

# SPIRE Newsletter



May 2020

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## WORSHIP SERMONS

May 3 – youth ministry

May 10 – Ruth 1:6 – 18;

Something God Alone Can See

May 17 – Genesis 42:1 – 26; A

Call You Have to Make Today

May 24 – Genesis 45:1 –15;

Which Story Do You Want to Tell?

May 31 – Micah 6:8 (Emily Levine's favorite Bible verse), “O mortal, what does the LORD require of you?”

## WORSHIP MUSIC

May 3 – special music by various youth from our church, including

French horn by Kaitlyn Sisney

May 10 – Moms and kids – plan to sing along to our traditional “Jesus Loves Me”, and then hear

a beautiful piece sung by Ellen Shuler

May 17 – a beautiful, thankful spring song sung by Michelle Hynson, and a piano version of “Blessed Assurance”

May 24 – our Memorial Day weekend tradition continues with “In Flanders Fields” and “America, the Beautiful”

May 31 – Pentecost music is yet to be decided



## May Youth Group Yodel

Hello from your favorite youth group! We hope everyone is staying safe during this dangerous time. We miss you all.

The online bidding for the bird houses was a huge success. We raised a whopping \$890 to go towards our upcoming mission trip! **Thank you** so very much for your support. All the bird houses have been safely delivered to their new homes across the North Shore area. Those birds will be living in style while sheltered at home!

The bad news is that the upcoming mission trip has been postponed until summer 2021. That being said, we are

looking at another option that allows us to help out a community in need during that week. We will let you all know once we have more details but there is something in the works.

A special thank you to Glen Van Fossen, who has been hosting Zoom Sunday school meetings with the youth every other Sunday since the pandemic began. We are grateful for all you do!

Mark your calendars for May 3, a date that is rapidly approaching. The youth are having their annual youth Sunday service. Online! Oh boy! This service is normally our huge fundraiser, so those of you who didn't get a chance to bid on a birdhouse but would still like to support us, please feel free to make a donation by check and mail it to the church.

That is about all, everyone stay safe and we will see you all on May 3. Or you will see us I guess. But we will be thinking of you!

Fun Fact: May 29 is "Put a Pillow in your Refrigerator Day", Do with this information what you will.

## From the Pastor

Eugene Peterson, who is the author of *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, wrote the following quote in his book, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*: As I entered a home to make a pastoral visit, the person I came to see was sitting at a window embroidering a piece of cloth held taut in an oval hoop. She said, "Pastor, while waiting for you to come I realized what's wrong with me – I don't have a frame. My feelings, my thoughts, my activities – everything is loose and sloppy. There is no border to my life. I never know where I am. I need a frame for my life like this one I have for my embroidery."

He concludes that Christians go to worship week by week to get a working definition for life: the way God created us, the ways He leads us. I'm so grateful that we have been able to attend worship online to keep that framework in our lives during these unprecedented times. And a HUGE thanks to our dedicated staff and volunteers who make that possible.

Since the Safer at Home order has been extended through May 26, we will continue to have online worship through May 24. When the Safer at Home order is lifted, MUMC leadership and staff will bring back in-person worship in the sanctuary through sequential phases so that service will be safe for all worshipers. We may introduce a new feature to our online worship to make this a smooth process, so stay tuned! And if you need any assistance such as a meal, groceries picked up, a ride to an appointment, etc., please let me know! We have wonderful people at MUMC who are more than willing to assist you.

May we all come out of these trying times with radiant faithfulness and love to the Lord and one another!

In His Presence always,

Pastor Sue Lee

## Mother's Day Slideshow

With the coming of May, our thoughts turn towards Mother's Day, which is Sunday, May 10. You don't have to be a mother or have a child to have given or received motherly love. There are many women in our lives who have given us the love of a mother — aunts, sisters, dear friends. On Mother's Day, our virtual worship service will feature a slideshow of these treasured women who have touched our lives with Motherly Love.

Please send in your favorite picture of your mother, or any other woman you wish to honor, to

be included in the photo montage. You can email your picture to [Carol Bayne](#) at the church office or text it to her cell phone at 414-491-1430. Please send your photo! The deadline is Tuesday, May 5.

## May Bible Studies via Zoom

### Five Things God Uses to Grow Our Faith

Pastor Sue is offering the Bible study “Five Things God Uses to Grow Our Faith” which began in April, through Zoom Meetings. The study is offered two times each week, both on Tuesdays, from 11 am – 12 noon and from 6 – 7 pm.

The four remaining topics that will be covered are:

May 5: Providential Relationships  
May 12: Private Disciplines  
May 19: Personal Ministry  
May 26: Pivotal Circumstances

You will need a smart phone, I-pad or Android tablet, or a computer to participate in the Zoom Meetings Bible study. Download the Zoom app. Pastor Sue will send you an invitation just before each meeting is to begin. Click on the invitation, and it will take you to the Zoom site, where you can “Join Meeting”— it’s that simple! Please contact Pastor Sue if you are interested in taking part in the Bible study.

### Upper Room Morning Devotions

Following Jesus is a daily commitment. Jesus said, “Take up your cross *daily* and follow me.” (Luke 9:23) Morning is a great time to set the tone for the day to follow Jesus. So we will start a **40-day Zoom Upper Room Morning Devotion** at 9:30 – 10 am starting on May 1. We will *read* the Upper Room Devotion for the day, *share* our thoughts on the devotion, and *ask* prayers for the day to one another. If you wish to join the journey, please let Pastor Sue know so that she can send a Zoom invitation to you to participate in the morning devotion.

## Announcements

**Prayers for Mark Spooner**, who was recently diagnosed with an acute leukemia and is under an intensive treatment at Froedtert Hospital. He will be there a few weeks for the treatment and has asked for your prayers to the Great Physician, our Lord. Your prayers for God’s protection, cure and healing for Mark, and God’s insights and wisdom for his doctors, would be very appreciated. The hospital is accepting mail, and Mark would love to get mail from his precious brothers and sisters in Christ. The mailing address is: Froedtert Hospital, 7CFAC-Room 16 – Mark Spooner, 9200 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53226. He will be thrilled to receive your cards and notes.

**New UMCOR Covid-19 Response Fund** has been established. As each of us shelters in place to do our part to prevent the spread of Covid-19, we cannot help but be impacted by the scale of illness, death, and financial distress all around us. Even as you shelter in place, you can be there for others.

The UMCOR Covid-19 Response Fund will equip partners in the United States and around the world to assist our most vulnerable populations. Grants from this fund will be disbursed quickly and efficiently to address health concerns, food insecurity, water and hygiene limitations, and other pressing needs. When you say “yes” to supporting the UMCOR Covid-19 Response Fund, you will help bring God’s love to life for those who need it most.

You can donate by check, or online at [www.mequonumc.org](http://www.mequonumc.org). Join the UMCOR Covid-19 Response with your gift today.

**Copies of the May/June Upper Room** devotional guides are available at the church. If you are a regular user of The Upper Room and would like a copy mailed to you, please email [Carol Bayne](#) or phone her at 414-491-1430, and one will be mailed to you. Please indicate

whether you would like the regular or large-print edition.

**Light a Candle of Hope** in a window of your home each night as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source of hope. We pray for our community as we have all been touched by this pandemic, and many are hurting and frightened. And we pray for the end of the pandemic. Please leave your candle lit for one hour. We will continue to light our Candle of Hope every evening from 7 – 8 pm until we are able to be together again. This will be our worshipful time “together” as the body of Christ.

**Jim Layton reports** our "garden angel" Bob Dominiczak tilled every plot in the Community Gardens on April 18. New for this season is the Byron Jackson Memorial in honor of Byron's love for hot peppers. The peppers will be labeled. The gardens are waking up slowly with the soil temperature behind normal, but the dryness will help a fast warm up. All the gardeners are looking forward to their first radishes and lettuce. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact Jim Layton.



**If you have joys and concerns** to share with the MUMC family, please let Pastor Sue or the office know so that the info can be sent with the online worship link on Sunday morning.

**Don't miss the music!** Our deepest appreciation to Rick and Michelle Hynson, Ellen Shuler, and Elna Hickson, who are continuing to uplift our hearts with music for our virtual services!

**The United Methodist Church General Conference**, scheduled for May 5 – 15, 2020, has been postponed until 2021. You can continue to get updates online at [www.umnews.org](http://www.umnews.org).

## Outreach Committee Update

Even though our church building is closed for now due to the pandemic crisis, our ministry continues beyond its four walls, in Jesus' name. Karen Huffman of the Outreach Team filed a report (shown below) with the South East District of Wisconsin Conference. Please give thanks to the Lord for all the faithful disciples of Jesus at MUMC. Thank you for your faithful support of MUMC's ministries, especially during these trying times!

**At Mequon United Methodist Church, we support the following:**

St. Vincent de Paul: monetary donations only (\$450 per quarter) as the meal site is temporarily closed; normally we serve 10 times per year.

Hunger Task Force: cannot accept food from private sources. Cannot use volunteers. They are temporarily hiring ten people to supplement staff and assemble stock boxes. We will send out a notice encouraging folks to donate. Normally we collect food and volunteer to sort.

Family Promise: families are housed offsite during the Covid-19 crisis. We are providing individually packed dinners.

Meals on Wheels: members of the congregation deliver five meals to clients one day per week.

Community gardens: garden plots have been filled and allocated.

Masks: sewists in the congregation are making masks for hospitals and groups requesting them through the Masked Sewists of SE Wisconsin. So far the group in four counties has made over 25,000 masks. Another 25,000 have been requested by hospitals, health organizations, senior centers, non-profits, and other agencies.

Prayer shawls: knitters are making blankets from preassembled kits.

The YMCA of Milwaukee is using our child care space, and will be using it for children of emergency personnel.

We are reaching out to people in our congregation to be sure they are well and have food and supplies.

## **"My Favorite Bible Verse"**

### **Spire's New Monthly Feature**

**Emily Levine's** favorite Bible verse is Micah 6:8 (NIV). She said it's hard to choose a favorite Bible verse but this is one of the ones she turns to again and again:

**He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.**

Thank you Emily for sharing this profound verse which is still so relevant today.

## **From the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation**

Giving: "In remembrance of me heal the sick", The Faith We Sing Hymnal, #2254  
May 2020

*'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 second and third centuries AD, when pagans far outnumbered Christians, a pair of epidemics rocked the Roman Empire. After the second epidemic 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 Covid-19 pandemic. 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

Due to the continuation of Wisconsin's Safer at Home order, the Reflections book group will hold their May 2020 meeting on Zoom again. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 14 at 7 pm. The group will be discussing *The Simplicity of Cider*, by Amy E. Reichert. Here is a brief summary of the book from Amazon:

*Focused and unassuming fifth generation cider-maker Sanna Lund has one desire: to live a simple, quiet life on her family's apple orchard in Door County, Wisconsin. Although her business is struggling, Sanna remains fiercely devoted to the orchard, despite her brother's attempts to convince their aging father to sell the land. Single dad Isaac Banks has spent years trying to shield his son Sebastian from his troubled mother. Fleeing heartbreak at home, Isaac packed up their lives and the two headed out on an adventure, driving across the country. Chance—or fate—led them straight to Sanna's orchard. Isaac's helping hands are much appreciated at the apple farm, even more when Sanna's father is injured in an accident. As Sanna's formerly simple life becomes increasingly complicated, she finds solace in unexpected places—friendship with young Sebastian and something more deliciously complex with Isaac—until an outside threat infiltrates the farm.*

Reflections is a women's book group that meets monthly for discussion and fellowship. New women are always welcome. Contact [Barb Henneck](#) for more information about the group or our May Zoom meeting.

## Apportionment News

### May — New Life in Christ

#### Not Just Bricks and Mortar

A man knocked on the pastor's door, obviously agitated and upset. He had been a member of the church for over thirty years, often serving in key leadership positions. He was well respected in the congregation, and people listened when he spoke. As the pastor opened the office door, the man exclaimed, "I just heard that the conference raised our apportionments again! What's the matter with them? Don't they know that when we are forced to pay for bricks and mortar, there is less money for real ministry?" The young pastor called her district superintendent for counsel and support. "What should I have said to him?" she asked. "He made some very good points."

This is not an uncommon scenario. Lay people and pastors across our denomination are concerned that our administrative costs are rising at the expense of our missional giving. But this reflects a serious misunderstanding about how the denomination uses this money. Most of our general boards and agencies have endowed funds and alternative revenue streams to cover most overhead costs. A portion of the funding does cover salaries and benefits, but this is still money invested in the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church through leadership. Here is a simple breakdown of where apportionment money actually goes:

- Mission and ministry worldwide 54%
- Salaries and benefits 30%
- Administrative costs (global and annual conference) 16%

On average, nonprofit organizations spend 67% on administrative costs and salaries, and only one-third of the money makes it to the actual cause that generates the appeal. The United Methodist Church does much better, with over half the money moving beyond the church to serve and transform the world. And because all these costs are covered through apportionments, Special Sunday offerings, Special appeals (natural-disaster response, health and disease outbreaks, famine, etc.), and Advance Specials are all paid at 100% — every dollar given goes directly to the target need. And through numerous matching-fund options, often each dollar given by a United Methodist actually results in two or three dollars received for mission and ministry. This only works well when apportionments are paid in full.

#### The Haiti Story

When the earthquake hit Haiti in 2010, the United Methodist Church was present through the

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) in a matter of minutes. Three relief centers were organized in a few hours, and aid was almost instantaneous. Due to the faithful giving of United Methodists, our response to this tragic disaster was immediate. While this offers us much to celebrate, one of the workers from our General Board of Global Ministries reflected, “It is too bad that our apportionments weren’t fully paid, otherwise we would have had five centers on the ground and open.”



When apportionments are not paid in full, it is not merely an inconvenience — it can actually cost lives. Our giving matters! Hungry people are fed, homeless people are housed, and those whose lives are torn apart by natural disasters look to us for comfort and aid. This is true around the planet, as well as in our own backyard. Together we fund a host of vital ministries throughout our own conference.

### **I Corinthians 13: 1–13**

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrong doing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. What is your definition of “unconditional love”?
2. Who do you believe God calls us to love unconditionally?
3. What are some of the ways we express our love in visible and tangible ways?

*“Live life when you have it. Life is a **splendid gift**. There is nothing small about it.”*

**Florence Nightingale**



**"The Lady with the Lamp" (May 12, 1820 – August 13, 1910)**

**Founder of modern nursing, statistician, public health reformer, author**

Deadline for SPIRE copy: the 25th of the month prior to publication's edition. Send copy to [news@mequonumc.org](mailto:news@mequonumc.org) to be included in the monthly SPIRE or the weekly Sunday bulletins.

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Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 9am-1pm

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Sunday Schedule

9:30am Worship Service

10:30am Fellowship

