & Susie Rulli
Dan Omar
Mr. & Mrs. Philip Ashton
Marcile Sellers
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Gerhold, Sr.
Lyn Kucela
Mary Beth Craft
James & Debra Smith
Karen & Roger Hintz
In recent days, as COVID-19 has been declared a global pandemic and countries have taken urgent measures to stem the spread of infection, I wish I could say that my first impulse has been to pray.

The crisis is urgent, and I feel powerless. But perhaps feeling small is the best reminder to pray. Prayer is how we actively practice believing, so simply, so confidently, that God has the whole world in his hands. It’s where we “let petitions and praises shape our worries into prayers, letting God know our concerns” (Phil. 4:6–7, The Message). Prayer is never the last resort of God’s people. It is our first point of action.

With that in mind, I’ve put together a list of 20 prayers to pray during this pandemic. Each one addresses the specific needs of a specific community.

This list isn’t comprehensive, of course, but it’s a good place to start. My hope is that it can provide words for us as we pray collectively (if also virtually!) as a church body. We believe there is a God who bends his ear to listen, and so we pray:

1. For the sick and infected: God, heal and help. Sustain bodies and spirits. Contain the spread of infection.
2. For our vulnerable populations: God, protect our elderly and those suffering from chronic disease. Provide for the poor, especially the uninsured.
3. For the young and the strong: God, give them the necessary caution to keep them from unwittingly spreading this disease. Inspire them to help.
4. For our local, state, and federal governments: God, help our elected officials as they allocate the necessary resources for combating this pandemic. Help them to provide more tests.
5. For our scientific community, leading the charge to understand the disease and communicate its gravity: God, give them knowledge, wisdom, and a persuasive voice.
6. For the media, committed to providing up-to-date information: God, help them to communicate with appropriate seriousness without causing panic.
7. For consumers of media, looking to be well-informed: God, help us find the most helpful local information to equip us to be good neighbors. Keep us from anxiety and panic, and enable us to implement the recommended strategies, even at a cost to ourselves.
8. For those with mental health challenges who feel isolated, anxious, and helpless: God, provide them every necessary support.
9. For the homeless, unable to practice the protocols of social distancing in the shelter system: Protect them from disease, and provide isolation shelters in every city.
10. For international travelers stuck in foreign countries: God, help them return home safely and quickly.
11. For Christian missionaries throughout the world, especially in areas with high rates of infection: God, provide them with words of hope, and equip them to love and serve those around them.
12. For workers in a variety of industries facing layoffs and financial hardship: God, keep them from panic, and inspire your church to generously support them.
13. For families with young children at home for the foreseeable future: God, help mothers and fathers to partner together creatively for the care and flourishing of their children. For single mothers and fathers, grow their networks of support.
14. For parents who cannot stay home from work but must find care for their children: God, present them with creative solutions.
15. For those in need of regular therapies and treatments that must now be postponed: God, help them to stay patient and positive.
16. For business leaders making difficult decisions that affect the lives of their employees: God, give these women and men wisdom, and help them to lead self-sacrificingly.
17. For pastors and church leaders faced with the challenges of social distancing: God, help them to creatively imagine how to pastor their congregants and love their cities well.
18. For college and university students, whose courses of study are changing, whose placements are canceled, whose graduation is uncertain: God, show them that while life is uncertain, their trust is in you.
19. For Christians in every neighborhood, community, and city: May your Holy Spirit inspire us to pray, to give, to love, to serve, and to proclaim the gospel, that the name of Jesus Christ might be glorified around the world.
20. For frontline health care workers, we thank you for their vocational call to serve us. We also pray:

God, keep them safe and healthy. Keep their families safe and healthy. God, help them to be knowledgeable about the diagnosis and treatment of this disease, as well as the changing protocols. God, help them to stay clear-minded in the midst of the surrounding panic. God, deliver them from anxiety for their own loved ones (aging parents, children, spouses, roommates). God, give them compassion for every patient in their care.

God, provide for them financially, especially if they fall ill and are unable to work. God, help Christians in health care to exhibit extraordinary peace, so that many would ask about the reason for their hope. Give them opportunities to proclaim the gospel.

God, we trust that you are good and do good. Teach us to be your faithful people in this time of global crisis. Help us to follow in the footsteps of our faithful shepherd, Jesus, who laid down his life for the sake of love. Glorify his name as you equip us with everything needed for doing your will. Amen.

Jen Pollock Michel is the author of Teach Us to Want, Keeping Place, and Surprised by Paradox. She lives with her husband and their five children in Toronto. This piece was adapted from her recent blog. From the website www.christianitytoday.com