

## Keep Going

*By Scott Carlson, District Superintendent, South West District, Wisconsin Conference UMC*

*"Comfort, comfort my people!" says our God. Isaiah 40:1*

Many of you know that I grew up in North Dakota. I have deeply appreciated the spirituality of the Lakota people, one of the Native American tribes of that area. One of my favorite authors is Joseph Marshall III. In his book, *The Lakota Way: Stories and Lessons for Living*, he shares the following story that I have been thinking about a lot lately.

"A young Lakota asked his grandfather why life had to be so difficult sometimes. This was the old man's reply.

"Grandfather says this: In life there is sadness as well as joy, losing as well as winning, falling as well as standing, hunger as well as plenty, bad as well as good. Grandfather does not say this to make you despair, but to teach you reality. To teach you that life is a journey sometimes walked in light, sometimes in shadow.

"Grandfather says this: Life can give you strength. It can come from facing the storms of life, from knowing loss, feeling sadness and heartache, from facing the depths of grief. You must stand up in the storm. You must face the wind and the cold and the darkness. When the storm blows hard you must stand firm, for it is not trying to knock you down, it is really trying to teach you to be strong.

"Grandfather says this: Being strong means taking one more step toward the top of the hill, no matter how weary you may be. It means letting the tears flow through the grief; it means to keep looking for the answer though the darkness of despair is all around you. It means to cling to hope for one more heartbeat, for one more sunrise. Each step, no matter how difficult, is one more step closer to the top of the hill. To keep hope alive one more heartbeat at a time leads to the light of the next sunrise, and the promise of a new day.

"Grandfather says this: The weakest step toward the top of the hill, toward the sunrise, toward hope, is stronger than the fiercest storm.

"Grandfather says this: Keep going."

### **Prayer:**

Loving God, thank you for placing us here. Help us to keep going. Give us the energy we need for this day. Give us the strength we need for this day. Give us the wisdom we need for this day. Give us the relationships we need for this day. Help us to remember to give ourselves and others a break on this day. Thank you for loving us and calling us on this day. Amen.