

Aldersgate UMC News
Letter # 8 – March 29, 2020

“Whoever doesn’t know it must learn and find by experience that ‘quiet conscience makes one strong!’” – Anne Frank

Dear friends,

As we enter into our 3rd week of SIP (shelter-in-place), we’re probably still feeling the highs, lows, and boredom of the experience; but some of us may be starting to find a little groove. We have figured out shopping patterns, learned a little more about zoom online conferencing, begun to find ways to exercise and so on. Like I said, “some of us”. However, do not let this be a guilt trip because none of us need guilt piled on top of everything else, we’re feeling. Let it just be encouragement and suggestions.

So as I begin Letter #8, let us: 1) Breathe deeply three times, 2) Focus on gratitude for a few moments, and 3) lift up our prayers for our medical professionals, essential service providers and for those who have contracted or been exposed to Covid 19. These are critical weeks in the effort to flatten the curve so say a prayer for all. Let us to do the best we can as we do our part in this effort to combat the pandemic.

Our Weekly Prayers List:

Haruye Ng, Paul Osaki, Sue Nakamura, Tak Nishiura, Sam Nieda, Kiyo Shizuru, Lea Haratani, Hitoshi Tachibana, Chloe Gong, Ginger Powell, Kamila Young, Jieun Lee, David Nelson, Patricia Orr, Jamie Campbell, Mel Imai, Harry Hatasaka, Amy Shao, Hiroko Yoshida, Patrick Chow, Patricia Orr, Ray Narimatsu, and Rev. Mariellen Sawada Yoshino.

For today's reflection, Rev. Jon has shared a poignant message about “Brave Spaces”.

Creating Brave Spaces

As I was on a video conference with other chaplains providing spiritual care amidst COVID-19, someone chimed in and shared the idea of creating brave spaces. She had heard the idea of creating brave spaces in moments where we cannot create safe spaces. I soon held onto the mantra whenever I met with patients or staff:

When it is hard to create safe spaces, create brave spaces.

I believe it is a timely thing to hold onto as Christians. The idea of gathering with our community is deeply ingrained, as we are taught to break bread TOGETHER, to worship TOGETHER, and it is one of the first times that I can recall that being TOGETHER IS NOT SAFE.

That said, social distancing is not killing the church because we cannot create a community, but rather, we are beginning to define what community can be for us right now. What church can be for us at this moment. What our faith can be in this space.

We hope for the moment that we can gather together and worship and pray and eat fellowship food. We pray we can gather to put on bazaars and cook salmon. In our common hope along with our common God, I hope you can find ways to create brave spaces amidst this time where it is difficult to create a safe space.

I hope you can designate a spot or a space in your house or yard that when you go there, you will be reminded of God’s presence amidst us. It can be noted by a candle or a homemade cross (two lines on a piece of paper will do), or even putting your Bible on the coffee table. Whatever you use and wherever it is, just make sure it is a brave

space where you can be reminded of God's presence with us, and that we all share that common space with one another. Take a pic and show us where your "brave space" is in your space today.

Amen.
- Rev. Jon

DeeDee Kato has sent me a link to a song created by young people online. Some others have shared this as well, but I share it in case others have not seen it yet. (Note: Many are discovering this process is not a simple nor easy task.)

[Virtual Orchestra](#)

On April 5th, we had intended a second showing of Jon Osaki's film, "Alternative Facts: The Lies of 9066". Of course, this has been canceled but Jon has worked with his distributor and will be making it available online for free for 14 days. It can be streamed through My New Day Films site:
<https://www.newday.com/film/alternative-facts-lies-executive-order-9066>

From Matt Schlegel – Some Enneagram Fun
Which emoji are you?



And... how are the different Enneagram types dealing with the SIP. Let us know.

Birds...

From Letter #7, I received several responses regarding the story of the bird hitting our window – one spiritual, one poetic/spiritual and one scientific/practical. Enjoy:

1. Spiritual Response: Spiritual Meaning of Birds Hitting Windows by Ryan Hart (March 16, 2019)
<https://www.ryanhart.org/bird-hitting-window-meaning/>

Three Spiritual Meanings of Birds Hitting Windows

In this post, you'll discover what it means when a bird hits your window. What I learned during my research was really surprising.

In fact:

I found out that there's a deep spiritual meaning when you see birds flying into windows.

Ready to find out what it means?

Let's get started.

What Does it Mean When a Bird Hits Your Window?

While there are many things that cause birds to fly into windows, each time it happens they carry a very important message. Bird's are often thought of as messengers of God.

The fact that this has happened to you tells me much about the stress and difficulties you are currently going through in life.

The next time a bird hits your window, write down the exact time and date it happens. This is part of the message they are delivering.

Think carefully about what this date means to you. The bird might be trying to communicate about someone or something that happened in the past. Or they might be letting you know that something is about to happen in the future.

You Are Worried About Money

Birds are very symbolic in the bible. They are considered messengers of God and are very special to him.

When a bird hits your window, this is likely a sign that you are worried about money. In Matthew 6:26 Jesus asks us to think of the birds. Everything they need is provided by God. They do not need to sow crops or labor in the field to eat. God gives them everything required to live.

A bird flying into your window might be a sign that you are worried about how you will pay your bills or where your next paycheck will come from.

This could be a sign that God wants you to remember that He will provide for you, just as he does for the birds.

Someone in Heaven is Sending You a Message

During creation, God separated the heavens from the waters of the earth. Yet, he allowed the "birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens" (Genesis 1:20). Birds are often thought of as messengers of God.

When a bird hits your window this could be a message from someone in heaven. Pay attention to when this happens as it could help you figure out who this message is from. Write down the date and time in your journal or on the calendar.

Birds might deliver messages on birthdays of the deceased, on the day they died, or other significant holidays. You should feel relieved to know that someone in heaven is thinking about you.

Change is Coming Soon

When you see a bird hit a window, this means you are about to experience a positive change in your life.

Genesis 8:8-9 tells the story of when the great flood ended and Noah was able to return to land. Noah sent a dove to see if the flood waters had subsided, but the dove immediately returned because there was no place for her to land. Later, Noah sent the dove again and when she did not return, he knew the flood was ending.

A bird hitting your window might be a sign that the trouble in your life has not yet passed. There is no place for the bird to safely land. However, this might mean that change is coming soon. Continue to be patient and have faith in God. He has plans for you that are in the works...

THE BIRDS OUTSIDE MY WINDOW SING DURING A PANDEMIC by Lee Herric (submitted by Brynn Saito)

What we need has always been inside of us.

For some—a few poets or farmers, perhaps— it’s always near the surface.

Others, it’s buried.

It was in our original design, though—pre-machine, pre-border, pre-pandemic.

I imagine it like the light one might feel though the body before dying, a warm calm, a slow breath, a sweet rush.

There is, by every measure, reason for fear, concern, a concert in the balcony of anxiety made of what has also always been inside of us: a kind of knowing that everything could break.

But it hasn’t quite yet and probably won’t.

What I mean to say is, I had a daydream and got lost inside of it.

There were dozens of birds for some reason, who sounded like they were singing in different accents: shelter in place, shelter in place.

You’re made of stars and grace.

Stars and grace. Stars—and grace.

LEE HERRICK is the author of *Scar and Flower* and two other books of poems, *Gardening Secrets of the Dead* and *This Many Miles from Desire*. He is co-editor of *The World I Leave You: Asian American Poets on Faith and Spirit* (Orison Books, May 2020). His poems appear widely in literary magazines, textbooks, and anthologies such as *One for the Money: The Sentence as Poetic Form*, *Indivisible: Poems of Social Justice*, *Here: Poems for the Planet*, with an introduction by the Dalai Lama, *California Fire and Water*, and *Dear America: Letters of Hope, Habitat, Defiance, and Democracy*, among others. Born in Daejeon, Korea and adopted to the United States at ten months, he served as Fresno Poet Laureate from 2015-2017. He lives in Fresno, California and teaches at Fresno City College and the MFA Program at Sierra Nevada University.

ANIMAL LIFE (from Monday’s, March 30, 2020 San Jose Mercury News)

Small bird constantly pecking on the window

DEAR JOAN >> A small bird has been pecking at a very high window on our house for about four days. It is only during the day, thankfully, and if it weren’t for shelterin- place, we probably would never know. The bird is mostly gray, with pinkish-red on the front of his or her neck, and a patch of white below that. Sometimes it seems there is another bird with him or her, but not pecking. Any idea why he or she is doing this? Is it some sort of nesting ritual perhaps?

— Pam Parsons, Brentwood

DEAR PAM >> It’s not a mating ritual, but it does have to do with mating season.

The bird at your window, a male, is trying to protect his territory and the nest his mate is sitting in, from a dastardly intruder that just won’t go away — his own reflection. Instead of recognizing his own image, he just sees another bird, and so he pecks at the window to make it go away. Only one bird — the magpie — has shown an ability to recognize itself. Scientists put a lot of different animals through the mirror test to see which ones have that self awareness. They put a removable dye on the animal, then put it in front of a mirror. If the animal touches the mark on its own body, it’s an indication it knows the image in the mirror is its own.

Elephants passed with flying colors, as did chimpanzees. Gorillas failed, but dolphins and whales passed. Pigs surprised researchers. They know that the mirror has a reflection and they use mirrors to find food, but they aren’t quite sure that the pigs in the mirror are them.

To keep your bird from driving you crazy, and to refocus the birds' attention back to nest building, baby making and feeding, try eliminating the reflective nature of the window by closing the curtains or putting newspaper on the glass. As trees get leafier and the sun's position shifts, you'll only need the preventive measures for a while.