

First Things

Issue No. 23

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

June 14, 2020

Reopening Plans at FUMC

Our Bishop has released her task force report on the steps local churches must take to reopen for in-person ministries during Stage 1. You may read a copy of that task force report at fumcor.org/covid19.

Congregations that reopen for worship in Stage 1 are required to take steps to keep worshipers safe from COVID-19, such as requiring participants to wear masks, eliminating congregational singing, not passing offering plates, etc. June 21 is the earliest congregations can return to their buildings, but they may do so only after their leaders create a series of protocols, building-usage agreements, and plans for implementing safe practices. All of those documents must be turned in the District Superintendent for approval prior to reopening.

Our staff and leaders are currently working to create the documents necessary to be approved for reopening. You may read a copy of our current "Stage 1 Protocol For Reopening" on our website. Our Church Council plans to meet via Zoom on Tuesday, June 23, to discuss the timeline for FUMCOR to reopen. Following that meeting, we will publicize the Council's thoughts and any decisions made to the congregation and community via church-wide email, newsletter, and social media outlets.

FUMC's Reopening Survey Released

Our staff and leaders need your help to prepare for Stage 1 of our reopening. First Things sent a link for an anonymous survey to everyone with an email address in our database. If you did not receive that link, go to: forms.gle/WwCF1cKvVyN4rflG6 to participate. We also sent paper copies of the survey to those who receive our newsletter but do not have an email address. If you want to participate, please do so before June 17.

You may answer as many or as few of the 16 survey questions as you would like. No question requires an answer to continue to the next item. This is not a scientific survey, but it will help our leaders gather important information that will be useful in the transitions that lie ahead. While this is anonymous, we will share the statistical results of this survey in our newsletter after they are collected. Any contact or identifying information will remain confidential and will not be published or shared.

Why is FUMC Posting "Black Lives Matter?"

Last week, the church staff posted "Black Lives Matter" on our electronic sign and on our social media pages. We did so knowing it would make some people uncomfortable, but we also felt strongly that it was important, as a predominantly White congregation, to show support for our Black brothers and sisters.

You may have heard it said, "Why are we saying Black Lives Matter? Don't all lives matter? Don't White lives matter too?" Of course White lives matter. We are all God's children; all lives matter. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case in our nation's history and is still not always the case. Although the horrible, ugly sin of human slavery is now outlawed in our country, the underlying racism upon which slavery was built still lingers in our culture, resulting in the devaluing of black persons.

Because racism still harms black citizens in a significant way, we need to make a point of saying that Black Lives Matter.

We need to acknowledge that, to some degree, we are all racist. Human beings are more comfortable with people who look like themselves than those who do not. This doesn't make us evil, but it does make us very susceptible to treating those who look different from us in harmful ways.

While we may not be actively racist, those of us who have not been discriminated against because of our skin color have benefited from the current situation. Have you ever worried about your skin color when applying for a job, asking for a bank loan, or being pulled over by a police officer? If those of us who are not facing discrimination because of our race remain silent regarding the disparities and injustice in our culture, we become complicit to them.

We need to reach out and support our black brothers and sisters. Jesus' Great Commandment calls us to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. If someone is hurting, we should do what we can to help, regardless of whether we caused that situation or not. We are called to let people know they are not alone and that we, as fellow children of God, care about them.

By putting the words "Black Lives Matter" on our sign/social media we are reaching out to our black brothers and sisters as a community of faith, letting them know we care and stand in solidarity with them.

If you have questions and concerns we, as your pastors, invite you to share them with us, so together we can grow closer to Christ.

Mark, Jenny, and Chris

New Youth Sunday School Series

Our youth group has begun a new Sunday School series for the summer on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Youth grades 6-12 (including rising 6th graders) are invited to attend via Zoom. Find more information at fumcor.org/youth.

Congratulations to

Jennifer Kidd Brashears and Pablo Salizar in their marriage on June 6. Jennifer is the daughter of Gary and Rhonda Kidd.

Our Prayers

Personal information removed for privacy

In Loving Memory

Harris Moeller

who joined FUMC on October 7, 1996, and died on June 2.

We extend love and sympathy to his wife Lisa, children Andy, Jason, Caroline, and James and mother-in-law Dolores Lowry.

Martha Denton

who joined FUMC on August 19, 1984, and died on May 23. We extend love and sympathy to her family and friends.

In Sympathy

We extend love and sympathy to Debbie, Harold, and David Clark in the death of Debbie's mother, Clarice Braatz, on June 3.

Our Gifts

Offering this Week	\$30,724
2020 Year to Date	\$663,334
2019 Year to Date	\$609,553
Monthly Special Offering	\$410

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

A Successful Food Pantry Collection



FUMC was a collection point for the Anderson County Food Pantry drive May 26—June 7. We collected about 1,400 items, including 480 cans of fruit and vegetables, 275 cans of meat and tuna, 163 boxes of mac & cheese, as well as diapers, cereal, cleaning supplies, etc. The United Way of Anderson County will coordinate the distribution of all items to established area pantries, including Grace Lutheran, St. Mary's, First Baptist, Unitarian Universalist Church, and Roane State.

Thank you, Church, for helping to stock these pantries again.

A special thank you to Kathy and Scott Gillenwaters, Martha Prazniak, Debbie Shepherd, Laurel Williams, and the FUMC staff for helping to sort all these items. We thank Naomi Asher and The United Way for giving us this opportunity to serve our community. We are blessed.



1350 Oak Ridge Turnpike
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Return Service Requested

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

Calling Our Homebound Members

As the isolation caused by COVID-19 continues, we are looking for more people to call the homebound members of our congregation. If you are willing to care for your neighbor by making just a few calls a week, please contact Donna Fairchild (nonnafair0730@gmail.com, 806.1027) or Jenny Caughman (jcaughman@fumcor.org). Thank you!

Traditional Worship Services Transcripts Available

Would you like to have a copy of the prayers, scripture readings, and sermon used each Sunday during this pandemic quarantine? Our staff will be happy to mail each week's transcript to your home, so even if you cannot watch our online worship services, you can enjoy written copies of them. Please contact the church office (483.4357) if you are interested.

June Special Offering: YWCA of Anderson County

The YWCA of Anderson County provides court advocacy and housing services, violence prevention, and education programs for victims of domestic violence. So far this year, YWCA provided housing for at least 39 women and 54 children.

In 2019 the YWCA of Anderson County was awarded grant money for two new programs.

- The "Game Changers Program," which helps middle school boys understand domestic violence and how to prevent domestic violence.
- A supervised visitation center for victims of domestic violence and their families, allowing an "abusive" parent to visit their children in a very controlled setting.

Please note "Special Monthly Offering" on your check, or indicate SMO if you give via other means.

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.