

# Turning a New Leaf



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- Promoting healthy relationships and personal growth from a Christian perspective -

Winter 2022

## Staying Connected to your Faith in a Season of Crisis

By Denise Jones-Williams, MA, LPC

**“It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: Great is thy faithfulness.”**

Lamentations 3:22-23

“WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?”

I've asked myself this question many times at particularly low points in my life, and depending on the nature of the circumstance, the answer doesn't always easily arise. One might think that a person of spiritual convictions should automatically abound with strength during bad times, but we know that's not how it goes.

Seasons of loss such as death, disappointment, illness, separation or even just change have the potential to hurl us into what can feel like a whirlwind of despair. Living amidst a pandemic has dealt us losses we never, ever could have prepared for, and has shaken our faith to the core.

As we enter year three of dealing with Covid-19, we are only beginning to understand how severely our society has been mentally impacted, with nearly half of U.S. adults reporting mental health issues, according to the CDC. Nearly one third of Americans polled reported symptoms of anxiety and depression, and health professionals have seen a sharp increase in the number of those seeking therapy. The pandemic has shifted the very foundations many of us have come to rely upon. Even the various ways we “do church” have changed drastically. Trying to maintain a sense of normalcy in abnormal times has tested many of our spiritual beliefs, prompting us to wonder how God can even allow this to happen.

What does “Faith” mean for you?

For most, the word faith has a strong spiritual connotation. Our spirituality gives unique meaning and purpose to the lives we lead. It is the way we commune with God, our higher power, or connect with the universe. Even those who consider themselves agnostics or atheists have a belief system that helps them make sense of their existence. Having faith represents our confidence, trust and assurance in the values that define us. During times of crisis and uncertainty, our faith should be a source from which we draw strength and hope. But the hurt we suffer in the tough times can muddy our vision, making it difficult to see the way out. Before we know it, we can find ourselves walled in by fear, and even angry at God. The challenge then becomes to avoid falling too deep into the mire of life's trials to grab onto our God's unchanging hand.



### Ways to stay Connected

- Meet Someone Else's Need

God uses our hands and feet, if we'll only make them available. If you know of someone who is in need or hurting, consider how you can help. Something as simple as a smile or a simple compliment can turn someone's day around and get them going in the right direction. The great thing about helping others is that it gets our minds off of our situation and onto caring for our fellow man.

- Be Inspired, Enjoy God's Wonders

Be intentional about finding inspiration. God is constantly speaking to us in all kinds of different ways, and his messages are all around. What moves your soul? The beauty of an art piece? The sun on your face? Driving down the highway to your favorite song? Whatever it is, seek it out and let that wonderful feeling wash over you. It's God's small way of showing you that He's there and how important you are to Him.

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## Creating Space for God

**"The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone."  
Exodus 18:18**

A year ago, I focused on these words from Moses' father-in-law Jethro and noted:

"Coming to terms with our limitations can be difficult. This past year, in one way or another, each of us experienced times when our limitations were undeniable. The need for a listening ear, support, and guidance has been greater than ever during this pandemic." These words still ring true a year later!

Many did not imagine that the roller-coaster ride through this pandemic would linger through the summer, fall, winter holidays, and into 2022. One thing has become evident: people are more aware of, unashamed of, and are seeking ways to address their well-being, not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually as well.

I'm grateful that New Leaf continues to provide not only excellent counseling services, but also valuable resources to help guide and support those who may never have an opportunity to walk through our doors for a counseling session. In 2021 we enhanced our website with additional resources, and offered a Mental Health First Aid workshop, which we plan to offer again in 2022.

Today, I highlight another resource that may assist you and those you love with deepening your emotional/spiritual well-being: [Space for God: Study and Practice of Spirituality and Prayer](#) by Don Postema. You may resonate with these words found on the back of the 1997 edition:

"In these hectic times, we long to create space for God in our lives. Space for God offers us a way to live gratefully in the presence of God."

We continue to lean on God and are grateful for your faithful support, as we acknowledge that "The work is too heavy for us; we cannot handle it alone."

Whether you have been a long-time supporter of New Leaf, or just learning about our ministry, your prayer support and financial gifts are vital to sustaining our mission: "to promote healthy relationships, personal growth and healing through professional counseling, education and consultation from a Christian perspective".

Together we continue to bring help, hope and healing!

In God's strength,

*Corky DeBoer*



**Our Mission:**  
To promote healthy relationships, personal growth and healing through professional counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.



## Welcoming Therapist Intern Tsuki Liang to Lansing & Crown Point



Therapy program at Purdue University Northwest. While there, she worked at their Couple and Family Therapy Center with individuals and couples presenting problems of identity issues, transitions of life, communication issues, sexual dysfunction, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and ambiguous loss.

Tsuki works with her clients from systemic and strength-based perspectives, and aims for helping them thrive as their authentic selves throughout every stage of life. She uses experiential, emotionally-focused, narrative, and feminist approaches.

Her work with couples and families aids them with communication issues, intimacy and sexual concerns, and parenting struggles.

**If you'd like to make an appointment with Tsuki, contact New Leaf today at (708) 895-7310.**



We at New Leaf are pleased to welcome Tsuki Liang! She comes to us from Purdue Northwest. As a Couple & Family Therapist Intern, she'll be working out of our Lansing and Crown Point locations.

Tsuki received her Bachelor of Social Work from Tunghai University in Taiwan, where she interned at the Child Protection Division of the Taichung City Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Center.

She moved to the US in 2020 and started grad school in the Couple and Family

## Welcome to our New Board Members:

Rev. Cal Aardsma

Kari Coffey

Tim Groenewold

Stephanie Rodriguez

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- Find the Good

Count your Blessings. It's that simple. No moment of loss, sickness or pain is ever easy. Making a decision to practice having a heart of gratitude is like coaching your spirit to "Look up!" and "Keep going!" It's that glass half full that you still get to drink, and it is so good when you need it! When you start counting blessings one by one, you'll end up with pages of things to be thankful for and smile about.

- Encourage Someone with Your Testimony

What victories have you already won? You are here today because you overcame some great challenges in the past. Hearing our personal stories of survival can be a life changing moment for someone who is going through tough times. Remembering and sharing the details of past overcoming reminds us of our own strength, God's faithfulness and encourages hope for tomorrow.

- Take a Step of Faith, Do What You've Been Putting Off

What's that thing that's been turning over in your heart, but hasn't yet made it to your brain? You have dreams of what it could be, but haven't started thinking the steps through to making it real? Could it be that your faith has gotten stagnant because it has lain dormant without anything to do? Faith has legs, it wants to move! It could be as big as starting a podcast, or as small as asking forgiveness from a friend. A season of dryness or disappointment could be the perfect time to launch out in an unconventional direction. It may be just the thing that will re-energize your relationship with God. Go back and do the last thing He told you to do!

- Write a Letter to God

What do you do when you can't seem to hear God's voice or even find strength to pray? You may be grappling with faith that is weakening or growing resentment against God. Write everything that you are feeling down so that you can get it out and see it on paper. In the bible, David wrote psalms in praise to God at times, but many psalms he wrote during moments of deep sorrow, distress and suffering. Psalm 13 is all about David's depression, feeling abandoned, and questioning if God has forgotten him. By the end of the chapter, however, it appears David has gotten relief. His act of crying out was actually an exercise of expressing his trust in His God to hear and answer.

- Lean On Your Supports

If you are experiencing spiritual challenges, feeling angry with God or confused about where your faith stands currently, I encourage you to reach out to your local Pastor or Spiritual leader. New Leaf's therapists are also available to help you and your family work through any spiritual or otherwise concerns. The walk of faith is a great and winding road with hills and plains, valleys and peaks. As we grow and evolve as humans our faith changes with us, but God and His love remain the same.





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## Help the New Leaf Community Grow!

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It's more important than ever to spread the word that *there is help for those who seek it*. **So we're building a volunteer list.**

**Email [marc@newleafresources.org](mailto:marc@newleafresources.org) if you could:**

- Give a hand at upcoming fundraisers
- Share your testimony about New Leaf/mental healthcare
  - Refer professionals interested in joining our ministry
  - Contribute in ways we haven't even thought of yet!

As always, many of our clients require financial assistance. To contribute to our Marty Doot Client Assistance Fund, simply return your gift in the enclosed envelope or visit [www.NewLeafResources.org](http://www.NewLeafResources.org) to impact a life today!



## Estate Planning with our Ministry Partner

As Christians, each of us is a steward of whatever God has entrusted to us. Barnabas Foundation encourages people to develop an estate plan which meets their individual and family needs and reflects their values, including the support of Christian ministries that are important to them.

