

## MID-WEEK MESSAGE FROM PASTOR LESLEY

April 21, 2020 "Words of Comfort"

Recently I came across an article from the United Methodist Church website that was titled "Centenarian offers words of comfort during pandemic" that I thought gives us comfort and something to think over today and in the days ahead. Let me share this story of a woman that has some answers!!!

This is not Lucille Ellson's first pandemic. In the century since she was born just weeks prior to the 1918 flu pandemic onset, Ellson has come to know a few things about navigating challenging times. A lot of that knowledge, she says, she learned at United Methodist churches."

"Being brought up in a faith family, it was part of me and it built something into me so that I knew during all of these difficult times that I would be protected," Ellson says. "There is not sense in worrying because God gives you the strength you need to get through tough times."

Born into the Cradle Roll at Laurens United Methodist Church, the 102-year-old Iowa native says she "always went to church and Sunday School and the whole works," adding that she also attended church camp at Lake Okoboji. As an adult, she chaired ladies circles, mission committees and youth groups.

"When I think about my whole life, I think being in church has taught me my whole value system. Be kind and share, be helpful and compassionate," she says. "All of that you learn in church more than any place else."

Ellson has had more than a few occasions to live by the lessons she learned in church, with a litany of tough life experiences that include the Great Depression, World War II, her son's severe health challenges, her husband's passing eight years ago at age 104, and now, the coronavirus pandemic.

Recently, Ellson, a member at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Orlando, Florida, had the unique opportunity to share her perspective on a national scale when she was interviewed by the Washington Post. "I've been through so many things," Ellson said in the Post article. "To cope with this virus and all that's going on, I would tell people to not get stressed about planning far ahead. You can't do it. A long time ago, I started making a list every morning of what I had to do. It was the only thing I could control, and I stuck to it, you hear me?"

Ellson continues to be a list maker and she recommends others do the same. "Do what you can in your own little spot that you're in," she suggests. "Telephoning people, sending them cards, let them know you're thinking of them. I think a lot of people need that." Her list also regularly includes Zoom video calls with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as making meals and baking desserts that she leaves on her front porch for nearby family members.

"I'm not in control of the virus, but God is going to see us through," she says. "It's all going to straighten out and life will go on."

"Thinking that God is there with me helps me get through each day."

Amen, Lucille Ellson....AMEN!!!

