



Tecumseh United Methodist Church

Christ's compassionate community in Tecumseh;
Loving and serving prayerfully and unconditionally

Midweek Newsletter

Wednesday 5 August 2020

Trying Something New

Welcome to the first edition of the Midweek Newsletter, a regular publication that is intended to be both informative and interesting. It fills a gap between Sundays and provides information and announcements for those who were not able to attend the previous Sunday's worship or catch the associated worship podcast. . . . Enough of the introduction, here it is:

Cast Out Again (by Choice)

We have again moved Sunday worship outdoors under our pavilion. This is a self-imposed exile from our building in response to Governor Whitmer's executive orders, EO-160 being the latest, specifying a limit of 10 persons gathered indoors. To add urgency to this, the Lenawee County Health Department has issued two letters insisting that all organizations avoid indoor gathering of more than 10 people. An obvious question arising from our doing this is, Why?, since it is clear that other churches in our area are not observing the same restriction and are meeting indoors.

The answer is rooted in our Wesleyan/Methodist Christian ethics. There is indeed a clause in each pertinent executive order says churches will not be penalized for gathering more than 10 people indoors. Effectively, this

means that we could violate the maximum 10-person rule without penalty. But leveraging a loophole that allows sidestepping a rule, regulation, or law does not make it right to do so. The choice is an easy one to make—we are choosing to the right thing and not meet indoors. Apparently, other churches and pastors are applying a different ethical calculus to this issue.

On the practical edge, there still is not enough that we know about the Coronavirus nor is there enough testing and contact tracing being done to help us insure the safety of indoor gatherings. Meeting outdoors is far safer.

Local Missions Continue

To misquote David Farragut, “D**m the Coronavirus, full speed ahead!” The pandemic has not displaced the needs of people in our own community and beyond, so we continue collecting goods and funds for the following:

Tecumseh Service Club – This organization helps people in need in NE Lenawee County fill the gaps left by government assistance such as SNAP, which covers just food. Each month we highlight a particular item or related group of items, asking that they be purchased and brought to church. We will make a fuss over them on the 2nd Sunday of the month.

This month's shopping list is **paper products, such as toilet paper, kleenex, and paper towels.**

You can bring these items to worship on the 2nd Sunday (8/9/2020) or put them in a bin in the church's North doorway.

Women's and Children's Ministry Center – This is the shelter established by Neighbors of Hope just behind Herrick Hospital. They are in need of supplies for mothers with babies--

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Baby Lotions
- Soap

We have a bin for these as well and they will also be collected at worship.

School Kits – We are assembling packages of school supplies for children in Central America who have none (we are not focused locally because there are already other organizations doing supplying children here). The following items are needed:

- Blunt, round-top kid's scissors
- 24-count boxes of crayons
- Notebooks – wire-bound, 8 ½ x 11 in. basic school notebooks
- Pencil sharpeners
- Rulers – these need to have both English and Metric scales
- Pencils – the basic #2 wood pencil
- Erasers

And yes, there's a bin for these too!

Important: Please do not deviate from the list above, the people we send them to need just these items specifically.

A Cultural COVID-19 Casualty

Due to the complications involved in keeping people safe from Coronavirus infection coupled with indoor gathering restrictions and our having no clear sense of where things will be by October . . .

We are canceling this year's Art's and Craft's Show.

We are not the first to do this, craft shows, festivals, and all manner of events that gather lots of people have been canceled, most notably the Lenawee County Fair and Tecumseh's AppleUmpkin Festival.

Charge Conference Season is Coming Soon

...very soon!

With the arrival of a new District Superintendent (Rev. LuAnn Roarke) and the realignment of several multi-point charges in the Heritage District, scheduling of charge conferences has given us an earlier-than-usual conference date this year.

Sunday, 21 September 2020

The requisite paperwork will need to be completed by 11 September 2020.

Finance, Trustees, and SPRC will be receiving paperwork to file very soon.

With Mary Ann unable to do all the organizing that she does each year, please be as helpful as you can if you are involved in any of this. Thank you.

What really is "Church Music"?

. . . By Pastor Mark.

When I began putting together podcasts for worship back in March, I added tracks I recorded on Native American style flute in part because people like to hear it and partly because of licensing complications that come with putting music online. Putting instrumental music out there as part of worship reminded me of an argument I had with several of my classmates in seminary. They maintained that music was not appropriately church music unless it was sung and had lyrics that expressed a Christian biblical or theological theme. My response was that their

categorization was a bit narrow and that their defining criteria, Christian lyrics, was only one possible characteristic of church music. Moreover, anything that did not glorify violence, evil, the devil, or pagan religion could be good church music, even jazz and heavy metal. To this day, I suspect my classmates believe I am a heretic.

While I do not like to sing and have been an instrumental musician since childhood, I do have theological rationale for believing a wide range of music fits in a church setting. The most important is that if the musician's

intention is worship, prayer, contemplation, or expression of their experience of God then the music they create is entirely appropriate because it is their religious expression as much as one who prays verbally, preaches, or simply gives themselves to the experience of worship. Another rationale is that worshiping people have always expressed their worship through creativity of that which is beautiful, and may be sublime and even profound.

Stained glass windows come to mind. And so does the music of folk like Johann S. Bach, whose music we think of as church music yet it is music often without lyrics.

So are the improvisations and non-traditional compositions I play on Native American style flute church music? I think so, since they are part of how I pray and worship. Besides, if it sounds good, then it is good, and if it is good, why not use it in the church?