

First Things

Issue No. 8

A weekly publication of First United Methodist Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

February 28, 2021

- After much discussion, the Church Council voted to relaunch in-person, indoor, and outdoor worship services beginning March 21. Credible medical sources, coupled with increased vaccination rates in our area, suggest it is now safe enough for us to return for worship and small-group gatherings under Stage 1 protocols. Congregants will hear more about those protocols in the coming weeks, but suffice it to say that masks and remaining physically distanced from non-family members will be required. We will continue to livestream worship services in the future so those who are unvaccinated and remain at higher risk of infection may continue worshipping virtually.
- Since Stage 1 protocols limit the number of people allowed in worship spaces, the church will use a "Save-A-Seat" program. Instructions on how to let us know your desire to attend will be available in the coming weeks. To limit groups entering and exiting at the same time as well as to provide an outdoor option for those who do not feel comfortable worshipping inside, services will be held at the following times:
 - 8:45 a.m.–9:30 a.m. Traditional in the Sanctuary
 - 10:00 a.m.–10:45 a.m. Contemporary in the Multipurpose Room
 - 11:00 a.m.–11:45 a.m. Traditional in the Sanctuary
 - 1:00 p.m.–2:00 p.m. "Worship On The Lawn"
- Our Stage 1 protocol also allows for small groups to begin meeting in person March 21, with safety precautions in place. At this time, no small groups will be allowed to meet on Sunday mornings. More information on small-group arrangements will be published in next week's newsletter.

February Church Council Highlights

- The Finance Committee announced FUMC was approved for round two of the Payroll Protection Program in the amount of \$282,082. That amount will help fund payroll costs for First Steps and Keystone employees. The committee also reported that January income was \$141,294 and expenses were \$86,026, for a surplus of \$55,268.
- The Missions Committee has distributed \$9,000 to charities that provide food or shelter locally.
- The Enduring Gifts Committee announced the amount to be released from each of our endowment funds for 2021. These amounts will be available for spending by various committees and ministries: General Endowment \$10,000; Adult Music Program \$2,500; Pastoral Visitation \$2,500; Rebecca Taylor Scholarship \$2,500; Library \$2,000; Ministerial Scholarship \$2,000; Mission \$2,000; Youth Ministries \$1,800; Withrow Youth Choir \$1,700; Property \$1,250; J O'Steen Veterans Ministry \$1,200; Jacobson Scholarship \$1,000; and J O'Steen Women In Domestic Violence Ministry \$1,000.
- Kayla Carico reported that our Confirmation program will move from 6th to 7th grade. This will allow us to include youth whose confirmation participation was placed on hold during this quarantine and, it will allow confirmands to participate in youth programs. We plan for our 2019–2020 Confirmation class to be confirmed on Easter Sunday, April 4.
- The United Methodist Women's Christian Homemakers Circle met via Zoom and had a program by Bob and Maxine Schultz on Eye Clinics held during past mission trips. FUMC will continue to collect reading glasses, prescription glasses, sunglasses, and hats for future trips.
- Stephen Ministry (SM): Dan Ingersoll has finished the virtual Stephen Ministry Leaders training course, and the SM Leaders are benefiting from his energy and enthusiasm.
- While we have been using our livestream equipment to record worship segments and editing them together, this Sunday will be the first time we record worship services straight through with no editing. This will enable everyone to become comfortable with the pace and technology as we anticipate returning to in-person worship.
- The staff are providing email devotions each day throughout Lent. If you would like to receive these emails each day, contact the church office.
- A new Grief Support Group has begun, with 10+ people participating. Our thanks to Steve Herbes for offering this class to our church and the wider community.
- The Community Meal continues to serve approximately 600 meals a month. We have acquired some new volunteers to cook, pack, and distribute the meals, as well as to wash dishes. Two of these volunteers have come to us via Ridgeview, so it is exciting that our volunteer base extends beyond the church.
- Trustees report that they have worked with the Library Committee to create a small maintenance room near the "man cave" to store equipment. They are also ordering six new cooling radiators to replace wall units that are beginning to fail.

Lenten Organ Series

Join Music Associate and Organist, Josh Sumter, as he offers short virtual recitals each Sunday in Lent (February 21 through March 21). Videos of approximately 10 minutes will premiere on the church Facebook page at 3:00 p.m. each Sunday and will be available there or on YouTube anytime thereafter.

Based on some aspect of the Lectionary readings for each week, musical selections will cover a large amount of territory, including 20th century English, Scandinavian, and American; 19th century French; and music influenced by jazz.

Have unwanted computer equipment?

There is a group of wonderful volunteers that recycles unwanted computers, laptops, screens, etc. These volunteers, who live at Tellico Village, work to refurbish equipment and put complete computer systems together. They give them free of charge to families with school-age children. Many of the systems also go to community agencies that work with children. In 2020, 1,088 computer systems were given, to families, serving 1,576 children and youth in East Tennessee.

FUMC has been collecting used computer equipment in our community for several years. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, collection days have not been set for 2021. If you have old computers and associated equipment you wish to donate, call Maxine Schultz (482.0080) to make arrangements to meet at the Mission Staging & Storage Area.

Hospitalized

UT: Dee Crumm

Our Gifts

Offering this Week	\$33,982
2021 Year to Date	\$242,675
2020 Year to Date	\$253,007
Special Offering	\$1,505



1350 Oak Ridge Turnpike
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage PAID
Permit #18
Oak Ridge, TN
37830

Lenten Offering: TORCH

TORCH (Trinity Out-Reach Center of Hope) opened its doors to the public in January 2013. Its mission statement is: "To ensure every person living in Anderson County has a safe place to sleep at night." TORCH operates using the Housing First Model and serves the homeless by paying security deposits for rent, utilities, and first month's rent so clients can be housed with a permanent address, allowing them to gain permanent employment and benefits when available. TORCH follows those housed (with case management) to ensure they are able to remain housed. The agency motto is "No child or handicapped individual sleeps outside". If a family with children or a handicapped individual seeks assistance, the first step is to place them in a secure temporary shelter (a hotel) while permanent housing is found. TORCH will begin building its own temporary housing in March.

TORCH's main funding source is the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), a reimbursable federal grant to be used in Anderson County through the State of TN Housing Development Agency/HUD. In 2018, TORCH ranked #1 of all agencies in the State of TN using the ESG to serve the homeless. Other funding sources are area Rotary Foundations, civic organizations, United Way of Anderson County, churches throughout Anderson County, and generous individuals.

TORCH is a registered 501(c)3 organization with EIN: 45-4745519. All donations are tax deductible. Please consider donating to TORCH this Lenten season.

AmazonSmile Rewards

Did you know that Amazon allows you to designate .05% of your purchases to the charity of your choice? The program is called AmazonSmile, and our congregation is beginning to see the benefit from having been chosen by customers as their designated recipient. In 2020, FUMC received \$196.96 from this program, which was an increase from the \$160 we received in 2019. If you want to join others in designating our church as the beneficiary of your rewards, look for First United Methodist Church Of Oak Ridge. And a big thank you for all of you who have already made that selection.

Scholarships Available

Each year, our church offers three scholarships for students: the Bruce and Phyllis Jacobson Scholarship, the Rebecca Taylor Scholarship, and the Jeanette Reynolds Scholarship. Students who have actively participated in our youth ministries at FUMC are excellent candidates for the Jacobson and Taylor scholarships, and those who are interested in full-time ministry work in the UMC are excellent candidates for the Jeanette Reynolds scholarship. Don't let an opportunity for help paying for college pass you by. Criteria for each scholarship and applications are available on the website (fumcor.org/scholarships). You can also email the Youth Director, Kayla Carico, (kcarico@fumcor.org) for more information.

March Homebound Member Birthdays

The following people are homebound members of our congregation who have a birthday in March. Please take a moment to send them a card. You can get their addresses by looking in the directory or contacting the church office (483.4357). Thank you for this expression of care and concern.



March 3	Judy Altman
March 14	Mildred Hayes
March 27	Tom Thornburgh

