



First United Methodist Church of Dunnellon
DECEMBER 2020
NEWSLETTER

FROM YOUR PASTOR

Blessings in the name of Jesus Christ as we approach Christmas during the Advent Season. Neither COVID-19, nor the hurricanes, nor the political unrest can keep us away from Christmas celebration. Jesus is born and the incarnation is real and He is on the throne, praise the Lord!

Toward the end of November we've had a variety of meetings in preparation for not only the end of this year, but also 2021. We have decided at this time not to start back the Wednesday night dinners, but we do encourage folks to come out to the Thursday afternoon 3:00 p.m. worship service. We will be adding some of our lay speakers in the future for testimonies as well as others in the church. We are hoping and praying that by the spring of 2021 there will be more normalcy in our church community and our world.

We are starting a new program called Pastoral Stewards. These volunteers will be calling folks who are currently not comfortable being in church to see if they would like us to bring them communion. These Stewards will bring the local church news, as well as denominational news, and have prayer with them. These Stewards will meet with me on a regular basis for the information and consecration of the elements before they are taken out.

We will continue this month and going into the first of the year to have three Sunday morning worship services at eight, nine and 11. The 8 o'clock service will remain a communion service with the liturgy and a devotional message. We are very excited about having special worship services coming in December. See Worship Committee report below.

Each year I ask the congregation to join me in blessing our staff. We have done this for a number of years. These funds do not go to your pastor :-). The donations are divided equally among those that serve our great church. Please designate your gifts and have them to the Church by Sunday, December 20th. Thank you ahead of time for making this bonus at the end of each year a special blessing.

I also want to give you an update on our denominational connection. General Conference is still expected to be the end of August and first of September 2021. There is a possibility it may be virtual, although they're going to do everything they can to have an in person experience. It is still on the agenda for the Protocol to be presented and it is believed it will be passed. This will give the denomination an opportunity to have a new denomination form that is a more traditional one. We continue as a church to be a member of the Wesley Covenant Association and they are doing the underwriting for this new conference.

I plan to give an update, when there is one, at the Thursday 3:00 p.m. worship experience. The message on Thursdays is always on the Holy Spirit. We share the Nicene creed, intercessory prayers and make an offering for the J dollars which goes to the homeless ministry. There will be opportunities in the new year to end that service from time to time with testimonies from our lay speakers and others in the congregation that might have a word of the Lord to share with us. I would encourage you to join us. I continue to send out the texting devotional from the Upper Room each Monday morning. If you would like to join, contact the office and give us your cell number. We continue to encourage you to check out our webpage and if you go to the Pastors Corner, I have some of the BullyWink bullfrog stories that you can read and enjoy and some of the Bully Wink Lego comics as well.

I want to give a special thanks to our administrative leaders for bringing us through, under God's direction, in 2020. They have met a number of times in meetings, planning today and our future as well. Their volunteer hours are outstanding and their faithfulness to God is wonderful. We are fortunate to have their leadership in this time. Since we cannot all get together, we can still experience good strong leadership in the Methodist tradition.

I want to express a special thanks to all of you that submitted ideas for us to raise revenue or to save resources because of the need of more financial means as we face the pandemic. One area we have capitalized on is only using the sanctuary for Wednesday night and Thursday services. All other programs have been moved to other locations throughout the week, so that we might be good stewards of all of our resources.

We want to get the word out as well that every Thursday morning there is a virtual Bible study using Zoom that any of you are welcome to join. Simply contact Mrs. Irene Brugh or Mr. Rick DuCharme, to get set up to be a part of that program. When you are unable to attend in-person worship and Bible study, this may be the next best way.

We are so looking forward to the special Christmas programs this year and hopefully we can upload some of these for those of you that are not able to be there. Our Christmas cantata from our chancel choir will be wonderful and the "Night of Joy," that is coming up with different groups singing unto the Lord will be such a blessing. Thank you again for being a part of this wonderful congregation and praying for one another and giving to the Kingdom of God so that we might be all that the good Lord has called us to be. Blessings!

FAMILY MINISTRY by: Jennifer Nemetch

Trunk or Treat was a huge success! We had a great turnout for decorated trunks. Approximately 21 cars. There was a large crowd of trick or treaters. The families that showed up to trick or treat this year were extremely appreciative and expressed it to us over and over. This is a great outreach to our community and they really look forward to it every year. Thanks so much to those who participated and to everyone who donated candy.

The Adam and Eve class, Youth Group and the Children's Ministry group will be starting back up every Wednesday night at 6:00 pm starting on January 6th 2021. There will not be a meal, but we will meet for Bible Study as a group and then split up into children/youth/parents for individual studies.

We will be working on measures to keep everyone as safe as possible. Regular Wednesday night church service is not starting back yet.

HERNANDO HOMELESS MINISTRY by: Mike and Susie Phillips

Mike and I say thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your continued generosity. This mission is so blessed by our church family.

At this month's Missions Meeting I found out we had more funds than I realized!! I immediately called the Resource Center and asked if they needed any tents, tarps or sleeping bags. Leslie said, "All of the above." I went to Walmart and purchased what they had in the size tents they need: 3 tents, 3 tarps and 6 sleeping bags and delivered them Monday.

Tom Tarkenton, Happy Feet, once again offered us money to purchase shoes for the Resource Center. They ranged in size from Toddlers to size 13 and 14. I purchased 11 pairs of shoes and four packages of socks. Mike and I delivered them to the Resource Center.

A gentleman, who lives in Citrus County, got in touch with Pastor about a nonprofit Preschool in St. Petersburg that had shut down in the spring because of Coronavirus and when they tried to reopen this summer, they had lost their funding from United Way. This school had been in operation since 1942. In January Mary Gray, Executive Director, would have been celebrating 32 years with the school. Mary felt led to give all their school supplies and clothes to a worthy cause in Citrus County. Pastor gave me her name and phone number. Needless to say, I knew of just the place in Citrus County that can use these items.

This gentleman was going down to pick the items up, but he fell ill this week. At the UMM meeting this week, Ken Korey (and Jeanie) and Johnny Jones stepped up and volunteered to go down and pick up the items and bring back to the Friendship Hall.

Since CCFRC is not taking donations right now except for Christmas items, Mike and I made a delivery of blankets to The Path in Inverness and five boxes of clothes to Jesus Is. In 2019 the Resource Center provided Christmas to 2,280 children in Citrus County. That is why they have to limit their acceptance of donations to Christmas items. ALL HANDS ON DECK to make the Christmas deadline.

I called the Resource Center about the St. Petersburg Preschool and they are taking the new toys, new undies and new back packs with supplies. They were thrilled to hear of this donation.

MISSION COMMITTEE by: Rick DuCharme

The Missions Committee has continued to meet throughout the Coronavirus pandemic. Here is the latest news.

In *Honduras*, Bob Wood Jr. reports Hurricane ETA did significant damage in Honduras. The five bridges between El Pino and La Cieba were washed out. Hurricane Iota struck Honduras and Nicaragua Tuesday Nov. 17. Fortunately, El Pino is on a hill so there was no major flooding in El Pino. Bob and his family are well. Many homes lost tin roofs, but Bob's home was not damaged. They were without power for several days, but are back on line, and will resume online school for the families who are able to connect. The Coronavirus remains bad throughout the country. Bob continues to distribute food that is purchased with available funds.

In *Cuba*, Pastor Yabay reports all is well in Cieneguita. Hurricane ETA passed over Cuba Saturday Nov. 7; leaving minor damage and flooding, but none at the church. Pastor Yabay has initiated a cafeteria following some services. The small profits help the church treasury and provide an opportunity for the service of talented church members.

Recently the church began providing lunches for four elderly. They continue receiving new worshippers at Sunday services, mostly from the three outlying missions. Sunday School is going well and they are continuing to develop church leaders through a leadership course.

Habitat for Humanity coordinator Elizabeth Chryst, reported that the Habitat home in Dunnellon, for Diane (who works at Dollar General), will be blessed Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Diane is beyond excited to be in her first home by Christmas. Her son, career Army, may come to spend the holidays now that she has room. The second home, next door on George Street, had a wall raising for Mrs. Glover last weekend. She is raising her two grandchildren.

Happy Feet, Coordinator Tom Tarkenton reported that 61 pairs of shoes have been bought so far for this school year.

Connections Homeless Shelter See Hernando Homeless Ministry report above.

Michelle-O-Gram coordinator Sherri Roberts reported \$3,540 was contributed from Marion County Foundation's Day of Giving event.

PRAYER QUILT MINISTRY

by: Charlotte Eberhard

Prayers and Squares members meet at Friendship Hall on the 2nd Thursday of each month (unless notified differently) from 9 – 11 AM. New members are always welcome. Fabrics, batting and patterns are available at the meeting. We will also do the cutting out of a pattern for you, layer a quilt and assist new quilters.

Due to the size of our congregation it is impossible for us to automatically make a quilt for each person who is ill or hospitalized. Prayer quilts are made on request. A black notebook with information sheets to request a quilt for a friend or loved one is located at the Welcome Center in the Narthex. A prayer quilt may also be requested by calling Charlotte Eberhard at 352-465-7330 or Laura Rutkowski at 352-465-0527.

Prayer shawls and scarves are available for those who have a new health issue and have already received a prayer quilt. FUMC shepherds may take one to their lambs. These are in the cabinet beside the coffee machine in Friendship Hall. Cards and bags are available to go with them. There is an updated list of church attendees who have received a prayer quilt in the cabinet. Please write the name of the person in the notebook provided.

Following CDC guidelines due to the COVID-19 virus we ask that each person use the hand sanitizer provided in the Narthex before tying a knot and signing the card. Clean pens are available in a container by the prayer quilts. After using a pen place it in the used basket at the Welcome Center to be sanitized. Prayer quilts will be sprayed with a disinfectant before taken down and placed in the blue bag for the recipient. All prayer quilts are machine washable and dryable. Please use the gentle cycle on your machine with cold water.

We celebrated our 18th year as a ministry of this church in November and have distributed 1,739 quilts over these past years.

We would like to share a thank you note received from Debbie Regener, Liz Martynowski's sister-in-law.

"Dear Members of the Prayer Quilt Ministry,

Thank you so much for the delightful quilt. I appreciate the time and talent it took to sew each square, tie each knot and storm the gates of heaven on my behalf.

I've accompanied my sister-in-law, Liz, to services a couple of times while visiting her and enjoyed Pastor Eddie's message, also most likely met a few of you. May God continue to bless each of you as you serve Him in this special way. Love in Christ, Debbie Regener."

PRAYER COMMITTEE

by: Patti Pott

Our prayer chain is growing. If you do not receive the prayer chain and would like to, please send an email to prayers@fumcdunnellon.org and ask to be added. If you have asked to be added and are still not receiving the prayer chain, please check your spam or junk folder.

If you have not yet started attending church and you want a prayer request placed on the Wall of Intercession, there is a prayer box outside the front doors of the church where you may drop off your request. There is also a box for the prayer chain so be sure you pick the right box.

Somebody Cares Community Prayer Boxes have slackened a lot due to COVID. We hope people begin using them again soon. We have 30 boxes placed throughout the community. If you know of a new location for a prayer box, let us know at the prayer chain address and we will make some new ones.

Our church's prayer ministry was recently featured in the Rainbow Springs Villager. A copy is posted by the Wall of Intercession.

SAMARITAN'S PURSE

by: Joann and Israel Garcia

I just wanted to say thank you to everyone for another successful year with Samaritan's Purse shoe boxes, we have outdone our numbers from last year. We couldn't have done it without our church and wonderful volunteers. We are

so blessed to be a part of spreading the Good News of Jesus to children all over the world. A special thank you to Bud and Jane Bowley and Bob and Carol Patria for all their hard work! Many blessings to you all.

SEWING FOR SOULS & UGLY QUILTS by: Jolynn Peart

Sewing for Souls is currently sewing items for preemie organization, Newborns in Need. Blankets, hats, burp clothes, wash clothes, smocks and hats. We have sent items to the branch in Tampa; Lewiston, Maine, where I was born as a preemie; and new chapter in Baton Rouge, LA forming after a hurricane.

On November 13, I took hats, masks, walker bags to the Oncology Center in Lecanto.

Please reach out to me if there is another need. Jolynn Peart 727-744-3077

STEPHEN MINISTRY by: Liz Martynowski

The Blessings of Stephen Ministry. Stephen Ministers are congregation members trained by our Stephen leaders to offer care to people who are hurting. A Stephen Minister typically has one care receiver at a time and meets with that person once a week for about an hour. Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life, but they all share a passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need. Stephen Ministers training is a Christ-centered experience that equips participants with essential caring and relating skills. Trainees learn how to listen, care for and walk with those going through difficult times.

If you sense that God might be calling you to serve as a Stephen Minister, the first step is to find out more about getting involved. Stephen Ministry helps our congregation carry out Christ's commandment to "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12) in a powerful and practical way.

Contact any Stephen leader for more information regarding an up coming class. Pastor Eddie, Liz Martynowski, Irene Brugh, Mike Atherton, Jane Peebles, Holly Fisk. May God Bless you as you seek to serve Him.

TRANSITION TASK FORCE by: Bob White

A new Transition Task Force has been formed and is working to prepare our church to join the newly formed traditional denomination. Members represent various areas and services in the church. They include Bob White, Pastor Eddie Fulford, Elizabeth Chryst, Lloyd Fisk, Roxanne Barnes, Ray Sanders, Lanny Finley and Ashley Perry. The group had its first meeting in October and met again in November. To date we've identified 10 tasks that will cover all the issues. Our approach is to assign a leader for each task and have them get help from within our group or outside if needed. They will develop a plan, brief the whole group and then complete the task. The task leader will provide periodic status reports so we can communicate to the congregation. The following tasks have been identified:

1. Create a prayer response to ensure prayer is the foundation for the church making the transition to the new denomination.
2. Create a plan that ensures intentional, regular communication is being shared with the entire congregation.
3. Decide what the name of the church should be during the interim period, from disaffiliation until the convening conference of the new denomination.
4. Review deeds and titles and other assets (including bank and brokerage accounts) to ensure that once transfer has taken place that release of trust clause from UMC is recorded.
5. Create a Financial Plan for ensuring that all connectional obligations are met for the church's final year in the UMC
6. Propose a new leadership structure for the church.
7. Before we disaffiliate find out whether insurance will be offered through the interim period before the new denomination's convening Conference in early 2022.
8. Before we disaffiliate find out how Pastors will be replaced, how their retirement and health insurance will be offered during the interim period.
9. A return to Small Groups (Accountability) will become an integral part of membership in the new denomination. Develop a plan for administrative committees and the congregation to implement the small group accountability methods. (Ephesians 4:15).
10. Evaluate the current Mission Statement (Building the Kingdom in Everything We Do) in light of our move to a more traditional denomination. Should we change it to reflect a Bible based direction, some other emphasis or leave it the same?

Task leaders are being assigned and work is beginning on a general timeline of events necessary to attend the New Denomination's Convening Conference in early 2022. Further information will be provided in subsequent Newsletters. We are also planning to have other informational sessions as time goes on.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

by: Sue Herrala

Circles began to meet again in October. Many plans and events have been either canceled or postponed, but not the *Annual Spaghetti Dinner, Saturday, December 12*. It is TAKE OUT ONLY and ready for pick between 4-6 PM. Tickets are available at all services on Sunday morning, donation of \$8/meal. Menu: Spaghetti w/ meat sauce, garlic bread, garden salad and cake. Tickets will also be available at the door.

Installation of 2021 Officers will be Sunday, December 13, 2020 at 11:00 service.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

by: Cory Stroup

On Monday, November 2, 2020 the committee met and discussed plans for the upcoming Christmas season. Due to the ongoing Covid issue, we decided to have two Christmas Eve services, one at 5:00 PM and the second at 7:00 PM. This will allow for proper social distancing and the anticipated large congregation. We will have the usual candles at both services. The choir will be singing at the 7 o'clock hour. Masks WILL BE REQUIRED. For those who either don't have masks or have forgotten them, we will have them available in the Narthex.

Our annual Christmas Cantata will be held at the 11:00 service only on December 13th.

We will be having a special concert "Night of Joy," by our music department on Thursday, December 17th at 7:00 PM. Our Chancel Choir, the Praise Team and the newly formed children's choir will be presenting Christmas music for all to enjoy. Lori will also have some special musical treats for us.

It was also decided to maintain the current worship schedule: Abbreviated 8:00 AM communion service, then the full 9 and 11 services.

We will continue to suspend the Wednesday night dinners and services until further notice, but the current 3:00 P.M. Thursday afternoon services will continue.