

A Message from Pastor Mary Kay Totty

Dear Seward United Methodist Folks,

Greetings from Washington D.C. where I am in the midst of preparations to move to Nebraska! I am so excited to be moving back to Nebraska where I lived from 1989-1991 serving in my first full time appointment. I love the plains, wide open spaces, and huge sky — the landscape of the plains feeds my soul in powerful ways. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as the pastor of Seward United Methodist Church. Jo Ellen, Wess, Shelly and members of the SPRC committee are already making me feel welcome. I am looking forward to being in ministry with the Seward staff and getting to know all of you who are part of Seward United Methodist Church.



I was born in Alabama and my family moved around a lot during my childhood — I figure that was good training for being a United Methodist minister! My folks finally settled in Baton Rouge, LA where I attended high school and college. Yes, I am an alum of Louisiana State University. While I was in college, I received my call to ministry so went from college to seminary to full time ministry.

After my two years in Nebraska, I transferred to the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Over the years, I have thought of returning to Nebraska but until now the time was not right. Now, however, I am at the end of a long appointment with Dumbarton United Methodist Church and I am engaged to a native Nebraskan, Rev. Stephen Griffith. So the opportunity to be your pastor is a gift and blessing in my life and I pray that together you (the congregation and staff of Seward United Methodist Church) and I will flourish in ministry.

Steve and I had a small wedding planned for April 21 of this year and it had to be postponed until some time after this pandemic. So, we will be legally married in June and do a church celebration at some other time. My Dad and brother are both in Louisiana. My mom died from Alzheimer's on March 2 of this year.

Thanks be I was able to be with her and with family the week of her death. I am grateful she died before most of the country went into this time of "sacred distancing." I am grateful that her suffering has ended and she is in the arms of God. This is an unusual time to be moving and yet I trust that God is at work in this appointment process. Seward United Methodist Church is in my prayers every day. I will share below a prayer that we might all pray together during this time of transition. So until I can see you face to face — on zoom and one day in person — blessings to you, one and all.

Grace, peace, Pastor Mary Kay

Prayer for Transition

God of Possibility and Vision, we pray this day for our beloved Seward United Methodist Church congregation. We thank you for our church and each person connected to this congregation. We pray for the health and well-being of everyone — individually and collectively. May your wisdom, O God, guide our ministry decisions during the time of this pandemic. Help us to make the best choices for the most vulnerable of our church and community. Give us patience for the long weeks of “sacred distancing.” Be with us during this time of pastoral transition. Be with Pastor Jo Ellen as she guides us during this time. Be with Pastor Robert and provide him with all the resources he needs, tangible and intangible, to meet his personal health crisis. Surround Pastor Robert with your healing grace and strength. Be with Pastor Mary Kay as she packs and moves from Washington D.C. to Nebraska. Watch over and keep her safe as she travels. Guide us through this transition and help us lay a good foundation from which to do ministry together in the years ahead.

In Jesus' name, we pray.
Amen.

Neighboring Small Groups... FUN TIMES ahead... Cocoa and Coffee Fellowship...

Neighboring Small Groups will be assigned such that they are folks who live near you. These might be church family and friends you see as you walk in your area, get your mail, or even visit from time to time. These groups will begin via zoom and phone calls. We will progress to outdoor gatherings (following the health directives as we are allowed)... and eventually these will be small groups who are able to meet in person.

This will help to improve our "connection", touch base with church family/friends during this curious time, and will allow Pastor Mary Kay some groups to gather with once she arrives. Pastor Jo Ellen will be sending out more details about these groups soon! Watch for updates!

- *The church family/friends who play together, stay together... watch for details soon!*
- Online BINGO game night coming soon!
- Online Movie night coming soon!
- Online Kahoot game night coming soon!

Cocoa and Coffee Fellowship times are posted on the [sign up genius link](#) ... sign up for as many times as you wish to be invited to a zoom gathering. As we are able these will move to more of a "Front Porch Faith" model for summer time fun. We are watching our health directives closely, so for now they are all set via ZOOM!

Vacation Bible School and Arts Week



SAVE the dates Sunday, July 26th through Thursday, July 30th, 2020! VBS and Arts Week are combined this year. We are not sure yet what this time will look like but there will be so much fun for all ages and stages of life! It might be a bit virtual, kits to go home, or even more "camp like" outside the building. We will be anchored in faith! Watch for updates!

Praying with the Earth *by John Philip Newell*

*In sleep may we be made new this night.
In sleep may we let go of today
and release the worries of tomorrow.
In sleep may we know you
as Soul within our soul
as Guide within our dreams
as Lover within our longings.
In sleep may we be one with you
one with earth's darkness
one with heaven's shining
one with each creature dying
one with each newborn breath.
In sleep may we be one with you
and one with all.*

