



HILLTOP HERALD-MAY 2020 MONONA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH & IGLESIA METODISTA UNIDA EL LIBERTADOR

ALL ACTIVITIES CANCELLED

At this time we do not know when we will be resuming regular activities. If you are not receiving our email updates but have an email address, please send your address to secretarymumc@sbcglobal.net. If you need anything at all, please call the church at 608-222-1633 or Pastor Brad at 414-534-8791. **We have cloth face masks available in the entryway to pick up if you are in need of one or they can be mailed if you would rather not stop by the church building.**

HOW CAN THE CHURCH SUPPORT YOU?

As a small group leader or committee chair, how can the church support your wish to communicate with your fellow members? The church has a Zoom account that can be shared to allow get-togethers lasting longer than 40 minutes. Our Adult Sunday School class "gathered" last week to discuss their *Christ in Crisis* book. Check out the article about the new Adult Sunday school class coming up in May.

Are you in need of food, financial or emotional assistance? We have our Human Welfare Fund available for anything you may need and people willing to pick up items for you. Pastor Brad and Mark are available by phone and could probably do a Zoom gathering also if you would like face-to-face contact.

Have you filled out your census, or done your taxes, or could you use assistance with these areas? We have people willing to help in any way that we can.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

On **Sunday May 3** at 11:30am the Adult Sunday School class will use Zoom to discuss a video of Jim Wallis talking about Covid-19. To view the video, click on the link below:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73Z7jsvZuhQ&feature=youtu.be>

After the discussion of the video, they will finish up the *Christ in Crisis* book.

They hope to begin their new book on **Sunday, May 10**, *Praying the Psalms, Second Edition: Engaging Scripture and the Life of the Spirit* by Walter Brueggeman. If you would like to join this discussion you should purchase the book on your own to make sure you receive it on time.

Please let the church office know that you would like to participate so we can make sure that you receive the Zoom link to join the class (secretarymumc@sbcglobal.net).

PASTOR'S COLUMN

Dear Friends,

As I write this on April 29th the U.S. has reached over one million cases from COVID-19 and over 61,000 deaths. If my count is correct we are six weeks into sheltering in place since Gov. Evers' Safer-at-Home order was issued on March 24th. Six weeks since life as we had known it ended.

Recently a writer posed the scenario, What would you have thought if someone had told you six weeks ago that you would basically be at home for the next six weeks, going out only for walks/runs in the neighborhood, no social gatherings, no going to church, no shopping except for essentials, no restaurants or theater? And by the way, no time with grandkids or family (except on-line).

It would have been hard to imagine. Which is why, even now, it seems a bit surreal. We may have wondered if we could do it. But we have done it. We are doing it. And there is no end in sight.

From what I read, the small, sporadic back-to-work protests are not representative of the country as a whole. They seem to be led by extreme right-wing groups. Nevertheless, they reflect a restlessness that all of us are feeling. Which is to say, the novelty has worn off. We are news saturated. And the quarantining is taking a mental health toll on us.

However, the level of cooperation with the required-but-unenforced restrictions has been high. Most people have kept good spirits and are reaching out in care (insofar as it's possible). I see signs of solidarity and encouragement like cut-out hearts in windows and blue lights in yards. Humor is evident and we are all making adjustments. The population at large has pulled together.

The beginning of spring is a blessing, to be sure, especially this year. The blossoms and the beauty. Have you felt, as I have, the oddness of nature's glory appearing in the midst of the pandemic? Whether or not "April is the cruelest month of the year," this year it's certainly the most ironic.

And we don't know what's ahead. Are we in for more hunkering down? Or a gradual "re-opening" and "return to some new normal"? Even if the infection rates decline, we are told it won't be like the flip of a switch. We won't go back to where we were and who we were before this all began. It hasn't been easy.

Through it all, my friends, you are doing well. I know that patience and perseverance is hard. But keep the faith. We will get through this together. Do those things you need to do in order to care for yourself physically, mentally, and spiritually. It's not indulgent; it's maintenance. I am thinking of and praying for you.

Here is a prayer from St. Augustine that, when I read it recently, seemed fitting for this time.

Watch, O Lord,
with those who wake or watch or weep tonight
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend your sick ones O Lord Jesus Christ
rest your weary ones
bless your dying ones
soothe your suffering ones
and all for your love's sake

Prayers, peace, and health to you,

Pastor Brad

PLEASE HELP OUR RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Due to the critical need for blood, Monona United Methodist Church will continue to host our third blood drive on **Tuesday, May 19, 1:00-6:00pm**. Blood donors and volunteers are needed. Please contact the church office for more information.

Please know that The Red Cross has implemented additional precautions to ensure the safety of donors and staff, including:

- Checking temperatures of staff and donors *before* entering a drive to make sure they are healthy.
- Providing hand sanitizer for use before the drive, as well as throughout the donation process.
- Following social distancing between donors including entry, donation and refreshment areas.
- Increasing enhanced disinfecting of surfaces and equipment.
- Donations are only with appointments and no guests allowed (e.g. children).
- **Donors are asked to wear their own face mask.**

More Volunteers Needed:

- 2 volunteers at 11:30am to help unload
- 5 volunteers, per shift 12:30 – 6:30pm to help with initial screening, registration, escort donors and in refreshment area
- 2 volunteers at 6:30pm to help reload

General Donor Information:

- Height/weight requirements
- General good health
- Rapid Pass saves 15 minutes
- Bring donor card or government ID
- Questions on eligibility 1-866-236-3276

WORSHIP TIMES

Join us for virtual Worship services on Sunday mornings at 10am. Click the link found on our website:

mononaunitedmethodistchurch.org

NEW UPPER ROOMS ARE HERE

The *Upper Room* is a great little devotional book that you can use for daily reading. The new May-June issue has arrived and is in the entryway. Feel free to take one. If you would like one mailed to you, please contact the church office. Also they are offering this issue as a free download which can be emailed to you if you would rather. so please contact the office.

OUR WEBSITE

Same URL/address with a new look! www.mononaunitedmethodistchurch.org
We now have a **Giving** tab to make a donation with your credit card.

CARING COORDINATOR COLUMN

During this unprecedented time of job loss and school closings, of safer-at-home and social distancing practices, many area families and children are in need of help. In response, the Southeast Community Network (SECN) has launched a new initiative to help those most at-risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. A.I.D. 2020 is a multi-faceted effort that coordinates the expertise, resources, and services of its member agencies to help serve the most vulnerable residents of southeast Madison.

One such effort is a Neighborhood Food Box drop-off that delivers weekly, 25-lb. boxes of food, including milk, to residents in Dutch Mill and Owl Creek. Needs assessment and community coordination included the City of Madison's Owl Creek Neighborhood Resource Team and residents' feedback and leadership. Partners in this effort include Dane County Joining Forces for Families, BLW Neighborhood Center, Life Center Madison, Madison Public Library, Second Harvest Food Bank, Two Men and a Truck, Owl Creek NRT, Madison Metropolitan School District and Monona United Methodist Church. Financial contributions to our Human Welfare Fund will help support this initiative as well as other community welfare requests our church office receives.

Our Caring Casserole Ministry needs your help again. Are you willing to double a recipe? Make an extra meal, casserole, or other delicious dishes? If so, please put food in plastic or aluminum containers, labeled and dated, and place in the church's kitchen freezer. This ministry provides frozen homemade meals for those in our church family who could use a little extra meal support. Please call ahead to the church office before dropping off food. Kay is typically there between 9 am and 2 pm, Monday – Friday.

Caring & Coordinating, Mark Buffat

JAVA JIVE

We continue our Equal Exchange (EEX) Authentic Fair Trade Mission to provide a market place for small farmer co-ops locally and globally (which is also grown sustainably by local farmers!!)

So we will continue as follows:

- 1- Church is open from 9am- 2pm. No shopping lines!!
- 2- Hand sanitizer by coffee cabinet
- 3- Shop in coffee cabinet, table and directly to right in upper cabinet is Tea and Chocolate Bars
- 4- Place payment in designated envelope in front of plastic box. Checks made out to Monona United Methodist Women, MUMW.

Kay Mackie- a team coordinator of MUMW EEX AFT TEAM MISSION. This is not a fund raiser. Questions or suggestions always welcome. 608-512-2053

WEEDS

If you are looking for a reason to go outside and enjoy the spring weather (it's pouring as I write this!), stop by the church and pick some weeds that are already growing in the sidewalk cracks. Rest on the bench for a while and check out the beautiful daffodils blooming in the garden. Take a walk through the garden and see if anything has started growing. We have church and community members already committed to growing vegetables.

MAY MISSION OF THE MONTH:

The River Food Pantry

The River Food Pantry has established a COVID-19 Emergency Food Fund to meet the nutritional needs of food-insecure households in Dane County for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic. An anonymous donor has generously offered to match donations up to \$25,000.

The River's COVID-19 Emergency Food Fund will help to provide boxes of groceries, including perishable and non-perishable foods, for hundreds of local households to pick up curbside at The River. The fund will also provide pre-bagged lunches for children delivered through MUNCH, The River's mobile lunch program, to nine low-income neighborhoods six days a week.

In addition to raising emergency funds, The River has made the following contingency plan adjustments:

- Curbside only pick-up: The River will not allow shoppers inside of the facility. Instead, prepared boxes of groceries will be available for pick up curbside. Our curbside pick-up distribution hours will be Tuesday–Thursday from 10:00am–5:00pm and Friday from 10:00am–6:00pm.
- MUNCH mobile lunch program six days a week: MUNCH will deliver pre-bagged lunches Monday–Saturday to children in the standard neighborhoods, as well as Kennedy Heights.
- **Volunteers needed:** The River seeks healthy volunteers who are not in the higher-risk demographic to help at The River with food packaging and distribution, as well as client registration. Volunteers are also needed to help with MUNCH lunch production (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30am–10:30am) and lunch distribution (Monday–Saturday from 10:45am–2:30pm).
- In-kind donations not accepted: To minimize the chain of possession of contact with products, we prefer not to accept at this time onsite donations of food, clothing, hygiene products, etc. Monetary donations will allow us to purchase in bulk the specific food and supplies that the community needs.

The River plans to continue to operate for the duration of this community emergency. Updates will continue to be made on our website, social media, and voicemail system as necessary. Questions and concerns can be directed to info@riverfoodpantry.org or 442-8815. The River Food Pantry is Dane County's busiest food pantry, offering free groceries, meals, mobile lunches and clothing to anyone who comes for help.

Please consider helping this agency continue its work in our community. Please mark your check, envelope or electronic giving "The River Food Pantry".

Thank you for your generous support of this mission.

The Mission Team

SECOND HARVEST NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

<https://www.secondharvestmadison.org>

Volunteers are ESSENTIAL to Second Harvest Foodbank. And, Second Harvest Foodbank is ESSENTIAL to the community. **We are in need of volunteers** to help us fill pre-packed Care Boxes. Volunteer shifts are available throughout the day, 7 days a week.

Care Boxes are filled with healthy foods, and are being distributed to those struggling with hunger through our partner agencies and our mobile pantries throughout our 16 county service area. An average of 2,600 boxes are being distributed per day! We need volunteer support to assist in packing these boxes.

We are committed to keeping our staff and volunteers safe by limiting the number of volunteers during shifts as well as adding new measures to maintain a clean and healthy environment.

\$ Financial Report \$

Cash Flow March 31, 2020

<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Income	\$ 39,139	\$ 87,863
General Operating Expenses	21,700	75,254
Net Surplus (Shortfall)	<u>\$ 17,439</u>	<u>\$ 12,609</u>

A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

"In remembrance of me heal the sick" TFWS 2254

And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:39-40)

In the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, when pagans far outnumbered Christians, a pair of epidemics rocked the Roman Empire. After the second in 252 AD, Dionysius (190?-264), Bishop of Alexandria, wrote in an Easter letter how Christians had behaved better toward the sick, than had the pagans. The pagans had run from the sick, abandoned relatives, ejected the dying from their homes and left the dead in the streets. In contrast, Christians diligently ministered to the sick and prepared the dead for burial. As a result, many Christians, themselves, became ill and died; it was a death akin to martyrdom, in the Bishop's opinion.

The sociologist of religion Rodney Stark, in the Rise of Christianity, has argued that this behavior of early Christians, and similar behavior during other epidemics, was critically important in the early growth of Christianity and its displacement of pagan polytheism. Christians survived at higher rates, the plague disrupted their communities less, they exhibited less fear, and they helped those in dire need. The pagans noticed and in subsequent years, the ranks of Christianity swelled.

One can only hope that history will remember the service and witness of our generation of Christians in the time of the coronavirus epidemic. Did we pray together, did we continue to worship, though from afar, did we give to financially support the mission and ministry of the church? Did we support charities caring for the poor and sick, did we help teach the children home from school, did we help the laid off and furloughed apply for benefits, and did we help the disenfranchised vote, and so on?

You are the answer to my questions.

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, 888-903-9863 or wumf@wumf.org

MONONA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

606 NICHOLS ROAD
MONONA, WI 53716

The HILLTOP HERALD is produced monthly for distribution to the members and friends of Monona United Methodist Church & Iglesia Metodista Unida El Libertador.

Monona UMC Church office 222-1633 (Fax 222-2395)

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Homepage www.mononaunitedmethodistchurch.org

Pastor Brad 414-534-8791 – bkvanfossen@gmail.com

Kay – secretarymumc@sbcglobal.net

Mark – markbmumc@gmail.com

Virtual Worship 10:00am

Iglesia Metodista Unida El Libertador 514-9470

Pastora Estrella Benítez 414-736-9521 (cell)

esbe2013.eb@gmail.com