

First Things

Issue No. 17

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

May 3, 2020

FUMCOR.ORG Online Opportunities

Reminder: We offer worship services, daily devotions, Sunday school classes, and Bible study opportunities on our website (fumcor.org). Visit the website at any time to see all of our resources.

April Church Council Highlights

Finance reported we ended March with a \$94,000 surplus and an increase in online giving. There are three payrolls in April, but expect to end the month with a \$60,000 surplus.

Thanks to the hard work of our Finance Office, our congregation has been approved for a Payroll Protection Plan loan from the federal government. The loan will also cover First Steps and Keystone staff.

The Council is in the process of creating a "Phase 1" protocol for reopening the building for worship when our Bishop allows that to happen. The protocol will be shared when that (currently unknown) day draws near.

The United Methodist Women have cancelled their Blanket Sunday. They hope to reschedule.

Our 2020 Vacation Bible School has been cancelled. VBS takes weeks of planning and we remain unsure when our building open. We are exploring a fun, summer family event instead.

Many Sunday School classes (including three Children's Sunday School classes) are meeting via zoom conference calls.

Our youth ministry has switched to a virtual format for now, including Wednesday nights and a Virtual Youth Loft available Monday-Thursday from 3-5 pm.

A support group for graduating high school seniors is in the works. Interested seniors have been asked to contact Kayla at kcarico@fumcor.org.

The staff are exploring the costs of installing equipment in our worship spaces which will enable live multi-camera streaming of our services in the future.

Many thanks for the overwhelming congregational response in making masks, food for the Wednesday Community Meal, and non-perishable food to supplement those weekly meals!

We are now hosting Sunday morning Facebook watch parties of our contemporary and traditional services.

Missions has decided upon the following budget allocations: Local Missions \$72,500;

World Missions \$15,100; Unique Projects \$915; and Emerging Issues \$2,000 for a total of \$90,515.

The Enduring Gifts Committee has been informed that funds approved by the EGC to refurbish chapel chairs (\$2,000) will not be needed because the fabric, labor for reupholstering, the oak wood, and labor to refurbish the chairs have been donated by church members.

Holston Annual Conference, scheduled for June 7-10, 2020 at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina has been cancelled. A Virtual Annual Conference will be held on Saturday June 27 at 1:00 p.m.

Does the Governor's Plan to Reopen Affect Us?

Tennessee Governor Bill Lee has released guidelines for restaurants and retail stores to reopen across the state. We will be hearing about other businesses reopening in the coming weeks. His announcement has prompted some to ask if our congregation has been affected by his order. The short answer is "no." All United Methodist Churches in our area are closed "until further notice" by order of our Bishop, Mary Virginia Taylor. All worship services will remain online, and regularly scheduled gatherings will remain postponed until she gives churches permission to reopen. When that day comes, the Bishop will likely issue guidelines that will restrict how gatherings can take place. Our staff members are currently working on multiple contingency plans that emphasize safety, hospitality, and respect for people who remain susceptible to illness (and, therefore, need all of us to continue social distancing). We will provide more details on what reopening looks like when we draw near to that day, whenever it may be. Until that time, staff members remain available by phone or email as we continue to care for this congregation and community.

New Online Bible Study Beginning Soon

All are welcome to join Rev. Flynn for a new, 7-week online Bible study on Wednesday evenings. The "iStudy Jesus" class will meet via Zoom conference call beginning on May 6 at 6:00 p.m. The 90-minute class will focus on seven aspects of Jesus' life, drawing on all 4 gospels. You may find a PDF of the free study materials on our virtual chapel at the church website (fumcor.org/post/new-online-bible-study) as well as the link for the Zoom call. If you have questions, please contact Mark (mflynn@fumcor.org).

Worship Watch Groups

On Sunday mornings, we are taking advantage of a Facebook option called Watch Party. This is an opportunity to join in a community to experience worship together. We are airing the contemporary service at 10:00 a.m. and the traditional at 11:00 a.m. You may "chat" with others or just watch. While a Facebook profile is helpful, it is not necessary. Go to facebook.com/fumcOakRidge at the appointed time. Contact Jeff (jkile@fumcor.org) with any questions.

In Sympathy

We extend love and sympathy to Betty Oakberg and her son, Frank, and family in the death of Frank's wife, Bonnie, on April 25.

Our Gifts

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| Offering this Week | \$23,810 |
| 2020 Year to Date | \$533,736 |
| 2019 Year to Date | \$448,101 |
| Special Offering | \$910 |
| Donations for Community Meals (includes \$5,000 grant) | \$10,452 |

Christian Mindfulness Online

If you are unable to join us on Wednesdays for Steve Herbes' class on Cultivating Christian Mindfulness, watch it online, fumcor.org/christian-mindfulness.

Pastors

Mark Flynn, lead pastor
Chris Black, associate pastor
Jenny Caughman, spiritual care

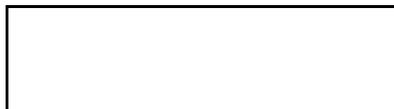
Contact Information

865.483.4357
www.fumcor.org
Pastor on call: 865.272.9862



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A Unique Opportunity Awaits

FUMC United Methodist Women will have the annual "Bakeless Bake Sale" even if we cannot be together in church. Because there is no actual baking of desserts or need for socialization with this event, we are able to continue with it. Please mail a check (payable to UMW, with memo: Bakeless Sale) to the church office. We are again supporting 10 local mission projects, including Free Medical Clinic and Boys and Girls' Club. Your donation will help our continued support of worthwhile projects that serve many people.

This year, we would like to make a special gift of \$500 to the Blossom Center, which provides day care for children of Oak Ridge 24 hours a day. It is the only day care facility that offers 24-hour care. This has been a difficult goal to achieve, and the center struggles to maintain this worthy and needed goal.

Please consider a \$20 donation to help those in need. Your gift will make a difference in the lives of many children and working parents.

City Utility Cutoffs Coming

During the pandemic, realizing that many people were unemployed, the City of Oak Ridge stopped turning off utilities for non-payment. However, the city may begin cutting services for non-payment as soon as June. Local charitable organizations are preparing for the inevitable increase in requests for support, and our pastoral staff is no different. Thanks to our congregation's generosity, there is currently \$13,600 in our Community Assistance Fund. We will keep you informed throughout the summer of the balance in the Community Assistance Fund, and let you know how you can help this essential outreach ministry.

The Upper Room Online

The widely read daily devotional, *The Upper Room*, is now available at upperroom.org/devotionals. The United Methodist Church is also making available the following resources at upperroom.org/COVID-19:

- *Seven Suggestions for Healing and Renewal in the Midst of Stress and Anxiety* by Flora Wuellner
- *A Blessing for Those Who Wait* by Beth Richardson
- *The Work of Hope* by Luther Smith, Jr.
- Getting Started with Your Private Online Classroom

Welcome New Members!

We would like to welcome new members David Buchanan and Kirstine Andersen. They joined our church family Sunday, April 26, during a Zoom Sunday school class.

A Huge Thanks!

A HUGE THANKS to all who donated food for those in need, cloth bags, and a very generous supply of Girl Scout Cookies that we continue to distribute with the Community Meals. We currently have what we need regarding food staples. We will inform you when and if we will be collecting again.

Coping Photos

What around your home is helping you to cope through this pandemic? Is it a pet, a place, a book, a person? We would love for you to take a photo and share it with us. If there are enough photos, we can create a slideshow to share on our website and social media pages. Send those photos to photos@fumcor.org with the subject line "Coping Photo."

Receiving church-wide emails?

If you are not receiving our occasional church-wide emails with important announcements, we probably do not have your correct email address. Please contact the church office to update your contact information (483-4357).