

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The activities surrounding the rioting at the Capitol building a week ago, created a uncomfortable, stressful time for many of us. Since my sermon for this Sunday relates to this topic, I would like to focus my letter for today on something we can all do now to improve our positive feelings--Self Care.

Those of you who live in or near Ontario, are probably aware that the Ontario Public Library has created a wall display entitled, "Winter Self Care." It includes the following categories--Get Outside, Be Artsy, Be Mindful, Do Something Intellectual, Organize Something, Eat Healthy, and one of my favorites, Practice Gratitude! The wall includes information in pocket folders regarding each of these headings.

Trying to tackle all of these things at once, is probably not the best means to improve your positive feelings. However, taking steps related to one or more categories, may give you the lift that you need right now!

One of the Ontario Library's suggestions is to read a good book(s). April Arndt at the Ontario Public Library, Rachel Conner at the Wilton Public Library (or your local librarian if you live elsewhere), will have suggestions for you. If you are home bound, the libraries have ways to help you get some good books to read.

Now, as a pastor, I too have a book suggestion. My suggestion is to read what many people know as The Good Book: the *Holy Bible*! There are many passages that can bring us comfort during this time of the pandemic, division, and mistrust. Perhaps begin with some of your favorite Bible passages. If you don't have any in mind, start reading, and jot down, or underline the passages that seem to be speaking directly to you.

Reading in the Book of Psalms is another option. The Psalms were written by human beings in their times of joy and sorrow. They are the words of persons like ourselves who experienced the gamat of emotional ups and downs. As you read the Psalms, you will most likely find that some speak to you more directly now than they may at another time. That is one of the benefits of reading the Bible; it speaks to us in new and various ways each time we read it!

My hope for you in these winter months, and at all times, is that you will practice positive self care. Spending time daily with God, through prayer and reading the *Holy Bible*, are two ways to do so.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy