

# The First United Methodist Church of Lowell Tele-Christian ~ January 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 are now almost in 2021. It is hard to believe. Most are happy to see 2020 end. We were able to live through an unprecedented time. As I think about the close of 2020 and the start of a new year, I am grateful. I am thankful to God for the multitude of blessings and future promises that I can reflect upon (even in the year 2020). I am thankful to my family for the support they give me in my ministry. I am thankful to my denomination and conference for the opportunity to serve another year in the United Methodist Church. For this article, however, I especially want to say thank you to **you**.

Thank you all for the love and support you show to me and my family throughout the year. This church goes out of its way to show love and support to each other. I feel the support that First UM Church shows its pastor. Little things go such a long way to making others (and me) feel welcome and appreciated. So thank you for all of the kind things you say and do during the year.

Thank you for all of the gifts, cards and other acts of kindness that you have done in 2020. Again, this is such a giving church. I thank you for what you have done for me, but more importantly; I'm thankful that you have this same generosity to all.

Thank you for the financial support you give to us. You are most generous in this area as well. I'm thankful that I am able to earn enough here to support my family. Thank you for giving us our salary and benefits.

Thank you also for the parsonage. You have provided a beautiful parsonage to your pastoral families. The Trustees and Staff-Parish Committees work hard to make sure it is well maintained. Aside from this, they also allow us to make it our home. Not all churches are concerned about what the pastor wants in the parsonage, and just provide the minimal requirements. You are most generous.

Finally, thank you for letting me be your pastor. A pastor can't lead where the laity won't follow. Thank you for accepting my leadership (and all of my faults) so readily. Thank you for all who provide the necessary leadership in the church. The pastor can't and shouldn't do it all. There are so many in this church who provide leadership in all of the various areas of administration, programming and missions.

God bless each of you in the coming year. What are you thankful for? Take some time early in this year and consider. Take some time also and express your thankfulness. Make it a prayer to the Lord. Have a blessed 2021!

*Pastor Mark*



## **Church Closure Update**

We will remain closed for public gatherings of worship through at least the end of January. We will keep you updated and let you know when we can safely meet again in person.

## January Sermon and Scripture Schedule

### **January 3 ~**

Scripture ~ Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon Title ~ *'Revealed as God, King and Sacrifice'*

### **January 10 ~**

Scripture ~ Mark 1:9-11

Sermon Title ~ *'Revealed as the Son of God'*

### **January 17 ~**

Scripture ~ John 1:43-51

Sermon Title ~ *'Revealed; One Who Knows'*

### **January 24 ~**

Scripture ~ Mark 1:14-20

Sermon Title ~ *'Revealed; The Good Teacher'*

### **January 31 ~**

Scripture ~ Mark 1:21-28

Sermon Title ~ *'Revealed; Commands Evil Spirits'*



### **Worship News**

Linda Hayden & Trudy Corning, Co-Chairs

### **Christ the King is Born!!**

As everything else in 2020, our Advent season was a little different than anticipated, but we hope you had a meaningful worship experience.

*Thank you* to Bryce and Linda Hayden for bringing the Light of the World to the outside of the church with the nativity and wreaths.

*Thank you* to Tom Sufana and Patrice Martin for bringing the Light of the World to the church foyer and to the sanctuary for online worship.

*Thank you* to Lynne & Charlie Haberlin and Patrice Martin for bringing the Light of the World through luminaries lining the church parking lot for drive-thru Communion on Christmas Eve.

Again this year, we will leave these outward signs of Christ in our world visible through Epiphany.

As the winter solstice has passed and the days are longer with light pushing back the darkness, let the Light of Jesus continue to shine in each of you!



### **Communion**

On January 3, we will have Communion in worship. You can pick up a sealed Communion set in the 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.

## The 2021 Budget Has Been Approved

The proposed budget for 2021 has been approved by both the Finance Committee and most recently by the Ad Council. In the final analysis the budget mirrors the 2020 budget in most categories. The vision was to be able to maintain support for those Lowell United Methodist church ministries that had been in place throughout 2020. Even though the pandemic has disrupted our normal operating procedures, our congregational members have demonstrated resilience, love, devotion, and commitment to the journeys of those in need. We have been able to respond to people in the way that God has scripted for all who are guided by God's word.

For every \$1 you give: 29 cents goes to Worship, 21 cents to Education, 20 cents to Congregational Care, 16 cents to Missions, and 14 cents to Outreach. All payroll and building expenses are allocated to each of these categories. Thank you for all that you do each & every day to support our missions and help those in need, both locally and globally.



WE are grateful for the servant attitude that provides our leadership guidance in determining where we can assist, when we can respond, and to what capacity we may extend our gifts.

Submitted by: The Finance Committee

\*\*Note: If you would like to see a detailed budget, copies are available in the office. Lynn Bochart will be happy to review and/or explain it upon request.



### “Thank You!” from the Stewardship Committee

I don't know about you but, when asked what church I attend and belong to, I proudly say Lowell First United Methodist Church. Why, you may ask? Well, I am proud to belong to a church whose members are obedient, loving, generous followers of Christ. A church whose members can be described by the words found in Psalm 112 verse 4: “Light shines in the darkness for the godly. They are generous, compassionate, and righteous.” And again, in verse 9: “They share freely and give generously to those in need. Their good deeds will be remembered forever. They will have influence and honor.”

During this past year we have faced unprecedented challenges that have tested our faith, perseverance, and commitment. The good and faithful members of this church have met these challenges head on and shown incredible resolve to continue to spread God's word through it all. We thank you for standing firm and being such faithful stewards of God's gifts. Your generosity has allowed this church to continually provide support and care to those in need, whether it be our members, the local community, or beyond. We hope you enjoyed the “Giving Moments” presentations during the summer and fall of 2020 which told the story of how your generous giving provides that support. Again, thank you for all you have done and continue to do.

Rick Bachman, Stewardship Chair

# MINISTRY IN ACTION

## **Christmas Clothesline Report** from the Mission Committee

The COVID-19 pandemic did not stop our annual Christmas mission, but it did alter it a bit. We requested a lesser number of children to serve this year. Some of us shopped from the safety of our homes. Several donated money to cover the cost of a child's gifts and let others take care of the shopping. We also had individuals who are not church members join in and provide the gifts for 5 of the children. Together we provided gifts for 47 children.

All bags were filled and returned to the church on time, in spite all church activities being suspended. Way to go, church family! Delivery of the bags to the three elementary schools was done on Dec. 9. This gave 7 school days for the parents to pick up the gifts before school dismissed for the holiday. While our project was scaled -back a bit this year, we still were able to assist parents and brighten Christmas for their family. Thank you to everyone involved!



### **Nurses' Corner** ~ Trudy Corning & Lauren Jansma

Snow shoveling can lead to a number of health risk for many people from back injuries to heart attacks. The mix of cold temperatures and physical exertion increases work load on the heart, which may increase risk of a heart attack for some.

Safety tips when shoveling snow:

- Take it slow and stretch out before you begin
- Shovel only fresh powdery snow, it's lighter
- Push snow rather than lifting it
- If you do lift, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel
- Pace yourself and be sure to take frequent breaks
- Dress in layers and remove them as you get warm to maintain a comfortable body temperature
- Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated while shoveling

Enjoy the beauty of the earth!



The UMW activities that are happening right now are working at the Resale Shoppe, and trying to keep in touch with each other. We, like you, are making plans then changing plans. We, like you, are holding on to our faith while remaining cautious. The UMW thanks you for your continued support.

Rachelle Ruge-Bernard, Lowell United Methodist Women President

## From Congregational Care ...

Thank you to everyone who added the persons in our Caring ministry to your Christmas card list. With COVID restrictions still in place and winter weather on the way, these folks face more confinement in their homes and facilities in the coming weeks. Please continue to pray for them and let these special members know that their church family is thinking of them. Occasional cards, notes, or even phone calls will surely help brighten the gray days of winter for them. A list of their names and contact information is available from the office.

Also, please remember our college students as they begin their spring semester. If you would like a list of our college students to pray for or send notes to them, contact Kim Newlin, Trudy Corning or the church office. Thank you to each of you for supporting this ministry.



## **MANAGE YOUR THOUGHTS**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, many of us struggle with negative thinking and worry. We may take comfort in prayer and online worship and study, but still find it difficult to keep our thoughts positive. Here are some tips from *the Mayo Clinic Health Letter of August 2020*. Hope you find them helpful!

You may have found yourself worrying more lately, thinking things such as “I know that if I get the coronavirus, I’ll end up in the hospital,” or “I’m scared that I will be laid off and won’t be able to find a new job.” Worry is common during times of stress, but you can keep it from running rampant. Worry can change how you think in several ways. Worry may cause you to:

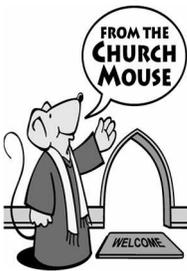
- Think the worst (catastrophize)
- Overestimate the likelihood that bad things will happen to you
- Underestimate your ability to cope when bad things happen

That’s why it’s good to challenge thoughts that cause worry, instead of just accepting them as facts. When you become aware of these thoughts, you can try to reframe them or think about them in different ways. This process can help keep them from escalating or becoming bigger. Try to keep this in mind:

- The most catastrophic outcomes tend to be the least likely to happen.
- The least catastrophic outcomes tend to be the most likely to happen.
- Worrying about the most catastrophic outcome does not generally change whether it will occur.

If you worry a lot, try this exercise. To start, write down one to five worries. Next, directly challenge those thoughts. Write out answers to these questions:

- What is a different way to look at this situation?
- What is the real likelihood that the worst will happen?
- What objective evidence do I have that supports my worry?
- What objective evidence do I have against this worry?
- How have I successfully coped with situations like this in the past?
- Will this matter in five years?



The church mouse is on vacation this month but will report back in February.



### 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



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FLETCHER

"We're teaching our children the importance of regular church attendance . . . what time should we pick them up?"

