



First News First

August 2020

Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors

"How Should We Pray?"

When we closed our church building in mid-March, and began having our worship services and other activities online, none of us expected this. It's August. A new school year is approaching. We're still trying to figure out life, and church life, as COVID-19 continues to spread. In the midst of it all, the most important thing we can do is pray. How should we pray?

Many Christians are returning to a verse in the Old Testament. When King Solomon completed the building of the temple, the Lord appeared to him and said,

*...if my people, who are called by my name, will **humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.** (2 Chronicles 7:14)*

This verse points to four keys to prayer:

Perspective "*...if my people, who are called by my name, will **humble themselves and pray...***"

There is something humbling about this virus. Over these months we realize we are not in control. There are things we can do to care for the well-being of ourselves and others, but the spread of COVID-19 is a daily reminder of our human frailty. God calls us to humble ourselves. To let go of our need to figure it all out and work it all out. To get down on our knees before our Creator and put everything in God's hands. Humility is not thinking less of ourselves. It's thinking of ourselves less, and trusting our present and our future to God, who loves us.

Presence "*... and seek my face...*"

God's face is always turned in our direction, much like the face of a parent or grandparent lovingly watching over a child. There are so many ways we can turn to see God's face. So many ways to become aware of God's loving presence. Reading the Bible and devotional writings. Worshiping alone or, as we've been doing, online. Enjoying fellowship with others. Keeping a journal helps some to seek the face of God. Walking outdoors, enjoying the beauty of God's creation, is another way to pray. Prayer is a love relationship with God. Seeking God's face feeds us. It comforts us. It's an amazing blessing.

Peace "*...and turn from their wicked ways, ...*"

We all experience the consequences of our sins and the sins of others, but this pandemic is not God's punishment for our wicked ways. God's heart aches for those who suffer and grieve. God is forever at work to heal and to restore. Jesus died on the cross for imperfect people like you and me. Our need is to turn from anything in our lives that interferes with our relationship with God. In prayer we lay down our sins, our fears, our anxieties and we receive God's forgiveness and God's peace.

Power "*... then I will hear from heaven, and I will **forgive their sin and will heal their land.***"

Prayer not only changes us. It also changes situations. God hears our prayers and acts in response to them. Just as God's people were called to pray when Solomon's great temple building project was completed, so we are called to pray in this time of crisis.

Prayer is the most important thing we can do right now!

God invites us to humble ourselves and pray, to seek God's face, and to turn from things that interfere with our relationship with God. As we do, the eyes of our hearts are open to see that God hears our prayers, forgives our sins, and heals our land. Things are not yet as they shall be, but a new world is emerging. A quiet revolution of grace and peace is underway. God's people, you and I are called to be part of it!

Joining you in response to God's call to prayer...
Pastor Denny

In This Issue...



Lifelong Learner 2



Praying Follower 3



Passionate Worshipper 3



Dedicated Missionary 4



Relationship Builder 4



Generous Giver 5



Bible Reading Plan 8



Bible Reading Plan

Use our Bible reading plan to remain in God's word daily. This reading plan is available on our church website at www.fumchurch.com, and on page 8 of this newsletter.

Connect Using The Bible App

Check out the YouVersion Bible app, available for both android and iOS smartphones/tablets, or on your laptop at bible.com. There are many wonderful devotional studies, plus you can create groups to study, chat with friends and share prayer requests!

Small Groups

Over these past few months, several small groups have been meeting on Zoom for the purposes of spiritual growth, and these groups have engaged many people on a weekly basis. How wonderful! While some of these groups will continue to meet over the summer, others will take a break and resume in the fall.

We would like to start some new summertime small groups, either on Zoom or in backyards now that it is considered safe to do so while maintaining physical distancing. Do you feel called to offer something for a few weeks this summer? Ideas for groups include:

- A book study/book club
- A fellowship group that shares brief devotions together
- A group study on the YouVersion Bible app or another app
- An activity-based group (such as our knitters group)
- A study group that uses our Bible reading plan/sermon series outlines (available on our website, fumchurch.com) or other study materials
- A worship group

The options are endless! Please pray for God's guidance in how you can offer a way to help people grow spiritually, stay connected to one another and stay connected to Christ. If you feel led to start a new group, please contact Tina Eaton at adultministry@fumchurch.com. If you would prefer to use Zoom, the church account information and training will be provided.

For a listing of both ongoing and new groups meeting, please see the weekly bulletin announcements (available on our church website, www.fumchurch.com).

The Upper Room Devotional

August is here, but you can still receive a copy of the July/August 2020 issue of The Upper Room! To download the free digital version, use this [link](#)! Or, if you would like to receive a paper copy, please contact Janice Bowen at wecare@fumchurch.com or 717-766-4611 x112.

From the Library

I am writing this on a very hot summer night in July and wishing I was out on the deck reading a book or watering my flowers while listening to a book. But I am going to power through this newsletter, wishing I could show each and every one of you all the wonderful books I have bought with you in mind during this time alone. Keep praying that happens soon. I have to stop and laugh. My computer just told me to be more concise—it doesn't know me like you do! But enough chatter—on to the books.

Becky Wade has been one of my favorite authors for a long time because she writes comedic romances. Nothing serious for her, but this time she is tackling a serious subject. In her latest book, **Stay with Me**, Genevieve Woodward has finally faced the fact that she is an opioid addict. It started after an ankle injury, and now it has escalated to a full-blown addiction. As a Christian Bible study author, she has taken great pains to hide it from her readers. When she wakes up in a stranger's house, with the homeowner staring down at her and wondering if she is dead, Gen knows she has to get clean. Sam Turner is a loner who has closed himself off after the overdose death of his girlfriend. He is understandably not sure he can be around another addict. But Gen begs for him to let her stay, and they come to an agreement with several checks

and balances. As Gen endures withdrawal, Sam tries to help her with healthy meals and some emotional support. With several twists and turns in this book, I will let you find out what happens.

Robin Carroll's new book **Dead Silence** caught my attention, because my daughter has a degree in deaf education, and I know a smattering of sign language. Elise Carmichael, is a court sign language interpreter and mother to a deaf son. Lip reading has become second nature to her, and when she reads a stranger's lips talking about an attack on a senator, who is also her mother-in-law, she wonders what to do. Just at that critical moment she receives notice that her son Sawyer has been rushed to the ER, and she races to his side. After being at the hospital with her son, she forgets what she has "over heard". Not until the morning news screams the news that her mother-in-law has been assassinated does she call the FBI to tell them what she knows. After revealing she can identify the killer, she and Sawyer become the focus of the killer's aim. This book is classed as a thriller, and the plot will keep you guessing to the last page. Don't miss this page turner.

If neither of these books interests you, watch for some other genres that might interest you. Now it is out to water my flowers—I hope you are enjoying your summer. Hope to see you soon!

~ Donna and Pam

Praying Follower



Prayer Guides

You are invited to use any of our prayer guides or other materials available on our church website, www.fumchurch.com. Simply go to the "Resources" tab and click on "Fun and Faith". Take this opportunity to spend more personal time with God!

Weekly Prayer Letter

If you have not already done so, sign up for our weekly prayer email so that you can receive a list of praises and requests from our church family. Contact Janice Bowen at wecare@fumchurch.com to share requests and to sign up for this once-a-week list.

Passionate Worshipper



Hospitality Tip

What does hospitality look like as we begin to regather for in-person worship in August? Although we are wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and waving instead of shaking hands or hugging, we can still display kindness, care and love to one another! And, as we begin to once again see each other in person, we must still remember those who continue to worship at home.... through our phone calls, texts, cards, prayers, etc.

Another way to show our hospitality is to volunteer to be an usher or greeter during this time of regathering! We are VERY MUCH IN NEED of ushers and greeters at this time. If you feel comfortable volunteering in one of these areas, please contact Tina Eaton at adultministry@fumchurch.com at your earliest convenience.

Sacred Space Worship Nights

While our church doors are open again, we invite you to continue to sing and worship online with **Sacred Space**, a new time of worship time premiering on select Sunday evenings. Experience the Holy Spirit through song, prayer, and scripture, led by some of our music & worship staff/volunteers. Tune in to Facebook, YouTube, and the church website on August 2nd, 16th, and 30th at 7:00pm.



Livestream Team — New Ministry

Livestream worship is underway! This new group forming has exciting potential to reach beyond the walls of our church. *Because of the higher demand for more volunteers to livestream, we are looking for more individuals to help grow our livestream team.* No prior experience is needed, and training is provided. If you would like to meet the challenge of modern church and advance the kingdom into a digital era, please contact Sarah Pugh at worship@fumchurch.com.

Spotify Playlist

On the first Wednesday of each month, we will release a new monthly playlist on Spotify. Each song-- hand-picked by staff, musicians, and volunteers-- has been on our hearts, and prayed over for a holy and meaningful connection with our congregation. For Spotify users, search for the user First UMC of Mechanicsburg, and click on the playlist titled “*Where Words Fail, Music Speaks*”. For non-Spotify users, click this link to listen to the playlist: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5rbHEYEfHei97cUI8rjwNJ?si=qzOB7cTVRg6iAU1L4BY2hA>

Worship DVDs Available

If you or someone you know are unable to access the online church worship services, we have DVD copies of worship available upon request! Please contact Janice Bowen at wecare@fumchurch.com or 717-766-4611 x112 for more information.

Dedicated Missionary



Help Us Feed Those In Need

We are asking all who can to help us fill our Little Free Pantry – the food is going fast and your donations are needed. Go to our church website for information on what you can donate and contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com if you have questions.

Get Connected With Service Opportunities

If you have not already done so, sign up to receive our periodic “Service Opportunities” email. Contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com to share opportunities and to sign up.

Relationship Builder



Food Trucks Return August 21!

First Church is pleased to announce that the Third Friday Food Trucks will be returning Friday, August 21! The trucks will serve in the church parking lot from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. Food will be takeout only due to recent restrictions, and guests are asked to follow physical distancing guidelines and wear a face covering if unable to physical distance from others. Mark your calendar now for upcoming Food Truck dates on September 18, and October 16. Please Like our Facebook page at First United Methodist Church of Mechanicsburg, Pa. for updates and future events.

Community Day/Wrench Hunt Update

Community Day in the Park has now been transformed into ‘Going on a Wrench Hunt!’ This free, family-friendly event includes a week-long scavenger hunt from August 3 to August 8. Participants will use the mobile app, GooseChase to earn points for finding various wrenches hidden around downtown Mechanicsburg. Prizes will be awarded to the participants with the most points earned by the end of the game on August 8. A nonperishable food collection will take place at Trinity Lutheran and First Church of God to ‘stuff their Blessing Boxes!’ More details along with registration information can be found on the Downtown Mechanicsburg Partnership website at <https://downtownmechanicsburg.com/event/wrench-hunt/>.

“First Church Forum”

If you are on Facebook, we invite you to join our private Facebook Group, First Church Forum! As a private group, the ‘First Church Forum’ is a great space to support and connect with one another during this season of sheltering at home. The First Church Forum is a "space for sharing information, encouragement, discussion, and fellowship among members and friends of First Church." Let us know how we can support you or your local business during these challenging times. Please 'Like' our page, First United Methodist Church of Mechanicsburg, PA and then feel free to join the First Church Forum private group. If you have questions, please contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com.

Generous Giver



FINANCIAL REPORT

Through June 30, 2020 — 50 % of year

General Fund

2020 budget	\$ 955,000	
Projected giving	\$ 477,500	50%
Actual giving	\$ 459,792	48%
Actual expenses	\$ 441,034	47%

In June, giving is running behind average weekly budget by \$2-\$3 thousand per week. We appreciate all the support for our church during this difficult time and are thankful for those who have been able to continue in prayer and financial support of our ministry. Until we gather again, we hope you will consider mailing your contributions to the church office or utilizing electronic giving via the church website, www.fumchurch.com. The quarterly giving statements were mailed in early July. Our actual expenses continue to be less than planned as the church staff is working hard to reduce discretionary spending to help keep our financial position in good shape.

We are looking forward to gathering again starting July 26th, but also understand the situation is very fluid. In the meantime, since the pandemic started, our church continues to serve the Lord and its members by offering services “online” and hosting Sunday classes and meetings throughout the week. Please be sure to visit the church website for regular updates and services online.

UMW Yard, Book and Bake Sale, August 15

We are looking forward to the annual UMW Yard, Book and Bake Sale in our church parking lot on Saturday, August 15th from 8:00 a.m. to noon. See all the details below:

- Yard sale spots in the parking lot (2 parking spaces) are still **\$10**, proceeds benefit the UMW. To reserve your spot, contact Donna Nichols at djnichols43@hotmail.com. Sign-ups begin on July 1st on a first-come, first serve basis. You may cancel up to August 1st, with a refund, but no refund after that date (we will consider it a donation to the UMW).
- Support our wonderful **Youth** by donating your treasures! The Youth will sell the items to raise funds for future mission trips. The collection takes place every **Wednesday** through August 12 from 10:00 a.m. to noon in the church Multipurpose Room. Questions, contact Lisa Aronson at uthrock@fumchurch.com or Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com.
- The church **Library** will have a variety of books, puzzles, CD’s, DVD’s available for purchase. You can bring your donations on **Wednesday’s** from 10:00 a.m. to noon to the Multipurpose Room through August 12. Questions about donations, contact Donna Nichols at djnichols43@hotmail.com.
- Enjoy tasty **treats** from the UMW Bake Sale! New this year, we are asking the baked goods to be pre-packaged or individually wrapped for safer handling at the sale. If you are interested in donating baked goods, please see the Time to Sign Up sheet at: <https://ttsu.me/mgsn7g> with all the details.

- The Children's Department will once again hand out **free** school supplies in handmade pouches to children who visit the sale.
- The church Handbell Choir will have **food** available for purchase.

There is something for everyone at the sale! If you have any questions, please contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com or Donna Nichols at djnichols43@hotmail.com. Thanks for your support!

Ways to Give

Even though we are not able to meet right now, there are still several ways that you can continue to give and financially support the ministry of First Church. We encourage you to explore the following options and discover which method of giving works best for you!:

- Mail offerings to the church at 135 West Simpson, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
- Give electronically, it's simple and easy! Contact our Office Manager, Ellen Hill, at office@fumchurch.com to sign-up or receive more information
- Use the "Donate" button on the church website, www.fumchurch.com
- Download the "GivePlus" app and search for First United Methodist Church

Questions? Contact Ellen Hill at office@fumchurch.com.



To Our Beloved FUMC Camp & Retreat Families and Supporters,

The Susquehanna Conference's Camp & Retreat Ministry Board made the decision to suspend all summer camp and retreat programming through September 1, 2020.

The Camp Staff is actively planning for the Fall Retreat season starting September 1, 2020.

We trust deeply in the growth and possibilities that have and will emerge as we move forward. The full-time Camping staff continues to maintain the camp facilities, as well as, to stay connected with camp volunteer teams, campers and families to keep camp alive.

While all of us acknowledge our shared disappointment at not experiencing camp as normal this summer, we know God will make a way forward through this time.

Please be in prayer and ask how you can participate in His Kingdom work.

Let's covenant together to go on a hike or a walk and take time off from everything and go somewhere near where you live and immerse ourselves in beauty. Let's take the time to walk slow miles or some steps with God and diminish every other distraction. Take time to truly walk with God and listen to His words about our hearts, lives and futures and the future of camp. This "holy time" will cement the community together and launch us into the remainder of the camp year in very unexpected and profound ways. It's amazing what setting aside one simple day to walk with God can do.

We hope that you will share your experiences with us!

Funding is still required to sustain leadership, facilities, and programs critical to fulfilling the on-going mission of the Camp & Retreat ministries – not just for this year, but for years to come.

There will be opportunities for generosity in financial giving as part of the "Camp Comeback Campaign". Your generosity can be the way God provides "*streams in the wilderness.*"

Donate through the conference website - <http://www.susumcamps.org/>.

With Hope and in Christ's Service,

The FUMC Camping & Retreat Ministry Team

Contact: Deb Noss (sdppp@msn.com) or Amy Ogden (amy.ogden7@gmail.com)

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

DISCOVERING GOD'S LOVE IN ROMANS 8

Sunday, August 2

Monday, August 3

Tuesday, August 4

Wednesday, August 5

Thursday, August 6

Friday, August 7

Saturday, August 8

“Waiting in Hope”

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

Psalms 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b

Matthew 14:22-33

Romans 10:5-15

Romans 8:26-27

Rest and Reflect

Sunday, August 9

Monday, August 10

Tuesday, August 11

Wednesday, August 12

Thursday, August 13

Friday, August 14

Saturday, August 15

“The Spirit’s Intercession”

Genesis 45:1-15

Psalms 133

Matthew 15:10-20, 21-28

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

Romans 8:28-30

Rest and Reflect

Sunday, August 16

Monday, August 17

Tuesday, August 18

Wednesday, August 19

Thursday, August 20

Friday, August 21

Saturday, August 22

“All Things For Good”

Exodus 1:8-2:10

Psalms 124

Matthew 16:13-20

Romans 12:1-8

Romans 8:31-34

Rest and Reflect

Sunday, August 23

Monday, August 24

Tuesday, August 25

Wednesday, August 26

Thursday, August 27

Friday, August 28

Saturday, August 29

“God Is For Us”

Exodus 3:1-15

Psalms 105: 1-6, 23-26, 45c

Matthew 16:21-28

Romans 12:9-21

Romans 8:35-39

Rest and Reflect

Sunday, August 30

“Love Conquers All”

Church News and Notes

Love & sympathy...

to Eve and Jonathan Kellenberger upon the recent loss of Eve's father
 to Betsy and Denny Keller and family in the death of Betsy's uncle, Bert Miller, on May 26th
 to Jim, Shannon, Chelsea, Jake and Shawn O'Leary in the death of Jim's step-father
 to the friends and family of Ada Lynn who passed away on June 1st
 to Ed Blum and family in the death of Polly Blum on June 5th
 to Bonnie Jeona and family in the death of Bonnie's granddaughter-in-law, Liza



Special Birthdays

Marty Coover.....	August 1st	Victor Norris.....	August 29th
Grace Koser	August 2nd	Emma Whitcomb.....	September 8th
Jane Heller	August 3rd	Pat Sheely	September 11th
Helen Kelly.....	August 10th	Kenneth Nelson	September 13th
Pauline Trace	August 12th	George Reh fuss	September 16th
Bonnie Jeona.....	August 17th	George Carpenter	September 18th
Jerry Sheely	August 18th	Joan E. Stokes.....	September 19th
Morris Barr	August 22nd	Ralph Harkins.....	September 25th
Kay Coldren.....	August 25th	Peggy Shenberger.....	September 28th
Jo Barth.....	August 27th		

Special Anniversaries

- ♥ Thomas & Jeanne Mullikin married 54 years on August 6th
- ♥ Fred & Doris Junkins married 54 years on August 9th
- ♥ John & Dolores Shell married 65 years on August 15th
- ♥ Harry & Joyce Woods married 67 years on August 23rd
- ♥ Pat & Jerry Sheely married 62 years on August 24th



FIRST NEWS FIRST

Editor: Ellen Hill

The **deadline** for submitting articles
 for the **September 2020** issue is
August 15th

**Early submissions always
 appreciated!**