

**Dear Friends,**

Mary Maurer is our lay leader, and after her last birthday is now counting the months till she reaches 100. Sharp as ever, she suggested I get a letter out to those who do not have internet access. She's one of those herself. And it's true – we need to connect, connect around mutual concerns, and share whatever is on our mind. I've been making some calls to you, and I've received much more than I've given by doing so. Our Congregational Care Committee is also making calls on folks who are living on their own or who may need to be checked on – you may have received one of those calls. I've also asked an ad hoc group of church members to divide up the names of our entire congregation to make calls. Let me know if you'd like to be part of an organized effort like this. In that same vein, some folks are willing to pick up groceries and medicine for those who need it. Call the church office or me directly, or complete and return the enclosed form.

Friends, we are worried for our loved ones. We are worried about our savings, or our jobs, our own health. Worried about anything that seems like a symptom. I believe I better understand how that feels after my personal difficulties over the last year and a half. It's not a good feeling. But I will also tell you there is a God who is with us in more ways than we can see or anticipate. Ultimately we are going to be OK. Maybe, probably, not in all the ways we now hope. But OK nonetheless.

**A couple more things:**

**First**, the church building is essentially closed. We are supposed to be doing our part to keep the rate of infection down, and that can only happen if we all do our best to stay away from one another – not emotionally or spiritually of course – but physically. It's got to be that way in order to stop the spread of this virus.

**Second**, we need your financial help if you feel you can spare it. I want you to know our staff seems to be working harder than ever these days, and we are trying to be faithful to missions outside of the church, trying to figure out how to best to serve the hungry and homeless in our area, and likewise fulfill our various mission commitments. For the next two weeks we are sending ten percent of our received offerings to two projects: **The United Methodist Committee on Relief** - which is doing vital mission work in areas impacted by the virus, and **The United Methodist Children's Home** – which is now dealing with some tragic foster care situations. These were to have been our special offering for March. Of course I truly don't expect you to put our church at the top of your list of priorities during this time, especially if you are facing an unexpected financial emergency yourself. But please remember us. I'll let you know right away if we are in real trouble.

We will get through this. I have immense confidence in this church, in its compassion and collective wisdom. I believe we are people of faith, a faith born out of our own trials, but also a faith made stronger by our connection to one another. Please allow that to happen and be a part of making it happen.

Rev. John Wagner

**Church Number** 513-423-4629, **Prayer Line** 513-267-9474, **John Wagner** 937-269-1661

**Henry Folgoso** 513-526-2121, **Dani Ortega Folgoso** 513-917-0959

## A True Lent

Wow! Who would have ever thought that everything we talk about during Lent...time to reflect, giving up the extras, stripping away all that is deemed distracting to focus on what's important.....has been demanded of us in the light of the coronavirus! This timely "forced Lent" has made me realize how little we actually observe the true requirements of this season. Spring is typically my busiest season, with long days and weekends doing both church and school music activities, so having it all involuntarily stripped away has been startling to me. It's been hard to slow down, it's been difficult to adjust to not having choir rehearsal or not preparing an anthem or making plans for the upcoming Holy Week services, or scheduling the arrival of the Easter flowers. I am gradually learning what it means to "be still".



It's forced us all the "think outside the box" as to how we do meaningful worship through a video and no congregation. Doing the videos has been difficult without you in the pews; to not hear your singing, or your voices offering prayer requests and joys and concerns for each other. I think Rev. Wagner would join me in saying we feel a little more like actors and less like participants in worship when the congregation is not physically with us. Your presence in worship is important and we can never take that for granted. We try to imagine you are sitting in "your spot" as we share the Word, deliver the Message, and play the hymns. While we may not be together in person on Easter, I know that our first Sunday together with each other in the sanctuary will surely be a cause for "Alleluia"!!

## News from the Pews

### UMW News

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, the UMW Executive Council has canceled the "Ireland" Salad and Bake Sale Annual Luncheon that was scheduled in May. We are hopeful that we will be able to reschedule it this fall. Watch for information concerning the UMW.

### Easter Flower Changes

Because we are unsure at this date if we will be worshipping together on Easter, we have had to make a decision regarding the ordering of Easter flowers. We know that ordering those beautiful Easter flowers is an important way to honor your loved ones so we want to make it possible for you to do that.

Here is the change we have made — flowers will not be ordered. You can use your Easter Flower order form to fill out your honor/memorial information and we will still

print the names in the bulletin (if we have church) or we will create a special video with the names listed to show during the filming of church (if we are still unable to worship). If you have already ordered flowers, we will be in touch with you.

Cost per dedication is \$10 and the funds will go to UMCOR, where 100% of your donation goes for supplies to assist worldwide disasters.

We will certainly miss that visual of the flowers, the scent of the flowers in the sanctuary, and the joy of what those flowers represent, but we will look at them with new appreciation in Easter 2021!

**The April 3 First Friday Concert has been canceled.**

### Contact Us

120 S. Broad St.,  
Middletown, OH 45044

Ph: 513.423.4629

Prayer Line: 513-267-9474

On the Net: [www.myfumc.net](http://www.myfumc.net)

An update from Dr. Les and Debbie Dornon, missionaries to Nepal working in the Tansen Hospital

## Spring in Tansen

It is now officially spring! Here in Tansen, we feel very blessed to enjoy beautiful weather now. The evenings are cool, but the days are in the 70's. We have had some rain, so it isn't as dry as it sometimes is. We look around us at the beautiful mountains, lovely and aromatic flowers, and baby bunnies and think, "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world". But, we all know life isn't all right in our world now. Even though our daily life here has changed very little, around the world we are reading of the spread of the virus, and people being made to stay in isolation. We had just purchased tickets to come to the U.S. for the month of July, and about a week later, it seemed like everything changed. Just yesterday, we heard that the U.S. State Dept. called for all Americans to either stay in the U.S. or return there. Then last night, the government of Nepal said they were closing the airport in the coming week.

We feel a bit like the missionaries of many years ago who left to live in foreign lands without any hope of ever returning or seeing loved ones again. How did they do it? We all know - their hope was in our God - who is bigger than this virus and bigger than governments and bigger than anything we can imagine. Because of His great love for us, and because of Jesus' sacrifice for us, we are free from fears about our future. He is in charge. He knows our needs and will provide. He is good - all the time!



So - even though we don't know when we will get back to the U.S., we know we are where God has placed us for now. How will He use us? We will see. We pray for the end of this pandemic, and we especially pray that the virus stays away from poorer countries and refugee camps where there are really no resources in place to fight it. We also pray for you as you are facing your own set of struggles - may God use you in ways that you perhaps haven't thought of before!

Much love from Nepal - thank you so much for your prayers and support for God's work here. And thank you for doing God's work in the U.S., too.

In Him, लेस (Les) and देबी (Debbie)

## Prayer List

### **Members of the Church Family:**

Bob and Marilyn Housh  
Don Burley  
Tom O'Brien  
Tom Atkinson  
Bob Caldwell  
Pat Beasley  
Mary Emmert  
Dick Roof  
Evelyn Breystpraak  
Jerry Slama  
Glenn Slama  
Elois Duff  
Betty Risner  
Pat Ickes  
Mary Lou Booth  
All Our Homebound Members  
**Family & Friends of the Church:**  
Michael Wright, nephew of Greg and Karen Cooper

Alan Richmond, step-son of Phyllis Richmond  
Family of Terry Gadness  
Family of Daisy Byrum  
Family of Virginia Dixon  
Mary Davidson, friend of Karen & Greg Cooper  
Dolores Dunham  
Marc Baumgarten, son-in-law of Barb & John Hoffman  
Cherie Soule, sister of Debbie Taylor and Betsy Koval  
Don Kuenzli, brother of Imogene Orts  
Jack Horton  
Tyler Robinson  
Tim Brown, nephew of Mary Maurer  
Darnell Williams, step son-in-law of Brenda Byrd  
Jill, niece of Kathy & Dennis Swab  
Marcia Young, friend of Glenna Combs

Dawson Harris, grandson of the Beasleys  
Thomas Swank III, grandson of Martha Swank  
Rick & Donna Wilson, friends of the Beasleys  
Cindy Bell, Pat Beasley's sister  
Kenny Short, friend of the Beasleys  
Tracy Snyder, sister, Vickie Frazer  
Jim Churchill, father of Sue Faulkner  
Drew Kelly, grandson of Karen Deddens  
Cindy Rule, friend of Phyllis Richmond  
Members of our Armed Services  
Young mothers

*Christ Our Life — Service Our Lifestyle*

April Birthdays

2 Sharyn Edelen

3 Lorena Trinkle

6 Dave Balsmeyer,

12 J.C. Shew

13 Betty Risner

14 Eleanor Imhoff

15 Anita Shew

16 Alex Wieneke,

Sandy Yaple

18 Michael McDaniel

20 Elois Duff

25 Debbie Taylor

Sue Moore

26 Don Beasley

29 Bob Duffey

Happy Birthday!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Middletown, OH 45044

120 South Broad Street

a united methodist community

M I D D L E T O W N



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