



# Faithnews

## July 2020

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF  
ELDRIDGE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

### CONVERSATION with Pastor Courtney

It has been a difficult month for my family. On May 14, my great uncle passed away, and then Bernie, my step-grandfather, passed away on June 6. And it all happened in a COVID-19 world. I hadn't seen my uncle in the nursing home since Christmas. My last visit with Bernie was waving hello/goodbye through a window and saying, "I love you." It has been so hard for me to focus on the joy when my family is suffering two losses and adjusting to changes.

We have all had our struggles throughout the pandemic. We all fight our own loneliness and grief. Now that things are opening up again, we are still uncertain of our safety. We all fear the state of our country as the Black community fights for change. We suffer with sin and guilt and shame. I have days when I wonder when the struggle will end, and I am sure you all do too.

However, we must put our hope in God, and see God's blessings in the midst of the struggle. Even when we cannot see or feel the presence of God, God is with us. God is caring for us. God is protecting us.

Today here's my joy: on June 5, I was approved by the clergy session of Iowa to be ordained as a full elder in the United Methodist Church. I may be struggling, yet God brought me through and helped me fulfill the goal and call I have had for seven years.

I invite you to list some of your joys now too.

*Gracious God, in this difficult time, help us to see your blessings, seek joy in the midst of our struggle. Give us hope for the future. Help us to embrace our faith over fear. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

# Welcome back!

*We hope!*

## OUTDOOR WORSHIP!

Saturday Evening

July 18 at 5pm

In the shade of the trees  
at the northeast corner of the  
lot — just across the parking  
lot from the church building

Bring your own:

Lawn Chair

Bug Spray

Water Bottle

We *beg* you all to love your  
friends enough to wear  
**FACE MASKS** and practice  
appropriately safe **SOCIAL  
DISTANCING** (see article elsewhere

in this newsletter if you're still not convinced).



## Special Music

*... we're looking for some!*

As you know we have been working to provide a more complete and realistic worship service online. Over the years we at EUMC have been spoiled with a great choir that provides a special anthem almost every week, and soloist/musicians who fill in on the weeks they don't. But right now we can't gather in those numbers so we need even more singles and small groups to take up the slack. Certainly, if you're a soloist, just give Sally a call and we'll plug you in to a date that works best for you. If you would be willing to sing or play in a small group but don't know how to go about pulling one together, again...call Sally! She has music just waiting for singers to sing it.

Call the church at 285-4314 or  
Sally at 285-8941 to volunteer!

**THANK YOU** to Don Doonan  
and Jan Velhuis-Kroeze for taking  
such good care of the church  
lawn in June and to Dana Blake  
for volunteering to do the same  
in July.

# Keeping in Touch

News about and messages from our EUMC friends and neighbors.

NORTH SCOTT HIGH SCHOOL  
CLASS OF 2020

JOIN US FOR A GRADUATION PARTY  
IN HONOR OF

**JASON APPLE**

FRIDAY, JULY 17TH

4:00-8:00 PM

AT HIS HOME:

700 S 7TH STREET, ELDRIDGE

**JENNIFER McLAIN** would like to thank everybody for their thoughts, prayers, cards, and video greetings during her time at college and her recent graduation.

Jennifer graduated from Wartburg College in Waverly, IA with a major in biology & a minor in psychology. Currently waiting out the Covid crisis at home, Jennifer has been selected to begin a fellowship in September as an Orthoptist with Chicago's Lurie Children's Hospital (Northwestern University).



## Together . . .

*Christie Nevenhoven & Doug Becknell*

*were united together in a*

*Ceremony of Holy Union*

*on June 13, 2020*

*in Doug's backyard in Sterling, IL*

*Dr. Christina Berry officiated*

*and rings were exchanged.*



*Christie & Doug are  
combining their lives by  
sharing time in both  
Sterling & Davenport.*

## Ordained!

Pastor Courtney will celebrate her ordination with a ceremony 2 p.m. July 11 in Cedar Falls. You are invited to view the ceremony online via Livestream. Pastor Courtney will send out the link as soon as it is available.

Pastor Courtney appreciates all of your prayers and support.

We continue to pray that we will be able to re-open on Saturday, July 18th. The worship committee is planning a special "New Beginnings" worship in which we will be honoring our EUMC graduates along with Pastor Courtney's ordination.

*From Bishop Laurie to the Clergy and Laity of the Iowa Annual Conference:*

*I want to thank you for your faithfulness over these last months as we have had to learn a new way of being the church as a result of COVID-19. We have now entered a new phase where we are considering re-entry plans for in-person worship in our local churches. One of the questions we hear often is whether we have to wear masks to worship.*

*Rev. Dr. Lanette Plambeck, who is our Director of Clergy and Leadership Excellence and leads our COVID-19 Response Team, has written an important article called, "To Mask Or Not To Mask: That is the Question." I commend Dr. Plambeck's article to you as we continue to put the safety of our most vulnerable people at the forefront of our coronavirus response.*

## To mask or not to mask, that is the question

By: Rev. Dr. Lanette Plambeck, Director of Clergy and Leadership Excellence  
(leads the IAUMC COVID-19 Response Team)



With the questions regarding reentry and mask-wearing, Bishop Laurie and I thought it would be helpful to share with you what is influencing our decision-making process in the Iowa Conference. The purpose of this letter is to respond to four questions local church leadership is wrestling with around *'to mask or not to mask'*:

### **1. Does mask-wearing help prevent contracting or spreading COVID-19?**

Our response is based on learnings from the medical webinars we are attending for the Crisis Response Team which is guiding the Iowa Conference reentry process and recommendations. These webinars are hosted by medical, epidemiological, and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) professionals. One primary area they are currently aligned in is the importance of mask-wearing during the pandemic.

While medical-grade masks can be worn to **protect the wearer** from getting infected, unless there is a medical reason to do so, we ask that you do not use N95 or surgical masks as there is a critical shortage of these items for our healthcare workers and first responders. Those who are high risk may be advised by their physician to wear a medical-grade mask.

You may see several medical reports and epidemiologist updates on how cloth masks and non-medical grade masks can be worn to **protect others** from being infected by the wearer. When we talk about mask-wearing at church gatherings large and small, the mask donning is to prevent transmission to others, and this is their most important use whether in churches or your larger community. If we lower the likelihood of one person infecting another, we are actively engaged in the reduction of transmission.

When you are wearing a mask, your breath works in partnership with your cloth mask to trap a large number of these aerosols in the fabric, stopping the aerosols that carry the virus from being released into the air. When aerosols are in the air, they are so minuscule that when we inhale the fabric itself cannot prevent the Covid19 virus from getting through the fabric. Wearing a mask lowers the number of aerosols emitted into the air by the one exhaling who can unknowingly be an asymptomatic carrier or in the early stages of the disease. Wearing a fabric or non-medical grade mask is about caring for the other; when another wears a mask it is their care for you.

### **2. Ugh! Wearing a mask is uncomfortable and annoying. How does our Christian duty to one another intersect with the recommendation to wear a mask?**

***"Dear friends, let's love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God."*** 1 John 4:7 CEB

These words, along with the Great Commandment, along with many other words of scripture call us to love and care for one another, even at the expense of our personal preferences or comfort. From the beginning of the Church, this has been understood as the duty of every Christian. This responsibility is important for us to remember amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The act of wearing a mask, combined with maintaining appropriate distance, is an act of love and Christian care. We wear masks not to protect ourselves, but to protect others in the event we might have contracted the virus. None of us would want to expose one of our family members when we can take precautions to prevent it. Even more so, we would not want to jeopardize the members of our congregations who are at greatest risk of the virus. This is a minor inconvenience when placed next to the sacrifice of Jesus, our Lord.

### 3. Being told to wear a mask feels counter to my rights of liberty and freedom.

As we have listened in on the debate on wearing or not wearing masks, the objections to wearing masks tend to be more ideological and emotional than scientifically driven. To not get caught in a debate that divides more than unites, we have leaned into what mask-wearing can mean as a spiritual practice in this unprecedented time of the pandemic.

As a spiritual practice, to don a mask is to proclaim love of neighbor, especially our most vulnerable neighbors. In Matthew 25, Jesus implores us to care for “the least of these” and when we do so, we are caring for him.

Wearing a mask has also become a Micah 6 moment. By humbling oneself and even risking critique or ridiculed by others, one can bear up under people’s stares or remarks knowing their mask has become an outward and visible sign of God’s grace working in and through us. Many have found that choosing to wear a mask as a spiritual practice has deepened their faith, has improved their listening, and increased their commitment to their neighbors during this time of the pandemic.

Additionally, wearing a mask is a form of mercy and action in that since we do not know if we are asymptomatic or in early stages of the virus and since we do not know if those we are around will go home to people who are going through chemotherapy, are immunocompromised or are otherwise medically vulnerable, one’s choice to wear a mask is a way of extending care to those sheltering at home. We hope and pray for the time when wearing protective face masks is no longer necessary. But we also hope that these Matthew 25 and Micah 6 lessons God is teaching us through this practice of mask-wearing remain an integral part of our life of faith in the Iowa Conference.

### 4. How do you respond to the “have faith not fear” dilemma?

When I think of the “have faith not fear” chant, I think of the many times we read the words, “Do not fear” in Scripture. But I do not think mask-wearing is about fear over faith; it is more about loving our neighbor. The parable of the Good Samaritan comes to my mind in this question. This parable is about compassion and sacrifice. It is about the willingness of the Samaritan to go out of his way and do what others would not; a willingness to give of his resources to care for another; a willingness to sacrifice his own immediate needs and preferences to consider the good he can do immediately before him.

#### **Midrash Moment**

Hebrew Bible Scholar, Vanessa Lovelace defines **midrash** as “a Jewish mode of interpretation that not only engages the words of the text, behind the text, and beyond the text, but also focuses on each letter, and the words left unsaid by each line.”

In a Midrash Moment, one of our Ministry Directors turned to the story of the Good Samaritan and offered one group of folks a simple test: “Everybody wear a mask for 5 minutes. Now, remove them. Pass your mask down one person. And now put on your neighbors mask.”

There were looks of discomfort and hesitation.

The Director said, “We cannot see what we cannot see. We do not know what we do not know. If you are not comfortable wearing your neighbors mask, you should be as uncomfortable breathing their air.

Also, were any of you worried about passing your mask to your friend, because you might have COVID-19, but don’t yet know it? Then protect your friend and ask them to not put on your mask.”

They continued with the words, “To best protect those around you, you should be committed to wearing a mask every time you gather in public spaces. As we walk down the street, enter the public square, or come to church, we can easily forget that we are called to be God’s witnesses in the world. Wearing masks is one way of being a witness and looking after one another.’

At that moment in the meeting, as people consider their own and their neighbor’s mask, one of the older gents said, “I guess we are wearing masks people.”

To the people of the Iowa Conference, I commend to you the question of Jesus raised in this parable in this Midrash retelling of the Good Samaritan story, “How can we be a neighbor to one who could become a victim of this unseen threat?”

Those in the room replied, “Be like the ones who show mercy and wear a mask.” Jesus told them, “Go and do likewise.”

Please send your questions to: [iaumccares@iaumc.org](mailto:iaumccares@iaumc.org).



7/1	Rebekah Riewerts Megan Coffman
7/8	Cindy Irwin
7/9	Elena Muhs Aiden Prochaska
7/18	Jan Mercy
7/20	Audrey Clip
7/21	Christie Nevenhoven
7/25	Rick Hardeman
7/27	Shirley Lucas



7/10	Bob & Karen Voelkel — <b>60!</b>
7/19	David & Stacie Kintigh
7/21	Jenny & Joe Greenwood — <b>30!</b>
7/24	Dave & Stacy Muhs
7/25	Frank & Marcia Rowley

*These lists are generated from our “Church Windows” member information system. If your name has been left off, it would indicate that our records for you are not complete. In such a case, please accept our apologies and let the office know so we can correct/complete your directory information and include your name in future issues. Thanks, CJ*



PASTOR COURTNEY'S FAMILY grieving recent loss of 2 family members  
The family of ALVINO TERRONEZ (Jess Medina's uncle) - passed away 6/28 of Covid. Five more family members have been diagnosed with Covid & we pray for their healing.

The family of MARY LOUISE CRONKLETON (Jeff's mom) - passed 6/18  
The family of HELEN MUHS - passed 6/17

TOM BLAKE (Jon's dad) - home & recovering from his 2nd colon reduction surgery

BERNICE KINNER (Carol Kay's mother) - failing health & moving to nursing care

CAROL KAY – recuperating from shoulder surgery

RICH MENKE - recuperating from knee surgery

LARRY HAUGLAND - recuperating from rotator cuff surgery

JIM ADEN (Susan Ames' friend) – cancer return and subsequent chemotherapy

LEONA LIGHTNER – more health struggles (was hospitalized)

David Smith's ex-wife, CHERIE, who is scared and disheartened by her recent cancer diagnosis

MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS & FIRST RESPONDERS; EMPLOYEES RETURNING TO WORK-PLACES; THOSE IN ECONOMIC DISTRESS . . . All who are suffering thru the COVID PANDEMIC

## United Methodist Women CHRISTMAS GIFT BAGS

If staying in motels this summer and toiletry items are available, UMW can use them in the gift bags handed out at the Churches United meal site in December. A sample of items used in the gift bags will be displayed in the Gathering Area. For questions, call Janalee at 285-4123 or speak to any UMW member.

## NORTH SCOTT FOOD PANTRY

During July the pantry will be collecting school supplies to be delivered to every school in North Scott. Watch for all those great 'back-to-school' sales! If needed, you can call Janalee, 285-4123, for pick up.

## 41<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL MISSION INGATHERING

It is time again to collect items for Iowa Conference Annual Mission Ingathering Kits. We will again be working to complete THREE types of kits: Personal Dignity Kit "PDK" (previously called the Hygiene Kit); the Layette Kit; the Student Kit (previously called School Kit). More detailed information will be available on Missions table in Gathering Area where donations can be placed thru October 11th. Remember, only items as described can be sent. With school (in some form or another!) starting soon, we will begin by listing the ingredients for the STUDENT KIT:

### *Student Kit (previous School Kits)*

- 3 Notebooks - 1 subject spiral 8"x10 1/2"
- 1 pair of student round tip scissors, remove package
- 1 ruler 12" long with metric
- 1 box of 24 crayons
- 1 pencil eraser 2" or larger, remove package
- 1 pencil sharpener 1", remove package
- 1 box of 12 colored pencils
- 6 unsharpened pencils



# Stewardship Report

*"Utilizing & managing all resources God provides for the glory of God & the betterment of His creation."*

<b>MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT</b>	<b>General Operating Fund</b>	<b>Building Fund</b>
2020 Pledges:	\$133,844.00	\$ 25,395.00
Anticipated 2020 Growth:	\$ 8,000.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$141,844.00</b>	<b>\$ 25,395.00</b>
	(\$11,820/mo)	(\$2,116/mo)
Received in 2020:		
January	\$ 14,283.00	\$ 5,040.00
February	\$ 11,498.00	\$ 905.00
March	\$ 14,530.00	\$ 620.00
April	\$ 13,203.00	\$ 515.00
<b>MAY</b>	<b>\$ 12,870.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,450.00</b>
<b>2020 Income To Date:</b>	<b>\$ 63,319.00</b>	<b>\$ 10,530.00</b>
<b>Percentage of 2020 pledges:</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>41%</b>

## **ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING**

6:30, June 11, 2020 Virtual

Attendance: Brian, Joyce, Gary, Kelly, Bill, Debbie, Steve, Keith, Judy

1. **SPPRC** -- Debbie updated the council on a gift for Pastor Courtney's ordination. We are looking at getting her a XXXXXX. We'd like to do something that identifies EUM..... Price around \$XXX+. Council approved.
  
2. **RE-OPENING--**
  - a. Steve talked about an outdoor service of 50 people on a Sat night. And then have an indoor the following Sun morning. He stressed masks, no hugs, no handshakes, social distancing. Also suggested recording the service to put on YOUTube if some don't want to attend.
  - b. Feedback...some felt a June service was too early. June meeting was nixed as the evening progressed. Zoom meetings also discussed.
  - c. How will outdoor meeting look? Be made safe?  
Possible to have keyboards; can sing through mask;  
Keith said they are looking at the lawn on the south side of the building.  
Suggested the Worship Committee and Ad Council meet to plan?  
Worship committee may need additional equipment;  
Suggested to start with one outdoor service (no indoor); have a cancellation plan.  
Time line was not discussed.
  
3. Question was asked about **FINANCES**. Kelly said they were good; stable. Becky was to send out information to committee.
  
4. Joyce also announced **UMW** would be selling peaches. NO PIES;  
Peaches would be available Aug 10<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>.

**CLOSING PRAYER** – Joyce Orcutt

Respectfully submitted,  
Judy Kilzer