

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are suspended due to the Corona virus until further notice.

JUNE 2020

The Way Forward

Friends, in this newsletter you will find information about the guidelines and restrictions for returning to in person. These have been approved by the ad council members and a subcommittee will be making sure the proper precautions are taken and we have what we need to keep all safe. As of now we are not singing congregational hymns, though we will enjoy the music in other ways, and we have volunteers to provide vocal music. We will not be having coffee fellowship until further notice. We will be able to take communion together starting in July.

I know this has been a strenuous and trying time for some, and we're not over the hill yet. With the warmer weather and larger gatherings, we could see another spike this summer or in the fall. For now, we will proceed the best way we can. I have heard from many folks how much they appreciate the online worship, though I know for some of you it is not possible for you to access. This upsets me, as I imagine it does you. I hope you have found ways to worship whether through television or radio broadcasts. I will be looking into ways to have the service accessible by phone if not through electronic devices.

It is my strong belief that because of this shift in taking the church outside the church building via a worship broadcast or a recorded video, we have no reason not to continue with that form of worship when we are back together again. Not only will it continue, but with time we will learn to do it much better, and we will be able to incorporate other forms of media within the worship itself, as we have sought to do for some time now.

One thing the church at large cannot do and that is to go back to normal. Life won't look normal anymore, but it will be filled with interesting challenges and opportunities. This includes the ways in which we can reach new people, explore new subjects, form greater bonds, grow as disciples, and do the work Christ instructs us to do. I would like each of you to pray for the way forward for First UMC. As you may know, our annual conference has been postponed until the fall, and so our Bishop Ough has offered to remain our bishop through the end of the year, though he will be in retirement. The jurisdictional council which meets in the fall will elect or appoint a new bishop, who will begin in 2021.

Our usual four-year schedule of bishop assignments and the jurisdictional council, and the general conference have been bumped just a bit. Just another reason why we need to be able to adapt. Our conference office has done a wonderful job of rethinking and retooling what they need to keep communications current and to help churches with financial assistance, worship resources for vacation times and moving pastors. I'm quite pleased not to have two trips to South Dakota within a month of each other, but of course I missed that opportunity to say goodbye to retirees and to fellowship with other clergy, to see the laity who return each year.

I'm sure you've all had similar disappointments and regrets this year, but I believe that God has something so wonderful that He will accomplish through the distress and sorrow of this pandemic. I have learned a great deal in my nonprofit leadership course that can assist the church in moving forward, but I will not be leading that progress alone. It will take each of us to do what we are able, even if it is to pray for the others, if we should remain vital and faithful and grace-filled people of God whose goal is to share the love and mercy of God with those who have never known it for themselves. God bless you!

Pastor Lori

JUNE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

June 5	Tana Triepke
June 8	Wayne Halle Sandi Ginther
June 9	Kristi Berg Steve Heilman
June 11	Joyce Carter
June 12	Karlene McLaurin
June 16	Sylvia Loehr
June 17	Heather Erickson Barry and Carrie Atherton
June 20	Sandy Reeves Jay Janssen
June 21	Ashley Minnerup
June 22	Tony Prozinski
June 25	K Roemmich
June 27	Charlotte Gonser Chad and Megan Estenson
June 28	Laurel Gouilding



Dear Members and Friends,

As we return to regular worship, remember you can watch online if you prefer to remain at home. Thank you for supporting the church during these difficult times.

As you know, the bills must be paid even though we cannot get together to worship at the church. We are grateful that some people have continued to mail in their offering. And, it is a blessing that some people are enrolled to have an automatic transfer from their bank account to the church on a regular basis. But, recent church deposits have been well below the normal offering and far below what is needed.

Please consider mailing your offerings, and give what you can to keep our church bills paid. You may mail your offering to the church at 601 5th Street NE, Devils Lake, ND 58301. **The outside mailbox is locked and mail is picked up regularly.**

We are blessed and protected by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Stay safe while sharing your faith and resources with your church and neighbors. Finance Committee

CONGREGATIONAL CARE GROUPS

As good stewards of each other as Christians, we need to be mindful of how this pandemic affects us all differently. Care calling groups have been created to assure we can check in on each other and see what needs we might be able to fulfill. The individuals on these groups include our elderly members, those who live alone, or couples without young children in the home. We are using both phone calls and emails to connect with these folks. Any concerns or prayer requests obtained will be promptly shared with Pastor Lori. If you lack email or internet access and would like to receive a copy of the weekly sermon, please let Marcia know (662-2034).

Remember our residents in our local care centers: Marge Bye, Ervin Harlow, and Harold Jorgenson (Bev Oehlke's father) in the Good Samaritan; Delcie Light, Lois Weed and Mary MacArthur at Eventide.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Please be in prayer for: Sylvia Loehr, Mark Restemayer, Naomi Modrow, Delcie Light, Jolene Wee, those battling cancer (Denice, Dennis, Keith, Doug), Rev. Howard Baird who is receiving a bone marrow transplant. Pray for all those affected by the coronavirus. Please pray for the finances of our church and for those who are unemployed or underemployed. Pray for the members of the military as well as fire, police, and emergency medical services. Pray for our children, our schools and all who work with them. Pray for our country. Pray for our denomination to stay united amid discord and disagreement. Pray for those who no longer feel welcome in the UMC.

If you have prayer concerns please contact Pastor Lori at 381-0755.

Breakthrough Prayer

Stop and pray this prayer daily at a time convenient for you. Be open to the changes God can bring to your life and to the life of our Church.

Lord, I pray for breakthroughs in my life, my church, and the world. Give me faith to see your Spirit at work. Reveal what you want to do through me. I trust in your grace in Jesus' name. Amen.

FUMC Administrative Council Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2020

Members Participating via Zoom: Pastor Lori Broschat, Ray Russell, Perry and Nancy Lundon, Gwen Hodgins, Leo Sayler, Chuck & Jonielle Soderstrom, Tana Triepke, Joyce Carter and Marcia Ulrich.

Call to Order: Perry Lundon called the meeting to order. Pastor Lori offered a prayer and thanked everyone for participating in this online meeting.

Approval of Minutes: February 2020 meeting minutes were included in the March newsletter. No action was taken for their approval.

Treasurer's Report: Perry reported a deficit of just over \$7,125 in the General Fund. He made payments to the Hope Center from the Endowment Fund. Offerings for April were \$200 less than those in March. No other items of concern at this time. Perry moved that the Treasurer's report be approved, seconded by Nancy, motion carried.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the Strategic Reopening Outline as prepared by a pastor colleague of Pastor Lori. The following is a list of comments made by Ad Council participants:

1. Some UM churches are reportedly not reopening until July. The conference has not established specific guidelines as to how to proceed, and every day seems different. The conference is deferring the decisions on reopening to individual churches. There will be a short 24-hour video UMC general session in October.
2. The main issue is precautions before and after worship that will take the most time and human resources. We may need to have church members sign up for cleaning tasks. We may need to remove items from the sanctuary that are normally touched. There will be no fellowship time allowed after worship services.
3. We may need to acknowledge a person's right to not wear a mask, and if so, should there be a section for unmasked people? Should we have extra masks available and require people to wear them? There should be one door (preferably south) for entrance and one door for exits (preferably north). There needs to still be elevator access.
4. Social distancing should not be a problem with access to the balcony and choir loft in addition to pew sections. Pews can be marked with distancing stickers, with families and couples allowed to sit together. There should be no singing other than perhaps a soloist in the choir loft. Communion would be not be observed.
5. Having attentive ushers at the doors and in the sanctuary to remind people of restrictions in place. Maybe have a greeter outside the door to ensure people are aware of the process.
6. We could use a single half sheet bulletin that can be tossed away right after the service. No hymnals would be used, can use the overhead screen for all media.
7. There is concern with excluding some members due to their lack of Internet access. Pastor Lori can continue to life stream Sunday service on Facebook, which gives people an option of watching that morning or later. It would be helpful to know which members have no email access and have sermons mailed and/or delivered to them. The group contact people should be able to identify them.
8. We know that our members will have differing views about returning to regular worship. And we have many elderly members who would be at risk. It is uncertain how eager our younger families with children are to return. Logic says that our geographical area has not been badly affected, no one in our congregation is affected, so can we afford to be less cautious than larger communities with more active CO-VID cases? The CDC has issued comments about church gatherings after learning of churches where the virus has spread quickly. There is no idea how long the virus lingers in the air and there is more concern with airborne particles than touching surfaces. Most of us believe it pays to be cautious and continue to enjoy online services for the time being.
9. Is there an option to worship outdoors at Roosevelt Park? This would require park board approval. Some places are worshipping in cars with loudspeaker coverage so people can remain their cars.
10. Considering the extent of preparing the church building and maintaining its sanitization, we may need to hire a service to do so. Even if members sign up to clean, they wouldn't all clean in the same manner.
11. It would be warranted to have a few people to sit down and review the outline and necessary precautions before setting a date for returning to worship. Nancy, Marcia, and Jonielle will meet at the church on May 26 at 2:00 pm to do this. We recommend using the month of June to prepare and possibly resume in early July.

The next meeting will be via Zoom on June 3, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectively submitted by Marcia Ulrich, Ad Council Secretary

FUMC Finance Report Operating Fund through May 27, 2020:

Income \$ 4,225.00 including automatic giving

*Amount needed per month to meet our 2020 budget is \$11,403.00

Remember to send in your offering when you're not in church. Consider the option of automatic withdrawals from your bank. Thank you for your giving!

Members Participating via Zoom: Pastor Lori Broschat, Ray Russell, Perry Landon, Gwen Hodgins, Leo Saylor, Chuck & Jonielle Soderstrom, Tana Triepke, Joyce Carter, David Reeves, Mary Oehlke and Marcia Ulrich.

Call to Order: Pastor Lori said an opening prayer. Perry commenced the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the May meeting are in the June newsletter.

Marcia summarized a meeting held on May 26th with Nancy, Jonielle and Marcia about conditions required for a return to regular worship. Topics include:

1. Have north and south doors propped open to reduce amount of hand contact. The west door will be open but shut.
2. Ushers will serve as assertive greeters to welcome people coming in and directing them to pews with information about distancing and sanitizing.
3. Bulletins will not be used; all information will be on video screen.
4. There will no congregational singing. Special music offered by Joyce and Jocelyn as possible. May consider soloists performing in choir loft.
5. Hand sanitizers and face masks will be available. Attendees will be encouraged to wear a mask; if not will be asked to sit in section away from others.
6. There will be coffee fellowship; keep basement area darkened. People would be welcome to bring in their own coffee cup.
7. As there has been no church activity since services were suspended, there is no need to sanitize the sanctuary. Our custodian should be asked to clean bathrooms prior to a return to regular worship.
8. There is a proposed date of Sunday, June 14th for a return to regular worship.

Pastor Lori will continue to life stream services each Sunday.

This is a list of comments by Ad Council members in response to that meeting:

1. Stay with a 9:30 a.m. service time for regular worship. People who choose to listen at home can view the service at any time.
2. Disposable communion cups are available to use; however, there is no rush to do so until we see how regular worship goes.
3. People will be asked to respect a distance between themselves and Pastor Lori, who prefers to remain in the pulpit area during the service while life streaming.
4. Tana expressed concern with our congregation's elderly population, considered a more at-risk group. Perhaps recorded solos would be wiser than actual singing. Taking the utmost precautions should be stressed. Even though other local churches have resumed regular worship doesn't mean it is the right thing to do.
5. Ushers should be located at the doors and inside the sanctuary to guide people and caution them about restrictions, etc. Nancy Landon can ask those on the current usher lists if they are comfortable with the added responsibilities. Every other pew can be roped off and signs placed 6 feet apart in the designated pews.
6. Pastor Lori will prepare signs for each door with instructions as people enter.

The basement area will be darkened with signs indicating no coffee fellowship. People can bring in their individual coffee mugs.

Chuck moved we resume regular services on June 14th at 9:30 a.m., motion seconded by Gwen, motion carried.

Financial Committee: Leo presented a summary of a *Paycheck Protection Program*, a description of which was emailed to Ad Council members prior to this meeting. The program extends forgivable loans to small businesses and non-profit entities (churches) during the COVID-19 crisis. Local churches have applied for such funding through Western Bank. Considering the 2020 budget, focusing on salaries, health insurance, pension costs, payroll taxes and utility costs, Leo estimates we may qualify for just over \$19,000, per program guidelines. This "loan" would be forgiven in full if the funds are used to pay the noted expenses during an 8-week period after receipt of the loan funds. Perry and Leo would need to meet with the loan officer at Western Bank to determine how much we can apply for. Considering a loss of funds from Devils Run, shortage of offerings during our church suspension, and a means of keeping our budget solvent, Leo proposed asking for the estimated amount of \$19,000+, seconded by Perry, motion carried. Perry noted that two articles of corporation need to be located and filed with the application with original signatures. Leo, Perry, Chuck and Gwen will meet at Traynor's law office for this purpose. Church files need to be checked to determine any contract status of our current custodian. Those fees may be included in the loan application amount.

The next meeting will be on June 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectively submitted by Marcia Ulrich, Ad Council Secretary

