"It is important to remember that: God is still present in the midst of his pandemic, that a building is not necessary for us to be the church ..."

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"Remember that churches are uniquely structered to provide love and support to those in need."

their technology resources to keep the community together online.

After he and his church board voted to go online with services, Tracy SDA Church Pastor Tyler Kraft wrote his church members in March: "It is important to remember that: God is still present in the midst of his pandemic, that a building is not necessary for us to be the church, and that while we should be prudent, God has not given us a spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7)."

5. We can all share resources - Toilet paper quickly became the meme for the growing list of supplies that couldn't be found in stores. However, several other essential items were soon added to the list as social media filled with pictures of long lines and empty shelves at stores. If you have extras of items, consider sharing with those in need. School closings have also left some families and students scrambling for meals. "Remember that churches are uniquely structured to provide love and support to those in need," wrote Brown. Consider donating to churches and other organizations that are filling critical needs during this time and share items that you might have an abundance of.

Hebrews 13:16 tells us to "not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." Let that be our mantra as we face these uncertain times. Let us lead the way in helping our neighbors, our communities, those who are isolated, everyone affected, and more. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment," (2 Timothy 1:7).

Let's use our confidence in Him to make a difference…now! "Throughout the Scriptures we are encouraged to put our trust in God's care. The promise of His grace is not that we will not encounter difficulties, but that we will not be left to meet them alone," wrote Pacific Union Conference President Ricardo Graham.

We can all be the light for our communities.

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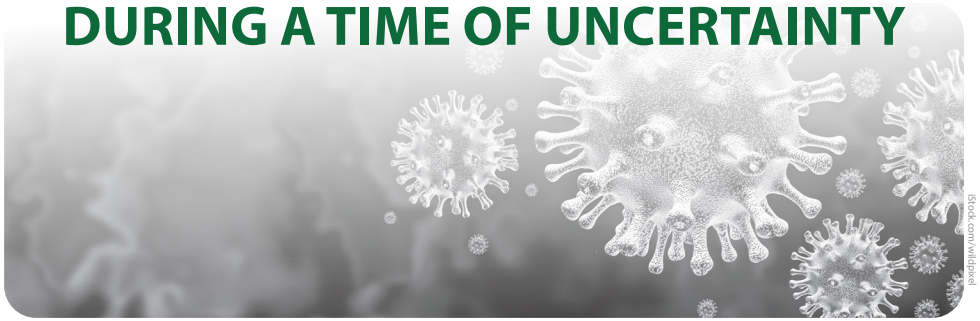
The STEWPOT

A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS *to help you become a better steward*

APRIL 2020 • VOLUME 25, ISSUE 4

BEING GOOD STEWARDS OF EACH OTHER

DURING A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY



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"Hi neighbors," the NextDoor post started. "I know this is an uncertain time so wanted to offer a helping hand. I'd be happy to run an errand for anyone who needs extra help. Don't hesitate to comment below or message me! And if you can offer help to neighbors in need, comment below with how."

The post appeared in the middle of March as this *Stewpot* is being written. Many details of our public health crisis may change by the time you are reading this in April. In an ever-changing pandemic landscape, we don't know what will happen. But even as the stress and fear increase in the world, so too does kindness.

The middle of March brought business and school closures, along with directives to work from home, if possible, and to practice social distancing. And as this is being written, we don't know what will happen in April.

As panic has set in for some, others have stepped in to help. One mom posted on Facebook that she had extra diapers. She had many left from her first child and was planning to save them for her second child. However, she thought what the community was facing now was much more serious and offered any mom the diapers free of charge. A youth group has started to contact local elderly people in

STEWARDSHIP is a total lifestyle. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality, and finances.

As Adventists, we have a hope and calm that is rooted in God's promises.

their community, many of whom have been in isolation longer than the general population. They want them to know that even during this time of uncertainty and loneliness there are people who care, so the teens are checking in with the seniors, calling them to ask how their day is going.

As Adventists, we have a hope and calm that are rooted in God's promises. It is not a call to be reckless, but to follow health guidelines, along with being a beacon of kindness in our communities.

In the North American Division's press release dated March 13, the leadership urged Church members to help: "As Christians we have a responsibility to care for each other and ourselves. With the World Health Organization now declaring COVID-19 to be a pandemic, we should be seen as part of the solution rather than potentially becoming part of the problem."

Multiple sources remind members of Ellen White's words in *Counsels on Health* (p. 59): "God will not work a miracle to keep those from sickness who have no care for themselves, but are continually violating the laws of health and make no efforts to prevent disease. When we do all we can on our part to have health, then may we expect that the blessed results will follow, and we can ask God in faith to bless our efforts for the preservation of health."

So, what can we do? For health guidelines and what your county/state/federal government is doing, please visit the appropriate websites. In addition to following posted rules, here are a few other ways we can all help:

1. We can all pray - In a post mid-March from the Nevada-Utah Conference, President Leon Brown introduced numerous measures for his conference and asked members to keep their connection to God during this time. "Most importantly, please 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thessalonians 5:17)," he wrote. "Pray for those who are infected, pray for our local, state and national and global leaders as they make the very difficult decisions about our health and safety. Please pray for our health professionals and first responders. And pray for our members, our churches and the local church leaders who have to interpret all these facts and make the difficult choices on the local level."

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"As Christians we have a responsibility to care for each other and ourselves."

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… we are living in a time with a wide variety of ways to stay connected - even if we are not physically next to each other.

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2. We can all check in on the elderly - If not through organized efforts in your local church, at least through your personal contacts, stay in touch with senior citizens. The situation is particularly delicate for this age group, but we are living in a time with a wide variety of ways to stay connected—even if we are not physically next to each other. "Even in these uncertain times we urge all our members to stay connected with family, friends, and church members through phone calls, texts, emails, social media, etc. We can encourage and support one another through these avenues of communication — and through prayer," (NAD's Press Release, March 13, 2020).

3. We can all show kindness - Perhaps you must make pharmacy or grocery runs. While being very cautious, treat others with a kindness that shows the love of God through us. People are scared. A kind word or smile may help people realize that we are all in this together and that we care about more people than just ourselves. "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31) is our commandment during good times and bad.

4. We can all help our local church get creative - Technology can be a powerful tool to reach members, and churches are stepping up