

# DAYBREAKING NEWS

Reflection from Rev. Susan Brims | Community Prayers

## *Community Prayers*

Prayers for all those facing health challenges and procedures and those who cannot be in person to support them.

Prayers for those we cannot get out of their homes during the heat and for those who do not have homes to escape the heat. Prayers for the good work of the Justa Center.

Prayers for teachers and students and governing board members as they seek to discern how to provide education and support to both children and employees while keeping all healthy.

Prayers for Sarah Burke and Ruth Wymer as they face the healing process following medical procedures.

If you have additional prayers, please let Amy Notbohm (480-302-1768) or the church office know.

## Return, Refresh, or Refocus?



When you go through a difficult time, how does it reshape you? I'm not talking about the COVID 20 weight gain. I'm talking about how a time of difficulty impacted who you are, how you live your life.

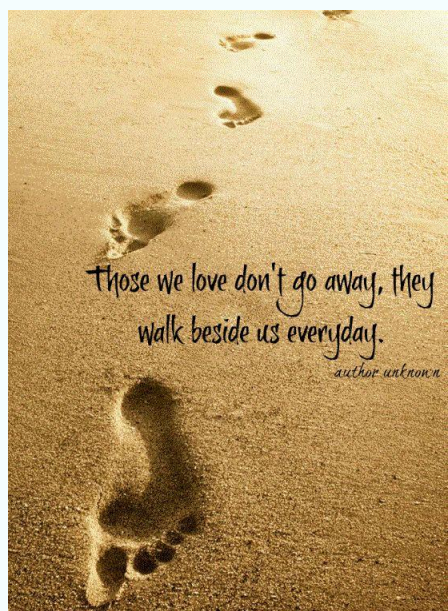
It seems to me that when people go through struggles, they typically have one of three approaches:

1. **Return** – This group of people want life to return to what they knew before the struggle began. Let's simply get through this and return to life as normal.
2. **Refresh** – This group of people will go through a difficult time and come through it with a sense of gratitude, having their spiritual lives refreshed and feeling a stronger connection with God, family and friends.
3. **Refocus** – This group of people sees the struggle as an opportunity, as a call to refocus time and energy on being different, living differently in the world.

Through this upcoming Charge Conference Season, churches are being asked how they have been impacted by the events of the last few months. They are being asked how what has been experienced is shaping them for the year ahead. It may be tiring to consider those questions, but here is the reality – the people of God have usually been reshaped during times of great trial and pain.

### *With Sadness*

It is with sadness that we share with you the death of Jim Simmons, one of our charter members. Jim died on August 14<sup>th</sup> from COVID-19 complications.



Thank you for your continued support for the work and ministry to Aldersgate UMC.

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Read the Bible and you will see story after story about how lives and nations were changed as the result of difficult times. People, systems, and nations often change more when they go through times that shake things up, than when everything is going along as normal. This is why returning to read the stories in the Bible inspires us.

When a problem is overwhelming, we need more than a new vision, or a new idea. What we need to create transformation is a deep sense of God's direction. The life of faith is one that repeatedly goes through a process that orders and reorders our thinking, our decisions. A sense of direction sustains us through seasons of disruption. A sense of direction empowers us to keep moving forward, even if by inches at a time.

In the weeks ahead, I want to share with you some of my thoughts about how to allow the disruption and struggle of this tumultuous time to lead you to a place of refocusing on the theological task of following the direction of God.

These thoughts include:

1. A call to be the body of Christ, finding ways to collaborate and work together.
2. A commitment to unity, allowing differences to strengthen us, rather than divide us.
3. A call to hear the cry of the outcast, recognizing that hearing is a call to action.
4. Process conflict in a way that doesn't destroy but transforms.
5. An ability to articulate what we believe and why we believe it.
6. Allowing the cycle of ordering and reordering to become essential if we are to experience resiliency.

We have come to the time in our communal life when it is important to seek direction if we are to find a way to thrive in the year ahead. I ask you to join me in this journey. We, as the people of the Desert Southwest Conference, are here for such a time as this. God has a purpose for this time of disruption and pain. Let's find it together.

Your sister on the way,  
Susan

Rev. Tom Kiracofe

Pastor

Martha Stowe  
Administrator