

Contact Us

120 S. Broad St.
Middletown, OH 45044
513-423-4629
office@myfumc.net
(Phone messages checked daily)

Worship With Us

Sunday Service
Online & In Person @ 10:30 am

Online Only
Sunday School @ 9 am
Junior Church @ 12:30 pm

On the Net

www.myfumc.net

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Pastor's Reflections

Easter Eggs

When I was a boy my parents served a Methodist church in Green Camp, a small town north of Columbus. They became close to a couple in the church, Bob and Donna Lashey, and over time we considered them family. A few years later my brother David, the one who has since become a newscaster, had the idea of asking Bob for a



first person account of his time as a prisoner of war in Germany in WW II. Even though that manuscript has been lost I think I can pretty much recreate it. I've also taken the liberty of adding a few details I recently received from Mary, Bob's surviving daughter:

"I was captured shortly after I came ashore. A close friend of mine was killed almost immediately so I felt fortunate to be taken prisoner. We were shipped by cattle car to a town in Germany. It was three days travel with no water so we held our spoons through cracks in the wood to catch rainwater. At that point in the war there was little food at the POW camp, neither for us or the Germans. We received two Red Cross parcels which contained some terrible food, but there was a little chocolate. We were assigned to work in the town digging graves and repairing train tracks blown up by Allied bombing. The bombing threatened us as well as the Germans. One day we encountered a few children from the village. We knew they didn't have much of anything so we gave them our chocolate. A few days later we saw a young woman from the town standing at the edge of the graveyard where we'd been working – she pointed to the ground and walked away. We were able to go over to where she pointed, and there were three colored Easter eggs. She must have been the mother of those children. She may even have risked being shot for doing this, since toward the end of the war many Germans were starving, and to give away eggs to the enemy would have been viewed as treason. I've never forgotten this. Even in the midst of this terrible war it was good to know people could still be kind to each other."

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After liberation the war was still very traumatizing for Bob. He had witnessed death in many ways. He didn't talk about it much, but his daughter said movies like "Saving Private Ryan" were deeply disturbing to him. But there was more to come once he got home. He and his wife had three girls, two of whom died young from cystic fibrosis. When I spoke with Mary this past week she said her father always told her his faith had made it possible to survive the turmoil and tragedy he experienced in his life. He focused on the positive things, like those Easter Eggs.

Friends, we are now in Lent, the season of the church year that leads to Good Friday, our darkest hour as Christians. But after Good Friday, Easter! Like those Easter Eggs at the edge of a graveyard, there can be something beautiful coming our way even in the midst of death and grief. I hope we have faith in that promise. Bob would encourage us to do hold on to that faith, as would others who have endured hard times. It's possible. This is what we should all be telling ourselves during this strange and difficult year.

Palm Sunday is at the end of this month, March 28th. Holy Thursday will be on April 1st, Good Friday on April 2nd, and Easter will be April 4th. We will have beautiful Easter decorations, including new ones you didn't get to see last year. I'm sure we will still need to restrict certain activities, but I'm hopeful we can do more of that this time around. And like Bob and his wife Donna, and so many other people from our past, let's hold on to our faith. We will get through.

Peace,

John Wagner



Here's What's Online

Livestream Worship: Sunday 10:30 a.m. — visit www.myfumc.net/worship-on-the-web/ - to join by phone, dial 312-626-6799 OR 646-558-8656, ID is 998 1948 9701, password is 998662—you can also see the recording anytime after the service at www.myfumc.net/worship-on-the-web/;

Adult Sunday School (9 a.m. on Sundays) and Bible Studies (Wednesdays at 10 a.m. and Thursdays at 6 p.m.): contact Johnny Schmitt at preachie@sbcglobal.net;

Junior Church: Sundays at 12:30 p.m. for all ages, contact the church office at 513-423-4629 for details; **Corazones Ardientes:** Worship Sunday morning on Facebook Live; **Bible Studies** contact Dani Ortega-Folgozo at danio72@hotmail.com.





Learning to Sing Again

In the story of “How the Grinch Stole Christmas”, after he has stolen all the presents and Christmas decorations from the residents in Whoville, the Grinch assumes that Christmas will end. But, he begins to hear something... it starts very softly and grows and grows and he realizes that all of Whoville is... Singing!!! He learns that Christmas isn’t about presents or decorations, but about family, love, and community.

I know you all are quite familiar with that story, and it certainly isn’t Christmastime, but a recent event during a church service reminded me of the lesson of this story.

Since the pandemic, we have been adding a benediction that includes a recording of a pre-pandemic church service where the organ and everyone’s voices can be heard singing along. We used it because it was a reminder of what we all sounded like with our voices joined together, and hearing it each Sunday was encouraging to those that were in the sanctuary or at home. One Sunday in February, something happened to the recording and it just stopped! Ask anyone who has worked in the sound booth or with audio equipment and they will tell you that sometimes things just STOP for no reason!! So when this happened just after the recorded benediction began, those of our congregation who were in the sanctuary



didn’t stop singing. We just kept on going! And then as if encouraged by the sound of our own voices together, we started singing even louder, facing the camera, and singing to the members of the congregation who were watching from home. We sang a cappella, without assistance from the piano or the organ. It was incredibly moving to hear those voices once again in our sanctuary!

In thinking back about that moment, I was reminded that singing together will never again be taken for granted during our worship as a congregation. I so look forward to the Sunday where that wonderful space is filled and swirling with voices that bring us together as one family of God. Like the Whos of Whoville, we know that worship isn’t about the “decorations”, but it’s about what we do together to worship God: praying, singing, and listening to the Word.

The Grinch took a lot of our traditions in this past year, but we as a congregation are learning to “sing” again, and we have never lost our connection to each other. I am proud how we have “held together” in the challenges of this pandemic and how we have celebrated as well as comforted members of our church family. It was good to hear your voices again that Sunday, and I know look forward to the day when we can again raise our voices in song to the Lord!

*Thank
You*

Dear Church Family.

David and I have both been lifted over the hurdles of life these past three weeks by your love and prayers. Please accept our sincere thanks for your help.

David and Rose Morgan and Family

Food Pantry Leadership Needed

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Stalker Food Pantry of FUMC. This is a ministry to the community that we hope will continue for another 50 years. In order for this to happen we need to recruit new leadership for the Pantry/Emergency Food Committee. Patty McGraw submitted her resignation as chairperson in August thinking that this might be a good time for someone who perhaps has a new vision to assume the leadership. The Pantry operates well under the present set-up, but all ministries need to keep open to new and better ways to serve in Christ's name. A job description for the pre-

sent format is available upon request. If you are someone who has a heart for those who struggle to make ends meet, if you work well with others and you feel you have the time and energy to put into this ministry, please contact the church office at 513-423-4629 or any of the following Pantry/Emergency Food Committee members for more information: Patty McGraw, Chris Buchert, Barb Balsmeyer, or Lynda Goecke. Thank you for considering this call to ministry.

**There will be no First Friday
Concert in March**



March Meetings

Ad Council 3/16 @ 7 pm

Ambassador Deadline 3/19

Investment 3/25 @ 10am

A Birthday Invitation

To the members and friends of First United Methodist Church:

You are cordially invited to my 100th birthday party

Saturday, March 13, from 3-4 p.m.

Activity Building at Ohio Living Mt. Pleasant

(Please use the Indiana Ave. entrance)

Masks and social distancing required.

It is necessary for me to know the number attending.

Please call the church office at 513-423-4629 to RSVP by March 6.

JoAnn and Linda will keep a list.

No Gifts! Cards appreciated

What's New in FUMC's Bible Studies?

By Johnny Schmitt

It has been quite a long time since I reported on FUMC's Bible Study groups and I wanted to invite you to a NEW study!

We have been meeting on Zoom since April of last year and we always have lively discussions, lots of questions, and lots of laughter. We begin our sessions by lifting up praises to the Lord, opening prayer, Scripture readings with discussion, and we close by updating our prayer list and praying for those on our list. Although what I have just listed are the elements of each session, they may not go necessarily in that order because we try to remain open to the moving of the Holy Spirit. I encourage you to use whatever Bible you enjoy when you join us. No one is forced to read and no question is considered silly, foolish or stupid. We all learn from asking questions.

On Wednesday mornings (10-11:30 a.m.), the Son Reflectors Bible Study Group, has an average of 10 people in attendance. We have been studying the "Design for Discipleship" series and we will complete it in approximately 4-6 months. If anyone would like to join us, and would like a study guide please contact the church office or me directly by email at preachie@sbcglobal.net.

On Thursday evenings (6-8 p.m.), the SonShine Bible Study Group has 14 in attendance. We finished a series called "Knowing the Bible" on February 19 and started a new study, "Miracles of the Bible," on February 25. YOU ARE ALL INVITED! I found a list of 267 individual miracles as recorded in Scripture. For



this study you will not need any study papers or workbooks, just have your favorite Bible ready and be prepared to get involved. If you do want to be a little prepared by doing your own reading and research before the class meets, I will be sending emails each week with the next session's scriptures. Please send me your email address and I can add you to the group

mailings.

This new study will be very interesting as we might find that one particular miracle could generate enough questions and discussion that it could go for two or more study nights. On the other hand, there might be several different miracles we could cover in one session as we find there isn't that much to discuss. It all depends on the length of the Scriptures, what amount of discussion is generated, and ultimately it will be according to the will of God through the Holy Spirit as to how long we stay on a particular miracle. The goal is to learn new things, grow in faith, and to discover what God is saying to our hearts.

I invite you to join either group we would LOVE to have you. If you cannot join us, then I ask that you pray for our Bible study groups. We want to become better disciples for Christ, grow in faith and understanding, and grow in the ability to witness and share the Gospel with others. The power of prayer is a mighty force that we all need to have open hearts, minds and spirit to what God has in store for us.

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

Back in Tansen Again

Thank you to so many of you who prayed for our travels – there are more causes for concern these days than there used to be! We both got negative covid tests (needed for travel – within 72 hours of takeoff), and the necessary letter from the Nepal Embassy saying that it was okay for us to return (even though we had a valid visa!) It was nice that the planes were not packed, so we always had extra room.

After our flights (which took just about 18 hours from boarding in Chicago to arrival in KTM) we got a few hours sleep and then traveled another 11 ½ hours by jeep from KTM to Tansen (traveling all night due to a nationwide strike the next day). We were pretty worn out – and just now (2 weeks later) are feeling like our bodies have adapted again to the new time zone.

We arrived Tansen at 5 a.m. on a Thursday morning, and started back to work on Sunday morning. Since then, Les has had one day off – due to a shortage of doctors and needing to cover for one who was ill. We are looking forward to his second day off in 13 days. But – he is loving being back in the wards and clinics. The patient numbers are up – it is impossible now to do social distancing, but most people are still wearing masks. We are thankful the Covid numbers seem to be way down here – we are praying that no second wave comes. We were both able to get the first dose of the vaccine the day we arrived back in Tansen.



Yesterday we were invited to a fellow doctor's wedding. The location was lovely – you can see the town of Tansen spread behind us in the photo. This is why we call it the hospital on the hill. We pray that the light of Jesus will continue to shine from this hospital as we seek to serve here in His name. And we are only able to do that because of your prayers and support.

Thank you!

Love, देबी (Debbie) and लेस (Les)

Want more stories and photos? Check out our blog at dornonnepalmission.wordpress.com.



March Birthdays

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 2 Beth Miller, Angela Murphy | 19 Alma Taulbee |
| 3 Scott Wills | 20 Dick Roof |
| 4 Barbara Dillon, Keeghan Wills | 23 Tom Atkinson |
| 6 Michael Alderton, Laura Griffin | 27 Barb Orth, Bob Housh |
| 8 David McGraw, Neal Walke, Phil Yaple | 28 Shelley McDaniel |
| 12 Marilyn Housh, | 29 Linda Schmitt |
| 13 Linda Heflin, Mary Maurer, Judy Smith | 31 Lon Fairchild |
| 14 Patty McGraw, Rhonda Scholl | |
| 16 Scott Tucker, Jennie Webb | |
| 18 Greg Cooper | |

Happy Birthday!

Prayer Requests

Members of the Church Family

Family of David Morgan

Bob Rogers

Rick Lyke

Mary Lou Williams

Bob Wieneke

Rick Fugett

Judy Smith

Ken Tucker

Pat Beasley

Jerry Slama

Betty Risner

All Our Homebound Members

Family & Friends of the Church:

Michael Bakich

Rex Perry, friend of Ron & Mary Davis

Scott McDaniel, brother of John
McDaniel

Jessica, great niece of Sharyn Edelen

Jerry Gillespie, friend of Tammy Brown

Jeanie Lands and family, friend of
Rachel Hurley

Sue Essen, sister of Peggy Kramer

James Rogers, son-in-law of Ron
and Mary Davis

Sam Barber, brother of Mary Davis

Thomas Swank II and Thomas Swank

III, son & grandson of Martha Swank

Members of our Armed Services

Alan Richmond, step-son of Phyllis
Richmond

Jack Horton

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

Rick & Donna Wilson, friends of the Beasleys

Cindy Bell, Pat Beasley's sister

Tracy Snyder, sister, Vickie Frazer

Cindy Rule, friend of Phyllis Richmond

2021 Easter Flower Order Form

Order Deadline: Monday, March 29, 2021

Lilies: \$15 x _____ = _____ Mums: \$15 x _____ = _____ Tulips: \$15 x _____ = _____

Hyacinths: \$15 x _____ = _____ Daffodils: \$15 x _____ = _____

Hydrangeas are larger plants and cost more: Hydrangeas: \$20 x _____ = _____

TOTAL DUE: \$ _____

All flowers will come in assorted colors, a foil-wrapped pot, and have a bow. **Payment must accompany order.** If you are mailing your order, please make sure it will be received before the deadline above. When picking up flowers please be sure to take the pot with your name tag on it in order to ensure that everyone receives their exact order. **Please pick up your flowers after services on Easter Sunday or by noon on the following Wednesday.** (NOTE: the office is closed on the Monday after Easter). Call the church office with any questions (513-423-4629).

Please print neatly and be sure to complete your name and phone number.

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

PLACED BY _____ **PHONE (_____)** _____

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Middletown, OH 45044

120 South Broad Street

a united methodist community

M I D D L E T O W N



Permit No. 37

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