

Dear Friends,

I want to share with you this message about Holy Week that came to me recently from our bishop. I never realized the saying about lighting a candle instead of cursing the darkness came from a United Methodist! Here's our bishop:

This period of isolation and challenging communication may last a while, and it may get worse before it gets better. God can provide us with a much-needed reserve of grace, patience, kindness, compassion, and love. The Holy Spirit can be a source of tolerance, serenity, calm, and playfulness. The wake-up call this virus provides is to rely on God and stay connected to the divine light that leads us through the darkness.

William Lonsdale Watkinson, an English Wesleyan minister, once instructed his congregation to choose to be positive in the face of negativity. He originated a famous quote, "Yet it is far better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." We are inundated by media messages that curse the current darkness. I want to encourage Wisconsin United Methodists to carry the light of Christ through this time. Stop focusing on the darkness and focus on the light. We will get through this by God's grace and with the strength that comes through our communities of faith.

In the modern version of the Lord's prayer, the line "and lead us not into temptation," has been changed to "save us from this time of trial." This should be our mantra through the pandemic – save us (all) from this time of trial. Give us strength, give us courage, give us hope, and shine your light in us and through us so that we always remember "this too shall pass."

I am not asking anyone to ignore the pain and grief that the coronavirus is causing. I am not asking people to deny the bad that is happening. I am inviting everyone to see this Holy Week as a metaphor for the current journey through the darkness, where we will emerge in the light as Easter people. We are living in terrible days of suffering and loss, but our God is good. May we truly awaken to the glorious light of God in Christ that is greater than any darkness we may ever encounter. Thanks be to God.

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

Those words spoke to my soul, and I hope they speak to yours.

I miss seeing you and look forward to the time when we will be able to gather in-person again. In the meantime, may you be safe and blessed as we continue to shelter in our homes.

Pastor Brad