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A Fall Season Like No Other

Don't Let This Difficult Year Keep You From Celebrating the Things That Bring You Joy

Sep 28, 2020 | Arkansas United Methodist



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Fall's welcome arrival in late September heralds the return of everything pumpkin. Pumpkin spice lattes, pumpkin scented candles, pumpkin decor; anything and everything

you can imagine is guaranteed to be touched by the pumpkin spice fairy.

I've even seen pumpkin-flavored goods taken to extreme levels, like pumpkin spice protein powder, pumpkin spice salsa, and (shudder) pumpkin spice kale chips.

Despite my avoidance of most things pumpkin other than coffee or pie, many people enjoy their daily fix of pumpkin. They also realize that the return of pumpkin spice on every menu and grocery shelf in the U.S. means that cooler temperatures, beautiful and bright fall leaves, and big family gatherings are here once again.

But, let's face it, this year is going to be different than any fall we've enjoyed in the past. COVID-19, and the strict social distancing, mask-wearing, and limits on group gatherings are going to severely limit some of the fall festivities we've grown accustomed to celebrating.

We're already seeing talks of Halloween being "canceled" this year; the CDC has recommended that traditional Halloween activities, like door-to-door trick-or-treating, be avoided to stop the spread of the virus.

Churches that celebrate trunk-or-treat or fall festivals will also have to rethink their plans this year.

And Thanksgiving? Well, I don't imagine most of us want to think about alternative plans for a holiday that is traditionally celebrated with large family gatherings and shared meals.

So what does it look like to celebrate fall traditions in the middle of a global pandemic?

At a recent staff meeting, someone brought up how different this year's fall celebrations will be and how they are usually excited to decorate their house with fall colors, pumpkins and spooky Halloween decor. But why should they even bother putting up decorations this year if there's nothing to celebrate?

As we all pondered this common feeling about the upcoming season, someone brought up the idea of celebrating for yourself; as in, if decorating your living space with fall decor gives you joy and lifts your spirits, then do it for you.

If buying all the pumpkins and ornamental gourds at your local nursery makes you happy, do it.

If pumpkins spice everything gives you a burst of positivity in your morning coffee, pour away.

Don't let the things we can't do affect the things that we still can do.

We can't celebrate the way we used to, but that doesn't mean we can't celebrate at all and we can't find joy in this wonderful time of the year.

One thing that I look forward to every fall is camping season and the beautiful color changes we experience throughout our beautiful state. And guess what? I can still do that! The pandemic has not stopped me from getting out and enjoying the peace and quiet of a secluded nature walk.

Remember to celebrate the little things that bring you life and meaning, and make a point to celebrate fall in a way that brings you real joy and happiness.

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