

The First United Methodist Church of Lowell Tele-Christian ~ August 2020 Edition

**The mission of the United Methodist Church is to
make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.**

Mark's Remarks.....

Apologetics is a word that is tied with Christianity. Apologetics is not being sorry for what we believe. Apologetics is defending what we believe. How much time have you spent thinking about what you believe? What do you believe about creation? Sin? Becoming right with God? Heaven? Hell? The state of humanity? Other religions? End times? Scripture? The church? Issues of morality? Can you come up with more than one sentence about each of these (and for that matter the hundreds of other topics of faith?) If an unbeliever asked you, "What do you think heaven will be like?" Could you give an intelligent, biblically-based, Godly answer? What if somebody with different beliefs challenged you, "Heaven is going to be for the 144,000 leaders within our faith. Other believers will live on the new earth. The most enlightened of our leaders will become gods themselves." This is the Mormon view of heaven – is it right or not? Could you defend your position?

The Bible contains many passages commanding and encouraging us to defend our faith. 1 Peter 3:15 says, "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect," What is the best way to defend the faith? The best and in reality the only way to defend the faith is from the Word of God. If we have beliefs that are not in the Word, they are probably not worth defending.

We must know the scriptures. We must begin memorizing the scriptures. If we do not, we will be unable to defend them. Thankfully, there are also alternatives to speaking scriptures right in the midst of a controversy.

If someone says something in opposition of scripture, for instance; "I believe in reincarnation." If you don't know passages that speak against reincarnation, say to them, "I know the Bible disagrees with what you are saying. Let me look at it and I'll get back with you (at a specific time)." Be sure to study up on the issue, ask me where the scriptures are or look in a Concordance to find the scriptures. Come up with an intelligent argument including the Bible passages and restart the conversation with that person.

One other option is the Bible promise found in Luke 12:11-12 which says, "When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." In these instances take a deep breath, say a prayer asking God to give you the words you need, and make your case. I have had times when God has given me the right words at the right time.

Know what you believe. Then try to prepare yourself, arm yourself with the weapons you need to defend the faith. Be an apologist for Christ! Be prepared to share!

Pastor Mark

August Sermon and Scripture Schedule

August 2 ~ Communion Sunday

Scripture ~ Obadiah 1:6-18

Sermon Title ~ *'Christ the Judge'*

August 9 ~

Scripture ~ Jonah 1:11-17

Sermon Title ~ *'Jonah's Fish Story'*

August 16 ~

Scripture ~ Micah 7:18-20

Sermon Title ~ *'God Will Forgive'*

August 22 ~

Scripture ~ Nahum 1:1-8

Sermon Title ~ *'The Fall of Nineveh'*

August 20 ~

Scripture ~ Habakkuk 1:1-4

Sermon Title ~ *'The Question of Judgement'*



Park Service Extended!!

Our 8:00 service at Evergreen Park will not end on August 30! The increasing number of Coronavirus cases in Lake County in July has not only caused us to delay our return to the sanctuary much longer than we anticipated, it also caused us to seek an extension of our outdoor service. The Lowell Parks Dept. graciously agreed to our request! **This year we will continue our 8:00 service at Evergreen Park through the month of Sept.** If the weather remains favorable, we have the option of continuing to worship at the park the first two Sundays of Oct. also.

On June 14, 21, 28 and July 5 about 50 of our church family arrived at Evergreen Park, respectfully wearing masks, and social distanced themselves comfortably in their lawn chairs under the trees. Even without shaking hands and hugging, the feeling of church community was felt immediately! Sadly, rain forced the cancellation of worship the next two Sundays, July 12 & 19. It is important to know that even a sprinkle of moisture can be destructive to electronics. If it is actually raining an hour prior to service, the decision to cancel is easily made. When it is not raining but likely to, the % chance of rain and the radar has to be studied and protection of our sound system equipment is a major consideration. Once a decision to cancel is made, Pastor Mark tries to send out an email by 7:30 am to notify the church family. So if the weather on a Sunday morning is questionable, check for an email before heading to the park.

Plans and preparations continue for restarting the 10:30 service in our sanctuary. The safety and health of our church family remains our most important consideration. We will keep you informed when decisions are made.



Communion

We will have our next Communion service on Sunday, August 2. At the park we will have sealed Communion elements at the table to pick up as you arrive. For those watching the online worship, have a small amount of bread and a small drink of juice available ahead of the service.



Worship Viewing Available

Have you been unable to view our weekly online worship service? Do you not have a computer or just can't get it to work? We want to invite you to come to the church and view the service on a church computer. Simply call the church to set up a time, come wearing a mask and enjoy the service in a sanitized safe environment. We want everyone to be able to stay connected.

Rich in Good Works
From the Finance Committee

So it often is with education, business, and life: There are those who "Talk the talk" and those who "Walk the walk". And, as many of you are to us, you "Talk the talk and Walk the walk." For which we are most grateful. It also kind of sounds like James, Jesus' brother; But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. James, through God, knew what was in store for us.

We share these thoughts in relation to what our church family of chairpersons have, and will continue to share, as "Giving Moments." We are telling "Our Story." There are so many touching, impactful, supporting ministries that are made possible through the efforts of our congregational members. "Giving Moments" is an attempt to remind you of what takes place humbly, quietly, impactfully, because people share the gifts that God has bestowed in their lives.

As Christians, God influences us to think about how we can obtain spiritual richness by following God's plan and serving others through love and good works like Jesus did. "Giving Moments" tell our story in how we go "all in" for serving God and His children, which include people in and around our cities, communities, and schools.

With blessings for you for determination, patience and success: Listen carefully to Our Story. Walk the walk!

From Kirk McQuiston for the Finance Committee

All families need to know about their financial status. Our church family is no different. The church needs money to take care of its members and the ministries it supports. These are the tasks that the Finance Committee is charged with over-seeing.

Your weekly church bulletin has a monthly income section where the income needed for the month is shown along with the actual income given for that month. Our financial statements for all of the programs, salaries and ministries are also available in the church office for anyone who wishes to have a copy. These are the ways that you can keep abreast of the financial happenings for our church. For the first six months of 2020, our General Budget Pledges have been paid at the 46% level. Our Capital Projects Pledges have been paid at the 48% level. Considering we are 50% through the year, and the fact that our church services have required extra effort on everyone's part, these numbers are very close to what they should be.

Our congregation is a faithful congregation. As faithful believers in Christ, we know that our story is our ministry. We also know that our ministry is supported by the gifts God provides. I would ask that each of you continue to pray for God's wisdom and guidance as we ALL make financial decisions for our church. As we look ahead to 2021, there are many unknowns. But we know that when we are able to gather together again, as a congregation, that our giving will allow us to further our ministries for our community and the world.

Thank you for your giving and your prayers for our church.

From Michelle Mishlove for the Music Committee

Because you give... we host 4 faithful music groups: We have the handbell choir, Godsbells, led by Patrice Martin; the Chancel Choir & the Praise Team, led by myself; and the Sonshine Singers, led by our Children's Director, Paige Corning. All of these groups usually meet from September to May ... except the Praise Team which meets year-round.

Because you give... we can purchase new sheet music that will be a blessing to both the musicians AND the listeners.

Because you give... we are able to cover the cost of handbell repairs and gloves, and the tuning/maintenance for the organ, piano and keyboard.

Because you give... we can continue the important work of using music to spread the gospel,³ encourage the people of God, and enhance your worship experience here at the Lowell First UMC. We appreciate all your support. Thank you!!

From Trudy Corning for the Worship Committee

The worship committee consist of 14 members; there are 9 work areas within the committee including communion and altar stewards, coordinators for acolytes, greeters, ushers and liturgist to name just a few. These work areas have an additional 13 volunteers who work together to provide meaningful worship.

In the book, The Purpose Driven Life, Rick Warren describes an act of worship as anything that brings God pleasure. For many, worship is synonymous with music. But worship is far more than music. Every part of a church service is an act of worship bringing pleasure to God including prayer, scripture, reading, singing, being still, listening to a sermon or devotional, taking notes, giving an offering, baptism, communion, signing a commitment card. And because you give, we are able to worship God in the ways just mentioned whether our worship is in person or online as we have recently experienced.

Because you give, we have candelabras to light and candles that are filled with oil each week so we can experience the light of Jesus Christ even during the pandemic with online church.

Because you give, we have communion supplies so we can break bread together at our Lord's Table. Currently this means providing individually sealed communion elements to those attending worship in the park during this time of social distancing.

Because you give, we the church, donated over 1000 items to 4 local food pantries this past Lenten Season. This year especially, these collected items were greatly appreciated by those in our community experiencing hardship.

Because you give, we have a banner on the church's front lawn inviting the community to join us for online worship.

Because you give, we continue to plan to return to the sanctuary to worship. We dream to place a historic Bible on the altar and hope to purchase a book mark for the Bible matching the other cloth paraments adorning the sanctuary. And we hope and dream to again offer Bread 4 Life which provides nourishment to the soul and body for all ages of the community at no charge.

Though our worship time over the past few months has been different, we have found new ways to worship and bring God pleasure because you give. Praise be to God!



A Church's Summer Challenge

The doors are open, the ministries continue, personnel must be compensated. God's work does not stop in the summer. Through stewardship (time, talents, and gifts) God's work is accomplished. The congregation are the heroes – partners with God's work. These things are possible when God uses your stewardship. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Please be reminded that your time, talents, and giving throughout the summer are needed so we may reach people in need of God's love.

The Finance Committee



The UMW is, like everyone else, working through this pandemic with God's help. We have had to cut back on some missions such as our Cooking Classes and cancel most meetings. Still the UMW is dedicated to working for others safely in this time.

The Resale has reopened. During June, the Resale had the Dollar Bag Sale on Saturdays and a few Fridays. During the sale, customers adjusted to the new rules of wearing masks, limiting customers in the store for social distancing, and not allowing children in the store. Customers were very happy to have the Bargain Korner (the Resale's original name) open again.

The Resale finally had its March cleanout at the end of June. July 1 the Resale opened with its regular hours. Business has been okay. The hot weather has meant less people out, but the customers and volunteer workers have been happy to see each other.

Our monetary donations can again flow into our 17 local, state, national, and international missions. The Resale will remain open as long as it is safe for customers and the volunteer workers. We have appreciated the words of encouragement and everything given by church members and the community **but we have to cease accepting donations temporarily.** We will let you know when we can resume.

The Susanna Wesley Circle encouraged each other to social distance at the shelter in Evergreen Park. They held their June 15 meeting there. They enjoyed box lunches and were grateful to fellowship. One of their members, Donna, always gives a great book report. She is a participant in the UMW reading program along with Virginia from the Naomi Circle. The UMW Reading Program addresses Education for Mission, Nurturing for Community, Social Action, Leadership Development, and Spiritual Growth. There are children's books and a Response Magazine with current events. The Reading Program has plenty of books to keep the members informed about the world.

The UMW is planning to hold an executive board meeting on August 5 in the basement. We are hoping to make decisions about the fate of upcoming events. We do know that the North District will be having our Fall Meeting via Zoom on September 19. We make the plans knowing it is all in God's hands.

God Bless and Stay Safe,
Rachelle Ruge-Bernard, President



HOUSEHOLD PANTRY NEWS

Julie Donovan, Chairperson

We served 48 families during a curbside household pantry held on July 21. We will continue this process until we feel it is safe to come back into the church!! Our next curbside pantry will be on August 18 so please spread the word! Thank you for your continued support! STAY HEALTHY!!!!



Thank you so very much for the sweet notes I have received to brighten my days during the past few months. They were so appreciated, especially during those days when it was so gloomy outside. I love seeing the children's signatures too! And thank you so much for my BIG birthday card too! My church family is the best!

With love,
Betty Kelley



Dear Church Family,

Thank you to all who gave condolences, cards and kind words after my father-in-law's passing late last month. We are surrounded by love. It is such a blessing to know that we never walk alone!

Michelle Mishlove



LOWELL CHURCH MOUSE

I'm the church mouse. I see all that goes on in the church and I love to gossip about it. Of course being a Christian mouse, I only say positive things.

The Trustees met recently. Boy, they sure have a lot of plans coming up! They are working hard to track down a leak in the roof. They think it's finally figured out and it can be fixed. They are making plans to change some burnt out bulbs. They are going to put pea gravel in the new playground area. The new swing set will be put together and set out. Those Trustees just do so much around here. Thank you to all of them!

Kathy Taylor put up a new 'welcome back' bulletin board for when you all come back to the sanctuary. She has such talent!

The Resale Shop has reopened. They are going slowly to keep workers and customers safe. It's great that some of our ministries are starting to happen again.

I see Craig Wilson and Sam Conley sneaking into the church early every Sunday to gather all the sound equipment for the Park Service. Although they wake me up, I'm glad for their faithfulness. Thanks also to Don Bales and others who volunteer some Sundays to do this vital ministry with them.

I've really enjoyed all of the special music that is going on in the midst of our pandemic. Michelle Mishlove has worked to have music at the park and for the podcast each week. It sounds great!

Be careful when you do good work for the church. I'm watching and just waiting to share that gossip.



Pastor's Comic Corner

In case you haven't noticed, I love humor.

Below are a couple of comics that I've come across. Enjoy! Pastor Mark



11-22

©2018 by Keane, Inc.
Dist. by King Features Synd.
www.familycircus.com

Bill
and
JEFF
KEANE

"We hafta hold hands while we say grace so nobody gets a head start eating. Right, Mommy?"



NOAH MAKES A COSTLY MISTAKE