

First News First

Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors

In This Issue...

















An Update From Pastor Denny

On May 5, a task force with representatives from our church's administrative committees and staff began planning for reopening the church. The word, "reopening" is a bit of a misnomer. First Church has never really been closed! Since mid-March when the decision was made to close the church building, we have been alive and active! In fact we've seen some amazing things happen since we've been gathering online for worship and small groups. I'm really proud of our efforts to support each other and to help people in our community with food and other necessities. Your generous giving has helped our church's ministry continue at this most critical time. As our county has moved into the yellow phase, we've begun to see some businesses reopen. We've also seen some churches begin to meet in their buildings. While we're longing for the day when we can all be together again, our task force has decided not to reopen the building at this time. This decision was guided by three important commitments.

#1 Safety: We're committed to taking appropriate measures to ensure the health and safety of every person in every activity related to First Church, whether it takes place in our building or another location. We're also committed to honoring and respecting elected officials, following the advice of medical experts, and protecting the broader Mechanicsburg community. As I said in the sermon this past Sunday, maintaining high standards of safety and protection for all, we are being good neighbors.

#2 Hospitality: We're committed to extending hospitality to everyone. Public health officials advise that in the yellow phase indoor gatherings be limited to 25 people. If we begin holding public services now, who gets left out? Even if we gather in two or three spaces in the building at multiple times, we will still have to exclude most of our congregation. Officials also advise that younger children, people age 65 and over, and others who are vulnerable remain safely at home. Opening the building for worship now does not allow us to "feel like us." Nor does it allow us enthusiastically to welcome new people into the life of our congregation. Until restrictions are lifted and we can hold larger gatherings, we will continue to hold worship services, classes, small groups, and other activities online. In addition, soon we may be able to begin in-person gatherings in small groups that meet outside of the church building. Following appropriate social guidelines, these meetings would provide some good first steps toward reengaging with one another and our community.

#3 Clear Communication: We're committed to communicate clearly so that everyone understands what we are doing, why we are doing it, and that they will be able to participate in it in some way. We do not know how long it will be until we move into the next phase and can safely hold larger gatherings, but we are already making plans so that we will be ready.

Please continue to pray with me in this time of national crisis. Pray for the suffering and the grieving, for the helpers and the researchers, and for public servants and community leaders. I also ask for your prayers for the pastors, staff, and leaders of our church and other churches. We believe that our present and our future are in the hands of a loving God! We are a people of hope!

Yours in Christ, Pastor Denny

Lifelong Learner



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 two months, we've had about 10 small groups (which include Bible study groups and Sunday School classes) meeting on Zoom for the purposes of spiritual growth, and these groups have engaged more than 130 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 back yards as it becomes safe to do so. 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

The options are endless! Please pray for God's guidance in how you can offer a way to help people stay connected and grow spiritually in this time of social distancing. If you feel led to start a new group, please contact Tina Eaton. If you would like 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

The May/June 2020 issue of The Upper Room is still available! Download the free digital version by copying this <u>link</u> and opening it in a new tab! 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

In May's newsletter, I told you I was still ordering and receiving books and they would be on the shelf ready for you when the church reopens. No sooner had I dotted the last "i" and crossed the last "t", did I get an email saying that Christian Book Distributors in Massachusetts was shut down till further notice. But as always, there are still books that I haven't talked about and many other treasures on the shelves for you to discover. I better get started!!

Karen Kingsbury's new book **Someone Like You: a Novel** (Baxter Family Novel) is on the shelf. Ms. Kingsbury always meets current news head on, and this story is no exception. Maddie Baxter West discovers as an adult that she was adopted as an embryo. Her adopted family always meant to tell her, but some how the time never seemed right. Maddie is thrown into turmoil by this news and throws her current life of new job, fiancé, and family out the window. She moves to Portland to discover her "real" family and to find out where she belongs in this world. In Portland Dawson Gage's feels like his life is over, when his fiancée, London Quinn is killed in an auto accident. Dawson learns that London may have a sister from a donated embryo. He finds Maddie and brings her to the Quinns for a reunion. But will it be more than that?

And what about the family Maddie left behind?

Francine Rivers has written a two-volume series about four generations of women struggling to find their place in the world. Her first novel **Mother's Hope** starts in Switzerland with Marta Schnieder at the beginning of the 20th century. Marta leaves Europe to settle in Canada and open a boarding house. There she meets Niclas Waltert. They marry and move to central California and start a vineyard. The second half of the story revolves around their daughter Hildamara Rose and how World War II challenges the family and all they have built.

In second book, **Her Daughter's Dream**, Hildamara is quarantined with TB so her mother Marta comes to take care of her granddaughter Carolyn straining the relationship between Hildamara and Carolyn. Later in the 1960's in San Francisco college-aged Carolyn has her life shattered in the counter culture of the times. She eventually brings her daughter, May Flower Dawn, home to try and restart her life and build a life for her daughter. The tensions between Carolyn and Hildamara come back to haunt them and the women struggle to be a family. Dawn finds herself drawn to her grandmother and would like to find a way to build a bridge in her family to bring all the generations together. After so much hurt, can that be possible? I will let you read this sweeping saga on your own to find out. Both books are on the shelf ready for you!

Hoping to see you in the library soon!!!

~ Pam and Donna

Praying Follower



Wednesday Prayer Group

All are welcome to join Pastor John as he leads prayer and shares mid-day meditations from the Celtic Daily Prayer book. Join him "in person" using Zoom at 11:00 am or pray "in one accord" on your own using the resources he provides. Please contact Pastor John at pastorjohn@fumchurch.com if you would like to participate.

Praver 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 weeklearth.com to share requests and to sign up for this once-a-week list.

Facebook Prayers

If you are on Facebook, you can request to join our private (closed group) Facebook page, "First Church Forum". Share praises and prayer requests there, and catch up with your First Church family!

Passionate Worshipper



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

New Sermon Series - "Different World, Same Mission"

We can all name things that have changed because of the COVID-19 virus. None of us could have imagined in January that by mid-March our church building would be closed and we'd have all of our services and activities online. This summer, some restrictions are being lifted as communities begin to reopen. We are living in an uncomfortable space between the past that we knew and the future that we know will be different. In this series, as we focus on the Great Commission, we will look at **four gifts**Jesus calls us to bring to a world in the midst of unprecedented change. It's a different world we're living in now, but our mission is still the same.



June 7 — Patience

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

One of the hardest things in our world today is waiting on God's timing. Many of us are frustrated, wanting everything to return to normal. Knowing that our present and our future belong to Jesus, we bring the gift of patience to a troubled world.

June 14 — Community

"Go therefore and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,..."

Many of us struggle with isolation, but social distancing does not have to mean social isolation. Jesus modeled community for us and calls us to build a loving community that welcomes everyone.

June 21 — Obedience

"...and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

Where do we turn for answers in this troubled world? Jesus calls us to anchor our lives in his teaching and to share his life-changing message with others.

June 28 — Certainty

"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Uncertainty about the future can create stress, anxiety and frustration. Whatever tomorrow brings, we are certain that Jesus is always with us.

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 weeare@fumchurch.com or 717-766-4611 x112 for more information.

Dedicated Missionary



Help Us Feed Those In Need

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



Hospitality Housecalls

What does hospitality look like in the midst of a pandemic? When we cannot extend a hand, open a door or give a hug, what can we do? Instead of looking at outward (physical) expressions of hospitality, we must look inward. As we look inward, we begin to understand that hospitality is an invitation into intimacy. Even without face to face contact, this intimacy can be experienced.... especially through a phone call. We can call people we haven't talked to in awhile. We can call people to renew old relationships. We can call people to check on their physical and emotional health. To those receiving these calls, these seemingly small gestures allow them to feel valued and cared for! We can show the love of Christ through one simple phone call. Let's get to work!

Everyone is encouraged to do this on their own, but additionally, the Hospitality Committee would like to form a "Hospitality Housecalls" team. Please contact Tina Eaton at adultministry@fumchurch.com if you are interested in becoming a member of this team, which is being created to help ensure that every church member/regular attender receives a call and continues to feel connected to their church family.

Joy In the Morning

Joy in the Morning support group meets Monday, June 1st! If you live with chronic health issues or pain and would like to join our Zoom gathering planned for 3:30 pm on Monday, June 1st, please contact Janice Bowen at wecare@fumchurch.com or 717-766-4611 x112.

"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 April 30, 2020 — 33 % of year

General Fund

2020 budget \$ 955,000 Actual giving \$ 317,683 33% 33% Projected giving \$ 318,333 31% \$ 297,912 Actual expenses

Giving has improved considerably in April as our members have mailed in contributions or used electronic giving to support our ministry during this extraordinary time. Please be sure to visit the church website (www.fumchurch.com) for regular updates and online services. Our "Actual giving" includes approximately \$25,000 received "early" this year versus prior years. Until we gather again, we hope you will consider mailing your contributions to the church office or utilizing electronic giving via the church website. In the meantime, the church staff is working hard to reduce discretionary spending to help keep our financial position in good shape. Thank you for your continued support of the First Church ministry with your prayers and gifts.

Personal Care Collection for Mission Central

Join us to support our neighbors and Mission Central. We will be collecting the following items: *Laundry detergent, hand towels (kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber), feminine hygiene products, toothpaste, bandaids, liquid concentrate household cleaner (no spray bottles), travel size shampoo, deodorant, soap, blue/black pens and pencils.*

Collections take place on Wednesdays from 10:00 am to noon in the church parking lot. You can drive in the entrance, place donations in the marked vehicle, and then drive out the exit. Donation will support local families in need!

UMW Yard Sale

The Annual UMW Yard, Bake and Book Sale is scheduled for Saturday, August 15 from 8:00 a.m. to noon. As of now, we are planning to hold the sale in our church parking lot, as in previous years. You can still rent a space for \$10, proceeds to benefit the UMW. If you would like to participate, please contact Donna Nichols at djnichols43@hotmail.com or 717-249-9477. Signups begin on July 1st. We hope to have a firm decision about the sale by early July. Thanks for your patience and understanding. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com.

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.

Congratulations to our Graduates!

Everyone is experiencing an altered life reality right now and this is especially so for our graduates. These folks have dedicated several years towards their studies and have reached the momentous milestone: graduation. Some are awaiting their graduations, some have had theirs cancelled, and others commenced virtually. Join with us as we celebrate them and their accomplishments in a special graduation edition of the June newsletter that will be published mid-June. **Congratulations class of 2020!**

Please continue to submit graduate information at https://forms.gle/2Yb8nABV5ryXGDqc7 and email pictures to Lisa at uthrock@fumchurch.com. High School Graduates remember also to fill out the form for the adoptagrad program: https://forms.gle/aucq2hLEV84y22DD7)





Camps and retreats are for **everyone** - adults, children and youth!

Susquehanna Conference's Camp & Retreat website: http://www.susumcamps.org

Please keep the 2020 Camp and Retreat Season in your prayers.

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Isaiah 43:19

(SPECIAL MESSAGE from the Conference Camping office)

To Our Beloved Camp and Retreat Families and Supporters,

Due to information received from Camp & Retreat Ministry associations, health experts, and state authorities that outline significant complexities and limitations involved in holding camps and retreats this summer, the Susquehanna Conference's Camp & Retreat Ministry Board has made the heartbreaking decision to suspend all summer camp and retreat programming through September 1, 2020.

All those who were registered for camp have been notified and fees will be refunded.

We are grieving, and at the same time, we trust deeply in the growth and possibilities that have and will emerge as we move forward. Our staff, along with our supportive board, will continue to stay connected with our campers and families in the coming months. So, while we acknowledge our shared disappointment at not being together this summer, we walk with God who makes a way forward through this time.

We are resilient but we are going to need your support this year more than ever. To be direct, we depend heavily on the income of our summer camping season to sustain leadership, facilities, and programs critical to fulfilling our mission and ministry. The inability to host our summer campers and retreat guests weighs heavily on our hearts, as well as on our finances. In the coming weeks there will be opportunities for generosity in financial giving. Your generosity is part of the way God provides "streams in the wilderness" right now.

Donate through the conference website or through your church.

We love you. We miss you. We look forward to seeing you.

With Hope and in Christ's Service,

The Susquehanna Conference Camp & Retreat Ministry Team

REMEMBER – CAMP'S GREAT!!! [ATTEND in spirit, prepare to **VOLUNTEER**, always **PRAY**]

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

The Ministry of First Church

While we may not be able to gather physically at this time, the ministry of First United Methodist Church is still alive and active! Check out what we've been up to!

From Congregational Care:

Congregational Care greetings from home! While I continue to think about First Church not as the building or the space where we typically gather, but instead as a community of Christ's people, I have two initial reactions. First, I am again painfully reminded of how long we are being called to live out our faith while physically separated from one another. However, I am also encouraged by the creative and practical ways many are finding to connect and support one another as a family of followers.

One church member was recently inspired by her neighbor to begin walking around her neighborhood each day, not only for exercise and fresh air, but to be able to say a prayer and blessing for her neighbors along the way. As time passes, more and more of our church family have been able to connect with Sunday worship...for some it has been figuring out the technology to watch worship on their computer or smart phone; others have received DVD players to watch worship recorded on DVDs; and most recently we have been forming partnerships to enable those with a phone to be able to listen to the worship service with someone else watching the online service at their home.

As we endure this season, I encourage you to seek meaning and purpose by connecting, comforting, and helping others, whether your family, neighbors, co-workers, or faith family. Confront your feelings of discouragement and helplessness by seeking personal growth and action in asking the questions: How can I pray? How can I serve? How can I give? How can I grow closer to God? You are more than likely to feel renewed and uplifted in return for your efforts. Here are a few suggestions to get you started!

- Someone on your mind? Get in touch! Give them a call, send an email, or mail a note!
- Create small bouquets from your garden to share with a neighbor or friend.
- Set aside a pocket of time to lift up the concerns from the weekly FUMC Prayer Letter.
- Collect or purchase food items or personal care items to deliver on a Wednesday to the designated drop off points in support of New Hope Ministries, Mission Central, and the Little Free Pantries.
- Check-in with a neighbor or friend to see if they need anything before you head out to the food store, pharmacy, garden store, etc.
- Plant some flowers around your neighbor's mailbox.
- Offer to help someone with the care of their yard or garden or check with John Bowen about any Backyard Mission projects.
- While libraries are closed, share some of your favorite books with an avid reader. Record yourself reading a favorite children's story to send to a relative or family from church with small children.
- Forward the link from Sunday's worship to a family or friend so they can experience your church.
- Offer to be a phone worship partner for someone who doesn't have an internet connection.

Please let me know what you try or what other ideas you may have! We read in 2 Corinthians 3:17, "The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Lord's Spirit is, there is freedom." I encourage you to find freedom and meaning by expressing the Lord's Spirit within you to others!

Grace and peace to you, Janice Bowen (wecare@fumchurch.com; 717-766-4611 x112)

From the Children's Department:

There's the sound of little feet coming down the hallway, and we know who it is long before a little face peeks around the door. We have memorized the sound of their steps. Kids are dismissed from worship and while some we collect with little hands tucked in ours, others dash on ahead. The kids dash ahead because they know that when they skid around the corner, they will see a familiar face who shines bright with the love of Christ. And hopefully a basket of lollipops! They know this church. We know this church. Because it's home. It's home because we have built our lives around and through each other. The beautiful thing about the body of Christ and His church is it isn't the building, it's the people.

The people are still here! And we still shine bright with the love of Christ! The difference is now instead of the sound of little feet, we get to look at them during the entire Zoom call we have on Sundays. If we're lucky, we get an up close and personal view of a giant eyeball or tongue or belly button. "I don't want to see the picture of a monkey butt" is now added to the list of "Things I never thought I'd say." Each Sunday is a new adventure in the land of Zoom, but there is joy in being able to teach about the faith of Paul or how we can recognize God all around us.

We continue to build this home brick by brick. Bricks in the form of Sunday children's videos and Zoom calls, Scripture prayers, parent affirmations, prayer requests, fun activity resources, and a listening ear are placed every week. There are more pixelated bricks than we are used to, but we know a foundation built on God's Word will not waiver. As we come alongside our First Church children and families, our intention is to point to God's love, His Word- active and alive regardless of what season we are in, and express God's constant presence in our lives.

If you would like to connect with the Children's Department, we would love to hear from you! We are aware of the mountains of emails parents are receiving, so have moved much of our communication to the Remind App. We use Remind as a home for thoughtful and intentional information to connect by text messages with our families. We also have a separate fun and informative monthly newsletter. Simply drop us an email at kidscount@fumchurch.com to be added to the newsletter list or get more information about Remind!

While we are now meeting from home offices, backyards, or dining room tables, our lives are still intertwined with threads of God's faithfulness and provision. We are still at home because Christ covers us and we are all sheltered in the shadow of His wing.

Dawn Fisher and Anna Harris

From the Youth Department:

While we are socially distant we are staying spiritually connected! Zoom might not compare to in-person gatherings but it is something and we are making the best of it. Several students have continued in gathering for a time of learning on Sunday evenings on zoom and others have taken advantage of the small groups that have been gathering on zoom throughout the week. Even worship opportunities have continued with students from our worship team who musically connect over zoom and who have been providing us with worship playlists each week. Our Instagram account is an active place to find silly games and faith encouragement. Already we know that our summers will look very different. Many of our much looked forward to events such as Impact, camps, and mission trips have been cancelled. And while we mourn that loss, we, like all the other areas of ministry, will persevere and continue to find meaningful ways to connect while keeping ourselves and others healthy.

If you are a youth not yet connected, or a 5th grader rising this coming fall, please join our Remind text group by texting 4Gyo to 81010. Please also email Lisa at uthrock@fumchurch.com if you are not receiving the weekly 4G News and Information emails.

Lisa Aronson



DIFFERENT WORLD SAME MISSION

June 2020 Bible Reading Plan

Monday, June 1 Tuesday, June 2 Wednesday, June 3 Thursday, June 4 Friday, June 5 Saturday, June 6 Sunday, June 7

Monday, June 8 Tuesday, June 9 Wednesday, June 10 Thursday, June 11 Friday, June 12 Saturday, June 13 Sunday, June 14

Monday, June 15 Tuesday, June 16 Wednesday, June 17 Thursday, June 18 Friday, June 19 Saturday, June 20 Sunday, June 21

Monday, June 22 Tuesday, June 23 Wednesday, June 24 Thursday, June 25 Friday, June 26 Saturday, June 27 Sunday, June 28 Genesis 1:1-2:4
Psalm 8:1-4
Psalm 8:5-9
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Matthew 28:16-20
Rest and Reflect

"Patience"

Genesis 18:1-15
Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
Romans 5:1-8
Matthew 9:35-10:8
Matthew 28:16-20
Rest and Reflect
"Community"

Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17 Romans 6:1-11 Matthew 10:24-39 Matthew 28:16-20 Rest and Reflect "Obedience"

Genesis 21:8-21

Genesis 22:1-14
Psalm 13
Romans 6:12-23
Matthew 10:40-42
Matthew 28:16-20
Rest and Reflect
"Certainty"

Church News and Notes

Love & sympathy...

to the Hiler and Cashner families in the death of Melissa Hiler's father, Bob Cashner, on April 4th.

- to the Van Kirk family in the death of Jim's mother, Nancy Van Kirk, on April 18th.
- to Grace and Jack Koser in the death of Grace's sister, Violet Smith, on April 19th.
- to Nancy Robinson and family in the death of Nancy's aunt, Nancy, on May 11th.
- to Dan Gunsallus and family in the death of Dan's mother.



Special Birthdays

Bill Morland	June 6th
Joe Moomaw	June 14th
Dolly Scholl	June 16th
Caroline Brown	June 21st
Joanne Reed	June 23rd
Beryl Morgan	June 30th
Charlotte Hess	July 5th
Richard Hayworth	July 6th

Mildred Neagley	July 6th
Veloice Washburn	July 6th
George Snoke	July 16th
Jack Koser	July 22nd
Harry Woods	July 27th
Jean Adams	July 28th
George Washburn	July 29th

Special Anniversaries

- ▼ Gerry & Darlis Aumiller married 62 years on June 7th
- ▼ Bob & Donna D'agostino married 51 years on June 7th
- ▶ Paul & Liz Nesmith married 65 years on June 19th
- ▼ Jim & Sue Chilton married 50 years on June 20th
- ▼ Jack & Grace Koser married 67 years on June 20th
- Marlin & Brenda Snider married 54 years on June 26th.



FIRST NEWS FIRST

Editor: Ellen Hill

The **deadline** for submitting articles for the **July 2020** issue is **June 15th**

Early submissions <u>always</u> appreciated!