

Family of God, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ.

There is no way we could've predicted where we would be right now. If you were to tell me back in February that we would be postponing our holy week services and even more so our Easter services, I would've thought you were out of your mind. Yet, here we are.

We all know that Easter cannot be canceled. We may close the doors but the reason for the season we celebrate continues regardless if we recognize it or not. Imagine that first Easter Sunday the disciples were sheltered in place. They were in a way practicing social distancing by limiting the number that would go out. When the other women returned from the tomb in sharing the the disciples and saying to them that Jesus is alive, he's been raised from the dead! It was only John and Peter that went to the tomb (safe social distancing). When Mary Magdalene couldn't understand what was happening she wept and walked away from the other two women. Jesus came and spoke to her even then he said don't cling to me. Remember, that had nothing to do with a spread of viruses it was more of a theological understanding that Jesus need to remain untouched until he delivered the blood for redemption. We need to remember nothing can separate us from God's love.

I have been partnering with our worship chair person and in conversation with several other individuals on how we can better be together when we are separated at Easter. Numerous ideas were shared and all of them merit a huge applause to their creativity.

Here is what we plan to do with you if you would be willing to participate.

Palm Sunday.

If you have tree branches around your house, green leafy branches you can take a few of those and put them on your front door, to share with the world "Hosanna! blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Make palm branches out of paper and put them into your windows, door screens, anyplace they can be seen. google "Palm branch template" you will find many ideas.

If you have the capability of taking pictures you can upload them to our Facebook Page" United Methodist Church of Elmwood. Use the **#palsundayEUMC**

Maybe you can take a short video of you and your family cheering for Jesus and praising his name. shout, hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, hosanna!

Holy Week

Each day you will find a brief devotion on Jesus last days. I encourage you to take part in those the best you can.

Maundy Thursday

Our bishop has made allowances for us to share holy communion through social and video connections. There will be a video posted on EUMC Facebook Thursday morning with instructions on how you can share in holy communion as we celebrate the last supper with Jesus. PLEASE NOTE: You will be using your own bread, and your own grape juice or some other juice-preferably the fruit of the vine. The video will consist of the liturgy of Holy Communion, prayer, confession and partaking in the sacrament.

I invite you to please take time at some point during the day and remember Jesus in the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup.

Good Friday

There will be a short video posted on our EUMC Facebook page centering on the events of good Friday. You are invited to pause in the midst of what you are doing and reflect upon the events of that day nearly 2000 years ago that still impact our world this day and will for the future.

Easter Sunrise and Easter Service

The greatest event in human history will not be canceled. Easter Sunrise service will be available on Facebook live at our EUMC Facebook page Sunday 4/5/20 7am. Our Easter Celebration service video will be posted at approximately 9am.

We invite you to share in the celebration of Jesus resurrection in your own unique way.

We invite families and individuals to find special ways to share and witness to our faith.

EASTER IDEAS

Here are few of ideas we would encourage you to participate in.

Each person has their own personal understanding of Easter. The bottom line we all share is that Jesus is alive! Amen! Because he lives we shall live also to those who believe and trust in him. That's great news we can't keep it to ourselves and we will not let anything stop us from sharing it.

Tie a ribbon or a piece of cloth around your lamp post out-front or mailbox (if that's allowable) on your front door handle, on your car door. put as many of them out as you can! Please put that ribbon or piece of cloth where people can see it because it tells the world what we believe.

You can choose a color that best represents Easter for you.

White - purity, new life, the hope of the resurrection.

Red - the blood that was shed on the cross for us and heals and forgives us. The gift of the resurrection

Purple - Christ's royalty, the king of glory, The resurrected King that conquered death.

Green - new life, rebirth, fresh start, the encouragement of the resurrection.

Blue - a new day, new beginning, washed in Christ's righteousness. The resurrection power

I would encourage you to take pictures of your ribbons or of your own personal celebration of the resurrection and post them to our EUMC Facebook page with the **#easterEUMC**

If you have children and sidewalk chalk maybe they could write the words: "he is risen" way or with permission on their neighbors driveway. On the sidewalk, or at the church!

Maybe you can even make a video responding to he is risen - "he is risen indeed!"

Please use the hashtags to connect them all.

Please post to the United Methodist Church of Elmwood Facebook page. (please make sure it is NOT the Elmwood park UMC)

I encourage you to be creative, even if you don't participate in these activities. I encourage you to participate in your own personal way in the celebration of Jesus resurrection from the dead!

This is great news not just for us but for the world, we have this hope we are in Easter people no matter what time of the year it is and no matter what is going on in our world we have a living God that loves us and cares for us and offers us hope when everything else is falling apart. Yes we may be separated at this time physically but we are together spiritually.

Be encouraged and be in prayer for all that is going on.

Happy Easter. He is Risen!

PD

John 14:27