

Small Talk – April 9 2021
Required Facial Covering When in Public – Day 259
By Michael Small

Would it be fair to say – this has been a tumultuous year. Routines have been radically changed. Events have been canceled. There has been too much tragedy and death. Families and the world have experienced challenge and grief to its very core. Also, in the meantime, we have changed, we have adapted, we have discovered new and strange ways of being – sometimes comfortable, but also difficult. Life, like a river, has steadily flowed on with its varied currents and depths.

Added to the challenges we have all faced this year, the epidemic of gun violence daily continues to tear apart communities and tragically kill innocent victims who are merely trying to live life. Senseless acts of violence that in a moment, in a millisecond families, loved ones are confronted with unthinkable actions that forever change who they are. We are all challenged to discover a way out from this growing trend. With conversation, with action, with research and development, with policy and laws, all must openly tackle this issue. Too many have senselessly lost their lives. With the same energy that has brought us vaccines for a pandemic disease in less than a year, so too, we must find ways to end gun violence – it's up to us. Awaken!

As we awaken to spring, though the Covid-19 numbers in Minnesota are alarmingly getting higher, we too awaken. The Twins (and the Wild) are back with some fans, and they are even winning. Community Church of Walker United Church of Christ will cautiously begin in-person worship on April 25. Masks, distance, no singing, and a thirty-minute service beginning at 10:30 am. Many are looking forward to open-air, outside gatherings. We are awakening.

After so many challenges, after so much disruption of life and routines, after too much death, after a long year, how do we reawaken? We have just moved through the drama of Holy Week that speaks to hopes, fears, life, and death. For those who followed and loved Jesus, they too faced unimaginable death, grief, sorrow, fear, and a sense of hopelessness. So fearful, they locked themselves in their places of residence. We all know what it is like to feel that sense of loss, sorrow, and grief. And yet, we still discover those times when we reawake, we come alive.

For the followers it was simple, amazing. Jesus appears to them. He doesn't scold, he isn't judgmental, he isn't cross. He looks into the eyes of those who are gathered, and simply says, "Peace be with you!" He asks them in this time of grief, to forgive. He sends them on, to a new day, and a new way.

When you are at your wits end, when you are tired, fearful, saddened, worn down – will you close your eyes, breathe in and out, and hear these words, "peace be with you". Breathe it in. Hold on to it. Let it wash over you like a gentle springtime rain. Let it

cleanse you. Allow those words to wash away all of your sadness, frustration, fear, confusion. Peace be with you. Now go forth. Now forgive. Now awaken.

Peace be with you!

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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