

The First United Methodist Church of Lowell

Tele-Christian ~ February 2021 Edition

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

Mark's Remarks.....

We will soon be in Lent. Ash Wednesday begins the Lenten season on Wednesday, February 17. Throughout this Lenten time we will be focusing our attention on various stones talked about in the scripture that can build us and instruct us as we approach Easter. We will have such themes as "rejected stones"; "written in stone"; and "hearts of stone." Come to church through Lent to get the full list of topics. Each time you enter the sanctuary, you'll be asked to pick up a stone at the door. Hold on to it through the service. Listen to the challenge given for each stone. If led to, you will drop the stone at the base of the cross which will be in the narthex on your way out of the sanctuary.

Lent has always been a time of preparation for the Easter season. We cannot truly experience Easter without preparing our hearts for it. Make an effort to attend or view online each of our worship services this Lenten season. Grow your hearts for the joy of Easter!

Ash Wednesday Service

Plan on joining us on Wednesday, February 17, for our annual Ash Wednesday service. Through hymns, special music, the message and a time to receive ashes from the palms of last year's Palm Sunday you will prepare yourself for Lent and the coming Easter season. It will be at 7:00 pm in the church sanctuary. All must wear a mask and remain social distanced. We'll use an individual applicator to dispense the ashes so there is no cross contamination.

Church Reopening Update

Yes, we are reopening for in-person worship starting with the Ash Wednesday service. On February 21 we will be open for our full Sunday schedule. The 8 and 10:30 worship services will be held in the sanctuary. At 9:15 we'll have our full range of Sunday School classes. On Thursday, February 25 we will resume Bread for Life (although we will not serve a meal yet). It will begin at 6:15 pm.

Communion

On February 7, we will have Communion in our online worship. You can pick up a sealed Communion set in the east entryway, or you will need to gather a small taste of bread and some juice before the service. Save the elements until instructed so that we can take them together.

February Sermon and Scripture Schedule

February 7 ~

Scripture ~ Mark 1:29-39

Sermon Title ~ *'Revealed as the Healer'*

February 14 ~

Scripture ~ Mark 1:9-11

Sermon Title ~ *'Revealed as Greater than Moses and Elijah'*

February 21 ~

Scripture ~ Psalm 118:22-29

Sermon Title ~ *'Rejected Stones'*

February 28 ~

Scripture ~ John 8:1-11

Sermon Title ~ *'Sticks and Stones'*



Worship News

Linda Hayden & Trudy Corning, Co-chairs

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebration of Easter.

The purpose of the Lenten season is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ to consider his suffering, his sacrifice, his life, death, burial and resurrection.

During the six weeks of self-examination, Christians typically give up something or take on a Lenten discipline, like reading the Bible or spending more time in prayer, to draw nearer to God.

****Join us as we begin the 40 day Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday, February 17 with a service at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary.**



Music Notes

Michelle Mishlove, Music Chair

I'd like to extend a giant "Welcome" to Nancy Lain, who has stepped up to lead our children's choir, the SONshine Singers! Nancy has several years of prior experience with this group. Whether we are worshipping online or in the sanctuary, you will see these young singers featured once per month. We hope you enjoyed their recent recording of "Fishers of Men". All of us are anxiously awaiting our return to worship in the sanctuary! When that time comes, parents will be asked to bring your school-age kids to the 10:30 AM service on Sundays. This music group will meet downstairs during the 10:30 AM service.

Chancel Choir members... Group singing continues to be a risky activity in light of the current pandemic and the spread of Covid-19 in our community. I want you to know that I miss seeing you and singing with you. Please keep praying for the day when we can gather and sing (safely) again!



Godsbells will begin rehearsal on Thursday, February 18th from 4:30 to 5:30 in the Wings classroom, (middle room on the balcony level). Masks and social distancing are required.

FUMC and COVID-19
February 2021

We Return (Again) to In-Person Worship!!

We are excited to be reopening our sanctuary to experience the Lenten season together! It has been a bumpy journey for us as a church since Covid-19 became a presence in early 2020. Now, after going through Advent and Christmas with virtual worship only, we celebrate that the positivity rate has declined in Lake County and the distribution of the vaccine is underway. Thankfully, we can once again gather together as the family of God in His house.

However, the pandemic is far from over. Our main concern continues to be making FUMC a safe place for ALL of our church family and guests. Therefore, all our Covid safety procedures that were set in place last summer must still be followed. **Safety procedures must be continued for all activities that take place in our church or on our property – worship services, all church group meetings, practices or gatherings, and all meetings & activities of outside groups using our building.**

As a review, here are the FUMC Covid Safety Procedures:

1. If you are ill, have tested positive for Covid, are awaiting test results, or have had a known exposure, please stay home. For those in high risk categories, we emphasize that it is your decision as to whether or not you return at this time. For those who cannot or do not wish to return to in-person worship, services will continue to be available online. A live-stream of the 10:30 service can be watched at approximately 10:45 each Sunday beginning Feb. 21, and a podcast of the service will be available on our church website <https://www.lowellumc.org> later. Those without internet may view services during the week. Call Kim or Pastor Mark to schedule this.
2. Face masks are required for everyone over the age of two.
3. Social distancing of 6 feet must be practiced. Family units may sit together.
4. Everyone is required to use hand sanitizer upon entering the building.
5. At the conclusion of each worship service, meeting or activity each person must wipe down the pew, table top and other touched surfaces with provided disinfecting wipes.
6. Since face masks must be worn at all times, no food is to be served at any event or in any area of the church. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

If/when any changes are made to our safety procedures, you will be informed in announcements, emails and the newsletter. We appreciate your understanding and your cooperation with our efforts to keep our church family healthy and safe.

From the Finance Committee

Don Bales, Chairperson

We are sharing the following message (from the United Methodist Communications) with each of you who considers the Lowell United Methodist Church your home, your family, your house of God.

*“While many focus on what separates us, our shared history tells us that United Methodists share a number of **core attributes**. We are a church that has persevered through challenges while remaining deeply rooted in our Wesleyan heritage. We forge into places of hurt and need, faithfully following Jesus’ directive to help our neighbors. As United Methodists, we have and continue to leave a footprint of love on this world.”*

This message is to convey the passionate, loving, committed prayer all of you have made to seeking God’s guidance through the alterations of our church service. These alterations have had an impact on our finances here at the church, but we have weathered a storm in 2020 and share the following with each of you:

2020 closed the year with a positive balance, but this was due to the Payroll Protection Plan loan/grant we received.

2020 allowed our church, with your gifts, to continue to support the Household Pantry.

2020 allowed our church to supplement the Good Samaritan Fund.

2020 did close with a decrease on Sunday giving – less than what had been budgeted.

2020 did close with a significant decrease in all budgeted expenses.

2020 did close with our church completing all tithing to the Conference and District.

Our church renovation loan will be paid in full in March 2021 not October 2021 as originally anticipated. This was due to paying a little extra on the principle every month.

These items are only a few of the financial outcomes of 2020. Detailed reports of the approved 2021 Budget, the 2020 Income & Expense Report, and the 2020 Cash, Memorials, and Designated Accounts statement are available in the church office upon request.

In closing we share this from our Methodist Resource Center: *“We are **faithful, missional, committed, spirit-filled, deeply rooted, connected, resilient and diverse people of God. No matter what, God is with us, and we continue to have opportunities to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!**”*

Sincere Blessings to all for Hope, Joy, and Love

MINISTRY IN ACTION

The Nurses' Corner

Trudy Corning & Lauren Jansma

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our country, community and church. By now most of us have personally been affected on some level by the virus. The COVID vaccine is being administered and many healthcare providers are recommending for those who are eligible to be vaccinated.

The vaccine requires two injections 3-6 weeks apart. Some people have experienced mild flu like symptoms after receiving the second dose, but most have no side effects or only a sore arm at the injection site.

Good hand washing and PROPER MASK WEARING are extremely important to continue even after being vaccinated for COVID-19. This practice will provide the best protection for oneself and others to prevent the spread of the virus, and, as always, if you do not feel well, stay home.

Here are some helpful links:

Vaccine information from the state department of health to find a vaccination site and register for the vaccine if you are eligible: <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/vaccine/>

To see who is currently eligible to receive vaccine:
<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/files/Eligibility%201.5.21.pdf>

General questions from the public about COVID-19 may be directed to the Indiana State Department of Health COVID 19 call center at 877-826-0011 (open daily 8am-12am)
<https://in211.communityos.org/COVID-19>



NEWS FROM THE HOUSEHOLD PANTRY.....

Julie Donovan, Chairperson

2020...What a year!! Even in the midst of a pandemic, our amazing congregation at Lowell FUMC remained committed and dedicated to the Household Pantry with their monetary and product donations and prayers. We served a total of 567 families CURBSIDE during the year.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US SERVE NEEDY FAMILIES IN THE TRI-CREEK AREA.

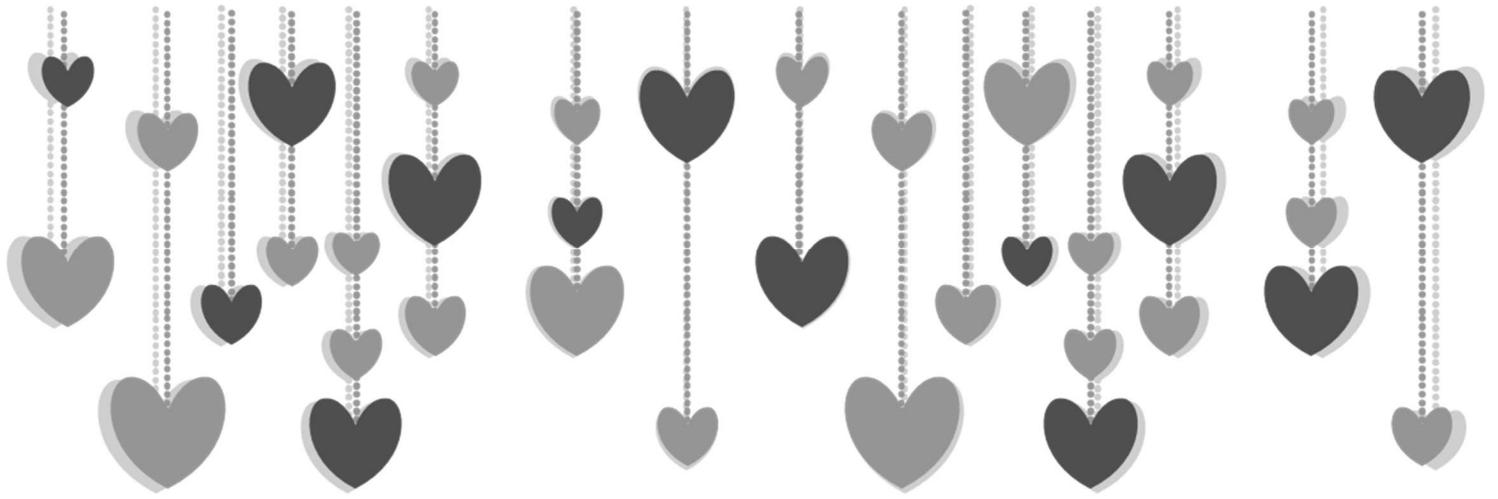
We were able to supply our families with laundry detergent, dish soap, household cleaner, paper towels, facial tissues, toilet tissue, bar soap, deodorant, toothpaste, sanitary napkins, and shampoo. We have added conditioner and toothbrushes to our products because of your generous donations. Our total costs for the Household Pantry for 2020 were \$5,807.87. We continued to work in partnership with the Lowell Family Dollar in 2020. Our products were purchased there. Rachel, store manager, made sure our monthly orders got filled correctly. PLEASE thank Rachel for everything she continues to do for us.

The pantry was blessed with many donations in 2020. We received monetary and/or product donations from Avery Dennison, Athletico, Hawthorne Arbor of Gleaners, Sickingers, Healing With Harmony, William and Sharon Poer, Kirk and Sue McQuiston, Dennis and Carol Olson, Kathy and Marion Nelson, and many other personal donations from families within and outside the church. How fortunate the Household Pantry is to be remembered by so many thoughtful people!! We head into 2021 with a dedicated staff of compassionate servants whose hearts lie in serving those in our community who need assistance. We are humbled to be able to serve these families.

THANK YOU!!

THANK YOU!!

THANK YOU!!



February 7th thru 14th

Love Thy Neighbor Week

The Mission Committee is encouraging you to send kindness out to those in our community. Share encouraging words in a card, text, phone call or email with someone. Try to let 7 people know you are thinking of them.

Also during this special week we, invite you to do special acts of kindness and keep the kindness flowing through 2021.

Suggestions for when you are safely out & about

SUPPORT A STRUGGLING BUSINESS

LEAVE A QUARTER IN AN ALDI CART

LEAVE A PRE-PACKAGED TREAT ON
SOMEONE'S PORCH

REACH OUT TO THOSE IN CARE FACILITIES

LEAVE A GENEROUS TIP FOR
SERVERS OR BEAUTICIAN

LET SOMEONE GO AHEAD OF YOU IN LINE

PAY FOR THE CAR BEHIND YOU AT
A DRIVE THROUGH



An opportunity to serve.....

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Meals on Wheels is in desperate need of help in delivering meals in our area.
If you can help call Charlie at 756-3663.



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. I took a month off to visit relatives in Florida. I almost hated to crawl back into my hole here at the church. It seems so cold.

Good things continue to happen at the church. The Worship Committee decorated the church for Christmas. It looked beautiful, even though few were in the building to see it. The decorated altar was visible in our virtual worship recordings and live-streams. The committee also decorated the east entry downstairs and outside. They even cleaned it all up in January. Thank you, Worship committee members!

On Christmas Eve, Patrice Martin, with assistance from Ray & Denise Smith, worked hard to set out and light the luminaries. Patrice replaced the candles when they started going out. It made for a beautiful drive-through Communion with Christmas Carols playing. Lori Berg helped her husband serve Communion and light luminaries. Charlie and Lynne Haberlin were the ones who put all of the luminaries together prior to Christmas Eve. Team work accomplishes great things.

The end of the year also brings up the Finance matters. Donna Bauman, our Financial Secretary, sent out giving statements to all the givers in the church. She spends a lot of time behind the scenes doing all the work of entering giving and preparing and sending out statements. Thank you, Donna.

Our treasurer, Lynn Bochart always works hard behind the scenes keeping detailed financial records. She put together the budget with the help of the committees and the Finance Committee.

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

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Jeff & Bil Keane



"The Bible tells us to study math. It says, 'Go forth and multiply.'"

FINDING ELIM By Dave Nelson



AREN'T YOU EVER GOING TO FINISH THAT THING?