



25 Main Street, P.O. Box 61, Grand Bend, Ontario N0M 1T0 * (519) 238-2402
huronshoresunitedchurch@gmail.com * www.huronshoresunitedchurch.com

April 30, 2020

"Dreamscapes" (from your Community Wellness Co-Ordinator)

"For God does speak—now one way, now another - though no one perceives it.

In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people, as they slumber in their beds..."

Job 33:14-15 New International Version

How have you been sleeping lately?

While many people are having trouble falling asleep at night, others are having trouble getting out of bed in the morning! And still others are enjoying the luxury of daily afternoon naps. But whether suffering from insomnia or an overabundance of sleep, one interesting thing many people are sharing in common during this period of isolation, is the experience of a strange and vivid dreamscape.

Psychologists who consistently study dream patterns, say that universally, people are currently reporting having bizarre, lucid and angst-ridden dreams. Anecdotally, I can relate to this! My dreams have been filled with mask-wearing characters, situations involving shaming where I've accidentally touched someone or been carrying on like normal because I've forgotten we're in the midst of a pandemic. Other people have described dreams of driving blind-folded, being swarmed by insects or watching from a window as a tsunami approaches. All of these dreams reveal a deep subconscious anxiety which is affecting people around the globe.

Researchers don't often have the opportunity to study the dreams of an entire population going through a similar crisis, so they are hastily collecting and analyzing dreams to see what they can discover about the world's collective emotional response. Websites and facebook groups are popping up everywhere – just google 'covid dreams'.

Why this sudden surge in quantity and ability to recall our dreams? Much has to do with the amount of REM (rapid eye movement) sleep that we are attaining – that deepest level of rest where most dreams occur. Simply put, more sleep equates to more dreams. Increased stress also leads to increased dream activity, as do significant life changes – both highly present these days. Our dreams occur as a method of coping with and processing events and emotions that are often suppressed during our waking hours. Nighttime dreams are filled with 'undigested material' from our busy days, that the unconscious mind has an opportunity to re-visit and explore.

Many online resources are offering advice on how to overcome having strange dreams during these strange times, but I would suggest a different approach; to delve into and try to understand them! Dreams offer an opportunity to recognize and address our fears, to find meaning in our experiences and to learn more about ourselves and our relationships. Working with dreams can lead to emotional health and spiritual wholeness. A great place to start, is with a dream journal left beside your bed where you can immediately record your dreams upon waking. From there, working on your own or with a group, dreams can be analyzed to seek their metaphorical and deeply personal messages¹.

Our scriptures are filled with stories about dreams – from Joseph and Daniel, to Mary and the Magi – we hear of nighttime visions that inspire people to change their course of action and alter the course of history. Maybe by paying attention to our dreams we too might be transformed!

Peace to you, and sweet dreams!

Elise

huronshoreswellness@gmail.com

*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*

¹ Anyone interested in forming a small online group in which to confidentially share and analyze dreams is invited to email me!