

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Like many of you, I have been watching the news broadcasts most days in order to get updates on the Coronavirus Pandemic. While much of the news may leave us feeling uneasy, it is heartening to hear the stories about people expressing a loving concern for one another. Newspapers have also added some special interest stories about people doing things to help others. It is good for us to hear that during this time when so much in our lives is out of our control, we still have control over how we treat others.

Recently, I was reminded of stories of anonymous persons who lived in concentration camps during World War II. Although there seemed to be so little in their lives that they had any control over, they still had control over how they treated other people. For example, they could give some of their bread to another prisoner, they could pray and recite scripture passages that they knew from memory, they could smile and share a favorite story of happier times with friends. All of these things they could do, even though most of their lives were under the control of other people.

As we look to the days and weeks ahead, we do not know how long the Coronavirus will affect us. We are in uncertain times, and yet, God gives us the free will to make certain choices in our everyday lives. These choices may include "Random Acts of Kindness," for our family and friends (while practicing social distancing). These choices may include leaving flowers in a "basket" for one's neighbors on May Day (May 1), creating and sending greeting cards, or doing something special for someone we do not even know.

As Christian believers we are called to love God, to place God first and foremost in our lives, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus modeled for us how to be accepting of persons who are different than us, and how to show hospitality to strangers. May we remember that God's love is not only for a few persons, but for all that God has created. May we walk faithfully in God's ways, modeling for one another what it means to be followers of Christ.

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Cathy