



THE CONNECTION

August 2020

Newsletter



Giving Thanks

I want to brag on our church. I have found that people have been patient through this crisis. We don't always agree, but people are being understanding and loving- and that makes all the difference in the world. I'm very thankful.

I also want to brag on our wonderful staff. This has been a challenging time for them. And they have tried to adapt and be creative during this crisis- even while going through some pretty huge trials in their own lives.

COVID-19

There's a growing number of anecdotal stories of people who publicly asserted on their social media pages for months that this was all a hoax- until it hit them.

Like these: <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/06/08/florida-man-covid-19-precautions>

<https://www.insider.com/ohio-man-veteran-died-coronavirus-mask-facebook-posts-2020-7>

<https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Man-dies-at-Texas-hospital-after-attending-COVID-15404765.php>

You read more extreme stories like those above and balance them with other experiences. The national death rate per week has dropped vastly

Worship Times

Sunday Mornings

The Well 9:45AM

Traditions 11:00AM

Office Hours

Mon - Thurs

9:00AM- 4:00PM

Staff Meetings

Mondays 9:30-11:30AM

Lunch

12:00-1:00PM

Church Staff

Pastor

Pastor Ronnie Bearden

drnonbearden@hotmail.com

Church Administrator

Angie Arnold

fumcrestview@gmail.com

Church Secretary

Cathrin Owens

office.fumcrestview@gmail.com

Children's Ministry

Angela Long

fumc.angelalong@gmail.com

Director of Adult Discipleship & Congregational Care

April Hight

fumc.aprilhight@gmail.com

Music, Contemporary

Nathan Hight

Music, Traditional

Kevin Lusk

Housekeeping

Amy Lohr-Sticha

Maintenance

Devon Stoy

lower compared to its high in April. This virus generally does not effect younger people this severely. One person I know contracted COVID-19 and only had a fever for 3 days- nothing worse. And none of his other family members have come down with it either (for which we are very grateful).

Organist
Leon Curenton

Pianists
Pam Myers, Susan Smith

Sexton
Samuel Allen

So there's a certain unpredictability about all this- whether because of our own differing immune systems (and preexisting conditions) or because there may be different strains floating around.

I get regular updates from our local health authorities. Here are some of the things that I'm watching: the number of positive cases in the county has gone up dramatically from about 6% in June to 13% last week; the number of people who are so sick they go to the emergency room and have a "flu-like symptom" has spiked upward in the last few weeks.

I also watch the occupancy of our hospitals and ICU beds. I hear reports of skeptics that their local hospitals have plenty of capacity- and that might be true. But currently, Okaloosa hospitals are almost 80% full- and ICU beds are over 90% full (that's for all patients for all problems). The vast majority of those people don't have COVID-19, but that tight supply can create a crisis if the COVID hospitalizations spike. However, a significant portion of those beds ARE occupied by COVID patients. On July 2, 25% of all Okaloosa hospital ICU beds were occupied by COVID positive people, July 20 that number was 31%. This increase is why the hospitals have recently shut down to visitors again.

But we also know that there is danger and an emotional, psychological and spiritual cost to isolating too long. The damage from this is all too real.

And so the leadership of our church has felt it important to take a balanced position in all of this. Especially because we have many older folks in our congregation, we should take all of this seriously.

But our desire and our goal is to continue to be open for in-person worship as long as possible for those who wish to come. But in order to do that safely, we need to continue with safe practices. This is one of the reasons I'm writing you. To affirm to you that the overall incidence in our area is still moderately low compared to other areas- but it is rising significantly. Please take all of this seriously when coming to church. Help us with the safe practices we have established: spreading out, practicing social distancing, and wearing a mask in worship- especially for singing.

There is a second reason I'm writing. We had hopes that in time, this would all go away- or at least greatly diminish- especially with the hot summer months. Severe active cases does appear to be down from 2 months ago- but this issue has not gone away.

So two weeks ago, I instructed our staff to begin to assume that this is the way things may be ... for a year- or longer. It's already been 4 months, so let's just accept the cards we have and deal with it. I hope we are not dealing with this for that long, but for now, we will operate on the assumption that we will.

So we have been brainstorming about how to do ministry- **ongoing** ministry- in the midst of this crisis. The church will not stop. We will find ways to adapt. For example, Vacation Bible School is happening this year online. Several churches pooled their resources to make it happen.

I personally have made a commitment to do First Light Devotions online for several months more. I originally thought it would be for one month- but we are now at four. I might have a couple of breaks, but I plan to continue this since many people have spoken so highly of it.

We've begun discussing small groups, and how those may still happen- whether in person or online.

We have also begun opening up the church for meetings. Our administrative committees and a few other groups have just begun to meet.

But here is the major challenge we have, friends. We must restrict the meetings to a good ratio of room size to number of people, and we have to juggle room utilization so we don't have groups meeting back to back. This is a major hurdle. Our church administrator, Angie Arnold has worked her best to juggle all this.

The difficult reality is that this is a **busy** church with a lot going on and we simply have to adjust our thinking in order to be a team in all of this. Each group needs to be flexible and even creative. For example, one of our largest adult Sunday School classes has been meeting online throughout this entire crisis- and they've been successful at it. While we were closed, they met online at the usual Sunday morning hour. After we opened for worship, they shifted to Sunday evenings. And now that many of our committees will be meeting on Sunday evenings, they will have to struggle with possibly meeting on a different day. Afterall, "Sunday School" doesn't

have to meet on Sunday. At its heart, it's a small group Bible study and can meet on many days.

So Sunday school classes will be a challenge going forward because of their size, room space, and time between meetings. We are looking at differing possibilities when we get to the next phase.

Holy Communion will also be a challenge. With COVID infections spiking in our area, I'm hesitant to resume Communion at this time. Once again, we will have to get creative and be willing to try new things. One possibility is to move to Communion to once a quarter- which many churches used to do. Another is to have communion online- as we did before. It doesn't even have to be live. I could record something and people could take communion when it best suits them.

Next Phase

Overall, when it comes to children, our leaders agreed to follow and be in step with the timing of the school system, but because there has been such a large up-tick in cases in our area, our core leaders decided to delay our children and youth coming back until it has become clear our community status about 3 or 4 weeks after school opens. Right now, no one knows what effect going back to school will have.

Therefore, since school is (currently) scheduled to reopen the second week of August, we want to see what the trends are immediately following. If the virus rate for our community grows dramatically, then we may delay re-opening. But of course, we would love for the situation to be unchanged or even dropping.

So please be patient. Listen out for more information in the coming weeks.

Please be in prayer.

Stay in love with Jesus.

Be patient and loving.

Hold on to the grace of God, because He has a plan for us.

The church is still the church, especially in times of crisis!

And now, more than ever, I love my church!

Pastor Ronnie



All students (from Pre-k to Graduate) and teachers are asked to bring their backpacks/totes to worship with you on Sun, Aug 9 and place them near the altar.

We will celebrate back to school and have the backpacks/totes blessed at a special time at each worship service.

We do not want to miss out on any of you for this event.

We want to include those of you who are not ready for in person worship or don't have a back pack because you will be doing remote or homeschool this year.

You can still participate by sending us a picture of yourself or your child, the back pack and/or name or a picture of their homeschool desk area.

(send to fumc.angelalong@gmail.com)

Teachers and youth will also be recognized on this day and are encouraged to send in a picture to include in our slideshow if they can not attend in person.

Our backpack tags will be individually packaged and handed out on arrival or as you leave the service.

They can also be mailed out or picked up.

Calling All Blood Donors!

The Big Red Bus is coming!

Location : On the corner of Texas & 8th in the parking lot across the street from the CRC.

Date : **Sunday, August 16th , 2020**

Time: 8:00AM-1:00PM

Promotion: All blood donors will receive a **FREE** COVID-19 Antibody Test, a **FREE** OneBlood Tote bag, and a **wellness checkup** including blood pressure, pulse, temperature, iron count, cholesterol screening!



Children's Ministry

Hello Kids Street Family and friends:

I find it amazing and overwhelming that summer is over and soon school will begin! School will look

different for all of us this year. Some will remain at home and many will return to school to find changes in the way everything is done. I challenge you all to take time with your families to look at what remains the same. There is so much out of our control. Yet at the end of the day, when the kids are tucked away, I am reminded of God's love and so thankful for another chance tomorrow to do better, love more, and worry a little less. Our children remind me of that opportunity. Babies, flowers, butterflies... all a reminder of how he makes all things new. I want to dedicate this month to our parents. You have changed schedules, work, appointments, and everything about how your family operates this year. Even those who were already homeschool parents have felt the impact of Covid-19. I see pictures of you on social media creating new learning opportunities for your children and sometimes just creating a chance to all be home together. Smiling faces, happy hearts, doing the best you can do even when things don't feel so great. I say all of this to lead into our new private facebook pages. Each Kids Street Sunday school group now has their own private page. Only approved parents and a few administrators are allowed access to these pages. The primary goal is a way to share our curriculum according to it's copyright requirements but I also wanted these pages for you to have a safe place to share with other FUMC parents. Safe to share a picture of your child that will not be blasted over social media, confident in confidentiality as you post a joy, a fear, a blessing or a concern you have for your child. These pages should also be for you to be able to turn to each other as parents. I will approve the posts to make sure we comply with our own social media policies but feel free to use the pages as a form of support and a bonus to the curriculum resources posted on the page. My goal for this year is to find more ways to include everyone in all that we do so let me know as you have suggestions. (fumc.angelalong@gmail.com)



Upcoming events:

PROMOTION SUNDAY: (July 12th during the 9:45 AM service) The Children's Ministry Team had a goal to bring back Promotion Sunday this year and we plan to make this happen for our 2020.21 kids! It may look a little different for our first year back, but we don't want another year to pass without a Promotion Sunday and receipt of a promotion Bible. This year will consist of calling out the children's name and new class versus being called on stage. For those who do not attend in person worship, please watch our live service. Please contact Mrs. Angela if you would like to add your child to the promotion list.

ONLINE VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: (July 28, 29, 30) Rocky Railroad VBS is coming to you online! No need to register... but if you do we will have a special packet for you! We will premiere VBS each day on Facebook and on our YouTube page as well as other sites. It takes about 30 minutes each day... you can stop and start the event as you want and even come back later to finish OR WATCH AGAIN!!!!!! Note: Registration can be found on. <http://fumcrestview.com/>

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS: (August 9): We will participate in our annual prayer over backpacks on August 9th. For those who can not attend, please send in a picture of your backpack, child, or school work area (for homeschool). We want to make sure and include children and teachers who are not able to return to inperson worship. A slide show will be shown and prayed over. We have tags for all students and teachers which will be individually packaged and available for pick up at the service.

-Angela Long

Congregational Care

Hi Friends!

It has been such a JOY to catch up with some of you this week! Thank you for taking a moment to chat with me. I have loved hearing your voices and stories! It blesses my heart to know that you are keeping connected to the church and to each other.

I will be out of the office this next week for a little "staycation" time with my family before school begins. If you have not received a phone call or email from me - hold tight! I will resume when I am back to work. Not sure if we have your most up-to-date contact info? Please email or call the church office or myself. One challenge we have run across is outdated info or missing info. We want to stay in contact with you - most especially now. YOU are important to us!



Thanking God for YOU!
-April Hight

Small Group Ministry

Keep an eye out for updated information on new Fall term small groups. We are exploring both in person and online options. Details to come soon!

If you have not done so already, please consider answering our brief online survey: <https://forms.gle/4dcu2NRjK8jgX7NP8> This will help us as we begin imagining what ministry looks like in the days ahead. Your thoughts are important to us!



Yarn Ministry

And we go quietly on.

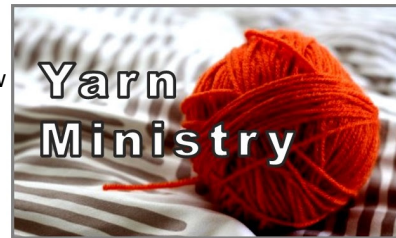
Even in the midst of our troubling times, our Yarnies continue to wow me with their faithfulness, enthusiasm, and tenacity. We've had over 84 shawls, lapghans, blankets and baby items made by loving hands in the 14 weeks that we did not meet face to face. Time for a Yarn Blessing!

Our community has been so gracious to us by donating yarn and supplies. I'm always fielding calls for yarn drop offs for our group and we are WELL STOCKED. God has blessed us abundantly.

Big THANK YOU to Pam Hight for spending 5 hours this week in Yarnia (RM 213) sorting and cleaning. You are AMAZING!

As Yarnies, we will continue to go quietly on lifting up God's kingdom one stitch at a time.

-Cathrin Owens



UMCOR / Sager Brown Depot Mission Trip

We are raising funds this month for our mission trip this Fall to the UMCOR Depot in Louisiana! Our Sager Brown team needs app. \$1800 for the cost of kits & rental vehicle for 9/27 - 10/2. Please notate any checks with FUMC & Sager Brown Trip on the memo line. You may also donate on our app! Please see Pam Hight for any information.



August Greeters & Ushers

Contemporary/The Crossroads Center 9:45AM

Aimee Keller & Dan Taylor

Traditions/Main Sanctuary 11:00AM

Leader: Mike Steen

August 2- Viki & Terry Luster, Glenda McMasters, Gary Johnson

August 9- Viki & Terry Luster, Melanie Zick, Sam Field

August 16- Viki & Terry Luster, Elaine Mantle, Sam Field
August 23- Viki & Terry Luster, Melanie Zick, Margaret Larson
August 30- Viki & Terry Luster, Sam Field, Elaine Mantle

Important Dates in August

Some of the meeting locations have changed due to social distancing guidelines that affect our room capacity limits!

Aug 2- Children's Committee 12:00PM Kid's Street
Aug 9- Blessing of the Backpacks at 9:45AM & 11:00AM services
Aug 10- United Methodist Men 6:00PM CRC
Aug 11- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213
Aug 12- Worship Ministry 4:30PM Rm 212
Aug 16- One Blood's Big Red Bus is coming! They'll be in the parking lot on the corner of Texas & 8th from 8:00AM-1:00PM, Missions 5:00PM Rm 212
Aug 21- Sr. Ministry Game Day 11:00AM-2:00PM FH (tentative)
Aug 25- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213
Aug 30- Last Sunday of Camp Meeting Month at the 11:00AM service, Trustees 3:00PM Conf Rm, Finance 5:15PM Conf Rm

**FH- Fellowship Hall, Conf Rm- Conference Room, CRC- The Crossroads Center, Youth Rm- Youth Room*

Please see <http://fumcrestview.com/calendar-1> for any updates or changes

Looking Ahead To September

Some of the meeting locations have changed due to social distancing guidelines that affect our room capacity limits!

Sept 4- Women's Service Group 9-11:00AM Rm 213 (tentative)
Sept 7- FUMC Office closed for Labor Day.
Sept 8- Yarn Ministry at 6:00PM RM 213
Sept 9- Church Council, CommUNITY Dinner (tentative), Book Fair (tentative)
Sept 13- Long Range Planning 5:30PM Youth Room
Sept 14- Oct newsletter deadline, United Methodist Men at 6:00PM CRC
Sept 18- Sr. Ministry Game Day 11:00AM-2:00PM FH
Sept 20- UMCOR Sager Brown Mission Team Commissioning 11:00AM service, October newsletter out
Sept 27 through Oct 1- UMCOR Sager Brown Mission Team to Louisiana
Sept 29- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213 (make-up meeting for Sept 22)

**FH- Fellowship Hall, Conf Rm- Conference Room, CRC- The Crossroads Center, Youth Rm- Youth Room*

Please see <http://fumcrestview.com/calendar-1> for any updates or changes



Praying Over Our Students

*Thank you, Lord for Your divine protection over our children.
Keep them safe as they travel to and from school.
Protect them from any physical harm while they are in school.
I stand on Your Word that no weapon formed against them will prosper.
I thank you that Your angels stand guard over them and surround them like a shield.
Guard their hearts and minds as they step out to meet new friends.
Let negative words or comments, roll off them and not take root in their souls.
Cover them as they navigate this new school year and guide them in the right direction.
In Jesus' name, Amen!*

FUMC News

For all the latest from FUMC please visit:

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