

THE SLIDING SCALE OF AGENCY CONTINUED FROM FRONT

PAGE

So what can we do?

Well, if agency refers to our capacity to act in the world then we need to view it, perhaps, as that sliding scale. There are moments in our lives in which we have great control and power to make change and see things through in a favorable way, and there are moments when we feel very small, powerless, and weak. Both of these points and all points in between comprise what it means to be human, and it's okay to be exactly where you are.

The question is, can we be honest about where we are so that we can lift one another up and shoulder one another's burdens as the body of Jesus Christ?

Living during this pandemic has made many of us keenly aware of this sliding scale of agency. We have come face to face with our own fragility, and seen exposed how systems and institutions have benefited some and excluded others by design. We have been called to a living hope in Jesus Christ, a hope that compels us to keep faith in the midst of our frail humanity that sometimes can act and that sometimes cannot. And in the midst of that, we need to learn to have compassion for ourselves, to do that battery check, to maybe ask as Dr. Bowler does, "What is possible *today*?" And day to day that will look different. But maybe, just maybe, that gives us a more honest place to start considering what it means to "love our neighbors as we *love ourselves*," as Jesus asks of us. I believe that's the gateway to learning just how much we need each other now and always.

Peace,
Pastor Patrick

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FRONTLINE

Focusing on the life and ministry
of Front Street UMC



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THE SLIDING SCALE OF AGENCY

Agency describes the amount of power and control we are capable of exerting in a given situation. It is our ability to *act*. Culturally we put forward the idea that we have nearly unlimited agency—i.e., we can act to effect change and bring about our desired future because we have at our disposal resources, time, and the energy to accomplish it. "If you put your mind to it, you can do it." "The only thing standing in the way is you." Unfortunately many people live with very little agency, either by accident or design. Some of our brothers and sisters live with a chronic or terminal illness, others live under the oppression of racism and sexism, others fight the battles of mental health, and still others find themselves in relationships of violence that deprive them of the ability to escape. These circumstances stifle agency.

However, in truth, agency is not a fixed reality. None of us have unlimited potential to act. Often agency is a very privileged capacity. Just because we think it or hope it, does not mean it will come to pass. Another way to put it is that endless "get up and go" is an addictive falsehood. A better way to think about agency is as my teacher, Dr. Kate Bowler puts it, as a sliding scale. When we wake up, it's important to do what we'll call a battery check. How much energy can I put forward today? What is my ability to give? And this isn't something we should ask not only as individuals, but also as neighborhoods, communities, and churches. In different seasons of our lives our ability to act and bring change and give to the world around us waxes and wanes both as individuals and as a community of faith.

continued

A LOOK AHEAD:

KNOWING CHRIST

MAJOR LIFE TRANSITIONS: A PRAYER

This prayer was shared by Pastor Ross as part of his Facebook video devotion on May 19.

Lord, help me now to unclutter my life, to organize myself in the direction of simplicity. Lord, teach me to listen to my heart; teach me to welcome change, instead of fearing it. Lord, I give you these stirrings inside me. I give you my discontent. I give you my restlessness. I give you my doubt. I give you my despair. I give you all the longings I hold inside. Help me to listen to these signs of change, of growth; help me to listen seriously and follow where they lead through the breathtaking empty space of an open door.

(Taken from "Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals" by Enuma Okoro, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, and Shane Claiborne (<http://www.commonprayer.net/CP.pdf>))

Do you have some uplifting words to share with your Front Street family? We'd love to hear from you. Visit www.frontstreetumc.org to learn how.

PARTICIPATE IN WORSHIP

The opportunity to participate in our online worship service is still open. We are seeking individuals of all ages to lead in The Lord's Prayer or The Apostles' Creed. Or maybe you'd like to video your whole family saying one of them together.



All you have to do is video yourself praying The Lord's Prayer or saying The Apostles' Creed, and send it to us. Please visit www.frontstreetumc.org for more information and instructions.

SHARING CHRIST

UMCOR LAUNCHES COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND

UMCOR, the relief and development arm of The United Methodist Church, is expanding its response in the fight against COVID-19 by launching a new giving campaign, "Sheltering in Love." With the funds raised, UMCOR plans to release grants to equip partners who assist vulnerable populations around the world impacted by COVID-19, including racial/ethnic and indigenous communities in the United States. Grants of up to \$20,000 will be disbursed quickly to address pressing needs in the areas of health, food insecurity, water, sanitation, and hygiene and economic instability. Even as you shelter in place, you can be there for others. For more information or to make a donation, visit umcmmission.org/covid-19.



CEREAL AND CANNED GOODS FOR THE SALVATION ARMY

It is our custom to collect cereal and canned/dry goods for the Salvation Army the first Sunday of each month. Please feel free to drop off these items any time during the month. You may deposit cereal or other canned/dry goods in the tubs in the cabinet in the Welcome Center. Thank you for your continued support of stocking the food pantry at the Salvation Army.



Giving Hope Today

COLLEGE GRADUATES

Just a reminder, if you have a loved one who is a new college graduate, please provide us their name, the school they graduated from, and the degree they received. Visit www.frontstreetumc.org/features to complete an online graduate form, or email Pamela



(pamela@frontstreetumc.org) by **Monday, June 1**. We will include the list of 2020 graduates in the June newsletter.

Prayers

- **The family of Jean Anderson** upon her death on 5/8
- **Clara Clayton** is at home recovering from a heart ablation
- **John McDonald** who is recovering from a recent heart attack
- **Jim and Carol Pace** upon the death of his aunt, Miriam Pace, on 4/17
- **June West** who is recovering from back surgery

Continued prayers

- **Lynn Chandler**

WORSHIP @ HOME

The service is available on Facebook and YouTube. The links can be found on our website. Visit www.frontstreetumc.org and click on the green "worship @ home" image.



FINANCIAL GIVING UPDATE AS OF 5/22/2020

YTD Actual Giving – \$442,834.92

YTD Budgeted Giving - \$526,676.15

3 WAYS TO GIVE



TEXT

Text \$ amount to 336.489.4483



ONLINE

www.frontstreetumc.org/give



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