

The First United Methodist Church of Lowell

Tele-Christian ~ June 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.....

On May 25, George Floyd died in police custody. It is an incident that occurred in Minneapolis and yet has had ripple effects across the globe. We are now seeing another outcome of that event. Riots are springing up across the country. Widespread looting, burning of cars and structures, beatings, clashes with police and other acts of civil unrest.

It's difficult watching the video of George Floyd's arrest. Seeing an officer kneeling on his neck after he was handcuffed, and hearing George say he can't breathe. George Floyd was declared dead at the hospital soon after. Floyd had been arrested on suspicion of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill.

In the aftermath, Officer Derek Chauvin was arrested and charged with third degree murder. The other three officers involved with Floyd's arrest were fired. But that didn't end the situation. Good people across the country desired to show their solidarity and their desire to end the kind of racism that continues to oppress primarily African American men in the justice system.

Peaceful protests were planned in cities and small towns across the country. There was talk of having a peaceful protest in Lowell. In the midst of peaceful protests came violent extremist groups. Individuals were paid and bused in from other states to cause havoc at the protests. Extreme left-wing and right-wing groups are using this opportunity to create a positive dialogue about race to promote anarchy.

It is difficult for me to fully understand and form opinions about the total situation. Let me try:

1. I support the police, respect them and pray for their increasingly difficult task of keeping the peace.
2. Of the thousands of police across the country, there are a handful that are racist, sexist, bigoted, oppressive and violent. I totally support weeding them out.
3. There are also those police who either are not properly trained or who don't follow their training, and hurt people in the process. I support whatever consequence is deemed appropriate when these individuals hurt others. I don't believe in the court of public opinion. There is normally established procedures for dealing with incompetent individuals.
4. I support peaceful protest and believe in dialoguing to bring about changes in society.
5. I don't support violence in the midst of protest at all. I believe any who would loot or vandalize in the midst of a protest are criminals who should pay for their crime.
6. I hate to see social issues become politicized. It makes it much more difficult for any meaningful change to occur.

This story makes me sad, discouraged, mad, confused and unsure if anything will really change. We need God in the midst of our sin.

Pastor Mark

June Sermon and Scripture Schedule

June 7 ~ Graduation Sunday

Scripture ~ Matthew 28:16-20

Sermon Title ~ *'The Trinity'*

June 14 ~

Scripture ~ Matthew 10:1-8

Sermon Title ~ *'The Harvest Field'*

June 21 ~ Father's Day

Scripture ~ Joshua 1:7-9

Sermon Title ~ *'A Courageous Dad'*

June 28 ~

Scripture ~ Genesis

Sermon Title ~ *'The Sacrifice'*



WORSHIP NEWS, Linda Hayden and Trudy Corning, Co-Chairs

THANK YOU to those who have contributed to the taped segments of online worship. It is a joyous sound to hear AND see music, singing of hymns, children's time....also how great to hear from the children on Mother's Day!! What a blessing it is to worship together while we are apart.

Thank you also to Pastor Mark for the online daily devotions. What a great way to stay connected to God and church!

Pastor Mark and our church leadership team have been working out the details of our return to in-person worship. You will find additional information about this transition on the next page.



Music Notes

Reminder to all Music Committee members:

The Music Committee will meet again on Wednesday, June 17, at 7 pm in the church sanctuary.

Though our Chancel Choir, Godsbells and Praise Team will not be meeting, "special music" will continue through the summer months.

A special "Thank You" to all who have been lending their voices and instruments to enhance the prerecorded podcasts. We appreciate your efforts!

Michelle Mishlove

IMPORTANT INFORMATION!! PLEASE READ!!!

Our Return to In-Person Worship!

Our IN governor chose to lay out our state's transition back to an open community and economy by stages in a plan he calls "Back on Track IN". Your pastor and the church leadership team have chosen to take a staged approach to our return to in-person worship at FUMC as well.

It is fortunate for us that it has been our tradition for years to hold our 8:00 AM worship from June – August at Evergreen Park! The experts tell us that gathering outdoors, with social distancing, is safer (there is less likelihood of the spread of the coronavirus) than within an enclosed space. So we feel the 8:00 AM service at Evergreen Park is the perfect first stage for transitioning back to in-person worship. We will hold our first service at Evergreen Park on June 14 and it will continue through August 30. **Our return to the sanctuary and to Bread for Life on Thursdays will follow later in the summer as the next stages. Those start up dates have not yet been determined.**

We look forward to worshipping together as a church family again! If you are feeling well and have not had contact with a COVID-19 positive person in the previous 14 days, we invite you to join us:

Sunday, June 14, at 8:00 AM at Evergreen Park

What to bring: your lawn chair, a facemask (this is required), and the bulletin that will be sent by email during the week

Where to sit: family units may sit together, but there must be 6' between family units
(A 'family unit' lives in the same household,
i.e. parents with children, a couple, or a single.)

When you arrive for the park service, there will be no attendance cards or songbooks on the picnic table, just the offering bucket for your tithes and offerings. By then it will have been 3 months (!) since we last worshiped together, and we will want to hug and visit.... BUT please refrain from shaking hands or hugging!!! As singing distributes viral particles more readily, we will not sing, but we will have music. At the conclusion of the service, you will be dismissed in an orderly fashion to adhere to physical distancing.

It is important that you are aware that *the Park Dept. will not have the bathrooms open this summer.* Also if the weather is inclement, the service will be cancelled.

Like the governor, we urge anyone over 65 or with to underlying health conditions to continue to stay at home in the first stage(s) and only return to worship when you feel that it is safe for your circumstances. Our service will continue to be available online, both as a live-stream at 9:30 AM beginning June 14 and a podcast that can be viewed later. We encourage at-risk members to view the service from the safety of your home until you feel it's safe to join us in person. Our foremost concern is the health and safety of our church family.

Continue to BE the Church

As some of the pandemic restrictions are being eased to allow the economy to begin to recover, please remember that for some people the restrictions have not changed. Those living in health care centers are not being allowed out and their families are still not allowed in. Those living at home who are consider high risk due to their age or underlying health conditions must still remain primarily at home. Some of these people live alone.

Please continue to reach out to these persons with cards and calls to let them know their church family is thinking of them and continuing to pray for their safety and health. Help them feel connected to our church. Names and addresses of our members living in care centers can be found on the Family Altar page of this issue.



Father's Day

On June 21 we would like for you to complete the statement, "what I like about my dad is..." Especially if your dad is or was a part of First UMC what revealing things can you tell us? Was he a supportive man, an adventurous man, a funny man? What can you tell us about your dad? Please email or call your fun facts to the church by Wednesday, June 17.

We will read your stories as part of our Father's Day celebration. Mark them as 8:00 am or 10:30 depending on the service you generally attend. The 8:00 am entries will be read at the park. The 10:30 entries will go on our online service.



Household Pantry News

We held another DRIVE-UP Household Pantry on May 19. We served 35 grateful families! We plan to repeat this process again on June 16 during our regular hours. We hope to return to our normal procedure in July, but that remains to be seen based on the data at that time. Thank you for your continued support of the Household Pantry. Everyone please stay healthy!!!



Congratulations to all of this year's graduates!

Your church family is so very proud of you and your achievements! Way to go!!

High School

Caleb Bernard, Joshua Koon, Brooke Hayden, Trenton Schroeder, Schuyler Wheeler

College

Robert Corning, Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology, Completion of Police Academy

Ryan Eller, PhD Specializing in Genetics

Samantha Ingebretsen, Degree in Business Administration

Katie Mooney, Degree in Sociology

Kimee Mooney, Degree in Performing Arts

Carrye Simmons, Degree in Nursing

Anna Sacco, Degree in Veterinary Science

Toby Taylor, Bachelor Degree in Business with a Minor in Human Resources

Alissa Taylor, Degree in Economics with Minor in Criminal Justice



Finance Committee Report

Submitted by Don Bales

Although we have physically not been present in the church building, our congregation has been diligent about their offering. The following is an explanation of what has occurred.

Income for the year is \$30,720 more than expenses. There are a couple of initiatives that have assisted this circumstance. First and foremost, due to Lynn Bochart's diligence and clear understanding of the Government Small Business Loan guidelines, our church was approved to receive a \$30,500.00 SBA Payroll Protection Plan Loan. The loan becomes a grant if the loan is used within 8 weeks after receiving the loan. The amount of that loan is determined by providing documentation from 2019 expenses (in the designated months stipulated by the SBA guidelines). The amount is calculated from budget line items to include salaries, mortgage, and utility costs. Our church will definitely use the entire amount within the designated 8 weeks. Great news!! We qualify to use the loan, and it becomes a grant.

Our Sunday giving for the year is down \$3,682.00 less than budgeted through April. Much of this may have come from unpledged giving as well as no loose plate offering.

Our expenses are down due to our stay at home orders and ministries not taking place as usual. The amount equals (\$9,905.00)

Considering the current environment, we are maintaining a reasonable balance in the Good Samaritan Fund - \$8,198.00. Our Household Pantry continues to operate under revised distribution. There is a respectable balance of \$17,779.00.

Note: we are still on track to pay off the building loan in May 2021 instead of October 2021. A considerable savings.

We hope you are living a prayerful life. We pray for God's guidance in your choices ahead. Blessings to all of you.

***“Seeds of faith are always within us;
sometimes it takes a crisis to nourish and encourage their growth.”***



Hello Everyone!

It has been a couple months since I have given the church an update on what has been going on with the children. They have received Sunday school lessons online. They received a bag of supplies every week that allowed them to participate while watching the lesson at home. Of course this is not ideal, but in spite of the current situation the children are still learning more about our heavenly Father and how to live based on the lessons Jesus teaches us.

The Sunday school year has come to an end. Normally at the end of the year the children have received awards and, depending on their year, they got Bibles. Rather than attempt to do this in the middle of the summer, the children will receive them at the fall kick off Sunday school party at a 10:30 am service.

This summer we will not be hosting an in-person VBS in our church building, but we consider it important, so we are hosting a virtual Vacation Bible School. VBS will be adapted and recorded so the children can watch each day of VBS at home on their computers or tablets. They will pick up a bag of supplies to use for each day of VBS. The children that register will be able to pick up their bags of supplies at the church June 19 from 5:30 - 6:30pm or June 20 11am - noon.

The week of VBS will be June 22- 26. The children will get access to the video link through the email provided during registration.

This will be the first time we have VBS through the internet so we are learning as we go, but we are praying to do our best and meet the needs of the children in the best way we can. We ask you to pray for VBS this year: that the kids will still be open to the lessons that God wants to teach them even during this hard time; that they will find the time to engage in each of the five days of lessons, even when it will be difficult to do something online and when they wish they could meet in person.

I have attached the registration link below. Please share it with anyone with children age 4 years old through fifth grade. We want to reach as many children as possible, especially during this pandemic!

Registration link: <https://vbspro.events/p/fumclowell>

I hope everyone is staying safe! If you have any questions please reach out.

Paige Corning
Children's Director



Thank you to my church family for all the prayers, messages and kindnesses during this continuing challenge. You are a true blessing me.

God's love and Blue Skies,
Shirley Spry



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.

Have you seen the beautiful signs that popped up in the church yard? Kathy Taylor did a great job creating those.

Remember the shelves that were up in the narthex with all of our groceries on them? Well, Mike Hayden and a couple of his children took those down and put them away. The groceries were taken to the area food pantries by a team of people. They were in and out so quickly I didn't get out of my hole quickly enough to see them.

Have you seen how nice it looks outside? Dan & Laura Eller work tirelessly throughout the spring, summer and fall to make the church yard and flowerbeds look beautiful. Sharon Sanders and Dean Moes got the flowers planted in the Memorial Garden. Everything looks great.

Mike Hayden, Doug Hayden and Garret Corning installed the playground. I've had fun sneaking out there and playing. They did a great job.

Even in the midst of a pandemic, the Trustees have been keeping things up around the church and calling in repairs. Things are ready and waiting for everyone to come back and worship together. If we could just get the coronavirus to cooperate with us...! Talk to you next month.



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

