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# DAYBREAKING NEWS

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Non-Anxious Presence | Prayer for the Week

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## Touring through Life

Four years ago, I discovered that I LOVE watching the Tour de France professional men's bike race. I think my fascination started out of my affection for all things French. I took five years of French language classes in school, did a study abroad in France as a college student and deeply enjoy cooking with cream and lots of butter. I think we stumbled upon the



race on TV; I fell in love in large part the NBC coverage is almost like a travel journal with beautiful helicopter shots of magnificent castles and spanning panoramas of the countryside.

Then, I started caring about the race. I learned that the big group of riders is called a peloton. I learned that the riders are in teams, and there is a strategy to how the teams work together to use airflows to make it easier for team members to ride. I learned about the individuals and how their body types make them better at sprints or climbing impossibly steep, long mountain passes. I was thrilled when the Tour was able to go on this summer after a 2 month delay due to COVID, so I had something new to watch on TV.

With watching three weeks of bicycle racing and the subsequent pondering of life, it's not surprising that I started to see life in the peloton as symbolic of our lives in community. Rob Bell, host of the RobCast, in one of his early shows talked about how spirit lives in the space between birds in a murmuration. Think of a flock of birds flying together in an undulating wave through the sky. They move and form without any direct leader, but based on the energy between them. They are primarily attuned to the birds directly around them and respond as such.

I see the same sort of beauty in the peloton. These racers are going 20-40 miles per hour in a group inches from each other. A flick of someone's elbow sends halves of the group right and left around a roundabout to rejoin on the other side. The group narrows and lengthens to fit through the corners of ancient towns and widens on huge highways. There is no one leader, yet they arrive at the finish line. Unless there is a crash. Someone loses focus for a second. An obstacle in the road impacts the speed of a rider. Then that rider takes down all of those closest to him in the blink of an eye.

The peloton of a bike race and the murmuration of starlings teach me that we are all interdependent. What I do affects you and what you do affects me. When you hit a rock in your path, I go down too. When we are all paying attention though, it is beautiful. When you sense that I am getting tired and need to fall back or that you are ready for the work and can go forward to clear the space in the air, then we all get to the finish line together.

## Starlings in Winter

by Mary Oliver

Chunky and noisy,  
but with stars in their black feathers,  
they spring from the telephone wire  
and instantly

they are acrobats  
in the freezing wind.  
And now, in the theater of air,  
they swing over buildings,

dipping and rising;  
they float like one stippled star  
that opens,  
becomes for a moment fragmented,

then closes again;  
and you watch  
and you try  
but you simply can't imagine

how they do it  
with no articulated instruction, no pause,  
only the silent confirmation  
that they are this notable thing,

this wheel of many parts, that can rise and spin  
over and over again,  
full of gorgeous life.

Ah, world, what lessons you prepare for us,  
even in the leafless winter,  
even in the ashy city.  
I am thinking now  
of grief, and of getting past it;

I feel my boots  
trying to leave the ground,  
I feel my heart  
pumping hard. I want

to think again of dangerous and noble things.  
I want to be light and frolicsome.  
I want to be improbable beautiful and afraid of nothing,  
as though I had wings.



### Community Prayers

- Prayers for healing of mind, body and soul for all with COVID, including the president and first lady, that they may be instruments of compassion and peace.
- Prayers for Sue Teel, Lee Smith, Ruth Wymer and Sarah Burke.
- With great sadness, we share the passing of Darlene Dominguez this morning, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, from cancer. Prayers for her family and friends in this time of sorrow.

If you have additional prayers, please let Sue Teel, Amy Notbohm or the church office know.

### Giving

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

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### October Birthdays:

**Valerie Lintz – October 13**  
**Thomas Kiracofe – October 27**

Rev. Tom Kiracofe

Pastor

Martha Stowe  
Administrator