

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ to Transform the World

First United Methodist Church

June 2020



A Message From Pastor Brad

Dear Church Family,

I trust you are doing well and staying healthy during this extended situation we find ourselves in. This pandemic has created a myriad of issues. Like you, I'm praying God will clear this deadly coronavirus out so we can get back to some sense of "normalcy".

I wanted to write this letter to update you on where we are at this point. While "where we are going" in the weeks and months ahead is not fully known, I ask you to continue praying for both wisdom and faith as we navigate these uncharted waters together.

There is such an odd feeling walking through the various empty rooms in the church, especially the Sanctuary that was often filled with people worshiping God and hearing the Word, but it's all very quiet now. I miss the music, the singing, but mostly the fellowship.

Many of the Psalms are quite encouraging, and my mind often goes to Psalm 27:14: (NIV) *"Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait confidently for the LORD."*

While all of us might honestly say that our patience is wearing a bit thin, I would ask you to keep your confidence in the Lord as you navigate these uncertain times. Trust in God.

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Letter from Pastor Brad continued

Many are now watching our Sunday worship Livestream via Facebook or YouTube. If you are one of our online watchers, thank you for taking the time to watch. Make sure you use the comment section to say hello to all the other people worshipping with you.

It has also been encouraging to know that so many of you continue to remain faithful in your giving. Again, we ask you to take advantage of the online giving capabilities found on our website: firstumonline.org. But also feel free to mail in your tithes and offerings.

The current NYS Covid guidelines have included places of worship in Phase 4 of the reopening process. The current restrictions also prohibit any public gathering of more than ten people. This obviously makes in-person worship nearly impossible at this time.

The church Trustees are working diligently to put additional safety measures in place, such as removing unnecessary furniture, intensive cleaning of the building, removing hymnals and Bibles from the sanctuary, posting safety guidelines, creating directional signage, etc. We thank them for their efforts and also appreciate the ongoing work of the Church Council.

Our current plan is to reopen the church building for worship when the allowed public gathering size has been increased to 50 people AND all the required safety policies are in place. Be aware that those policies right now include that everyone wears a mask (including the pastor), no congregational singing allowed, no handouts, no fellowship time and assigned seating. Church will certainly be different when we can gather again.

But we are so thankful for the technology which allows us to be spiritually together now. Join us for online worship every Sunday at 10 AM. No mask required and you can sing!

We will meet again soon! Remember God loves you! We love you and miss you too!

If there is anything we can do to minister to you, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Brad C.



Grief: Isolation vs. Community

~Deacon Becky

Genesis 2:18

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

From the beginning of human existence, God saw fit to create us in community—first with Adam and Eve, then children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and beyond. Isolation was never God's intent. Yet, this is where we find ourselves today.

Isolation...lockdown...quarantined...separate...minimum 6' apart. What a time to be alive!

But, we read in Genesis 2 that we are not supposed to be isolated from one another. We are to be in community; to care for one another; to grow in love for one another; to be present for one another as God is all these manifestations to us. If the definition for *isolation* is 'far away from everyone or everything else', then we are not upholding the model that God has in mind for humans. In fact, this is the total opposite of what God calls for in living a holy life. So, what is it that we need to look at that we are missing in this time of isolation/separateness that may help us to see God in our midst?

The first lesson is found in Matthew 11:28-29: *Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*

God knows that we are weary after several months of disconnection. God knows that we need rest for our souls. Our hearts are broken and our bodies are feeling the need for physical hugs and warmth rather than 'virtual' hugs and warmth. Jesus invites us to leave our weary bodies and hearts to him so that we feel the love and protection of God—the true source of contentment.

The second lesson is found in Romans 12:2: *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

We are already hearing about people who have no self-control roaming the streets and shops without protection for self or others. We are already hearing of group gatherings to force change before humans are safely ready to do so. The time has not been declared 'safe' for us to travel freely. We live in a 'free nation' under restriction. For some, this is intolerable. The news continually updates us on the number of exposed, infected, and dying. Yet, we push for open homes, open businesses, and open borders as soon as possible. Specialists can only conjecture the future if we move too soon. The time **will** come when we will be released from our isolation.

We will have the freedom to move through the streets and shops with/without protection.

The question for us will be do we follow the world or do we tread lightly asking God's discernment on what is "good and acceptable and perfect"? The Good News is that we are not left to make this important decision on our own. We do not need to conform to the world's frantic desire to be released from this situation. We can ask for God to show us the path of perfection in all things, including release from this isolation. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul tells us "the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." Love, kindness, and self-control jump out to me as behaviors fitting

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Deacon Becky continued

Christians in this time of isolation. Yes, we all want things to return to a time of gathering together in groups, freely moving outside our homes without worry. But having love for and being kind to our neighbors who are vulnerable and showing self-control speak to a belief in the sanctity of life and our desire for the best for others as well as ourselves. God has a plan for all to be safe if we but consider these fruits our call to justice for our families, our neighbors, our communities, and our world.

The third lesson is found in Proverbs 3: 27-28: *Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back tomorrow and I'll give it to you"—when you already have it with you.*

As Christians, our hearts ache for those who are impacted by the pandemic. Living in a time of isolation can seem daunting when thinking about ministry to the needy. What is it that you would like to do? The author of Proverbs 3 indicates that we have the power to take action for good. For Christians, from whom does this power come? God, of course! If you can envision it and it is for the good of humankind, God will help you make it a reality. There is no need to sit back and wait for 'tomorrow'. There are ways that we can support the poor and needy right now. God is actively giving you a vision—a vision that can change lives. If you hear a voice say, "but I'm unable to do anything because (fill in the blank)", God knows us intimately and has a plan for each of us—regardless of age or physical ability. The creation of 'community' in a time of isolation begins with stepping out in faith. Did you know that we have set aside monies to help those in need during this special time? Do you know someone who could use a gift to tide them over? Do you have a spiritual gift that offer support to someone in need? Step out in faith and ask God to bless you with discernment.

The message today is to transform isolation into community through releasing your burdens to Jesus, transforming your mind to the will of God, and taking the faithful step to act in the power of our Almighty God. May you find the blessings awaiting you in the name of Jesus.

April Visitation: Cards: 7; Phone calls: 46

Need to connect with Deacon Becky or Pastor Brad?

Please call the church number, 315-733-4227. You will be able to leave a message for them to get back to you.

Church Announcements are now available weekly by telephone. To access these announcements, call the church, 315-733-4227. Once you hear the recorded greeting, press "9". Wait and you will hear the recorded announcements read to you over the phone.

Food for Those Facing Job Loss during COVID-19

Team Vital at First UMC is getting ready for a second food distribution to reach those in need due to the economic downturn. We are inviting folks who want to contribute basic, kid-friendly varieties of canned soup, such as chicken noodle and tomato, and canned fruit. These may be dropped off in a bin outside the church Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. If you prefer to make a donation, mail or drop off a check in the mail slot to "First UMC", memo: "Team Vital Food Ministry". The distribution is 1-3 p.m., June 10, by drive-up only, first come, first serve. Please help get the word out to those you know who are furloughed or unemployed and need food assistance. Thanks for considering this way to help others who need the basics. Our goal is to impact 50 households with enough food to provide lunch for 4 people for 4 days.

Who is Working at Church? Is the Building Open?

The First UMC Clergy, Pastor Brad Chesebro and Deacon Becky Guthrie, are still working, but are doing so at home, except for the Sunday worship Livestream. ***We expect churches to open in Phase 4.*** However, your Church Council is working through meetings online to decide the ***safest option for everyone*** to return to in-person work and worship. Council Chair is Barry Damsky. Contact him through the church office, 315-733-4227. Watch this space for additional information. The Office Manager, Jennifer Terrell; Custodian, Jonathan Panzone; and Bookkeeper, Sue Bevins; are still working. Jennifer is working from home. All music staff and the nursery attendants are not working. At this time the building remains closed.

Worship, Exercise, Study take place:

Worship Livestream: 10 a.m. Sundays, firstumconline.org, click "Live Stream Links, View", then, "Online Links, First UMC YouTube, First UMC Facebook"

Faith, Fellowship and Fitness: 9 a.m. Saturdays, cgarrabr@roadrunner.com, for a link to join in online from your home. All women are welcome to take part.

Women's Bible Study: 10:30 a.m. Saturdays, benson@twcnny.rr.com, for a link.

Bible Study provided by Deacon Becky: Six Streams in the Life of Jesus -
<https://firstumconline.org/online-bible-study-1>

United Methodist Camping Ministries Stay On Pause this Summer

The current context of the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a very challenging decision for the Upper New York Camp & Retreat Ministries (UNY CRM) lead team.

After consultation with UNY CRM and several meetings with experts in the medical and camping fields, the UNY CRM lead team has decided to suspend all UNY-hosted summer programs at each of the CRM sites, including Aldersgate and Casowasco. While this is disappointing news for everyone, safety is not something the sites can confidently provide during this pandemic.

Read the full article on summer camp from UNY Conference Camp and Retreat Ministries:

<https://www.unyumc.org/news/article/important-announcement-regarding-uny-summer-camp-2020>

June Birthdays

8 - Jean Misiaszek

9 - Sue Timian

12 - Debbie Ash

14 - Roberta Woodruff

18 – Loren Ford

18 – Nancy Mason

18 – Mason Williams

20 – Kiley Cook

June Anniversaries

6 – Stewart and Elaine Irvin

13 – Ralph and Lois Humphreys

20 – David and Joyce Russell

24 – Norman and Joyce Burch

25 – Bob and Sara Porter

26 – Donald and Beverly Cantwell

26 – Dayton and Tosha Elseth

Soldier Care Packages

If you know someone who is active duty or deployed in the military effort and would like to add them to our prayer list, please send the soldier's name and rank to me. When your soldier is no longer in the military, please let me know so their name is taken off. If your soldier is deployed, send an overseas address and we would be happy to send monthly packages to him/her. Send to Peg at: newyorkoma@roadrunner.com

Those on active duty or deployed in the military effort:

Major Elissa Adams

Major Benjamin Adams

Pvt. Jesse Babicz

James Barker

SFC Brian Boyt

PFC David Guiterez

Jon Huff

Captain Patricia Linck McEaney

Rev Dr. Keith Manry

Sgt. Keenan Marin

SSgt. Simon Miguel-Romero

Tyrell Thompkins

Captain Schuyler Van Buren

Thank you all for your unwavering support. WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

A Word from Our Church Treasurer on Giving

During this unprecedented time of virtual, rather than in-person, church services due to the spread of COVID-19, we would like to encourage you to express your generosity electronically, rather than in person. There are two options for setting up a regular electronic donation to the church, either weekly semi-monthly, or monthly. The first is to visit our website at <https://firstumconline.org/giving-2>, scroll down to the "GIVE NOW" button, click or tap it and enter the information requested. The second is to complete the form included in this newsletter (find it on the next page) and drop it off or mail it in to the church office. We will input the information for you and return the form. For the past 10 years several of our church members have successfully supported our church this way. We use VANCO, a very secure Automated Clearing House endorsed by the United Methodist Church, for all of these transactions. The church is so grateful for your financial tithes and offerings to support the clergy, staff and building expenses. Please continue to be faithful to giving during this time as we thank God for continued faithfulness to us.

Jim Mason, Treasurer

Cell: (315) 269-9342/Email: james4748@adelphia.net

JOY Ministry Continues

The First United Methodist Church JOY Ministry provides caring, calls and outreach to individuals who are in need of these. During this time of stay safe, stay home, the JOY Ministry Team is still staying connected by sending cards, praying and making phone calls. The ministry occasionally provides other outreach as needed. If anyone needs calls or prayers, please contact the JOY Ministry Coordinator, Carole Gehrig, at 315-725-0315 or cgehrig_1@yahoo.com. We would love to include as many as possible within this outreach.

How to access the Livestream Worship Service:

Turn on your computer, tablet or smartphone and go to the church website: firstumconline.org. Click or tap the button that says, "Live Stream Links, View". You will be taken to a page that says, "Online Links, First UMC YouTube, First UMC Facebook". Click or tap either button to watch the worship service online. Note: You must have a Facebook account to watch on FB.



Authorization Form

New Hartford First United Methodist Church

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	ENVELOPE #	DATE
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Type of Authorization Form

New authorization Change banking/credit card information
 Change donation amount Discontinue electronic donation
 Change donation date

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Date of first donation: _____

Frequency of donation (please check only one)

Weekly - Mondays
 Semi-Monthly - 1st and 15th
 Monthly on the 1st
 Monthly on the 15th

Church fund designations and amounts:

General/Operating \$ _____
 Benevolence \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Special instructions: _____

CHECKING / SAVINGS

Please debit my donation from my (check one)

Savings Account (contact your financial institution for routing #)
 Checking Account (attach a voided check)

Routing Number _____
 Valid Routing # must start with 0, 1, 2, or 3

Account Number _____

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
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 CREDIT CARD

I authorize the above church and Venco Services, LLC to process debit entries to my account. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization.

Authorized Signature _____ Date _____

CREDIT CARD

Please charge my donation to my (check one) Visa MasterCard American Express Discover Card

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Billing Address (if different from above): _____

I authorize the above church and Venco Services, LLC to charge my credit card in accordance with the information above.

Signature (as it appears on the credit card): _____ Date _____