

The UMW Voice

The Newsletter of Bozeman's United Methodist Women

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Spiritually Speaking

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In the seasons of the year and the seasons of the soul, this has seemed like an exceedingly long winter. Although it's currently early April, it feels like January 97th. It's snowed twice this week, and the weather station on my dresser says it's 15 degrees with 20 mile-per-hour winds. My Swedish heritage naturally predisposes me to a certain gloominess, and I've certainly done my part to maintain my ancestral reputation during the past several months.

It's been winter in my soul too. I've touched on this before, that I'm currently in the longest spiritual dry spell I've experienced since I returned to church about twelve years ago. This is a time when my past experience of God is the sustenance I rely on to move through this season. Just as I'm certain that the sun still lives behind the clouds and that summer will eventually return, I know God is there, even though I can't feel God's presence right now. I believe that fully, and I trust it completely.

I've got a few tools to help me get through the winter – getting outside as often as possible, focusing on nutrition, exercising, avoiding alcohol, sitting by my “happy light,” and taking vitamin D. Similarly, I'm trying to find tools to get through my spiritual winter. When prayer feels like struggle, I journal instead. And often I find that my journal entries are letters to God, whether or not they start out that way. When I can't even find words to put on the page, I simply sit instead. And whether or not I can actually feel God's presence, I can imagine myself sitting with God.

I can't make spring come any faster than it will, but I know for sure that it will. And I hope that by the time you read this, there's an undeniable promise of summer in the air. I can't hurry this spiritual winter either, but I know for sure that it will eventually end as well. All I can do is trust in the promise of sunshine and the promise of God's presence. That doesn't feel like a lot, but it's all I have.

I'm reminded of the time when Jesus taught his disciples that they could come to the Father only through him, by eating his body and drinking his blood. Many left after that hard and confusing teaching. But when Jesus asked the twelve apostles whether they wanted to leave too, Peter replied, “Master, to whom would we go? You have the words of real life, eternal life. We've already committed ourselves, confident that you are the Holy One of God.”

And so I remember: I've already committed myself to Jesus. To whom else would I go?

