



INSPIRE



MISSIONS NEWS COMMUNITY MINISTRY

The Methodist Church of Puerto Rico (MCPR) and Rehace, Inc., (the social holiness arm of the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico), has provided information regarding the success of the mission work performed by United Methodist churches, including Community UMC. Your hard work and willingness to be the "hands and feet" of Christ helped surpass 2019 goals:

2019—1,312 volunteers served (up 8% over 2018)

2019—118 teams served (up 9.26% over 2018)

2019—763 completed houses (up 77% over the 2018 goal of 432 houses)

Due to a 6.4-magnitude earthquake striking the southwest part of Puerto Rico on Jan. 7, all team service was halted for a period. Teams have resumed serving, and the program continues to repair and rebuild homes affected by Hurricane Maria.

In Nicaragua, students recently received new school supplies as they started a new school year. Unlike in the U.S., the Nicaraguan school year begins in the winter. These supplies were sent from Columbia through The Container Project. Thanks to all who made this possible!





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Devotion: *Surviving the Wilderness*

The Gospels, three of them anyway, tell us that Jesus was baptized and was led by the Spirit into the Judean Desert to be tempted or tested. He fasted for 40 days and nights. Satan tempted him with food, death and power.

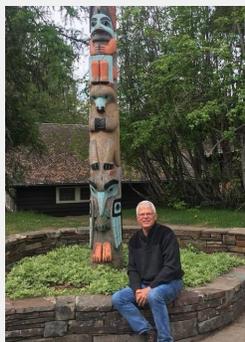
“Turn the stone into bread,” Satan taunted. “Throw yourself off a cliff. Your God will save you,” Satan offered, presumably as a way out of Jesus’ starvation. “Bow to me, and you can have everything you can see,” the final and perhaps most powerful temptation. Jesus, of course, declined them all. In his faith and wisdom he knew that nothing could be worse than the true wilderness — separation from God.

We’re encouraged to do something or to give up something for Lent to commemorate Jesus’ experience of temptation and fasting. We are to repent sincerely and move forward. I’m not sure it matters what we do or give up to commemorate Lent as long as we’re mindful as we do it. It’s a time for communing with God — a time for opening our minds to learn His plans for each of us and a time for opening our hearts to the healing power of His love through the Holy Spirit.

We all have a wilderness. It’s the place deep inside us where we bury the pain of our sins and darkest fears and weaknesses. Lent is a time to seek and accept forgiveness (hard to do) from God and others, and we need that desperately, but it’s also a time when we can learn to forgive ourselves (even harder to do). The most important thing we can do is take 40 days and make a habit of being with God. Call it prayer. Call it meditation. Call it what you want. God can transform our sin, pain and our weaknesses into purity, joy and strength. Just sit and be quiet. He is there.

—Laura Porter

Meet Director of Facilities Eric Peterson



Eric joined the church staff in the fall, bringing years of experience in construction management and energy conservation. A spiritual person with questions about organized religion, he was drawn to Community UMC by the faith-based teachings of Methodism. He has two grown daughters, one in Peru and one in South Korea. In his spare time, Eric loves to hike, hunt and fish. He also helps to maintain a marsh north of Keytesville, providing a habitat for more than 130 different bird species and other wildlife. We think Eric makes a great addition to our staff!