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# New Stories to Tell

May 6, 2020 | Arkansas United Methodist



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It's been a crazy...seven? Eight weeks? I've been doing the same thing for so long that, honestly, at this point time only exists in theory to me.

COVID-19 has completely transformed the way Americans, and the world, go about our daily lives.

But especially Americans.

The American Dream — to work hard, get a good job, get paid well for your job, make a living for yourself without anyone else's help — doesn't exactly fit into this new coronavirus-centric world that we're all trapped in.

Every day, people are losing their jobs. Good jobs. Great paying jobs. Jobs that they've had for years, decades even. And it's all because an unseen virus is wreaking havoc on people's livelihoods that almost no one alive today has ever seen in their lifetime.

You'd have to go all the way back to the 1918 influenza pandemic, or the Great Depression or World War II, to find something even close to what the world is experiencing today.

One of my favorite podcasts is [The Daily](#) from The New York Times. Each day, the podcast covers the daily news in the United States and around the world. The episodes usually cover typical news stories about various world events, but one day recently, they shifted tone and chose to tell the story of an older woman and her granddaughter, who had found a way to connect with each other through a shared interest in cooking.

Every week, the granddaughter called up her grandmother using Facetime to ask her how to cook some of the most famous recipes that the family had grown up eating at their grandmother's house.

The family always raved and craved the delicious Matzo Ball Soup or tuna casserole that the grandma would make for Christmas every year. Other people could cook soups and casseroles, sure, but no one made them like grandma did.

One of the funniest aspects of the story was the revelation that most of the recipes the grandmother had cooked weren't a family secret or a natural cooking ability; many of the recipes had in fact come from the directions printed on the backs of big brand soup cans or pasta boxes!

The grandmother had lived through her own tragedies and hardships in American history, and in the midst of teaching her granddaughter to cook her famous recipes, she also told her stories about how hard it was growing up during the Great Depression and years later in the 1960s when she had to take learn how to provide and care of her own family.

At one point, the granddaughter says that one of the things she learned through talking with her grandmother is the importance of stories and connecting with the past in order to make sense of the current chaos of our world.

"I think talking to her about her past, making it through all of these different periods and challenges makes me feel a little calmer, even though this is unprecedented and we feel that. We feel how strange and new all of this is. It will become a story that we tell," she said.

Isn't that a wonderful thought? That, despite all of the pain and suffering and uncertainty that we are all facing right now, we know that one day, when we're on the other side of this thing, we will have wonderful, important stories to tell.

We will be able to tell people "I lived through the COVID-19 pandemic, when the entire world seemed to stop, and I came out on the other side better for it."

I reconnected with my family. I reached out to friends I hadn't spoken to in years. I learned how to cook. I explored a hobby. I helped my neighbor who needed food or other necessities. I sewed masks for people to protect them from the virus. I made something good out of this tragedy.

As Bishop Mueller mentioned in his [Sunday sermon on April 19](#), I don't want to go back to the way things were. And I don't think there's anyone that we possibly can go back.

This is the new normal. This is the new world that we live in. It's scary and it makes me anxious, as I know it makes all of you, but think of the lessons we are learning from this.

Think about the stories that we will one day be able to tell our children or our grandchildren.

I hope and pray that we will all learn something from this experience. I know that God didn't cause this tragedy to happen, but he is definitely using it for the betterment of our world.

Let's not go back to the way things were. Let's make the world better, not just for me and you, but for everyone.

The experiences of today will be the stories of tomorrow.

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