



## First United Methodist Church of Dunnellon

June 2020

### NEWSLETTER

#### FROM YOUR PASTOR

*If my people which are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray... (2.Chronicles 7:14).*

I do believe that God's people are praying more now than we have in a long, long time. What a crazy Spring we have been through. Who'd ever thought we would not be having "in person" church for months. Who'd thought all the restaurants, theme parks, traveling, and sports activities would all be closed down. The whole world has been turned upside down. There are so many voices in the media, that it's very difficult to discern who has wisdom and who is pushing an agenda.

Can the Lord possibly do something good even in this time? Romans 8:28 says all things will work together for good for those who love the Lord, those called according to his purpose. Therefore, since we are Bible believers, God will be working His amazing love through His mysterious ways even in this era of COVID-19.

What that will look like for us individually and corporately as a church, I am really not quite sure. You have all been so faithful to worship along with your sisters and brothers virtually for a number of weeks. Our goal is to continue to offer that when we do have in person worship again. Hopefully that will be very soon.

We are seeing many different churches opening their doors in a very careful way, but the leadership of the Florida Annual Conference is taking a very, very cautious approach which has kept us from opening our doors. Thank you so much for keeping your pastor and leadership under your constant prayers, for it is very hard sometimes to submit to leadership when you disagree. God still has a hand in this though!

We have tried some online (Zoom) bible studies and we give a special thanks to those who have been involved. We have continued our mission and ministry focus. We have championed taking care of little children, because the state asked us to even during this time of isolation. You have helped us make it through this time by mailing in your tithing to us, or given online, and I can't thank you enough for that and hope you will continue as the Lord moves us forward.

General Conference has been moved to next year and our 2020 clergy session for annual conference is being held virtually. All of these changes have an effect on us and all other Methodists in very complicated ways. May God give grace and strength and peace to us in the midst of the storms that we endure each and every day. May He encourage us to stand strong for our virtues in our faith and at the same time be peace loving and considerate of others we agree and disagree with.

For those of you who have lost loved ones during this season, I would love to lead a memorial service and put all the leaves on our memorial tree. If you are interested, please contact the church office.

Finally, I encourage you to find several Bible verses that are sustaining for this season of your life. For me they are Isaiah 40:31, where the prophet says they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.... Exodus 14:13 where Moses, as they are about to cross the Red Sea, told the people of God to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. And Philippians 4:4-9, where the apostle tells us to rejoice in the Lord always and again, I say rejoice...

Thank you again for being the family of God right here in Dunnellon and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and help you become an even greater part of the family of God today.

#### CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS by Linda Jones

*Wednesday Night Children's Ministry:* We will resume when we can come back to church. Check out the new sign on the children's portable. Can you guess where the idea came from? LOL

*Harmony Preschool:* We want to let you know how much we miss the church members and all of the church activities. We have continued to remain operational since the start of Covid-19, with state restrictions, providing care for our essential workers. Our hours have changed temporarily from 7am-3:30pm to accommodate the restrictions that were placed by the government. We will continue closing at 3:30 for the month of June but expect to return to regular hours on July 1st.

We currently have a staff member on a full-time cleaning schedule. We've restricted the classrooms to be no more than 10 individuals per classroom, and we've limited foot traffic within the building by placing the sign in desk outside the front entryway. We've also canceled any events that would accumulate a large amount of people.

On a more positive note, we did not lose many students and have acquired a lengthy waiting list. We've also taken the time to revamp the preschool by painting all the classrooms with a fresh coat of paint, deep cleaned the carpets and general spring cleaning within the building. We are anticipating our renewal inspection from the Department of Children and Families in June, and are expecting it to go well!

We hope everyone is doing well and staying healthy and we hope to get back to normal soon.

### **MISSION COMMITTEE** by Rick DuCharme

The Coronavirus pandemic has not stopped Missions Committee activities. The committee has met at the regular times in April and May using the Zoom computer application.

In *Honduras*, Bob Wood, Jr. reports that the whole country is still under martial law. The virus is rampant, and people are allowed to leave their homes, once every two weeks based on their national ID number. Bob has been able to distribute the food supplies to over one hundred families that regularly depend on this monthly blessing. Both the El Pino Bilingual School and the church are closed, but teachers prepare lessons for two weeks in advance, and deliver them to students on their designated day out. Bob gave an update on the Honduras Mission in a video at the May 31 services. Honduras is the Mission highlight for June.

In *Cuba*, Pastor Yabay, at our sister church in Cieneguita, has distributed four newsletters since the virus outbreak. He is also producing weekly videos of his sermons, copying that to thumb drives, and with help of his four missionaries, he distributes the drives to the homes of church members to watch on television. This is an arduous process, but Pastor Yabay will not be stopped in delivering the Word to his flock. Church members have also planted a large community garden behind the new church facility. This will be a blessing to members and others in the community who suffer food shortages.

In *Kenya*, ZOE has purchased hand washing stations for the homes of each member of the program. ZOE students are leaders in their communities in bringing information regarding the spread of Corona virus. Our group, in their first year of their three-year training, are in need of funds for their start-up businesses. Any donations should be designated, ZOE.

In Dunnellon, *Habitat for Humanity* coordinator Elizabeth Chryst, reported the Habitat for Humanity build in Dunnellon is back underway. Volunteers with all skill levels are needed from 7:30am to 12:30pm, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 19348 St. George Street in Dunnellon. Email Tyler Starr for more details or to volunteer [TStarr@habitatocala.org](mailto:TStarr@habitatocala.org).

*Hernando Homeless Ministry/Connections*, Susie and Mike Phillips continue to deliver tents and sleeping bags to the shelter. The feeding program continues every Friday. If you would like to help with the meal delivery contact Susie Phillips. 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.

*Jesus Is Ministry*, underwent a food shortage in April, but members of our church along with designations from the Missions Committee's undesignated funds met the needs to replenish the food supplies of this important ministry.

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

### **HERNANDO HOMELESS MINISTRY** by: Mike and Susie Phillips

Mike and I want to tell everyone how much we appreciate your continued support during this difficult time in our lives. During the shutdown of our church we have had some heartwarming donations to the ministry. The homeless still need our help with food and camping supplies.

In March I spoke to Ginger West, CCFRC, as to the procedures feeding the homeless. Connections was offering take out only - the clients were not allowed to come into the facility. Because of the pandemic two churches had to step back for a while and she said Connections would continue to provide food for as long as possible. Through your generous donations we are able to provide additional food to help feed God's children.

I periodically check with Ginger as to their needs regarding camping supplies. Last month they needed tents and sleeping bags. We purchased three tents, four sleeping bags (all Walmart had) and have also purchased eight sleeves of take-out boxes.

On Monday, May 4th, Connections opened their doors to permit the homeless back into the facility. They only allow five in at a time to eat. They still use the take-out boxes we gave them so they can take food back to their living quarters.

We are now purchasing the food from Publix in Dunnellon. The Deli Manager has been so helpful working with us. When we order the food, she suggested we request catering pricing as this is less expensive. We check out at the Service Center and they have our church in their books as "Tax Forgiven" status.

The new sign-up sheets for July through December are now at the Welcome Center. I have also updated the procedures handout.

**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.

A prayer quilt may be requested by filling out the form in the black notebook in the narthex or by calling Charlotte Eberhard, 352-465-7330 or Laura Rutkowski, 352-465-0527.

We hope to be able to resume our monthly meetings on July 9th, the 2nd Thursday of each month from 9AM - 11AM.

**SEWING FOR SOULS & UGLY QUILTS** by Jolynn Peart

*Sewing for Souls* have been very busy during this quarantine. A large group of volunteers have been sewing at home making 200 + masks, scarves and matching cancer ports pillows, walker bags, knit hats fleece hats and quillows. Our items have been given to RBOI oncology center, Florida Cancer Center in Lecanto, Hospice Marion county, and Timber Ridge.

We all have had a challenge getting supplies (elastic has been our biggest) and your donations have been FABULOUS which is why we could accomplish what we did. Thank you!

*Ugly Quilts* has been on pause since we are unable to do them at home.

**UNITED METHODIST WOMEN** by Sue Herrala

Since March all UMW circle meetings and special programs have been cancelled. We will be awarding scholarships to graduating seniors who are continuing their education. Seniors should submit a letter to UMW.