

Today's Devotional is provided by Rev. Dr. Robin Hawley
Gorsline

Lenten Pandemic

So this is the Lent (and probably Easter) with coronavirus/COVID-19.

I doubt I shall ever forget these days, when we were led into the wilderness of social distancing, schools and restaurants and theaters and gyms closed, offices closed, being forced to work from home (if we're lucky).

Will we will ever get back to normal? Will things ever be the same? Doubtful "normal" probably will look and feel different after we get through this (of course not everyone will make it).

I keep thinking about Jesus being led into the wilderness. This time feels like a contemporary version for the entire world: when we walk the empty streets or stay home every day—and even when we do have to go to the store for milk we must keep our distance from others (will people start carrying tape measures?). A week ago, some of us chose to worship via Livestream (it was a great experience), and now we don't even get to choose. Yikes!!



Therapists and other helping professionals urge us to not let social distancing become social isolation. I would add spiritual isolation.

That brings me to the angels ministering to Jesus in the wilderness. He was, after all, in social isolation. Except, of course, he was not in spiritual isolation. God was with him, and angels, too. The same is true for us today. We are not alone.

But it can be especially important to reach out to others dear to us, others we care about—by phone, text, email, FaceTime, other social media. That includes members of our faith community.

One gift (of many) for me from last week's livestream worship was the dialogue message from Steve, Jason, and Tiffany. Such a good example of the wisdom and faithfulness we all can share with each other.

As a faith community we are an extended, intentional family. Reaching out can help others feel cared for, and it helps us feel safer and stronger, too. It works both ways, strengthening each other and our family.

I have started reaching out to folks in our community every day or two—focusing on those I know live alone or have significant physical or mental health challenges (including being over 60 like me). But of course, everyone is affected so feel free to do what you can. We are in this together.

Each of us has our own ways to avoid isolation. Remember God is always with us. Jesus and the Holy Spirit, too. And there are human beings who are willing to be present, too.

You might even call these mortal beings, and yourself, angels, inspired by God to minister to those around us in need. A good Lenten reminder that there are many ways to live faithfully, generously, and lovingly.

