



CORNELIA

Cornelia was 85 years old when Typhoon Haiyan destroyed most of her community in Barangay Calogcog in Tanauan, Philippines. Of the 20 family members who took shelter in her daughter's home, only she and two others survived when a tidal wave engulfed the land.

Cornelia is a survivor. She survived a major typhoon when she was a little girl in 1937. She survived the Japanese soldiers who burned down their homes and enslaved Filipinos in World War II. And she survived Typhoon Haiyan on Nov. 8, 2013.

Long after the news media left, UMCOR spent years in Barangay Calogcog, working with the local community to rebuild after the typhoon.

Cornelia said, “I can’t use my hands to crochet anymore, I can’t see well enough to thread a needle, and it is hard for me to hear, but I am still here, and I can still smile. Thank you, UMCOR.”

It's important not to romanticize or minimize pain and suffering. We try to avoid theology that claims that God tests us or subjects us to distress. At the same time, we can become aware of a depth and richness to life, even amid struggles, when we recognize God's loving presence on the journey with us. I believe that Cornelia has experienced that presence in part through The United Methodist Church.

“Do not keep worrying” — Luke 12:29b

Our lives are full of uncertainty that can lead to anxiety and fear. Fear keeps us separated from experiencing the certainty of God's loving presence in our lives.

In this era of 24-hour news cycles and social media, where everyone strives to share information and get answers immediately, perhaps we are trying to create an illusion of control. What happens if, instead, we set aside fear and anxiety when faced with situations of overwhelming magnitude and put our trust in God?

JESUS REASSURES US IN THIS MORNING'S GOSPEL READING THAT WORRY IS A WASTE OF ENERGY.

Worrying about things that may or may not happen is not productive.

Amid humanitarian and personal crises, God's hope replaces worry and, in part, shows up as the hands and feet of Christ lived out by United Methodists through UMCOR. God's hope shows up in the form of emergency food purchased from local merchants. It shows up in housing, schools, jobs, and the ministry of presence in the midst of disaster.





UMCOR SUNDAY

SERMON STARTER

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” — Luke 12:34

Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” When we invest in something, we begin to care about it. That sense of caring is reflected in how we spend our money and our time in all aspects of our lives.

In our United Methodist membership vows, we commit to supporting the ministries of this congregation and the denomination with five treasures: prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. What is on our heart to pray for and how do we speak about Jesus with others? How do we represent part of this body of Christ called (*name congregation*) when we move beyond these walls?

We are called as Christians, not just to sit here and enjoy a nice worship service, but also to be moved to recognize and respond to the extraordinary invitation to partner with God. We hear this invitation in the prayer that Jesus taught us, creating the kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven.”

When we keep Christ as the center of our ministry with others, we begin to understand that kingdom building isn’t about us. Contributing to the beloved community is not a “feel-good” move. Sharing our treasure is a means of responding to God’s invitation to bring healing and wholeness to God’s broken world through the power and love of Jesus Christ.

UMCOR SUNDAY

One way we make an impact as a congregation is through our special Sunday offerings. Today, that offering will benefit UMCOR. We are not called to respond to the needs of the world on our own. We do it in community, sharing our gifts for joint denominational ministry through UMCOR.

We have “purses . . . that do not wear out” (Luke 12:33) when we allow the Spirit to guide us through a holy treasure map that crosses boundaries into compassionate action. We connect with the giving of other United Methodists so that UMCOR can respond to disasters on our behalf as soon as the need is known.



Through this connection, in times of grief, sorrow, crisis and pain, we need not be afraid. We are connected as the body of Christ when we trust in God’s abundance.

I INVITE YOU TO BRING YOUR TREASURE AND YOUR HEART TOGETHER IN FAITH THIS MORNING. AMEN.



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®