

First Things

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The Shift to Virtual Youth Ministry

In March when the church building closed, our church ministries had to shift swiftly to a virtual format. As weeks and months passed and we realized that the shift was more long-term than anyone expected, our life as a community settled into new patterns.

This shift initially came with a significant amount of grief for the youth ministry at FUMC because several events had to be canceled—a lock-in, a retreat, an end-of-school party, and Jr. and Sr. High Assembly. Thankfully, the youth of our church have great amounts of technological aptitude and adaptability. It's true that young people are resilient and can adjust to just about anything.

We began meeting for youth group virtually on Zoom and playing online games together. Some of the favorites have been Jackbox games and Skribbl (like Pictionary, online). What was surprising was that some new people appeared at online youth group who hadn't previously attended our in-person gatherings. Some youth who had perhaps been too nervous to attend before or youth without transportation *thrived* at online youth group! This discovery opened the door to many new possibilities for youth ministry in general, not just during life-altering pandemics.

Now that a strange summer break has passed us by and school has resumed, our online youth ministry has settled into a rhythm. Sunday school arrives each week via YouTube so that it can be accessed anytime, especially for those who like sleeping in. We have a virtual youth loft (a.k.a. an open Zoom meeting) where youth can check in after school to chat. And, the biggest part of the week, as before, is still youth group every Wednesday nights where we have a devotion, play some games, and share prayer requests.

It's not the same as in-person ministry, and it's going to be shocking to see how much everyone in the youth group has grown in past months when our church finally reopens. However, two bright spots of hope have manifested this year, and that's what we can keep holding on to:

- Online youth ministry can be a beneficial addition to in-person youth ministry because it is more inclusive to socially anxious youth or youth without transportation, and
- Our church ministries have continued and relationships have deepened in our church during this time, despite the circumstances. Community is a powerful force!

Virtual Communion

In an effort to help everyone feel closer to God, grow in our faith, and trust that God is indeed with us, FUMC pastors will be offering a live, virtual communion service each Thursday at noon. Participants are encouraged to have some bread and juice or wine with them at the start of the service. Liturgy will be available on the screen. Please join us for this sacred time by going to the Virtual Chapel on our website (fumcor.org).

Contemplative Prayer

Contemplative Prayer is a means of opening ourselves up to God by creating a quiet opportunity where we invite God to speak to us. This group meets each Tuesday at 12:00 p.m. and practices two forms of contemplative prayer. At 12:15 p.m., we engage in Lectio Divina which is a means of turning to scripture to hear God's voice. Following Lectio Divina we engage in 20 minutes of Centering Prayer. For more information contact Rev. Jenny Caughma (jcaughman@fumcor.org).

Helpers Needed for Food for Kids

Although in-person worship is currently prohibited, our Bishop is allowing ministries that supply food to people in need to take place, as long as participants follow rigid safety protocols. Our Wednesday Community Meal is an example of such a ministry.

Our congregation has now been approved to re-launch the Food for Kids ministry, which gathers workers one day a month to fill bags with food for students in the Oak Ridge school system who are "food insufficient" on the weekends. Our first Food for Kids workday will be Monday, September 14. If you are interested in helping with this vital ministry and willing to follow a strict mask, glove, and distancing protocol, contact Cara Weigel (rcweigel@comcast.net).

Needed: Passionate People About Recovery Ministries

Last month, the leaders of our congregation began discussing the possibility of beginning a 12-step "recovery" ministry similar to others in the region. These mid-week ministries usually offer participants an evening meal, a worship service, and support groups that focus on such areas as substance/alcohol abuse, anger issues, sexual integrity, anxiety, PTSD, co-dependency, and family support. The next step in our exploration is to find out if there is enough interest among church members and friends to supply the necessary number of volunteers a weekly ministry such as this would require. If you are interested in learning more about this ministry or have a passion for recovery work, please contact Pastor Mark (mflynn@fumcor.org).

Grief Support Group

The Grief Support Group will meet for eight weeks on Mondays via Zoom, September 21-November 9 from 5:00-6:30 p.m., led by Steve Herbes. To sign up, contact Jenny Caughman (jcaughman@fumcor.org).

Changes to our Phone System

Since our building has been closed, the church staff has had the opportunity to upgrade parts of our communications network. This process is currently taking place and will be ongoing this month. Occasionally, our phone system may be down or acting irregularly in the coming weeks. If you have an urgent need for the church staff, go to fumcor.org and click on the Leaders tab. Click on the picture of the staff member you want to contact to send an e-mail. Thank you for your patience as we implement these essential changes.

In Loving Memory

Doris Beams

who joined FUMC on March 15, 1954, and died on August 21.

We extend love and sympathy to her family and friends.

John Auxier

who joined FUMC on February 1, 2009, and died on August 27.

We extend love and sympathy to his wife, Mary Lou, and family.

In Sympathy

We extend love and sympathy to David, Susan, Abby, Bennett, and Blaise Ochs in the death of David's mother, Linda Ochs, on August 27.

Congratulations to

Troy, Christina, and Callen Forrester in the birth of their daughter and sister, Mallory Elise, on August 18.

Our Prayers

Personal information removed for privacy

Our Gifts

Offering this Week	\$12,438
2020 Year to Date	\$907,037
2019 Year to Date	\$919,173
August Special Offering	\$1,585

The Importance of Giving

COVID-19 has affected our lives in many ways and has greatly changed what we can and can't do. The "change" has made Bob and me realize even more how important our church and church family are to us. Not being able to worship together and check on members have been disconcerting for us. But we have also been reminded of how important it is to continue supporting the church. Making a monetary contribution to the church has never been a question for us. The church is such an important part of our lives that we feel called to always be "cheerful givers."

So, why be a "cheerful giver"? Stop and think of the many ways the church, its programs, staff, and group interactions have been such a meaningful part of your lives. FUMC has been central in our lives for over 57 years. We feel called to return a portion of our gifts to God and the church for the abundant blessings we have received. The more we have given to God, the more we have been blessed. We want to do our part in supporting all the wonderful programs, groups, services, and staff that make FUMC a great church. We are proud to be members of this fantastic congregation.

Bob and I hope that FUMC is a meaningful part of your life. Please join us in committing a portion of what God has given us, enabling the church to serve ourselves and others in a loving and meaningful way. If you are not a "cheerful giver", we challenge you to take a step in that direction as you consider what you can do for FUMC.

-Carolyn Henderson

Help Us Livestream Our Future Worship Services

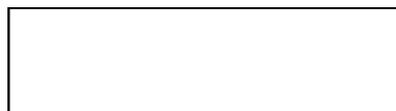
Like churches across the world, FUMC has discovered the importance of having high-quality video of our worship services available online. After months of providing such recordings, it is difficult for us to imagine our congregation *not* making such offerings available, even when we return to in-person worship. Our Church Council decided that having a livestream of our in-person worship (and a recording of those services afterwards) will be essential in the future. We may not know what the future holds, but we certainly can assume that online worship is here to stay...and is a way to connect to new families and a broader population.

We have begun purchasing and installing the equipment necessary to make this project a reality. The cost of the cameras, switchers, computers, installation, etc. is approximately \$61,000. We have already received a little over \$2,600. If you would like to contribute to this important ministry, please send in a donation to FUMC (memo: Livestream Ministry). Thank you for prayerfully supporting our congregation.



1350 Oak Ridge Turnpike
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Return Service Requested



Rosary Class Saturday

Join Pastor Mark for a Zoom Rosary Class on Saturday, September 5, at 6:00 p.m. Contact Mark (mflynn@fumcor.org) with questions or to receive a link.



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Virtual Mission Trip

Late Saturday night, the team "returned" from the first "Virtual Mission Trip to Honduras." FUMC was represented in the week-long virtual mission trip by Bob & Maxine Schultz. The virtual mission trip was sponsored by United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) and was organized by Rev. Tammy Kuntz, UMVIM-NCJ coordinator, and Milton Ilovares, Honduras Mission Coordinator. The event was a week-long adventure preceded by several planning and introduction sessions. The team gathered via Zoom each night (August 15-22) for a couple of hours and was comprised of 46 United Methodists from around the world including: Belize, Zambia, Columbia, Coted'Ivoire, and Honduras. It also included the District Superintendent, the Country Director, pastors from both churches that FUMC is in "In Mission Together," and a local journalist. Following the typical mission team structure, there were nine *Areas of Interest* in which to serve (Construction, Cultural Research, Devotions, Fundraising, Meals, Photography/Videography, Reading, Safety and Social Media). Each evening, following the general session, the participants broke into groups to discuss various issues related to their area of interest. The journalist, Cesar Rivera, provided the team with several videos and presentations showing the "native's" view of the country.

Honduras Mission now has three young doctors on staff and is anxiously awaiting the time when teams can resume travel. Honduras is still on lockdown/curfew, so travel within the country is very limited. The hierarchy of the church now has all of the pastors connected via Wifi, so they are able to communicate and have training sessions.

Overall, it was an interesting experience. Maxine & I ended up being the resource people for how teams really did things for the general group and especially for our *Area of Interest Groups*).

Grace & Peace - Bob & Maxine Schultz