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Greetings!

Please read [Psalm 13](#)

You cannot delete a memory.

My birth family were members of the Sharonville UMC congregation in 1973-1974 until we relocated to West Chester. While we lived in Sharonville, the community was devastated by a terrible tornado. It was a scary time for a 2nd grader. The sounds of sirens still trigger a memory for me. Years later, it still happens, but now sirens for me are a call to prayer, thanks to a pastor friend who taught me this spiritual discipline. I learned you can't delete a memory.

A few weeks ago I talked about my experience with the movie *The Last Day*, concerning the nuclear destruction of the United States through the eyes of fictional characters living in Lawrence, Kansas. In that devotional I disclosed my adolescent concern for MAD – *Mutual Assured Destruction* - a deterrence policy of both the United States and the Soviet Union. It came up again for me this week when a bellicose Vladimir Putin put his nuclear forces on high alert. You cannot delete a memory.

On Ash Wednesday we attended service at one of our ORV churches. The preacher of the evening went through a list of items that people give up for the season of Lent. Haven't we all have given up some silly things? The pastor then continued by telling a story of a Ukrainian family he knows personally. The line that moved me to tears in the sermon – "This year while you and I give up \_\_\_\_\_, they are giving up everything they have ever known." This family and many like them are living in the real time notion. You cannot delete a memory.

Memories of life as addressed in the Psalms offer a window on our inability to delete our life's experience. In the Psalms every human emotion is employed to question

God. Psalm 13 asks, How long? Good question, isn't it? We cannot delete our memories but we can learn to live with them. We may even become skilled at using them to minister to others and strengthen ourselves and our relationships with others, and ultimately God.

In recent months, the Ohio River Valley District has invested some teaching time to trauma and the notion that you cannot delete a memory. The Covid-19 pandemic has been an unimaginable trauma on the whole of human community. Many have employed the Psalms to pray through this experience. In response, leaders in the ORV have created some resources and connected with others who are helping us with strategies for dealing with our common suffering.

Chris Cox and his team at the Mason, Ohio based [Back2Back Ministries](#), are working towards creating trauma free zones in the Cincinnati public schools. It is a bold vision, and one that is very timely and necessary in today's world. Chris led a workshop at our MIV/ORV Leadership Training Day about a month ago. You can access his teaching and others by clicking [HERE](#).

Another training opportunity is coming up on March 19 called *You Can't Delete a Memory: Strategies for Overcoming Life's Hurts*. This virtual training will feature as keynote speaker the Rev. Dr. Peter Matthews, Sr. Pastor at McKinley UMC in Dayton and Executive Director of the Global Village. In this experience you will learn about trauma and its long term affects on our lives and relationships. Sign up by clicking [HERE](#). I hope you will be able to join us.

Peace,



Rev. Dr. Todd D. Anderson, West Ohio Superintendent  
Ohio River Valley District, United Methodist Church

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