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*"I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep."*

*--Psalm 121: 1, 2, &4*

Being a pastor in this time is different than it was when my father was first ordained (in 1978!!). When people wanted to get in touch with my father, they could call the church or our home. When he wasn't in one of those places, they might be able to get information from my mother or the church secretary as to where he was having a meeting and call him there. If all else failed, someone would have to leave a message for my dad to get back to them. When we went on family vacations, my dad was totally unplugged – no email, no texts, no calls.

Early on in my call, my dad was shocked to find out that hospitals don't automatically get in touch with pastors to let them know when a parishioner is being treated and what they are being treated for. Privacy laws mean that people will have to get in touch with me, if they want me to know they are unwell. And communication technology has made it much easier to do so at any time of day or night and wherever I am in this world (literally).

Over the course of this, my first call, I have struggled to know how to best be available to the congregation, while also making sure to care for my children and my own needs. Because, unlike God as described in the Psalm above, I do slumber and sleep. That can be challenging with a phone that provides people 24/7 access. On the other hand, I have found out about serious hospitalizations and family emergencies much later than I or the people involved would have liked. So, in an effort to ensure that I am informed, but also not overwhelmed, I am requesting that you all try to honor the following guidelines:

- When you or a family member are experiencing an emergency, please contact me on my cell phone at your earliest convenience day or night. The best way to do that is to call me. If I don't answer right away, call back immediately until I answer. You are not a burden. It is an honor to provide you pastoral care.
- For all non-emergency communication, please feel free to call/text/email me between the hours of 9am and 9pm Saturday – Thursday. I will get back to you as quickly as possible.
- Please do not call or text me on Friday (my day off) or after 9pm on any days for non-emergencies. I love hearing from you, so if you think of something you want to say during those times, please call and leave a message on my office phone or email me and I will get back to you asap.
- When I am out of town, I always have local clergy willing to provide care for emergencies as well. Deb, in the office, will have that information. For those times that the church office is closed, please reach out to the Executive Committee of church council.

There are times in life that I am frustrated by own limitations. I wish I could be more of a parent and more of a pastor, but this is simply a sign that I am a mere servant of the Lord and not a replacement for the Lord. The Lord never sleeps and has no limitations. You are never alone.