

Contact Us

120 S. Broad St.

Middletown, OH 45044

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(Phone messages checked daily)

Worship With Us

Sunday Service

Online & In Person @10:30 am

Online

Sunday School @ 9 am

Junior Church @ 12:30 pm

www.myfumc.net

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Pastor's Reflections

Give Church a Chance

As of this writing, Easter Sunday is still on the way. If you are reading this before April 4th, well, “Happy Easter” to you! And if you already have Easter in the rear-view mirror I guess the next big day is April 15th, often know as “Tax Day.” Is there a traditional greeting for Tax Day? Any suggestions?

There’s an old joke preachers tell about Easter Sunday. Seems the church is full for once. Every pew filled. The preacher gets up in front of the congregation and says, “Happy Easter! And since I won’t be seeing many of you for a while let me take this opportunity to also wish you a Merry Christmas!” Most preachers know this joke or some variation, and will sometimes refer to the people who show up consistently only on Christmas and Easter as the “C & E crowd.” Sounds a bit snide, I know, but it’s not meant to be hostile. Actually, I don’t know any pastors or priests who aren’t very glad to see these folks. We always hold out hope that this is the year they’ll stick around, that they’ll be impressed enough by the preaching, music and warm welcome that they’ll be back the next Sunday. But that rarely happens. And despite our cynicism every year we are honestly disappointed and a little surprised by that.

So how do we interest people in coming to church these days? It’s a real problem — even among those who claim to be devout, including those who declare themselves Evangelicals, there has been a considerable decline in actual church attendance.

It’s a fact that churches used to be the center of civic life. I got a sense of what that might have been like when I exchanged pulpits with a West African pastor. I was struck by how so much of what I saw might seem familiar to those living in the U.S. 40 or 50 years ago, and that would include the role of religion. I remember asking a young man with some ambition why he chose to be an Episcopalian, and he said matter-of-factly, “I thought it was my best opportunity.” He was basically saying the local Episcopal church had more business and social connections for him. There was a day here in our country when many young people might admit as much, but not anymore.

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So what do we have going for us? How do we convince someone to get up early on a weekend and come sit for an hour? Many of us who are already here at church look forward to seeing our friends, but those whose circle of friends is elsewhere wouldn't have that motivation, at least not at the start. So what is it that might bring them?

Friends, it's faith. It's the love of Christ. It's the hope in a living God watching over us. And church is the place where faith, hope and love are affirmed over and over again. We help provide something all people need.

So what would I say to those who express any interest at all in church, to the "C & E" crowd we see on major holidays? I'd say come back, come back and be a part of making yourself and the world more about love than hate, more about faith than fatalism. You need us more than you know, and we need you more than you'd ever guess. You're keeping something alive that desperately needs to be kept alive – a living faith in a living God. Without it, the foundations of morality begin to crumble, selfishness and greed take over, humanity regresses. We can wrangle over theology and ethics if we want, but these should be earnest discussions among friends. The main thing is that we are all seeking an Ultimate Truth in this fleeting time we have on earth. I can think of no greater endeavor. Please join me in asking people we know to give church another chance. Make it a goal. You have between now and Christmas.

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 Henry Folgoso at hefoja@live.com.





When Can We Start Singing Again?

Throughout the pandemic there have been a large number of sources from which to obtain data about when we can congregate again. There have been a smaller number of sources that have been studying when it will be safe to **sing** again. These sources are using the same data along with some specific data relating to the emissions that travel farther during singing.

One of the first groups to publish data on singing and COVID was the American Choral Directors Association followed by the Center for Congregational Song. The latter group is the outreach arm of The Hymn Society of the United States and Canada. The Society has been organized since the early 1940's and is an ecumenical group of church musicians, hymn writers, composers, and others who want to encourage congregational singing. They have brought on board many specialists in the fields of public health and communicable diseases to interpret and present an ongoing flow of information regarding singing and COVID from the CDC and other scientific and medical fields.

Since much of the data we read in the newspaper is related to daily activities and social events, it doesn't specifically address group singing. So over the last year, I have been tempering the data I read in the newspaper from governmental sources, with the in-



formation I have been receiving by these two organizations that are "singing specialists". They understand the unique situation of group singing—often shoulder to shoulder in an enclosed space and forcing air out at a greater level than normal talking and for extended periods of time.

Most recently they have devised a graph that looks much like a speedometer, with an arch of numbers and below it a dial that moves across it. To the far right of the dial is 100% when 100% of persons in the US have been vaccinated. At the far left of the dial is 0%. The movement of the dial is determined by what percentage of people have been vaccinated. They indicate that when the national threshold of vaccinated persons reaches the range of 70-85% it will be safe to begin gathering in choir. As of mid-March we are currently at a national vaccine rate of 11.7%. I enjoy seeing this percentage rise as I check the "dashboard" every few days. It gives me hope that we are moving forward with our efforts to a safer environment for our choir members and our singing congregation.

The ADCA and the Center for Congregational Song understand our deep need to sing again together and have much personal experience in the transformative value of choral singing. They want to get us back together as quickly as possible, but not at the risk of lives or good health. So hang on a little while longer! Maybe I will make a "dashboard" for us all to see and let the countdown (or rather, the count UP!!) begin!

An Easter Cryptogram

K S Q	R	E	E	R	B I Q	U R T T
J B R O C Q	Y N C	T S J Q	B I Q	U R T T		
B T O S	R	E	X O	X Z	D A	N R O
	J B R O C	X O	X Z	D A	N R O	Z S U C J
	1	R				6:14
	L S J R I Y N R B I O					

UMW Flower Sale

Dear Congregation and Friends of FUMC,

We are delighted to offer our Spring Flower Sale with Berns Nursery as our provider. This year we will have pre-orders only — what you order is what we request from Berns. There will be no extras for purchase and no partial flats will be sold. Our **delivery date is Wednesday, April 28 from noon-3 p.m. at the church.** Please note on your order sheet if you have a special delivery request. Order forms are available in the north foyer, on page 7 of this newsletter, and online at <http://www.myfumc.net/links-resources/>. **Orders are due by April 9.** If you have questions, please contact Rose Morgan or Barb Orth. Berns gift cards are available for purchase on the form as well.

Volunteers Needed for Children and Nursery

We are in need of volunteers for both the Nursery and for Junior Church. Even if you can only serve occasionally, you are truly needed. Please contact the church office at 513-423-4629. This is an area of ministry where our church needs to continue to grow. Young adults and some teens can help as well.

Donations Requested

There are needs for the poor and homeless being served at Access Counseling at The Gathering — John Tack reports that styrofoam cups, wash cloths and small mens' and womens' underwear are the current needs for continuing this ministry. You can drop donations at the church office — please mark your bag somehow for ACCESS. Thanks.

Acolytes Needed

We extend our thanks to Ken and Carolyn Tucker, who have managed our acolyte program for years and we welcome Nick and Angela Murphy who have graciously agreed to step up. We are in need of children who are third graders (or nearly third-graders) and up to be volunteers. If you have a child or grandchild who would like to serve as an acolyte, please contact the church office.

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





April Birthdays

2 Sharyn Edelen
 6 Dave Balsmeyer,
 12 J.C. Shew
 13 Betty Risner
 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!

Prayer Requests

Members of the Church Family:

Martha Swank
 Bob Rogers
 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:

David and Sharon Horn, brother and
 Sister-in-law of Rick Fugett
 John Overpeck, father of Erin Over-
 peck
 Michael Bakich
 Rex Perry, friend of Ron & Mary Davis
 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
 II, son & grandson of Martha Swank
 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

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

See You in Sunday School!

We have enjoyed continuing to be part of the Sunday school class at First Church even after returning to Nepal. The time difference makes it a bit of a challenge – and the recent switch to DST has made it a bit harder. 9 a.m. on Sunday morning for you is now 6:45 p.m. Sunday evenings for us. (It was 7:45 p.m. before DST). Most likely I will be finishing my supper now during Sunday school!

I realized that many of you either might not know or might not remember what our schedule is like here. It has been a while since I shared about it, so thought I would do that this month.

The work week in Nepal starts on Sunday! So – Sunday mornings, Les goes to work at 7:45 a.m. The doctors gather for morning report and a short prayer time and then go to the wards for rounds. These days, Les is usually doing the medical ward. (This includes men and women – non surgical and non-maternity). After rounds, if there is time, he and the other doctors have a cup of morning tea and then start in the clinics – seeing patients who have come to the outpatient department with all sorts of medical problems. Les comes home for lunch between 1 and 2 p.m., and then is back in the clinics and finally ends the day with final ward rounds – usually getting home around 6 p.m.

This same schedule happens on Mondays and Tuesdays. Wednesdays is a bit different – the outpatient department is closed that day, so after morning report and rounds, the doctors gather for teaching and training sessions until about 1 p.m. Wed afternoon is free except for the on-call doctor. Thursday is again like Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Usually for Les,



Saturday worship at Tansen Church

Friday is his day off. He always has one night of on-call during the week – sometimes Tuesday sometimes Thursday ... it changes.

Saturday is the day off for everyone who isn't on call. It is also the day of worship. Nepali church gathers at 10 a.m. and lasts at least until noon. We have started meeting again together – most people wear masks. Above is a picture I took just last week – the leaders and praise band don't mask.

So – that is our week – at least that is Les's schedule. Thanks for your prayers – especially we would ask that our second round of vaccines would come, and that no second wave of covid will appear! We are way down in numbers in Nepal, but India is going up again. We miss you and think of you often! See you in Sunday school!

Love, देबी (Debbie) and लेस (Les)

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

First United Methodist Church - UMW Flower Sale

DEADLINE FOR ORDERS: Friday, April 9, 2021

Name _____

Phone Number _____

	Quantity	Cost
Hanging Baskets \$20 ea.		
Ivy Geraniums		
Dark Red		
Pink		
Deep Rose		
Million Bells		
Fruit Cocktail		
Sprinkles on Top		
Sunpatiens		
Red		
Pink		
Lavender		
Fuchsia		
Boston Fern		
Impatiens		
Mixed		
Non Stop Begonia		
Deep Orange		
Pink Shades		
Scarlet		
Yellow		
Dragonwing Begonia		
Red		

	Quantity	Cost
Flats (24 Plants) \$15		
Alyssum		
White		
Begonia		
Rose		
Scarlet		
White		
Impatiens		
Mixed		
Portulaca		
Mixed		
Marigold		
Mixed		
Coleus		
Petunia		
Red		
Midnight		
White		
Rose		
Snapdragon		
Vinca		
Mixed		
Polka Dot Center		

Petunia		
Magenta		
Purple Majesty		
Rose Vein		

Berns Select Mix - \$25		
Blue Red Yellow Mix		
Pink Mix		
Red White Blue Mix		

9" Pots \$15 ea.		
Geraniums		
Cardinal Red		
White		
Flamingo Rose		
Orange		
Violet		

Flats (12 Plants) \$15		
Wave Petunia		
Red		
Pink		
White		
Blue		
Violet		

Berns Gift Card		
\$25		

COLUMN 2 TOTAL _____

COMBINED TOTAL
(COLUMN 1 + COLUMN 2) _____

COLUMN 1 TOTAL _____

Return order form to a UMW member or the church office.



Please make checks payable to UMW.

Products are subject to availability.

CUSTOMER PICKUP: Wed., April 28, Noon-4, at the church.

Holy Week at First Church

**Maundy Thursday, April 1 — 7 p.m. service in the sanctuary and online at
www.myfumc.net/worship-on-the-web/**

**Good Friday, April 2 — 7 p.m. Community service at
First Christian Church, 4520 Rosedale Rd.— Link to be provided.**

Easter Sunday, April 4

Celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

**10:30 a.m. — Traditional worship in the Sanctuary with socially
distanced overflow seating available**

**Also online at www.myfumc.net/worship-on-the-web/
Easter Egg Hunt for Children!**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

120 South Broad Street
Middletown, OH 45044

a united methodist community
M I D D L E T O W N



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