



The Midweek

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Some of the easiest things in the world have now become a problem for me. Staying home, which used to be something I would look forward to as a special “night in,” is now monotonous. Getting up the energy to put on something other than sweats is a chore. I spent 10 minutes in front of the refrigerator the other night trying to decide between crushed ice and cubed ice. I’m pretty sure my husband thought I was having some type of medical issue. And then after the excruciating mental gymnastics of thinking through water volume of ice structures as it melted into my tea, I just wanted to take a nap. Seriously? It’s only ice.

But for everything that is harder and more stressful, there is something special that has happened. The big one for me is seeing people I have not seen in years. For some reason it’s easier to get online through a virtual ZOOM happy hour or to Facetime with people from around the globe for an hour than it has been to write them an email.

Literally I have been in contact with people in the past few weeks that I have not seen in decades. I have seen sorority sisters that I have not chatted with since graduation in 1985. I have “met” with industry colleagues who were last in my company when Deepwater Horizon blew up. And I cried through an online dinner with my interpreter from Sierra Leone whom I literally never expected to talk with again in this lifetime. Every conversation for me has ended in tears and a recognition of how blessed I am.

Every chat and laugh and memory shared made my heart smile and in the midst of this nightmare pandemic I felt moments of pure joy with people from my life that I have not experienced in years. How is that possible during this crisis? There is only one way this could happen and that is through the power of God. As much as there have been hidden blessings in this whole nightmare, they are nothing compared to what is coming.

Matthew 5:2-12 says, “And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The new reality we face is not what we ever would have wanted or expected. But the blessings we have been promised in scripture have always been there for us and always will be. We can count on them for all eternity. And we can take comfort in knowing that even when we don’t have any clue what life will bring next, we can trust God to bless us. Thanks be to God who deserves praise and honor forever and ever.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Henry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP ON SUNDAY: Join us on **Sunday at 10:00 a.m.** on Facebook Live as we gather to worship and pray together. If you cannot watch at 10:00 a.m., the video will remain up on our Facebook page. Join us at www.facebook.com/avenueumc

You can also share the live stream on your page, inviting others to worship with us.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT: We want to thank everyone who has continued to give as an act of worship and support over the last several weeks. We know that many of our financial futures are up-in-the-air as jobs are shut-down and routines are disrupted. Your support means that Avenue Church can continue to serve the Milford community through this crisis. If you are able, you can send your gift through the mail to our church office (20 N. Church St. Milford, DE 19963) or by giving online at www.avenueumc.com/give, or by texting 'avenueumc' to 77977. Thank you, again, for your continued support.

AVENUE CHURCH APP NOW AVAILABLE: You can now download the Avenue Church App on your smartphone and stay up-to-date with the latest news, videos, and events happening at Avenue. The app is updated regularly and you will have the ability to give to Avenue directly from the app. The app is available for iPhone (IOS) and Android (Google Play) devices.

To download the app, click this link from your phone:

[iPhone \(IOS\)](#)

[Android \(Google Play Store\)](#)

You can also search "Avenue Church DE" in your App Store.

CAN YOU HELP LIVESTREAM? We are looking for those who are interested in exploring digital ministry by providing some leadership in our Livestream worship services. We are looking for members to learn the recording and editing process, to manage our Youtube uploads, and to help with Social Media. As we are learning, this kind of ministry will be essential moving forward. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Steve at srlamotte@avenueumc.com.

PASTORAL CARE: If you know someone who is in need of prayer or a phone call, please call the church office at 422-8111 or contact one of the pastors directly. We are doing limited face-to-face pastoral care visits during this time, but want to make contact any way we can.

PRAYER CONCERNS PAST WEEK: All those infected by the coronavirus and the medical teams who are seeking to heal and contain it, the family and friends of Janet Callaway, the family and friends of Laura Leach, the family and friends of Bernadette Delong, Ellen Heinbach, Chris Schultz, Racheal Simesak, Barbara Dietrich, Jennifer and Chris Miller, Larry Hughes, Janie Martin, Jean Hutchman's daughter-in-law, Bob Cage, Lee Tyrrell, Joe, Scott Horsman, Donna and Keith Coverdale, Julie Dally, Rhoda and Greg Kurz, Dottie and Jerry Jackson, Ellie Lauckner, Jean Layton, Jan Perkins, Bill and Marty Brereton, Ed Bailey, Joe and Mary Jo Lear, Bob Voshell, Craig, Sammy, Bella, Linda Breedlove, Charlie and Barbara Fleetwood, Esther LaMotte, Chris, Laurel Pastor, Tori Nelson, Betty and Ramie Ziesel, Dean Johnson, Jack and Zelda McDuff, Luisa and Billy Combs, Joan Wadman, our nation and its leaders, everyone dealing with financial issues including the church, all those feeling rejected and isolated as a result of the virus.

Rejoice with: Everyone who has been blessed by God.

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: Those infected by Covid-19 and the medical teams who are seeking to contain and treat it, the family and friends of Jack Heinbach, Chris Schultz, Racheal Simesak, Barbara Dietrich, Jennifer and Chris Miller, Larry Hughes, Janie Martin, Bob Chalmers, Jack Simon, Bob Cage, Lee Tyrrell, Joe, Donna and Keith Coverdale, Julie Dally, Rhoda and Greg Kurz, Dottie and Jerry Jackson, Ellie Lauckner, Jean Layton, Jan Perkins, Bill and Marty Brereton, Ed Bailey, Joe and Mary Jo Lear, Bob Voshell, Craig, Sammy, Bella, Linda Breedlove, Charlie and Barbara Fleetwood, Esther LaMotte, Chris, Laurel Pastor, Tori Nelson, Betty and Ramie Ziesel, Dean Johnson, Jack and Zelda McDuff, Luisa and Billy Combs, Joan Wadman, our nation and its leaders, everyone dealing with financial issues, all who are feeling lonely and isolated as a result of the virus.

Rejoice with: Everyone who has been blessed by God (and that is all of us)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO:

Kathryn Webb who will be celebrating her **92nd** birthday on **May 24th**.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Ernest and Lorraine Donovan will celebrate their **60th** anniversary on **May 21st**.

Sonny and Donna Meck will celebrate their **52nd** anniversary on **May 23rd**.

Jeff and Bonnie Carmine will celebrate their **55th** anniversary on **May 29th**.

CHARGE CONFERENCE will be held on Wednesday, May 20th at 7:00 p.m. via the online video conferencing platform, Zoom. The Charge Conference is being held to vote on the potential purchase of The New Century Club property. Membership at Avenue Church is required in order to vote at the Charge Conference on this matter. Information on the proposed purchased and information on how to use Zoom will be emailed out at a later date. Please contact Pastor Steve, Pastor Wendy, or Jack Dickerson with any questions.

2020 YARD SALE: Due to all the uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 virus, it has been decided that the **Yard Sale will NOT be held this year.** We feel this is in the best interest of the church, community, and volunteers. Please keep our mission program in your prayers as we search for ways to help others in our area, country, and world. Thank you to all!

SUNDAY SCHOOL AT HOME: Since we are unable to meet for Sunday School each week, we are providing a home Sunday School lesson for you to do with your children (or grandchildren!). You can click on the link below for a video lesson. Then use the pages at the end of the MidWeek to lead your children through the lesson. This week's lesson is on the Ascension.

1. [Watch the lesson here](#)
2. Read the Parent Page with Kids

3. Have children fill out their questions
4. Do the coloring page.
5. Pray together

We will send out another lesson each week for you to disciple your children at home. Thanks to Sparkhouse for making this curriculum available.

2020 GRADUATES: If you have a family member that is graduating (high school/college), please send an email to Kelly at churchoffice@avenueumc.com with the information and a picture. We will be listing the 2020 graduates in June.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES DURING CORONA OUTBREAK: There are several opportunities to share the light of Christ during the next several weeks of our new reality.

- Volunteer to help prepare meals at Banneker Elementary School. Contact the church office at 422-8111.
- Donate Money to the schools or two one of the restaurants who are providing meals. They providing out of their bottom line and this is an opportunity to rally around them.
- Check-in on your neighbors who may be lonely, shut-in, or at-risk. Be safe about it, but don't give up on the community.
- Do a grocery run for someone who may have trouble getting out.

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT: If anyone would like to send letters of encouragement to Milford Genesis it would be appreciated. The staff and residents are struggling. Health ministry has collected masks and caps for the staff along with some food. The Chief of Police has jumped in with me to organize groups to support the staff and residents with food.

Please bring your letters to the church, we have a basket in the Fellowship Foyer.

HEALTH MINISTRY: This week we have information on masks how to make them, etc. Click link below:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>



“A dynamic faith Community growing in hope, love and service”

On Monday, May 18th, Governor Carney released some information that pertains to churches that provides a roadmap for reopening and gathering for in-person worship services. The Avenue staff has been discussing and preparing for this and I want to share some of the States requirements and how Avenue is looking to approach reopening.

Governor Carney’s requirements closely follow some of the requirements for other institutions within the State of Delaware. They include:

- Gatherings are to be limited to 30% of the capacity of our worship space. Our sanctuary holds around 230. This would mean that we could gather in a group of 69 in the sanctuary. Fellowship Hall is around 175-190. We add 52 in there. If we use both spaces, we have a capacity of 110 people at any given service.
- Social Distancing is to be practiced between households. We will be sitting in every other pew and leaving six feet between individuals and/or households.
- Mask are to be worn at all times during worship services by those 13 and over. This not only protects you, but protects those around you.
- Worship will be “no-contact.” We will refrain from shaking hands and hugging. As much as possible, we will eliminate contact with offering plates, bulletins and hymnals.
- While the Governor’s guidelines permit congregational singing, Bishop Peggy Johnson is recommending that we do not sing corporately to eliminate more risk from our gatherings. Singing can still take place from small groups or soloist from the chancel.

By far, the most restrictive requirement from Governor Carney is that no one is to enter who is “65 and older OR have underlying health issues identified by the CDC as higher risk.” This not only includes a large number in our church, but in many of the churches across the state of Delaware. This will be a hard pill to swallow as we consider reopening and gathering for worship. Our sisters and brothers who are 65 and older make up a significant portion of our congregation and of our volunteers who make ministry happen. The staff and leadership at Avenue are committed to explore ways to make worship available and life-giving for as many people as possible.

The “Greatest Commandment,” according to Jesus, is to “Love God and to love our neighbors

as ourselves.” Loving our neighbor includes things like wearing a mask even though it may grate against our “rights” not to wear one. We care enough about our neighbor to do something we may not like or may not be comfortable with. Loving our neighbor means adjusting our worship times, expectations, and who gathers to ensure that we can keep our sisters and brothers as safe and healthy as possible- as an extension of our faith in Jesus and our love for our neighbor.

On May 19, 2020, there was reports through news sources of two Southern churches who recently reopened and now are closing indefinitely. Members and leaders of those churches have tested positive for COVID-19 after reopening worship. Early on in the pandemic, a church in Arkansas was resistant to closing and as a result at least 35 of 92 participants tested positive for COVID-19 and three of the church members died. Until there is an effective vaccine, gathering for worship will carry risks for those who attend.

When will we gather for worship? (It’s like a pastor to take this long to get to the point!)

We are working on policies and procedures to ensure that those who gather for worship can do so with the highest level of safety and the knowledge of the presence of God. While we long to gather together, the staff and the leadership have a moral responsibility to care for all the people in our care. We are in the process gathering supplies, figuring out how to clean and sanitize between worship services, and how to make worship “work” in this new reality. We have a goal of gathering by mid-summer. But it is too early to put out a specific date. There is much that is unknown and fluid.

In the meantime, let us continue to love our neighbors, to pray for all those who put themselves in harm’s way, and to ask God for wisdom and guidance in how to live our lives as disciples in these uncertain and changing times.

Grace and Peace,



Pastor Steve

“A dynamic faith Community growing in hope, love and service”

Witness to Our Faith

Each week in the Avenue Midweek, members and friends of Avenue UMC will be sharing their own personal witness of faith. This column will be coordinated by Janice Abbott who will be seeking volunteers and writers who are willing to share their stories. Each article is due one week in advance and should be sent to Kelly at the Church office so there will be time to add it to the newsletter. It will appear the following week. It will be inspirational to read each week how God has blessed each person/family today and through the years. If you would like to contact Janice to volunteer, please call her at (302) 943-7278.

From Bonnie Carmine

I have been asked to share my faith in the church midweek. I can tell you I'm a better talker than writer. But I am willing to give it a try.

How did I become a believer in Jesus as my Savior? Well first I have to thank our son Lance for sharing Christ with us in 1982, when he was attending Avenue Church due to a teenager named Laura Voshell and his art teacher at MHS named Mrs. Helen Lucia. Mrs. Lucia was the Pastor Frank Lucia's wife at Avenue. Not only was she an excellent art teacher she also shared her belief in God at school in the classroom. I don't mean preaching or reading her Bible but her witness and how she spoke of God at the right time. She encouraged her students to not only see their talent, but to learn through experiencing going to church. Might add, she was also the Senior High Sunday School teacher at Avenue. It didn't take long for our son to become a believer not only go to Sunday School but to also attend church.

Now Lance was witnessing to us without knowing it. We were home sleeping in while he was getting up early on his own and heading out to church. I like a fool was envious of this time because that was our day for brunch together as a family and there we were without our only child for the morning. I only share this to show you how far off the mark I was. Am I ashamed of this, you bet I am! However, I heard a preacher say something I will never forget "you don't know what you don't know", and that covers one of my sins. I believed in God and prayed to Him everyday Jeff was in Vietnam that he would come home safe to Lance and me. God answered those prayers without me even knowing Him. I had Jesus from the stable to the Cross and nothing in between.

One Easter Sunday Lance asked us to go to Avenue church for a Lenten Breakfast were he was going to read Scripture and wanted us to be there. Of course we went a little nervous wondering what that would be like since we didn't know anyone there. That day changed our life and we started going every Sunday that we could. We were sold, God spoke to us in a way we couldn't explain at the time.

Next in my step with God was after Lance graduated from MHS in 1983. I was so emotional over our only child leaving for ODU in Norfolk, VA, that I would tear up just going to the old Acme market (where Salvation Army is now) that I would be sad when I would see all the things I would buy just for Lance. Well there I would find my calling,

and my faith tested our sweet persuasive Mrs. Helen Lucia saw me and said, “I have been praying about you and Jeff leading our Sr. High Sunday School class now that Lance has gone off to college. What do you think about it? Well I wanted to go down another aisle so that I would not have to answer that question. I said, how can we do that when we don’t know half of what that class knows now? Her response, “do you love the Lord? Oh yes I do, love teenagers oh you know what I do with all my heart!, well God will do the rest!” Went home told Jeff and he said are your crazy or something’ like that, we prayed about it and the rest is history. With the faith that God would be there to lead us we began our fourteen year journey with Him.

When we first began to help with the youth Mrs. Lucia and Pastor Lucia were there to get us on the right track and we accepted Christ right in that basement with some of the teenagers. Wow what an experience that was. Will never forget it Jeff and I at the sometime, how amazing, praise God! Also the other position that came with Sunday School, came MYF (Senior High Youth Group). So we would see these kids morning and night at church. Our family and friends would say why in the world are you guys there AM and PM Sundays, you never get to do anything with us. We simply said for the love of God and those kids. Some of the best time in our lives were spent in the basement with those kids, we loved them and Mrs. Lucia was right her prayers might have been answered but we were the blessed ones!

Oh by the way, our trainers for MYF were Joyce and Bob Voshell, Jack and Lil Burris, and Helen and Frank Lucia, what more could you ask for!!!!!!

During that time we had another big adventure in our Spiritual walk with Christ, called “The Walk to Emmaus”. We heard about this while in Texas at a Methodist convention for leaders all over the US. Let me tell you about that below.

Ok, at the Gathering they called for a meeting of all those that had gone on the Walk to Emmaus. We didn’t know what that was so we just forgot about it. That night we went to dinner with, oh yes, Helen Lucia and the District Superintendent Charlie Barton. They begin telling us all about the Walk to Emmaus and how they would love to sponsor us, what could be say. There we were with two people that we respected and loved, how were we going to say no thanks. Next thing we knew we were all signed up and were only told no radio, TV or cell phones on the weekend retreat. Men went first for three days and women would go after that, just a few weeks in between each retreat.

When my turn came I was blown away. I could feel God’s arms around me like never before, it was all inspiring. I finally knew what was happening when I didn’t have a relationship with Jesus. God had His hand on me my whole life just waiting for me to put my hand up to His and ask him into my life to be my Savior. The talk that was given about prevenient grace made all the sense in the world to me, God had a hold on my life the entire time. Praise Him, Halleluiah. After that experience we were on fire and could not wait to share this with our church friends. We also learned about a retreat for teenagers called Chrysalis just for them. Same kind of weekend no phones, radio or TV a lot for them to give up and being away from their family and friends. Well mostly their friends right. So we each made list of friends and teen s and prayed oved the list and went from there. What

a blessing it was to see some of our friends and teens be able to have this sort of blessing in their lives.

God has brought me through many days, weeks, and years of hardships and joy. I have been richly blessed.

Jeremiah 23:11 ~ for I know the plans I have for you “declares the Lord”, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

I wonder...

- What the disciples said when Jesus ascended.
- What it feels like to be taken into heaven.
- What the prayers of the disciples were about.

I'm Going to Need More Lemons

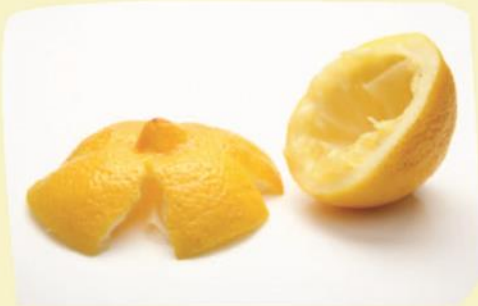
Squeezing lemons. Limp like a rag doll. Deep breath in. Long breath out. Repeat.

Joshua is practicing ways to stay calm. Lately he's been having some issues with anxiety. When he's worried, his mind races and he can't sleep. When Joshua's tired the next day, everything seems worse and he feels more anxious, more worried. This cycle was getting to be a serious problem, so Joshua's mom suggested seeing a counselor. Tools for the toolbox of life, she says.

Jason is his counselor. He's teaching Joshua ways to deal with stress, fear, and anxiety. When Joshua feels tension in his body, he knows to squeeze all his muscles and then let them relax. When his mind is racing, he thinks about a happy place and takes slow, deep breaths.

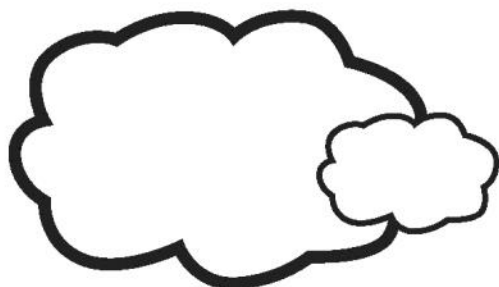
Jason understands what it's like for a kid to see that everything around you is changing. Jason says it's normal to worry about change and the uncertain future, but that we can't let the worries control us or interfere with the regular, good stuff in life.

So Joshua "squeezes lemons" and then relaxes. He takes deep, slow breaths. He prays too. Joshua knows that God is with him and people like his mom and Jason are there to help him through the tough stuff. Even as things change, it will be okay.



Cloud Quiz

When Jesus ascended to heaven, his disciples watched him rise up into a cloud. What do you know about different kinds of clouds? Try to match these facts in the Cloud Quiz to find out!



These clouds often look like mushrooms

These are often called “middle clouds” because of where they are in the atmosphere

These clouds are usually puffy

These clouds form from jet plane exhaust

This type of cloud forms on the ground

These clouds are often seen before extreme weather like tornadoes

These clouds rarely lead to rain

Stratocumulus clouds

Cumulus clouds

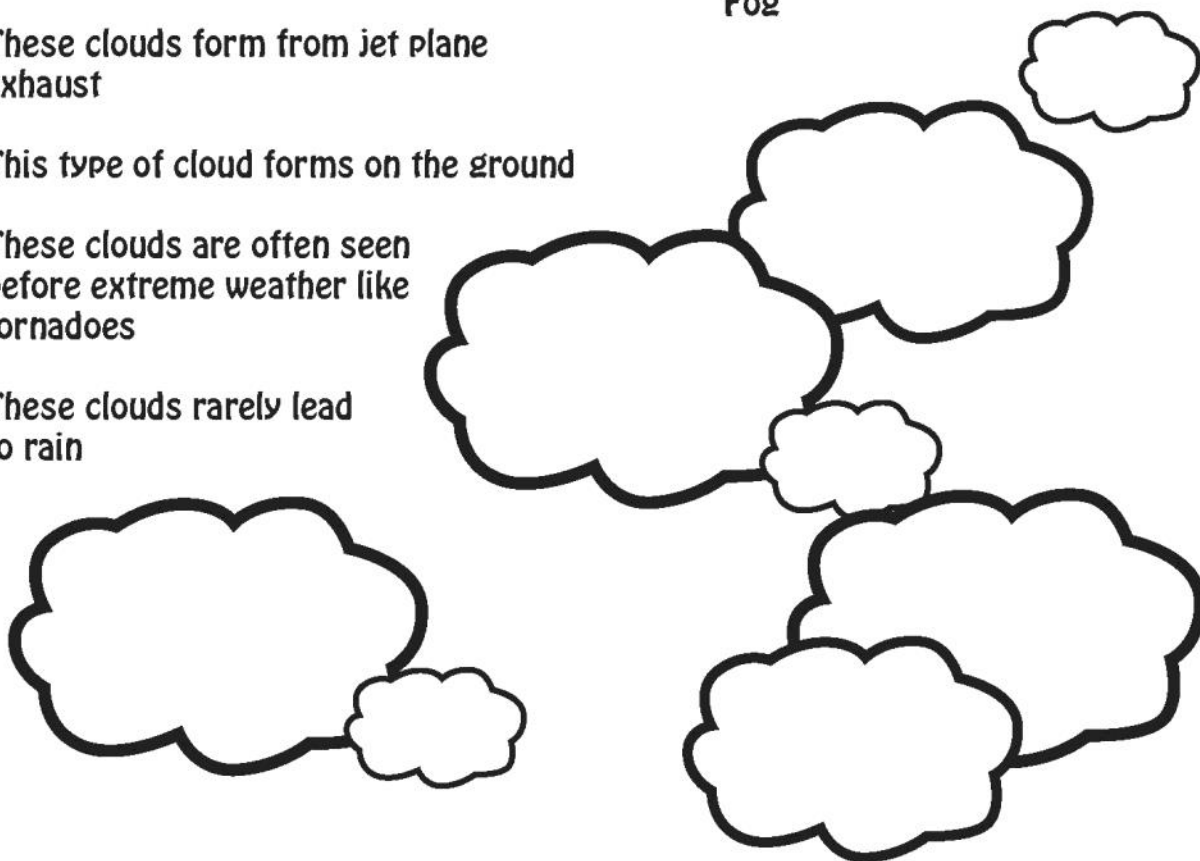
Green clouds

Cumulonimbus clouds

Contrails

Altostratus clouds

Fog

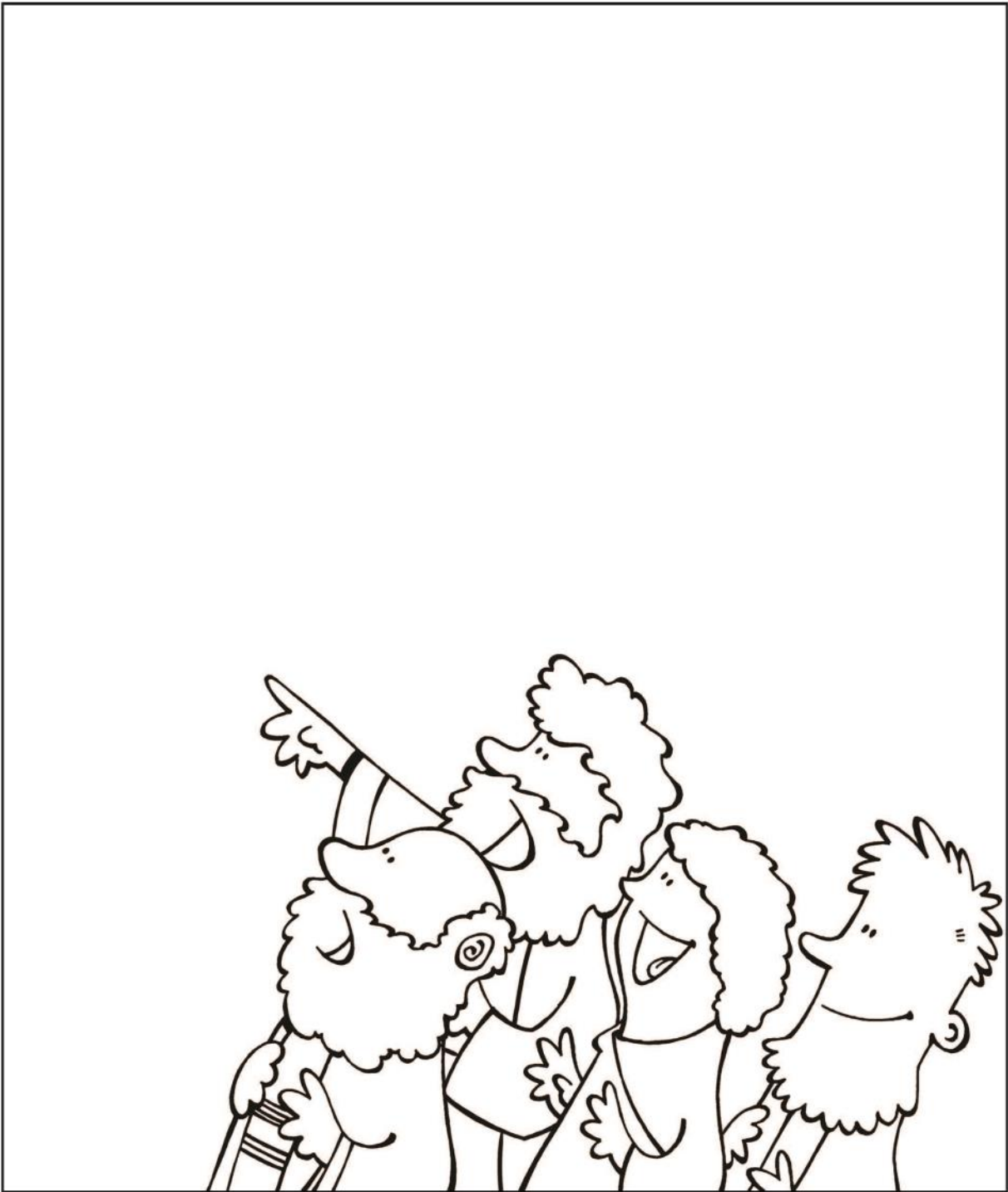


The Ascension



Then suddenly Jesus was rising — up in the air!

The Ascension



What do you think it looked like when Jesus ascended to heaven?
Draw it here!



BOOK for children

During this challenging time, our children have questions about the COVID-19. Available for you is a book you can download and read with your children to help them understand.

[download conqueringcovid.pdf](#)



ZOOM

For some of you, being home is difficult and you would like to be with others. There is a program called ZOOM that you can use to have a video meeting with your loved ones. We had a ZOOM birthday party for my sister. Now we have some doctors using video conferences to assess you while you sit in your home. If you would like to have a ZOOM meeting with someone and do not know how to do it, please call any Health Ministry person or me for direction. We are very happy to help.

COVID-19 Testing

There are 2 types of testing, a rapid test requiring a finger stick to check your blood. The wait time is 15 minutes. If you are positive or have symptoms, a nasal swab is performed (results takes 4-5 days). Please check your local papers and DHSS web site for locations and times.

IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS, PLEASE CALL YOUR DOCTOR!

Enjoy a song from Matthew West: [Take Heart](#)

“Do not grow weary or lose heart.

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and Let us run the race that is set before us! Looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Hebrews 12:1-2