

Assembly Mennonite Church Worship
June 28, 2020
Small Acts of Kindness

YouTube Link to the Full Service: <https://youtu.be/X3O2eLL-C8I>

If you'd like to watch only certain parts of the service, you will find links to that portion of the video at each section below.



[Prelude](#) - Ana Yoder Coulter (0:07)

HWB # 26

[Call to Worship](#) - Maria Wenger (2:31)

HWB #671

[Peace Lamp](#) - Sophia Yordy (3:28)

[Offering Prayer](#) - Cheryl Shreiner (4:24)

You may send a check to the church office, transfer money electronically through your bank, or through a [PayPal link on the church website](#).

[Children's Time](#) - Eliza Koop Herber (5:27)

[Children's Song](#) - Maria Wenger (8:06)

Magic Penny

Love is something if you give it away,

Give it away, give it away.

Love is something if you give it away,

You end up having more.

It's just like a magic penny,

Hold it tight and you won't have any.

Lend it, spend it, and you'll have so many

They'll roll all over the floor.

For love is something if you give it away,

Give it away, give it away.

Love is something if you give it away,

You end up having more.

Source: LyricFind Songwriters: Malvina Reynolds Magic Penny lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group

[Scripture](#) - Ashley Fehlberg (9:50)

John 6: 1-15

[Storytelling](#) - Jen Eberly (11:21)

(see text below)

[Time of Silence](#)- (21:58)

[Response](#)- Mary Gilbert, Bill Mateer, Marna Mateer (23:19)

from a trio sonata by William Boyce

Prayers and Sharing

Share prayer requests by filling out the online form [at this link](#). You may continue to do this throughout each week. Prayer requests are sent out to the congregation via the Assembly listserv on Wednesdays, and are also included in the Pastoral Prayer each Sunday.

Pastoral Prayer by Scott Coulter (text below)

(The pastoral prayer was not included in the pre-recorded video of the service. If you are worshipping at home or with a small group, you are encouraged to share requests and pray together. You may choose to read the text of the pastoral prayer included here. Or: if you join the "Virtual House Church" meeting on Zoom, Sunday at 10 AM, one of the pastors will lead live sharing and will offer a live pastoral prayer as part of that Zoom meeting.)

[Benediction](#) -Maria Wenger (25:05)

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the worship materials for this week!

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Other Assembly ongoing events:

For All Events: Zoom Meeting ID: 999-527-5153, password: AMC

Call to prayer: Join us on Zoom at 12 noon, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, for a brief time of reading this week's psalm (from the lectionary) and prayer.

Sunday Worship: "Virtual House Church" – Join us Sundays at 10 am on Zoom if you'd like to join a live group of Assembly participants online in watching that week's pre-recorded worship service together. We will also have a time of live sharing before the pastoral prayer. We will wrap this up in time for the online fellowship break at 11 am (see below).

Community building: Join us for an online fellowship break, Sundays at 11 am, via Zoom (you'll need to provide your own coffee).

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Happy 10th Birthday to Alano Kingsley! You can read more about Alano in the [AssemblyLine](#)



Happy 4th Birthday to Emma Coulter! You can read more about Emma in the [AssemblyLine](#)



Happy 10th Birthday to Elias Magatti! You can read more about Elias in the [AssemblyLine](#)



Happy 7th Birthday to Luisa Kingsley! You can read more about Luisa in the [AssemblyLine](#)

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Small Acts of Kindness

Text for Storytelling by Jen Eberly

When I was first asked to speak on the topic “small acts of kindness” I immediately started to think of the many stories I could tell from my classroom. Anyone who knows me, knows that I absolutely love my job as an EL teacher at Goshen High School and that I love to tell stories about the amazing, and often quite funny, things my students do. And trust me, there are a multitude of stories that I could share. From the way they burst into applause when another student who has been struggling with a particular concept finally gets it right, or how they love to bring me treats from their home countries as a simple way of sharing a bit of their culture with me, or their compassionate hugs and smiles when they know I’ve had a rough day. But as time went on and the topic marinated in my mind, I felt a strong urge to connect our summer worship topic to our current reality and the pandemic that we are all struggling through. For many of us, it seems that now, more than ever, we rely on small acts of kindness to help us through these uncertain times.

Our world feels like a different place. Those common happenings and interactions that used to fill our days have been replaced by new realities. Things that we used to take for granted and do without even thinking about, it has all been changed for something that we are still trying to adjust to. The city feels quit, almost like it is asleep. And while this time can be challenging and perhaps a bit fearful, there are also many things that I hope we can cherish from this time and learn to incorporate into our future when we finally emerge from this pandemic.

When I talk to friends about this time and these feelings, I find that I keep connecting to what my life feels like when I live overseas, back to the times that I have lived in Nicaragua or Paraguay or even Cote De Ivoire on SST. In those times, life tended to move at such a different pace, a slow and deliberate pace that allowed room to cherish the people around you. While our American lives seems to have us scheduled from the moment we wake up to the moment we finally lay down to sleep, my live overseas is often filled with hours of empty time slots that can be filled with walks through the city and sitting down to talk to a neighbor or friend. Those social times are often the currency of life, much more than our never-ending chase for the all mighty dollar here in the US. In Nicaragua, it felt as though there were more opportunities to give and receive small acts of kindness because the simple gesture of spending time with someone was so valued.

One person in Nicaragua who showered me with small acts of kindness was Connie. Although she was officially our maid, I hated to call her that because she really was much more of my friend and family while living there. Each morning, after my run and shower, I knew that there would be a cup of coffee with a little bit of cream waiting for me on the kitchen table at which time Connie would take a break from her

morning routine and sit and talk to me. I loved these moments because while it obviously gave me time to improve my Spanish, it gave me a greater view into Connie's life and a chance to see Nicaragua through Connie's eyes. From retelling stories of her work during the Sandinista literacy campaign at age 14 to her delight in buying and showing me unique fruits and treats that she knew I hadn't seen in the US, Connie's small act of kindness, her act of friendship, allowed me to feel as though Nicaragua was not just a place I was visiting, but a place where I was really living.

Like those special morning moments with Connie, I feel as though Covid is allowing us to finally slow down and find more appreciation for small acts of kindness, small acts of togetherness. Being a single person, and living alone during a global pandemic has proven to be challenging on multiple levels. In early March, just as school was shut down, and I suddenly became a zoom teacher, I also became sick with what was later determined to be Covid. It was early into the pandemic, so no one really knew what to do with me or even how to get me tested. After being redirected to my fourth medical facility and finally getting tested, I remember driving home and feeling like I was completely alone. It was a surreal feeling. I felt numb with fear, feeling contagious and contaminated and afraid to even look at a friend for fear of getting them sick. Thankfully, I never felt that my condition was bad enough that I needed to go to the hospital, but the combination of coughing till you can hardly breath, dealing with a fever for 14 days, and living in complete isolation left me crying myself to sleep many nights. For me to survive, I had to rely on small acts of kindness from friends and family to get me through it.

And get me through it they did. I was overcome by the outpouring of support and acts of kindness from my neighbors and family. My neighbors passed by often and would wave or leave cards or treats at my door. They checked in on me throughout the day to make sure that I had food or medication. And, because everything was shut down, their visits were not just "hi" and "bye" times. Covid gave us the benefit of time to spend time with one another.

The most treasured of these acts was when friends and neighbors would come by to visit me on what I liked to call my observation deck. The front of my house is made up almost entirely of widows, with a large deck and seating out front. Friends would come by and sit on one side of the window, while I sat on the other, with our phones on speaker so that we could talk. These moments were truly the highlight of those 18 days in isolation, when an hour felt like a day. Some, like Bethany, would even come by at meal time and bring their dinner so that we could eat together through the window. It seems like such a small thing, but sharing a meal together was so uplifting. Those small acts of kindness were what kept me going. They made me feel loved and gave me support.

As I slowly recovered and began to emerge back into the world, I have pushed myself to continue to embrace the gift of time and the small acts of kindness that can come from it. I found that I look for ways to fill my time with meaningful interactions, or as best as those interactions can be at this point. Taking long walks with a friend or

writing letters to my students and aunts and uncles have been life giving. Even doing the shopping for my mom and Lorna is a treasure because it feels like one way of giving back.

As I said before, this time is most definitely challenging for all of us, but I encourage you to take time to walk your neighborhood, talk to the people you pass and use this gift of time build deeper relationships. Perhaps we can learn from these moments and see the gift of time as a small act of kindness from Covid.

Pastoral Prayer, Scott Coulter

God of "the least of these",
we are reminded today that no-one of your creation is beneath your notice.
We pray that you would enlarge our small hearts,
that we might have room to see and embrace one another in our smallness.
For we hunger to embrace you, God.
And we know that it is by seeing and embracing those who seem "the least" in this
world that we see and embrace you.
And when we are tempted to despair
in the face of big, seemingly insurmountable problems in our world,
Give us courage and determination,
that we might persist in the small things we can do and that we know to do,
for the repairing of the world you have called us to love.

We pray God for the justice of your Reign to come on earth as in heaven.

We pray for the hungry, that they would have secure access to good food.
We pray for the imprisoned, that they would be released and restored to live as part
of a just and harmonious community.
We pray for those who have lost jobs, who have been denied economic security, that
they would be given what they need to flourish, together with their neighbors.

We pray for those whose bodies, whose rights,
have been trampled upon, have been suffocated.
May they be heard, may they be raised up,
may they receive justice so they can live in peace.

We pray for those who are sick, that they may receive comfort and healing.
We pray for those who are afraid, and we pray for all who mourn,
that you would be with them and that they would not be alone.

We pray for all those in positions of power and privilege, including ourselves,
that we would be held accountable and that we would be transformed -
that the systems we are part of would be transformed into more just systems.

We pray for the young black man who was assaulted in Syracuse last Friday; we pray
for his safety and the safety of his community, and we pray for a just response to this
and so many other acts of violence in our local communities and in our nation.
We pray for Anne's grandmother Mary as she approaches death, and we pray for all
who love her.
We pray for Nadia as she is faced with unwelcome news about her shoulder and with
difficult decisions on the road ahead.

May our prayers transform us as they bring our hearts closer to your heart, God of
Justice & Loving Care.
In the name of Jesus our Teacher and your Messiah we pray,
Amen.