



First United Methodist Church of Dunnellon

April 2020

NEWSLETTER

FROM YOUR PASTOR

What a crazy March we have all participated in! In the NCAA basketball tournament, they call it March Madness. I think that name takes on a whole new meaning for the world today.

We are trusting that the lack of gathering in churches and many other community events throughout our country and world will begin to move this virus away from us. While being in this “Stay at Home” situation, hopefully you are logging into our online opportunities to stay up to date on church information, access sermons and devotions, and stay connected with our church family. You can stay connected through our church webpage at www.fumcdunnellon.org, from there you can also click on the Facebook, YouTube, Online Giving, and other various links.

We are now on Facebook with worship! We are posting devotions several times a week, and our weekly Sunday Worship. This is something we were going to start in about three months but with the issues at hand we have had to start immediately. We give a special thanks to our worship team leadership that has put this together for us. All of you have been so gracious and patient and a blessing as a community of believers.

Thank you also for remembering us with your weekly tithing. We have received checks mailed to the office, dropped off in the mail drop, as well as online giving. We know this is a difficult time for so many folks financially and you have been such a blessing to keep us at the forefront of your giving experience. The good Lord will bring us through these times together.

Blessings in Christ.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES by Don Gamache

Since January of 2020 the Trustees have been very active in trying to maintain and improve the campus and facilities of the Church. After much discussion and meetings with experts in the field, all of the lights in the Sanctuary have been changed over to LED. This should be a cost savings for the Church. The floors in all 3 buildings have been stripped waxed and buffed out to bring them back to what they should be. A roof over the playground is in the process of being completed. Steps and a hand rail are being installed between the Youth Bldg and Bldg 5. Also approved, but not yet started is a unisex restroom in Bldg 5.

Don't forget all Building Request Forms must be submitted to the office prior to coming to the Trustees.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS by Linda Jones

Harmony Preschool: The school is open for their regular attending children. Many of these parents are employed in areas that require them to stay on the job during this crisis. Harmony is taking every precaution to keep the children, parents and staff safe.

Harmony has been commended by the Early Learning Coalition of Marion County for our decision to stay open. VPK falls under the rules and regulations of the ELC and they changed the rule for absenteeism in VPK to allow the children to stay home during this time without penalty.

Harmony Preschool is an asset to our church and community. We have new young families in church and in our church programs through Harmony.

Many of Harmony staff help out in other areas of the church: Keeping the Sunday and Wednesday night nursery. Helping with the Wednesday night children's program, cooking one of the monthly Wednesday night meals and they participate in different programs during the year. Our staff are also an asset to the community, participating in many of the civic activities. Because they are so active and dedicated to their job, they keep a full attendance number with a waiting list.

Harmony has pledged a quarterly 10% tithe to the church in gratitude for all the support they have received. When they can they purchase their own groceries for their Wednesday night meal. They also offered a donation to VBS to help cover expenses.

Thank you Crystal (Director) and Alex (Asst. Director) and the great staff for your dedicated work and your caring heart for Harmony

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL by Irene Brugh

We were just beginning Lenten studies when we were interrupted. So, I ask parents to have a daily study with your children. The internet has many SS lessons with activities to help them remember what Easter is about... not bunnies and candy. I truly miss our children. Thank you all for your patience and diligence during this time of separation. May God bless you all.

FORGET-ME-NOT MINISTRY by Grace Burks

Praying that everyone is staying home and taking care of their loved ones. It is with a sad heart that we are cancelling The Forget Me Not Ministry, until we know the danger of spreading this dangerous virus, is over.

Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. --Matthew 6:34 (NRSV)

Whatever tomorrow brings, God will walk us through it. Hugs and Blessings to everyone!

LAY LEADER by Irene Brugh

During this stressful time, I urge all Sisters and Brothers in Christ to bombard Heaven with prayers of thanksgiving and petitions for all. I know that many of us miss our personal connection to each other and the church activities, and how lonely it can feel. Now is a lesson that church cannot be done without community, but use this time to build your relationship with the Lord. Contact friends and family often, making sure all needs are met. I also ask that everyone continue to support our church with your offerings, and send in your gifts as usual; but I might suggest we give to the General Fund instead of designating gifts at this time. Be fully confident our leaders will distribute all gifts where they are most needed at this time. We cannot neglect The Kingdom during a crisis like this; we want to return to a healthy church physically and financially. May the Lord bring you peace, comfort, mercy and grace. In Christ's love!

MISSION COMMITTEE by Rick DuCharme

Since the Missions Committee meeting of March 11, the Coronavirus has had a major effect on each of us and also on the missions we support as a church.

In **Honduras** for example, Bob Wood, Jr. reports that the whole country is under marshal law. There are no flights in or out of Honduras. The virus is rampant, and everyone is quarantined to their homes. Fortunately, Bob had distributed the food supplies to over one hundred families that regularly depend on this monthly blessing. Bob is expecting to receive more funds for food from a donor in Atlanta, but is not sure how suppliers will be able to deliver the food to him for distribution for April. Both the El Pino Bilingual school and the church are closed for now. His family's travel plans to attend his daughter Emily's April 24 wedding in Kentucky have been postponed, as have plans for the wedding.

In **Cuba**, Bishop Pereira ordered all Methodist churches closed. Pastor Yabay at our sister church in Cieneguita, Cuba, drafted a beautiful newsletter detailing how washing hands with soap and hot water kills germs, and specifically the Coronavirus. In the newsletter, he says the church is praying for all residents of Cieneguita and he invites all to congregate with the church when the church reopens. Yabay is hand delivering copies of this newsletter to all homes in Cieneguita. Church members are praying and fasting for the crisis to pass. The healthcare system in Cuba is not equipped to handle a mass outbreak of Coronavirus.

In Dunnellon, **Habitat for Humanity** coordinator Elizabeth Chryst, reported the Habitat for Humanity build in Dunnellon was underway with a successful raising of the walls on March 13th. Good coverage of the event appeared in the Riverland News. Since the virus outbreak, the build has been shut down until after Easter to resume construction. Volunteers with all skill levels will be needed from 7:30 to 12:30, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 19348 St. George Street in Dunnellon. Email Tyler Starr for more details or to volunteer TStarr@habitatocala.org. Also, Habitat for Humanity held another highly successful Strawberry Festival in Ocala with 40,000 in attendance. A Fourth of July Habitat fund raiser is tentatively scheduled at the Ernie Mills Park in Dunnellon.

For the **Hernando Homeless Connection**, Susie Phillips reported taking various supplies including tents and sleeping bags to the shelter. The feeding program continues every Friday. However, due to the virus, the homeless are being given meals in to-go boxes at the shelter entrance and are eating meals at the picnic tables outside.

Michelle-O-Gram: Sherry Roberts reported that various fund-raisers for M-O-G have been postponed due to the virus. The Michelle-O-Gram hog recently sold for \$13,295. This annual fund-raiser is done through an FFA student for sale at the county fair.

The Mission Highlight for the Month of April is the **Missionary Scholarship Fund**, which currently supports tuition for Emily Wood at Asbury college. Emily is the daughter of our Honduras Missionary Bob Wood, Jr. She is in her final year at Asbury. Our goal is to raise \$2,000 toward Emily's college tuition. Having been raised as a bi-lingual, missionary kid, Emily has a heart for teaching in the mission field.

Thanks to all who so lovingly support our church's many missions' programs.

PRAYER COMMITTEE by Patti Pott

Somebody Cares Prayer Box Ministry: We are pleased to announce that we now have 30 prayer boxes throughout our community. Note: I was in Ace Hardware today and they had moved the box to the very front of the checkout counter to make it more visible and accessible.

New Support Offered: We now have a Pet Parent Support Person on the team, Crystal Goins. Please email the prayer chain at prayers@fumcdunnellon.org if you would like her contact information for yourself or someone you know who is dealing with a pet's illness or death.

The Prayer Chain continues to receive positive feedback. We appreciate hearing from you, your feedback or suggestions.

PRAYER QUILT MINISTRY by Charlotte Eberhard

As result of the coronavirus we are not able to provide prayer quilts at the present time. When we are all able to go back to regular church services we will once again be happy to fulfill requests for a prayer quilt for a loved one, neighbor, friend etc. In the future we will have hand sanitizer available at the Welcome Center for everyone to use prior to tying a knot and signing the card. We will also be spraying the quilt with a disinfectant spray and letting it dry before taking the quilt down. Also, prayer quilts are machine washable and dryable if anyone has any concerns about spreading this virus.

We would like to thank the Country Quilters once again for making quilts and quilt tops for this ministry in the month of February. We would like to share this thank you note from Steven Schlei:

Dear Charlotte and Church Family,

I wanted to thank all of you kind sisters and brothers for making my beautiful prayer quilt. Your hard work and the many prayers said on my behalf are greatly appreciated. As I have said on numerous occasions, I feel so very blessed to be a part of this wonderful church. The many ministries of this congregation are truly a wonder to behold and an evidence of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

God bless all of you, and thank you for your continued prayer as God takes me on this journey toward the healing of my earthly tent. Love in Christ, Steven Schlei

Church Family,

I would like to thank my church family for all your prayers, cards, food, flowers, telephone calls, and visits following the passing of my dear husband, Carl, on March 4th. I especially want to thank Pastor Eddie for his visit and the last real conversation Carl had with anyone, Debbie Wright for being with me the last day of his life and coming as soon as he passed, and Irene Brugh, Tiny Weimert, Linda Topper, Suzanne Eno, and Barbara Uhlinger for their visits at a time when my family is unable to come and comfort me. I have postponed the memorial service until it is safe for the whole family to travel from Canada. Charlotte Eberhard

SECOND LIFE THRIFT SHOP by Dot Chadwick

The Thrift Store is closed due to Covid-19 Pandemic warnings effective 3/16/20 until further notice.

Our new Administrative leaders, Cathy Bashore, Diane Takahashi, and Gail Ward, took over leadership of the

shop effective January 1st, 2020, and are doing an outstanding job. They have agreed to lead the shop until such time as we are able to find a ministry minded Shop Manager.

LOOKING FOR A MINISTRY MINDED SHOP MANAGER: We are praying that the Lord will lead us to the right combination of a person that has a passion for the ministry of leading the Thrift Shop and that we might be able to pay a small salary.

VOLUNTEERS: Thankfully, in February, we have had some new volunteers, including several men, which is a blessing. Once we reopen, we will continue to seek additional volunteers.

THRIFT SHOP DONATIONS: Effective 3/16/20 we are suspending Thrift Shop Donations until further notice due to the Pandemic and possible exposure to the virus.

CLEANING AND REARRANGING THE THRIFT SHOP: During the closure of the shop, the leaders (and cashiers have also pitched in) have begun cleaning and rearrangement of the Thrift Shop. They are doing a great job and the shop really looks nice. We have purchased several new clothes racks and had an opportunity to purchase a very nice lighted jewelry case.

THRIFT SHOP REOPENING: We will, as soon as the health restrictions are lifted and we can safely reopen the shop without concern for the safety of our employees and volunteers, reopen the Thrift Shop. In the meantime, we lift our voices in prayer for guidance and protection for everyone.

SEWING FOR SOULS by Jolynn Peart

Sewing for souls is currently making face masks for Hospice, nursing homes and other medical staff to help cover the major shortage of disposable ones. All members are pitching in sewing, cutting them out and ironing. We are also continuing to make Quillows for veterans pinning ceremonies at Hospice of Marion County.

STEPHEN MINISTRY by Irene Brugh

Due to the requirements for social distancing, our Stephen Ministers are using our Telecare training to keep in contact with our Care Receivers. I ask all Stephen Ministers to go to your manuals to review that unit to aid you. Also continue to read our book, "Christian Care Giving" so we can resume that study when we are able to meet again. Until then, keep in touch with each other for encouragement, support, and pray for everyone involved in this ministry, especially Pastor Eddie...he has a greater burden. God bless you all.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN by Sue Herrala

Our Health Study was cancelled until a later date. All is calm and peace be with you 'til we meet again.