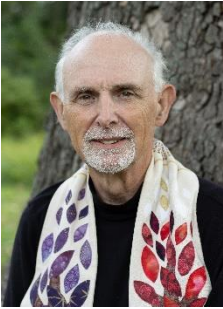


The Messenger – April 2024



Grace and Peace,

It is raining and cold as I am writing this article. April has begun. The familiar proverb “April showers bring May flowers” is bearing truth. The cold temps of the last couple of weeks feel like Spring has stalled. Other signs of Spring continue to show up. The birds are greeting the morning with joy. The greening of lawns and foliage continues to spread. I wonder how you are experiencing these early weeks of Spring. I look forward to discovering what abundance will unfold as Spring continues to blossom. Each morning in my morning ceremony I notice the small changes in the earth, while I also look inward for what might be greening within me.

I think that Easter is much like Christmas. There are special gatherings of family and faith communities. These gatherings are planned with the intention of festivity. Then, when the festivities are over, we hope for a lingering glow of warmth and gratitude. However, within a few days’ life continues with ordinary rhythms. What is the key to the significance of both Christmas and Easter. Is it that once a year we have festive celebration of an event long past? Is the significance the festive celebration of gathered family and friends? I wonder if the significance of both Christmas and Easter is what happens when the festival gatherings have ended, and the ordinary returns. Christmas is the beginning and Easter is the culmination Jesus’ story. Yet, the story does not actually come to an end. Instead, that story continues as it slips into our ordinary living. The question for this month is: How is new life, resurrected life, manifest in the everyday? The gospel read on Easter Sunday included the assurance, “tell the others I am going ahead of them to Galilee and will meet you there.” How might the Christ meet us in our home settings? How is Life showing up in the ordinariness of living? I think that new Life showing up *now* is more important

than an event, no matter how miraculous and mystical, in the past. The reality of new life is revealed by the festive celebration and the lived experience. I invite you to be open to how the “green blade rises from the buried grain.” We will be exploring these questions of the Life during the ReFresh service this month.

As I was writing this article a hymn came to mind, “Now the Green Blade Rises.” I invite you to listen to it on-line if you are able. The following is a link to a YouTube video...

https://youtu.be/vpU01KQIUJM?si=idx9ipZlsfh_rQIM Below are the lyrics.

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain, wheat that in dark earth many days has lain; love lives again, that with the dead has been

Refrain: Love is come again like wheat arising green

In the grave they laid him, love by hatred slain, thinking that he would never wake again, laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen R:

Forth he came at Easter like the risen grain, he that for three days in the grave had lain; raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen; R:

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain, your touch can call us back to life again, fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been. R:

Wild Spring Blessings

Pastor Frank

WELCA (Women of the Evangelical Church of America)

Our next WELCA meeting will be on **Thursday, April 17th at 9:30am**. Come and join us. Leader: Karen Van Howe



Winnebago County Forest Preserves

Interest Hikes

Join Soul Garden for continued hiking experiences in the Winnebago County Forest Preserves. Dress for the weather! Contact Holly if you want to join the hikes. 815-543-1191

Link to Descriptions of all 44 Forest Preserves

<https://www.winnebagoforest.org/items>

Thursday, April 11, 9:00am
Roland Olson Forest Preserve
9669 Atwood Road,
Roscoe, IL 61073

Saturday, April 20th, 9:00am
Sugar River Forest Preserve
10127 Forest Preserve Road
Durand, IL 61024

We Pray for Healing:

Jonathan Chell
Peg Burns
Shannon
Karen Johnson
Judy

Jeff Birch
Jim Petzold
Ian, Joel, & Rick
Kim and brother,
Beverly

Tim Austin
Miguel
Bina Holland
Gary Walt
Noreen Mackey



April Birthdays

4/1 Paula Wittke-Anderson
4/2 Susan Hurley-Whitacre
4/3 Gary Johnson
4/7 Betty Ralston
4/9 Sarah Seeber
4/9 Karen Van Howe
4/13 Andrea Mahan
4/15 Xander Olson



4/18 Beth Gleichman
4/21 Magdalena Aldana
4/25 Timothy Fenelon
4/26 Ann Canton
4/27 Eva Marie Helge
4/28 Graham Streed
4/29 Mary Seeber
4/30 William Schulz



Got a minute? You should read this!

Stress Awareness Month has been recognized every April since 1992, and is still important today. Learning to cope with our stress and finding healthy ways to deal with these situations



can go a long way in living a healthy and positive life. We all experience stress – yet we may experience it in very different ways. Because of this, there is no single definition for stress, but the most common explanation is a physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension. Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the proper care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms.

Common reactions to a stressful event can include:

- Disbelief, shock and numbness
- Feeling sad, frustrated and helpless
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Headaches, back pains and stomach problems
- Smoking or the use of alcohol or drugs

When you are placed in a stressful situation, specific stress hormones rush into your bloodstream leading to an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and glucose levels. This is helpful in emergency situations, but having this “rush” for extended periods of time can be dangerous. Long-term stress can cause headaches to stomach disorders to depression – even very serious issues like stroke and heart disease can come as a result of stress.

Sometimes the stress in our lives is not something we have the power to change. Try to:

- Recognize when you don't have control, and let it go.
- Avoid getting anxious about situations that you cannot change.
- Take control of your reactions and focus your mind on something that makes you feel calm and in control.
- Develop a vision for healthy living, wellness, and personal growth, and set realistic goals to help you realize your vision.

Here are some basic ideas to help you cope with stress:

- Take care of yourself – eat healthily, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, give yourself a break if you feel stressed.
- Share how you are feeling and coping with a family member, friend, doctor, pastor or counselor.
- Avoid misuse of drugs and alcohol. These can create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.
- Reduce your workload. What can you delegate? Set new boundaries.

Find encouragement in Sacred Texts:

- Exodus 33:14 "The Lord replied, "My Presence will go w/ you and I will give you rest."
- Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

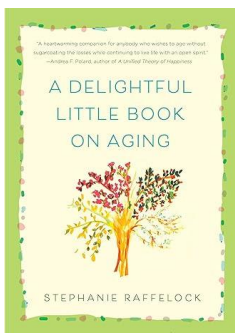
Excerpts from Original post: By **Pam Meyer**. She is the Wellness Director, BLC-Wahpeton. www.stress.org

Spiritual Journeys Started a New Book, Tuesday, April 2nd.

"A Delightful Little Book on Aging" by Stephanie Raffelock

All around us, older women flourish in industry, entertainment, and politics. Do they know something that we don't, or are we all just trying to figure it out? For so many of us, our hearts and minds still feel that we are twenty-something young women who can take on the world. But in our bodies, the flexibility and strength that were once taken for granted are far from how we remember them. Every day we have to rise above the creaky joints and achy

knees to earn the opportunity of moving through the world with a modicum of grace. Yet we do rise, because it's a privilege to grow old, and every single day is a gift. Peter Pan's mantra was "never grow up"; our collective mantra should be "never stop growing." This collection of user-friendly stories, essays, and philosophies invites readers to



celebrate whatever age they are with a sense of joy and purpose and with a spirit of gratitude.

Spiritual Journeys meets every Tuesday morning 9:30-11:00 over zoom. Any questions, Contact Karen VanHowe at

karenavanhowe@gmail.com

Care for Creation Committee

The Care for Creation Committee will begin planting Emmanuel's Pollinator Prairie this Spring. We will also plant flowers in the raised beds - annuals and perennials. We would be grateful to receive donations for the plants. Our goal is \$450 to complete the Pollinator Prairie. There will be a donation jar in the Celebration Room. You can also donate directly to Taj, Sally or Lou Ann. We are still very short of our goal. Thank you for your consideration.

It's time for Pancakes!!!



Stockholm Inn, of course!

2420 Charles Street

April 20th @ 9:00am.

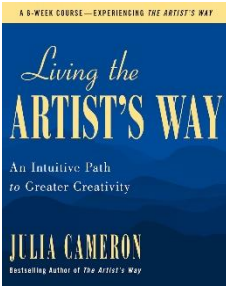
To assure seating, please let us know if you plan to attend. RSVP at the sign-up sheet on the table outside Celebration Room, call Bobbie, 815-312-8985 or call the church office, 815-963-4815. Thanks!!

Womens' Interfaith Potluck

Monday, April 29, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Inscape Collective, 201 - 7th St., Rockford. Program to be announced.

Join Susan Goldberg in a 6-Week Discussion Group, Starting

Tuesday, April 16th



All are welcome to attend a discussion group about Julia Cameron's new book "Living the Artist's Way: An Intuitive Path to Greater Creativity".

The group will be on Tuesdays, starting on April 16th and going through May 21st, from 6 to 8 p.m., at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 920 3rd Avenue (on the corner of 3rd Avenue and 6th Street). We will meet in the Celebration Room or the Library. Enter at the north door, off of the parking lot.

No cost to attend, but you will need to have a copy of the book--you can find it in bookstores, online, and maybe at a library. Plan to read the first chapter in advance of our first session.

We will meet for six consecutive Tuesdays, to cover each of the six chapters of the book, but you are welcome to attend as many or as few sessions as you wish.

You are welcome to bring a snack to share, if you wish, and we will have hot tea and water available.

April 27th , Saturday, ArtbyCarla, We will be getting ready for Spring and making suncatchers, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm in the Celebration Room. Cost \$65 for supplies. Register at <https://buy.stripe.com/eVa4hHanE3IGds44gm> or go to Emmanuel's website to register.



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Emmanuelchurch07@gmail.com

Elcrockford.org

Pastor Frank Langholf
309-509-5241

fslangholf@gmail.com