



# NORTHWOOD

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

P.O. Box 295, 62 West Highway 61, Esko, MN 55733

Pastor Brian Cornell ~ 828-434-6995

bcornell@wnccumc.net

Sunday Online Worship: 9:00 am

## A church with a BIG heart!



Reverend Brian Cornell

Check out our website for online worship, pictures and upcoming events! Weekly newsletters and bulletins also are available for viewing.

[www.northwoodesko.com](http://www.northwoodesko.com)

FIND US ON FACEBOOK @ Northwood United Methodist Church, Esko MN (include *ESKO MN* in the address) for the most current information and event albums.

### DIRECT ANNOUNCEMENTS

to Shirley Brandt for the bulletin by Tuesday by 5:00 pm and/or for the weekly newsletter by Monday afternoon at: [shirleybob15@gmail.com](mailto:shirleybob15@gmail.com).

Please also cc to Ann Butler at: [annonpond@yahoo.com](mailto:annonpond@yahoo.com)



## PUT IT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

**Sunday, August 2** ~ Facebook or YouTube Live Worship service at 9:00 am. Links to view the video will be emailed out prior to Sunday. The link will also be on Northwood UMC's website at [www.northwoodesko.com](http://www.northwoodesko.com)

All online worship services may be viewed on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Northwood-United-Methodist-Church-Esko-MN-113344768735604/> on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCizZVSYdgxa81\\_CEBbIXQyw?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCizZVSYdgxa81_CEBbIXQyw?view_as=subscriber) or on the Worship page at [www.northwoodesko.com](http://www.northwoodesko.com)

**Please send your Tithes and Offerings to Northwood UMC, P. O. Box 295, Esko MN 55733**

### SHOUT OUTS FOR . . .

- Amanda Zbacnik for singing our special music "On Eagles Wings" on Sunday, July 26 accompanied by Phyllis Kruell from Asbury UMC.
- Pastor Katherine for leading us in worship on Sunday, July 26 while Pastor Brian continues to heal.

### PRAYER MINISTRY . . .

The tea light candles we light on the altar each Sunday remind us of our ministry of prayer to the military service personnel and their families within our congregation. Especially Gavin Day stationed in Fort Campbell, KY, nephew of Dan and Beth Belden and grandson of Dennis and Julie Day, and Alex Lammi serving in Memphis, son of Barb and Ted Lammi.

### VIDEOS NEEDED . . .

The worship team is looking for videos or a collage of pictures about 3 minutes in length to be played as a backdrop for Sunday's Special Music each week. Nature videos would be most appropriate. If you have a good eye and camera, please e-mail your result to Pastor Brian at [bcornell@wnccumc.net](mailto:bcornell@wnccumc.net)

### CHECKING IN . . .

Where have you See God? Need God? Feel Joy? Feel Gratitude? Please share your thoughts by calling Pastor Brian at 828-434-6995 or emailing [bcornell@wnccumc.net](mailto:bcornell@wnccumc.net)

If you would like to share your thoughts in the newsletter, please email to Shirley at [shirleybob15@gmail.com](mailto:shirleybob15@gmail.com) and/or Ann Butler at [annonpond@yahoo.com](mailto:annonpond@yahoo.com)

# COLLOQUIES with Pastor Brian

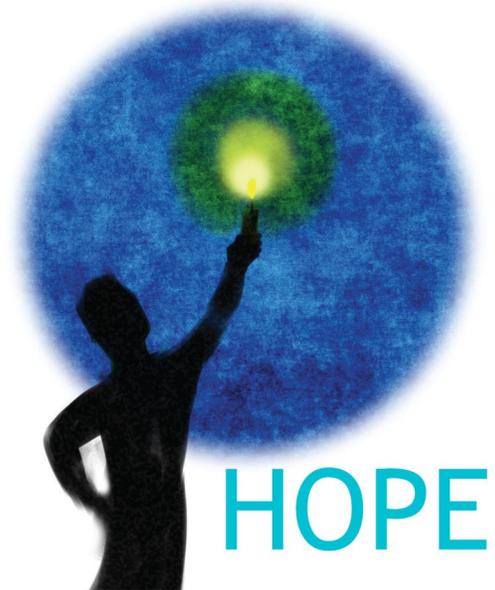
## Facing Empty Spaces With Hope

I have enjoyed seeing everyone's postings of summer activities. Getting together with family, going on outings, camping, playing sports and pursuing growing things are just some of the things shared and posted. Thank you for sharing your joy!

Since Katherine and I have been in quarantine, we've been living vicariously through people's posting and emails and sharing when we gather virtually. We are also now getting outside more and enjoying the incredible surroundings that Minnesota has to offer.

We have experienced a number of stark contrasts here in Minnesota. Weather is certainly part of it. But instead of being frustrated with our circumstances or complaining until things change, we are learning to embrace what our situations bring us.

Our two Bible passages this week certainly offer some encouragement to see challenging places as a place of promise. Jacob was alone at night in the desert when he wrestled with God and for his troubles, got a damaged hip and a blessing. Jesus was intentionally going to a deserted place to be by himself, but the crowds followed him and got hungry. But instead of Jesus ignoring their needs, he blessed them with food and blessed the entire world with a story about God's miracles in unyielding places.



<sup>22</sup>The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup>He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. <sup>24</sup>Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. <sup>25</sup>When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup>Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' <sup>27</sup>So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' <sup>28</sup>Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.' <sup>29</sup>Then Jacob asked him, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And there he blessed him. <sup>30</sup>So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.' <sup>31</sup>The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip.

— Genesis 32:22-31

<sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup>When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. <sup>15</sup>When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' <sup>17</sup>They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' <sup>18</sup>And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' <sup>19</sup>Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup>And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. <sup>21</sup>And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

— Matthew 14:13-21

L: May God add a blessing to the reading and hearing of these words. ALL: Thanks be to God!  
Let us pray: Amen.

The Pandemic and our necessary response to it have created empty spaces. Schools that used to have seats full of children are unnaturally empty. Restaurants that had wait times for seats now have ½ capacity at best. Concerts and graduations and funerals — all these are places our hearts long to return to and fill again. And that is a normal response. Nothing is wrong with longing.

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Yet the empty spaces surround us. So my question for myself (and I share with you) is, what blessings can we claim in these empty spaces? We don't have to say they don't hurt. Jacob limped the rest of his life. And the disciples had to admit they didn't see any way everyone could be helped with just five loaves and two fish. That must have stung. Yet the final outcome was a blessing that would not have been possible without the fierce and sometimes forbidding empty spaces as well.

For a place many see as forbidding, Minnesota has been a garden of hope for our family. Those that have been here for some time told us early, "Make friends with the winter and don't fight it. Enter it." That advice might be helpful for all when entering new spaces seemingly empty of things we are used to and provide comfort. But let me remind us all of two crutches we have and can absolutely lean upon. Wherever we go, God promises to go with us AND we have this greater community willing to travel with us, if we ask. Thank you for being a part of my family's journey and for all the ways you help us face the empty places with hope. If we can walk more closely with you as a congregation, let us know.

With peace,

Pastor Brian

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### **JOYS, CONCERNS, GRATITUDE & NEEDS . . .**

- Continuing prayers for everyone and all circumstances being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Pastor Katharine Cornell sees God in feeling better; Joy in the gorgeous weather; Gratitude for prayers and cares sent while ill.
- Prayers for Shirley Fahrenholz as she continues to recover at home from her heart surgery.
- Prayers for those who are sick and facing issues as a result of the pandemic.
- Prayers for racism and unjust systems in our Nation.
- Prayers for those experiencing difficult times: economic hardships, loneliness, depression.
- Prayers for Ronda Thierer's grand-nephew moving his parents to the Carolinas.
- Prayers of healing for John Thierer's back.
- It was a joy to have Christian Butler home this week from Utah.



*Prayer requests may be texted or called in to Pastor Brian at 828-434-6995.*

*Prayer requests also may be emailed to Pastor Brian at [bcornell@wnccumc.net](mailto:bcornell@wnccumc.net)*

***If you would like your request to appear in the newsletter, please also email to Shirley at [shirleybob15@gmail.com](mailto:shirleybob15@gmail.com) and/or Ann Butler at [annonpond@yahoo.com](mailto:annonpond@yahoo.com)***



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### **Self-Guided Garden Tour/Continental Breakfast To Go**

Norton Park UMC, 436 North 79<sup>th</sup> Ave. West, Duluth, is hosting the Western Garden Tour & Continental Breakfast To Go on Saturday, August 8, 2020. There are no presale tickets -- \$10.00 payable on August 8 only. This is a rain or shine event!

Gather in the church parking lot (stay in your car) from 9:00 to 10:00 am to obtain your wrist bands, map and enjoy a continental breakfast to go. Everything will be brought to your car. Garden and ceramic items will be available for sale. The self-guided tour starts at 9:00 am and goes to 1:30 pm. Masks and social distancing are strongly encouraged. For more information, contact Kathy Moland at 218 590-1964.

See you virtually and until we meet again ...

**SCATTER JOY, INSPIRE HOPE, SHARE LOVE, AND SEEK PEACE.**