

Getting Through a Tough Winter

April 3, 2008

It was dark this morning when I left the house. My day started early, because I was on my way to the hospital to have a prayer with a member of our church who was going to be having surgery. I was thinking about this past winter as I was driving. I realized that not only did we set a record for snowfall, but that we also went over 100 inches of snow. I said to myself what many of us in the Madison area have said, "I have had enough. Winter can end now. Spring can arrive."

As I was driving to the church later, following a nice visit and prayer and breakfast at an area restaurant, the sun was coming up and that was when I saw it. I was struck by the newness, the green coming up between the brown on the ground. I realized that spring is arriving. It is almost here. I found myself giving thanks to God for new life that is even now growing.

For many of us, this has been a tough winter. Not just because of the snow and cold (although that is a contributing factor). For many people I know, this winter has found us facing tough, challenging times. What about you? What challenges are you facing?

My family challenges are well documented, with the death of my daughter and the on-going legal issues remaining for my son who is incarcerated for her death. But I now know more people out of work at the same time that at any point in my adult life. I know of people who are struggling with their personal finances. I know of people who are struggling with health issues for themselves and for people they love. This past weekend an aunt and uncle of mine in southwestern North Dakota had most of their farm devastated by a prairie fire.

For many, recent times are pretty challenging. It feels like we remain in the middle of winter. But spring is coming. I have seen it.

In my life, God is at work touching and bringing healing to me and to our family, even in the midst of immense tragedy. In Psalm 50:15, the Psalmist has God saying, "Trust me in your times of trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory."

Spring is coming. I have seen it.

If you are struggling through a tough time right now, how can you trust God? What are you doing to reconnect with God? Is there someone you can trust and talk with who can help you connect with God?

Spring is coming. I have seen it. Just yesterday I heard the news; my cousin in Montana has had a new baby boy. Our family, the same one concerned about the prairie fire, is rejoicing over the hope of new life and new birth.

Winter comes. Tough times come. But today I remember that spring also comes. God is with us. God can lead us through the tough times. Are you willing to do as the psalmist encourages and trust God in times of trouble?

In the hope Jesus offers us,
Rev. Scott Carlson

PS: This weekend we are beginning a new sermon series called *Stressed! Dealing with Life at the Boiling Point*. Our sermon is titled; *Handling Stress When Tough Stuff Happens*. You may want to read Ezekiel 37:1-14 in preparation.

PS: This is intended to be a devotional e-mail sent to get you thinking about your relationship with God and what it means to live a life of faith. If you would prefer to be taken off of this listing, please e-mail me (scottcarlson@spwl.net) and let me know. It is sent to Laura Meixner, Our Church Secretary, with everyone else as a Blind Copy.

The Mission of Sun Prairie United Methodist Church is to invite and welcome people to be committed and compassionate followers of Jesus Christ through worship, through spiritual growth, through fellowship and through service to others.