



Beacon

... guiding our walk

May 2020

From Pastor John

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."- Isaiah 30:15

As I write this, we are in our sixth week of "social distancing," and working "together" online. We have suspended all face-to-face gatherings (except a small "Soul Café" crew that continues to prepare and deliver between 150-160 lunches to our community every Monday). We have had to make all kinds of adjustments to the ways we "do church." We are learning as we go, and the staff and leaders of SUMC want to thank you for the ways you have "stepped up" to stay engaged with your church family – from a distance.

We especially are grateful for the wonderful way you have continued to give generously to Christ through our church. Many of you increased your giving recently as a result of our stewardship campaign, and have been very faithful in continuing to give during this time of "sheltering in place." Those contributions, along with a successful application for a PPP small business loan (part of the CARES Act) which enables us to continue to employ and pay our staff for eight weeks (and will be "forgiven") will see us through these lean times. (Thanks to Bethany Messersmith for her tireless work to make this available – also, see the financial report elsewhere in this Beacon.)

There is still a great deal of uncertainty about how long this crisis will go on, and a debate rages about when and under what conditions it will be safe to return to "normal" (whatever that will look like). Of course, we all would love this to happen soon, as we miss one another. However, we also want to make sure that we as a church do not come together before it is safe to do so. Our Bishop and his Cabinet (District Superintendents) are monitoring the situation, and will give us guidance about when they believe it will be safe to ease back into public worship and gatherings (with restrictions, certainly). They are reviewing this every two weeks. The directive we received a couple of weeks ago was that we should plan to continue "virtual" worship through at least May 15. Of course, this may be extended, based on conditions. We will keep you posted.

At some point, we will receive the "green light" to ease back into gathering together for worship. In anticipation, Megan Mash, Sharon Johnson, and I have developed guidelines for post-lockdown worship. Just so you know what we are thinking, here are the highlights:

- ◆ To ensure adequate social distancing, we will offer two identical worship services, one at 9:00 and one at 11:00 a.m. (color-coded, see next item). Members will need to register and select which service they plan to regularly attend so we have a count. Seating at each service will be limited. We are anticipating marking the pews with painter's tape indicating where you will be allowed to sit (individual, couple, or family group), spaced well-apart, with some spaces available for "visitors." We will hold two services until it is safe to return to one combined service.
- ◆ Pews and the sanctuary will be sanitized before the first service and after the last service. We are considering using different color painter's tape to indicate seats for first and second services (insuring that second service attendees are not sitting in the same spot as first service attendees.
- ◆ All worshipers will be required to wear a mask, preferably bringing one from home. Those coming without a mask (including visitors) will be given a mask to wear and to keep (Sharon Johnson is currently sewing masks to make available to folks who attend without one). People will be asked to take home their mask and wear it on Sundays. Participants in leading worship will wear masks, except when they are engaged in speaking or singing. The congregation will sing wearing masks.
- ◆ Greeters and ushers will wear masks, of course. They will not shake hands. Greeters will stand outside each door and open and close the door for folk so people don't have to touch to doors. They may distribute a dab of hand-sanitizer as people arrive. Greeters may be asked to wear gloves. They will also open doors for people as they leave. Ushers will pass out bulletins while wearing gloves. We are working on a method whereby only ushers touch the

- offering plates as the offering is collected.
- ♦ Communion will be served using one loaf and individual cups that only the servers touch while wearing gloves and masks. Ushers will invite people to be served from the back seats to the front (opposite of the way we usually do it) so that there is not a crowded line waiting to be served. Painter's tape along the aisle may mark 6 feet distances. As people approach the altar, they will pull down their masks so they are able to take communion. Communicants will open the palms of their hands and a piece of bread will be dropped onto their palms. The juice will be served one-by-one in individual cups, handed to the communicant with a gloved hand. After receiving, people will return their masks to their proper position before returning to their seats.
 - ♦ Even when we are back to public worship, we will continue to stream one of the two services "live" on Facebook so that those who may not yet feel comfortable to attend in person can still participate online. This will also be a blessing to shut-ins and others who may be ill, as well as a way to extend the reach of our service into our community.

I know this may seem cumbersome, but we feel this interim step will be needed to provide as much safety as possible while we transition back to normalcy. We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this.

In spite of the challenges we face, there are benefits to this "time apart." Families are connecting more than ever before. By our absence from one another, we are learning the value of being in community – if only via the internet. And, we all are discovering the value of "alone-time" with God. I hope you are using this season of Sabbath rest to deepen your relationship with God. We need our faith to be strong during these challenging times. As the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

*I love being your pastor,
John*



Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. via Zoom "Book of Acts"

CONGREGATIONAL NOTICE:

As we move forward in our consideration of the possibility of constructing a new building addition to our Thrift Shop, we must follow certain Disciplinary steps. One step is to create and elect a "Study Group" that will be tasked with preparing a report and proposal to present to the entire congregations through a "Church Conference" (where all full members have a vote), at some point in the future (probably this fall or winter). We have a group that is working on this already, so we need to officially anoint them our "Study Group" and "elect" their members. To do accomplish this, before the beginning of our monthly Administrative Council meeting Monday, May 18 (7:00 p.m. - perhaps on Zoom), Pastor John will convene the Council as a "Charge Conference" (where only those leaders have a vote) for the purpose of creating our "Study Group" and officially electing members to it. We are required to announce a Church or Charge Conference at least three Sundays before the scheduled Conference



I have to admit that I have struggled selecting a hymn to write about this month. My emotions lately seem to be all over the place! Some days are filled with anxiety of what is to come and grief over the things that have

been lost. Some days are filled with joy as I participate in Zoom meetings with friends far and near. Some days I'm highly motivated to work on projects at home and work. Some days I struggled to get focused enough to figure out what I'm going to wear that day. This constant rollercoaster is something you

may be experiencing as well. What are the best choices for us to make as we continue to navigate these waters to stay safe, be in relationship with one another and help our neighbors? It can be difficult. "Be Still My Soul" reminds me that especially in moments of anxiety, the best way to navigate the waters is to be still and listen. When we work to

still our hearts, we can hear God better and have a better perspective. I know for me, stilling my heart takes work. Sometimes it takes a lot of work which can seem counterproductive. My thoughts race and it becomes easy for me to say "I'll rest after I do the dishes" or "I'll be still once my laundry is folded" or "I'll be still after all the worship services are planned."

For me there becomes a fear of not getting everything done. In times like the ones we are experiencing, I think it is important to know that often we are more productive after we have been still. When we work to still ourselves and rest in God's presence we can find new energy.

"Be Still My Soul" was originally written in German and had six stanzas. Three of those stanzas appear in our hymnal. The first two appear at the beginning of this article. They serve as a reminder for us that God is with us through all times of life. When the way is dark and chaotic, filled with anxiety and pain,

God walks with us. Knowing this, God provides us the strength to still our souls. Often when we experience these emotions, there is little we can do to change our situation. Many of us like to be in control and when that is taken from us our lives feel even more difficult. When we still our souls and bask in God's presence we are relying on the God who controls the wind and waves and remains faithful through all moments

in life, dark or bright. As we continue to move forward through this pandemic, into more new, uncharted territory, may you work to still your soul and find those moments to rest in God's peace so you may be filled with energy to know God's love and presence.

*Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side;
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
leave to your God to order and provide;
in ev'ry change he faithful will remain.*

*Be still, my soul: your best, your heav'nly Friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

*Be still, my soul: your God will undertake
to guide the future as he has the past.*

*Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.*

*Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
his voice who ruled them while he dwelt below.*

WORSHIP PLANNING COVID19 PANDEMIC EDITION

Breathe on Me, Breath of God.....NOPE
Precious Lord, Take my Hand.....NOPE
Just a Closer Walk with Thee.....NOPE
Gather Us In.....NOPE
Close to Thee.....NOPE

COULD WORK

Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters
Jesus Walked this Lonesome Valley
I Come to the Garden Alone
Trust and Obey

FINANCE
DIANN FLANIGAN, CHAIR

Below is our financial snapshot for March.

March 2020

INCOME

	Actual	Budget
Church Offering	\$ 17,950.56	\$ 18,558.67
Church Use	\$ 525.00	\$ 116.66
Div & Interest (Qtrly)	\$ 2,270.31	\$ 625.00
Thrift Shop	<u>\$ 8,999.80</u>	<u>\$ 8,333.34</u>
Total Income	<u>\$ 29,745.67</u>	<u>\$ 27,633.67</u>

EXPENSES

Total Expenses	<u>\$ 24,254.77</u>	<u>\$ 27,634.03</u>
----------------	---------------------	---------------------

Your Finance Committee wants to thank you for your continued support of the church. Even though we have transitioned to virtual services and the thrift shop was closed for 2 weeks in March, we did not fall behind financially as much as we could have. It appears many of you have either mailed in your monthly pledge or given it electronically. Thank you!

Please continue to pray for our healthcare providers, each other, practice social distancing and remember God is always walking in front of, beside and behind us! Thank you God!

Diann Flanigan
Finance Committee Chairperson

STEWARDSHIP
KATHY MESSERSMITH, CHAIR

Dear Church Members:

You answered the call! You stepped up your giving and we are very grateful!

The following information was compiled and reported to the Finance Committee and Administration Council by our Financial Secretary, Kent Casey. By the way, Kent is the only person who sees and tracks the pledge cards

We now have \$152K of pledges from 63 giving units vs \$120K in 2019. We have 15 giving units that pledged in 2019 that have not yet pledged in 2020 and represent about 31K of 2019 pledges. Those that pledged in 2019 and have provided estimates of giving for 2020 have increased their estimates by an average of 21%.

We have also received 2020 estimates of giving from 24 giving units that did not pledge in 2019 totaling over \$48K, an increase of \$31K of estimated giving over their \$16K of 2019 giving. Consequently, this could lower non-pledged giving by a similar amount this year.

Again, thank you for your generosity and commitment to our goals and to our Church. Step by step we are moving to a balanced budget!

Your Servant In Faith,
Kathy Messersmith
Stewardship Chairman

MISSIONS
DONNA OBOURNE, CHAIR

A Note from Missions

Dear Church Family, I hope everyone is doing fine with our social distancing. Aren't we blessed to have a caring group of people to surround us in these very unusual times? There is always someone to reach out to when we may feel lonely and in need of a friendly conversation, or when we have concerns and need to hear the voice of God through a church member, Pastor John or Megan.

It is so wonderful to be able to stay connected through Sunday Service, Bible Studies and Church Meetings. If this had happened 20 years ago we would be feeling so much more isolated, in Bible study this morning, we talked about the early church and reaching out to others; about being intentional in reaching others. There are many ways to do that. It is about bringing the love of God to others, perhaps people who don't know about it or lost their way somehow. Sure the more we reach out we increase our opportunity to grow our church, but I believe the focus should be more than that. I like to think how fortunate I am to have this church and I would love for others to experience it. So, if we grow in numbers that is great, but if one life is changed through our efforts that is a blessing.

Soul Café is feeding over 150 people weekly. Our church is becoming known as the church that helps. One person in our town told me SUMC is what church should be. Other church going people want to help with Soul Café because they see how people are being helped by it. The blessings we get when we give are amazing.

A new development is happening in May with Soul Café. Roseland UMC has created a team who will take responsibility for the first and last Monday of the month to cook, clean & deliver meals. YAY!

A business in town wants to donate to people in need in our town. They reached out to our church to get them connected to those people because of the things we do.

If you know of a family or individual who is struggling who would be blessed to receive a small box of fruits and vegetables please send me an email with their name, address and the number of people living in that dwelling or give the information to the church office. Over the next week we will be gathering that info and then making deliveries. With Blessings & much Gratitude for a Wonderful Church Family

Donna Osborne, Mission Chair

An Update from Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)

Just in case you hadn't heard via the Church Service, we are blessed to have Pastor John reassigned to our church again this year. Feel free to send him a message via text or email to share your blessings with him.

It certainly is a bit challenging to work together for our church when distancing, but we are giving it our best shot. We have completed the revised Job Descriptions for our Staff and my goal is to get them delivered to each staff member this week.

We have been revising our Personnel Policy Handbook. The most current one is from 2010. We have been reviewing, making some changes, making updates and omissions. It is in final review this month and will become a permanent document in May. We will give each staff member a new Handbook for their records & one will be filed in the church office.

Please continue to pray for our SPR committee as we continue to be available for all of you.

On Behalf of the SPR Committee
Donna Osborne, Chair

Happy May Anniversary

Ed & Janice Ertel	May 2
Brad & Janice Marx	May 2
Ed & Yvonne Oleksy	May 2
Harald & Pat Banta	May 7
Lee & Marlene Kalsch	May 8
Bob & Betty Stull	May 22
Ron & Barb Farrington	May 30

Happy May Birthday

Muriel Douglas	May 4
Churck Benjamin	May 5
Melodee Chapin	May 5
Donna Bevington	May 9
Sherry Hunter	May 11
Alan Hulse	May 12
Laura Bast	May 22
Harold Banta	May 28
Carol Pheneger	May 28

Altar Flowers

If you have your name on the altar flower sign up sheet, we will not be ordering fresh flowers at this time

Stamp Out Hunger

Stamp Out Hunger was scheduled for Saturday May 9th and has been postponed (***not cancelled just delayed***)



Sebastian United Methodist Women

Our wrap up the year May Banquet with Roseland United Methodist Women is cancelled! What a way to end our season.

But we have had a busy year!

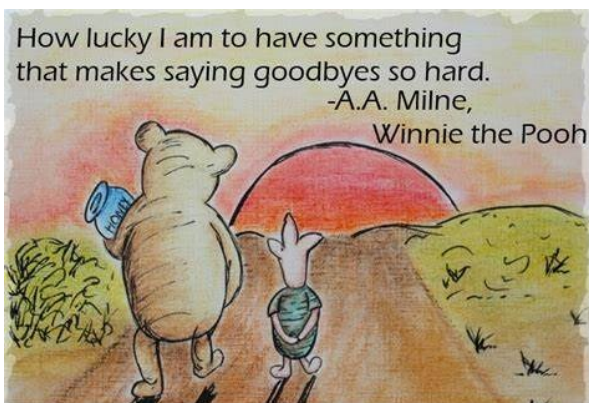
- Donation to Women at Risk.
- Donated sandwiches to Sebastian Hospital workers. They put a picture on their web page showing workers getting their sandwiches.
- Supporting By the River and Backpack Buddies

To all our sisters headed north, I hold up prayers for safe travel and a healthy, happy summer. Looking forward to your return as we begin our programs in September. Please forward any programs you would like to hear and ideas for additional programs you would like to support.

Have a wonderful summer to all!

Ginger Horner

President, Sebastian United Methodist Women



Dear Sebastian UMC Friends,

We are sorry not to say goodbye in person but we want to let you know we love you and will miss you all. We will be making our move to TN the first week in June. We pray you all stay well and continue to make this church a special place to worship.

Blessings,

Sally & George Lambert

Wonders of Gods Creations

Ann McCullough

With this PAUSE in my somewhat busy and fast- paced life, I am becoming so aware of this Magnificent earth God created. Nature is absolutely fascinating -there are so many gorgeous birds who fill the air with their beautiful singing. There are blue jays, wrens, mockingbirds, robins, cardinals, black birds, woodpeckers, doves, hummingbirds, crows, kites, hawks, egrets, sand hill cranes and others. Occasionally Ron and I hear the hoot hoot of an owl.

We have a cardinal nest with 3 babies. It is so interesting to watch the male and female. We can now recognize the male calling the female and she will leave the nest to be fed by the male. They are such beautiful birds. There is a woods rabbit named Freddie(he likes carrots). Squirrels are everywhere. They chase each other and seem to always be playing games. Actually they are quite acrobatic.

Don't forget the ground frogs and singing tree frogs, along with an assortment of geckos. And those beautiful red-throated anoles (sometimes referred to as Chameleons)

Lots of butterflies and dragonflies.

Ron and I have been spending time observing, and learning about all this marvelous nature. For example Crows are fascinating birds and among the smartest animals in the world!! They remember people's faces and the ones who were kind and the ones who were not--crows hold grudges!!

So spend a little time in nature and discover all the wonders of God's creation. It is here for us to enjoy.





Sebastian United Methodist Church
1029 Main Street
Sebastian, Florida 32958

Pastor John Gill
Pastor's cell 321-794-0010
johngillumc@bellsouth.net
Church Office: 772-589-5230
Thrift Shop Direct Line: 772-388-0405
sebastianumc@bellsouth.net

Open our eyes God, that we may see...



Open our eyes God, that we may see...Your Glory all around...!
You have made this wondrous Earth and all that surrounds!
Open our ears Father God so that we may hear...!
The cries of those who need Your Love and those You Hold most Dear!
Open our arms Dear God... so we may lend a hand!
Open our hearts Father God and help us understand...!
The needs of others across this earthly land!
Feed our Souls Almighty God, so we may grow in likeness to YOU!!!
Show us Your Way, Dear God and Guide us Home to YOU!!!

Nancy L Fox April 23, 2020