



If you are hospitalized

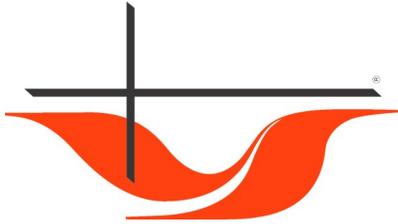
If you are hospitalized, and would like Pastor Nancy or Joan Osborn, the hospital visitor coordinator, to know about what is going on, please call the office (219-872-7200), Pastor Nancy directly on her cell phone (812-584-2418), or Joan.

Now You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sq4PALP2q6U>
<http://mcindianaumc.org/>, Find us on Facebook &



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Lenten Promise



March 2021

Crossbeams

First United Methodist Church

Crossbeam Publication

Lent did not have much meaning for me when I was a child. Oh, we had purple coin folders that received a daily (or was it a weekly) quarter, and I had a classmate who was Catholic who was surprised that we didn't give anything up. Frankly, we didn't do much with Lent. It wasn't until the current United Methodist Book of Worship, published in 1992, that there was even an Ash Wednesday service that included the imposition of ashes! We did, however, go to church for Maundy Thursday and could participate in the community Good Friday service.

Looking back, all of Lent seemed to be encapsulated in Holy Week, and often, we went from the high of Palm Sunday to the high of Easter without walking in the depths of spirit that Lent can bring, especially if we didn't attend any midweek services.

That began to change for me as a first-year student at Valparaiso University. As far as I can remember, that was the first time I truly participated in an Ash Wednesday Service and took on some of the disciplines of Lent. And then, just days before Palm Sunday, my mother died. When I returned to campus following her funeral it was the evening of Palm Sunday. I went to the chapel and there were the remnants of the celebration... palms scattered around and red balloons hanging on the ceiling beginning their downward path as the helium went out of them.

That year I truly experienced Holy Week. I attended chapel daily and my grief found a home in the music, liturgy, and scripture readings. And when Easter morning arose, I could sing ***Know That My Redeemer Lives*** with a hope and passion I had never before experienced.

For the past 43 years I have welcomed Lent as a time to examine my soul. I have participated in Holy Week services as a time to enter into Jesus' Passion, and I have greeted the dawn of Easter Morning with a joy that is unlimited. For Christ is Alive. Even during Lent.

As you move through Lent may this be a time of joyous examination and surrender that leads you to new life on Easter morning,

Shalom,
Pastor Nancy

Homebound March 2021 cont.

We thank those Scientists who developed a Covid vaccine, and the individuals who work at the pharmaceutical plants that continue to create the much needed vaccines.

Thanks to those wonderful people who continue to minister to our Home bound friends. I know the cards, and phone calls you have made have really been appreciated. Some of you have also visited those who are unable to leave their homes and what a welcoming experience it was for those you visited. As one visitor said to me, "she made us feel like a King and Queen."

"Dear God, thanks for your peace that passes all understanding. We don't have to understand everything that has happened this year, but you have brought us through this time. You have taught us lessons everyday. Our lessons might have been how to help children learn in a remote environment, how to work from home, and how to handle being home for a long period of time. You also taught us that you were with us each and every day. Thanks for the many blessings that we did experience even though we can't see them all right now. In your name, Amen."

As we experience and celebrate this Lenten time, you decide what you want to give up or add to your plate.

God Be With You, Till We Meet Again,

Judy Commers



Homebound March 2021

As we enter this time of Lent we can look back on this year.

What did we give up? Did we learn to live without? Some things were harder to give up - like seeing family and friends. Not being at church. But were we able to add to our plate? Did we slow down, consequently adding more time to relax? Was our slowing down for the best? Did we spend more time with God?

Did we start appreciating what we really had? A roof over our heads and food to eat. Even if we didn't see our family and friends we could call, do FaceTime, and learn Zoom. My two year old grandson doesn't realize that seeing each other on the phone is something special, but it is to us.

As we experienced the Ash Wednesday service, I found happiness in seeing church members and peace knowing that we didn't have to travel to church and then worry about where to park. Pastor Nancy was able to televise the Ash Wednesday Service to viewers using different formats. Just think, last year we wouldn't have dreamt of all the different ways to stream a service.

Each Sunday we have been rewarded with a lovely church service in a beautiful sanctuary accompanied by wonderful music. Pastor Nancy, Bev, Joe, George, Pam, Trish, Chris, Billy and the many individuals who have brought us music - we thank you.

I want to thank all the Health Care workers who gave up so much this year. These individuals truly cared about others so much that they stayed away from family to insure those in their care stayed healthy.

Worship Plans March 2021

Lenten Bible Study:

The Lenten Bible study this year will focus on the texts used in Sunday worship. We will gather via zoom each Wednesday at 7 pm. Here is the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84609788109?pwd=TU9UMVRTLzkvMUVQc2M2QmZZUnMxZz09>

Meeting ID: 846 0978 8109

Passcode: 022110

Worship Notes:

Join us for our Lenten Worship Series, *Rend Your Hearts: Claiming the Promise*.

Third Sunday in Lent – All These Words March 7, 2021 – Exodus 20:1-17

Fourth Sunday in Lent – Look Up and Live March 14, 2021 – Numbers 21:4-9

Fifth Sunday in Lent – Written on the Heart March 21, 2021 – Jeremiah 31:31-34

Palm Passion Sunday – The One Who Comes March 28, 2021 – Mark 11:1-11 & Mark 14:1-15:47 Isaiah 50:4-9

Maundy Thursday – A Lamb for Each Household April 1, 2021 – John 13:1-17, 31b-35 & Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14

Good Friday – By His Bruises April 2, 2021 – John 18:1-19:42 & Isaiah 52:13-53:12

We will send out Holy Week information in Mid-March.



Ministry Opportunities

Soup Kitchen

If you can help out in the Soup Kitchen it would be greatly appreciated. There have been days when Chef Erick has only had 1 or 2 volunteers, and he still makes it work. All volunteers must wear masks and distancing is practiced as much as possible. Some of the jobs – such as cutting and bagging deserts- can be totally distanced. If you cannot help in person please consider donating bottled water or food handling gloves.

You may call or text Chef Erik at 219-243-3331.

Cindy's Office Hours

Cindy is in the office Monday.-Thursday from 7:30 – 2:30. Please call before you come and refrain from coming during soup kitchen hours – 11:30-1:15. 219-872-7200

Warming Trees

We will continue our ministry of the Warming Trees by providing gloves, scarves, mittens, hats, and socks and placing them on the trees by the big parking lot for people to take if they need them. If you would like to donate some for the trees, you may bring them to the outdoor communion on Sundays at 10:45am, place them on the trees yourselves (please bag in a ziplock) or contact the office during business hours. Thank you for all you do for our church and community.



The Church Office Staff

Announcements

We are sending out Sunday's announcements via email. You may also find them on the church website. If you are not getting the emails, please contact the office with your up to date email address.



TRY- IT is back! Weather permitting, Try- It will begin meeting OUTSIDE in the parking lot, on Wednesday nights from 4:30- 5:30 PM beginning on **WEDNESDAY MARCH 17!** Wear green! We'll play green games, sing green songs, and have fun being together!

MC1st Middlers! Don't forget to send me your stories, pictures, poems, or interviews for our MC1st Middler Newsletter! This is your chance to see your work in print!

Are you receiving the newsletter?

Are you using the lessons and videos?

Let Ms. Trish know what else you need!



Youth Group continues to meet (on Zoom for now) on Tuesday nights. Ask a youth member what they've learned about prayer or how they use the bible! Right now, we're busy making plans for camp, summer plans, and mission trips (with the Portage Youth group). Stay tuned to see what the MC1st Youth are up to next!

God's Big Family

Plans for a **Messy Vacation Bible School** are under way! Mark your calendars for June 28- to July 2, 2021! This year's VBS will be "hybrid". There will be take home VBS kits for Monday- Thursday and "God's Big Family Picnic" Messy Church, outside in the church parking lot on Friday night. Please let me know that you would like take- home kits reserved for children in your home, your family, your neighborhood, and your life! And all are invited to Messy Church!

Trish Johnsen -Children, Youth and Family Ministries-
765-490-1994 trishatchurch@gmail.com



Red Cross Blood Drive

Greetings,

You have been hearing about Messy Church here at First UMC for more than a year now. We launched this exciting ministry in February of 2020 with the Chili Cook- Off, and met once more in March 2020. Then, the world suddenly became a very different place and the whole vision of Messy Church just didn't seem to fit. Messy Church is church- but different. Messy Church is about relationships, and gathering together. Messy Church is about sharing a meal, and hands- on activities, and singing and music, movement, and worship. None of that has been possible for almost a year now. Our vision for reaching our neighbors and establishing a new kind of congregation went on the back burner as our goals turned to simply surviving this pandemic and keeping each other safe.



A few months ago, I had a conversation with our National Messy Church director, Roberta Egli. In this conversation, I found myself lamenting this potentially lost vision and wondering how on earth we were to reach outside of our walls (the very goal of Messy Church) during a time of quarantine. Roberta assured me that the best thing we can do right now is to keep the Messy Church vision alive in our congregation in any way we can, until we can pick up where we left off. That's the reason that your Messy Church team created take- home Messy Advent bags as a gift to the congregation. It's the reason that we continued our "Chili Cook Off" tradition, even though it was virtual (but so much fun!) and why you'll continue to see announcements about Messy Church opportunities. We hope and pray that you will join in, and that you'll spread the word and invite someone else to join in. Messy Church isn't just for kids or families- Messy Church is for EVERYBODY!

Several months ago, I was asked to serve on a conference Fresh Expressions/Messy Church team. In this role, I am honored to represent Messy Church as we help other churches in our conference connection establish their own Messy Churches, along with other similar ministries known as "Fresh Expressions." We realized that we have a number of ministries here at MC 1st that we can build on to reach people in our community who may not join us for traditional Sunday morning worship. I'm very excited to share with you that our amazing team is preparing to begin a year- long coaching cohort program that will equip us to further the vision that began with Messy Church. We will be finding ways to establish ministries that reach even more of our neighbors with the love of Jesus. I'll be sharing regular updates as we go along this process known as "New People, New Places." Our team is very excited, and we can add more members! Please let me know if you would like to join the team.

Here's some other ways that you can be part of growing these new ministries:

- * Be part of the prayer team. Let us know if you would like to be part of this team that will pray specifically and intentionally for Messy Church, the leadership team, and new Fresh Expressions ministries.
- * Share the word! Take an extra Messy Church- at – home bag with you and share it with a neighbor, or hit "like" and "share" when you see social media announcements.
- *Pitch in! We can always use fresh ideas, and help with outdoor events.
- * Feel free to ask us questions or share new ideas!

Sunday, March 7- get your Messy Church to- go bag featuring a lesson and items for Lent and Holy Week.

"Ms." Trish Johnsen

trishatchurch@gmail.com

In January we moved our blood drive from Friday to Saturday. We amazed the local Red Cross with the positive response – we provided 38 pints of blood! Because of such a positive response, we are keeping the blood drive on Saturdays. The next one is March 27 from 10am-4pm. IF YOU CAN HELP, please contact Yvonne Bancroft. You may register to donate a RedCrossblood.org.



Worship Opportunities

We have added yet another way for you to join in worshipping at First UMC. We have opened our very own YouTube channel. However, we need your help to make this work. The more followers and subscribers we have the more easily people can find us. Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sq4PALP2q6U>

Of course, you may still join us on Facebook as we livestream every week, on Access Cable TV, and occasionally on zoom.

THOUGHTS FROM THE GREEN TEAM

QUARANTINE / SEQUESTER / SOCIAL DISTANCE/ TIME AT HOME / ARGHHH

Day 335 and still counting . . .

One thing we can say about this past year is that it's sure given us lots of time to think! Lately I've been wondering just how in the world I could possibly have accumulated so much stuff, and I'm wondering why it's still here taking up space?

My 2021 goal is to pare down, simplify, reorganize and have some room to breathe.

If you've done some weeding out of your own and found that you have surplus with nowhere to go, consider this great, green suggestion!

There is a wonderful resource called SCARCE (www.scarce.org) that takes many things no longer wanted or needed. It is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization that offers environmental education programs for residents, businesses, schools, youth groups and organizations, and collects items at their center for reuse and recycling.

They take books in any condition, crayons broken or whole, school & office supplies, arts & crafts supplies, musical instruments & sheet music, electrical & computer cords, holiday lights, keys, LP records, ink jet cartridges, eyeglasses & sunglasses, hearing aids, cell phones, corks, yarn, CD & DVD disks (no cases), watches & jewelry, Brita & Pur water filters & accessories, bread tags, plastic bottle caps, and unused greeting cards. All supplies should be in new or gently used condition.

****Currently, they are also taking pens, pencils, mechanical pencils and markers, working or not. They can't take homemade crafts & supplies, customized worksheets, broken or damaged supplies or hazardous waste of any kind.****

I regularly visit SCARCE (full disclosure, I'm a board member) and am happy to transport what is collected - we'll have sorting bins in the Gathering Room at church by March 1st. You're welcome to de-clutter and help protect our planet at the same time. It's a win, win!

Questions? Contact beverlyegriffith@gmail.com. Also, check out all the great things SCARCE does at www.scarce.org. Donations are tax deductible to the extent the law allows.

And, what better things do we have to do in February and March?!?!?

xoxoxox

Bev

Soup Kitchen

On March 13, 2020, representatives from 4 of the Downtown Soup Kitchens met to discuss 'short term plans' in case we had to make changes to the Soup Kitchen protocols because of the possibility of a shut down. Well, a year later we are still working with those plans. Hiring Erik, (at a small stipend), to coordinate the work of at least 3 of the kitchens was perhaps the best decision we made at that time. He is all in in making this work.

In addition to providing a hot, to go meal, 6 days a week (5 from our kitchen), we have provided weekly food boxes, at no cost to us, that provide dairy, protein, and fruits and vegetables as well as other foods that we cannot use in the soup kitchen meals.

Even during the most recent cold snap we have continued to feed between 85 and 110 meals daily! In January we were moving toward 40,000 meals served since March 17.

Erik has a tremendous team that has helped make this work, and with funding from the LaPorte County Health Foundation, The Unity Foundation, United Way, and donations from St Paul's, First Presbyterian, First UMC, St. Luke's, and many other churches and individuals we are making this work. We can always use more support!

Our UMW has donated countless (well, they know the count) cases of water to this project. Thank you all for your support of this missional outreach that lives out Matthew 25 in tangible and real ways.

