

# First Things

Issue No. 20

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

May 24, 2020

## A Statement from Bishop Taylor

My Dear Holston Friends,



As I write to you, my heart aches with the new realities that COVID-19 brings into our lives. Television continues to report how this new coronavirus is changing the world as we have known it. Each news broadcast highlights the numbers of reported cases of the virus around the world and the precious lives of those who have left us too soon because of this pandemic.

Every life is precious and a gift from God. In my prayers I find myself begging God to forgive me when I see those rising numbers and become indifferent to the great pain and grief they represent. I know that we are all eager for the day when it will be safe to gather together again in our churches. The cabinet and I continue to evaluate the health data and the need for our churches to remain closed. The cabinet has given me names of health professionals, local church pastors, and legal experts to create a COVID-19 Task Force to guide us in making informed decisions and plans for reopening our churches across Holston Conference when it is safe.

Dindy Taylor  
Resident Bishop  
Holston Conference of The United Methodist Church

## A Virtual Annual Conference Gathering

Our Holston Annual Conference Planning Committee has approved a "Plan for a Virtual Holston Annual Conference." While it is not ideal, a virtual gathering is the best option United Methodists across Holston have, given the present circumstances. On Saturday, June 27, 2020, at 1:00 p.m., the session will open with worship. Although not provided yet, instructions on connecting to the virtual experience will be found on [holston.org](http://holston.org) that day.

Bishop Taylor will offer a welcome and give the State of the Church address. Our Conference Lay Leader will offer the laity address. There will be reports from the Conference Committee on Finance and Administration; the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits; the Commission on Equitable Compensation; and the Board of Ordained Ministry. There will be a link to a pre-recorded Memorial Service, as well as a teaching moment on Opioid Addiction from Dr. Barry Steiner-Ball. Ordination will take place sometime later this year, so as not to shortchange those who, along with their families, have been on that long journey.

## Zoom Kids' Sunday School Rocks!

Our Sunday school class for kids on Sunday mornings at 11:00 a.m. has been a lot of fun. Kids in Pre-K to Grade 5 can join by emailing Megan Alden, ([malden@fumcor.org](mailto:malden@fumcor.org)) for the Zoom link.

We are off for this Memorial Day weekend. Following is our upcoming schedule:

- May 31 Virtual Pentecost Party and 5th Graders Farewell.
- June 7 Scavenger Hunt Fun!
- June 14 Breaking Bread Together...Virtually!
- June 21 Father' Day Fun!
- June 28 Fruits of the Spirit all around us!

## Holston Home Collection Winding Down

May 31 will mark the end of our collection for the Holston Home for Children. Please get checks (payable to FUMC, memo: duffels) to the church, or contact Vicki Hinkel (482.3931) if you have other donations that need to be picked up and delivered to HHC. Thank you.

## Another Request for Cloth Masks

As we prepare for future worship gatherings at the church, at a date unknown, we need to have cloth masks available for people who do not have a mask or forgot to bring one with them.

So, once again, we are asking for homemade cloth masks. There are multiple sites online to find a pattern to make one for yourself or to donate to the church. Choose any style you prefer to make. Our goal is 400 masks, and we have no doubt you all can make this happen.

Please drop them off at any of the following addresses with a note indicating they are for FUMCOR. Place the masks in the box on the front porch. There is no need to call or ring the bell.

- 106 Danbury Drive
- 103 Meadowlark Lane
- 92 Tempura Drive

You can also drop them off at the Vienna Road entrance of the church, Monday-Wednesday 8:00-11:00 a.m.

And a big thank you to Shelia Michel, Kathy Gillenwaters, and Terry Pfeiffer for allowing us to use their front porches as convenient drop-off sites!

## Our Prayers:

**Personal information  
removed for privacy**

## Our Gifts

Offering this Week	\$12,843
2020 Year to Date	\$590,913
2019 Year to Date	\$529,859
Monthly Special Offering	\$860

## May Special Offering: Family Promise of Roane County

## What is the Finance Committee?

Each month, we are highlighting a different administrative group, explaining what they do. This month we look at our Finance Committee. Although it is officially composed of eight members, with the Lead Pastor acting as the staff liaison, representatives from a few of our other administrative committees (Church Council, Trustees, and Staff-Parish Relations Committee) also attend Finance meetings. This "cross-pollination" of our administrative groups ensures that all of our leaders are on the same page with the congregation's finances. The Finance Committee oversees (1) the financial policies of the church; (2) how our financial offerings are collected, counted, and deposited in the bank; (3) the creation and tracking of our church budget; (4) the tracking of our designated giving; and (5) annual audits. The Finance Committee also has the added joy of reviewing the Keystone and First Steps budgets once a year. Obviously, this committee works very closely with our Finance and Administration Office staff. Jessica Williams currently chairs this essential committee. A listing of persons on the Finance Committee and all other committees is available on the church website ([fumcor.org/leaders](http://fumcor.org/leaders)).

## Pastors

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

## Contact Information

865.483.4357  
[www.fumcor.org](http://www.fumcor.org)  
Pastor on call: 865.272.9862



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## Community Meal Update

We are continuing to serve our community meal each Wednesday from 5:30–6:00 p.m. Thank you to all who have supported what we are doing, either with your time or contributions. We are currently serving about 150 meals per week, while following safety protocol. A shout out to Buddy's Bar-B-Q who made sandwiches this past week and charged us 30% less than the normal price. Thank you to everyone for supporting this vital ministry to our community.

## Write the Sermon YOU Want to Hear

A few weeks ago, one of our members approached me with a wonderful sermon he had written on the spear that pierced Jesus' side following crucifixion (thank you Lynn Boatner!). Not only did I enjoy reading his words, but it made me realize that others might have a sermon they would love to share. Is there a sermon you have never heard a pastor preach but wish they would? If so, why don't you take this opportunity to write it? Have you ever heard a sermon and think the preacher missed the point? This is your chance to write what "should have been proclaimed!" If we have enough participation, we will happily collect and distribute the ones we receive. If you have questions, feel free to contact me.

—Rev. Mark Flynn

## FUMC Stained Glass

Stained glass has a rich history of helping people understand God's love for us. First Church has two beautiful sets of stained glass windows. In a new Friday video series, you can get up-close and personal with them and learn all of the ins and outs of these windows. Check our Facebook page, YouTube, or Virtual Chapel page on the website on Fridays for a look at each one.

## A Special Way to be in Mission Together

The Tennessee Valley District of the Holston Conference is collecting items for food buckets that will be sent to our partner ministries in Zimbabwe. This has been our conference "Hands-on Mission Project" for many years. However, this year is different because of the social distancing requirements of COVID-19. FUMC's Mission Ministry is inviting you to contribute what would equal a fully stocked food bucket (including shipping costs). Sunday, May 17, through Monday, May 25, you are invited to submit a \$42 check (payable to FUMC, memo: Holston Food Buckets). You may also give online at [fumcor.org](http://fumcor.org). Funds received will go directly to the Tennessee Valley District's efforts to collect and ship the food buckets.

Each food bucket includes:

One new 5-gallon bucket with lid, 1 bag of sugar, 1 bag self-rising flour, 1 bag rice, 1 bag dried beans, 1 powdered milk, 1 box quick/instant oats, 1 bottle cooking oil, 1 box Splenda/sucralose, canned ham.

## FUMCOR.ORG Online Opportunities

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