



Tecumseh United Methodist Church

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

Midweek Newsletter

Wednesday 12 August 2020

And You Think You've Been Married a Long Time

Congratulations to Lee and Nancy Vavrinek who have recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary! This is good news indeed!

Although it has been a disappointment that concerns about COVID-19 have prevented them having an anniversary bash to share the celebration, Nancy declared that they would do so on their 75th anniversary.

Check out our mildly redesigned website at <http://www.tecumsehumc.org/>, where you can find worship service podcasts, our church calendar, highlights of upcoming worship services, these mid-week newsletters, and more.

Meeting the New UMs

We have a number of new neighbors in our part of the SE Michigan United Methodist community:

- A new District Superintendent, the Reverend LuAnn Rourke, who attended worship with us this past Sunday
- The Rev Eric Stone who is the new pastor at Adrian: First UMC,
- The Rev Willie Lass, the new pastor at Britton: Grace UMC,
- The Rev Michael Vollmer, the new pastor at Clinton & Stony Creek UMCs
- The Rev Kelly-Marie Zawondni, the new pastor of Blissfield: Emmanuel and Macon UMCs
- The Rev Keith Lenard, the new pastor of Lasalle: Zion and Petersburg UMCs
- The Rev Bob Freysinger, the new pastor of Ida, Samaria: Grace, and Lulu UMCs

The Most Important Person in the Church

Our Christology tells us that the most important person in the church is Jesus Christ, who created the church. The Eastern Orthodox Church would argue for the Ecumenical Patriarch, and Roman Catholics, the Pope, the apostolic successor to Peter, the Rock upon whom Jesus built his church.

United Methodists know the truth: The most important person in the church is the Church Secretary (Administrative Assistant). If you don't believe this, try keeping up with the church's myriad day-to-day office tasks.

With our Admin Assistant, Mary Ann, away on medical leave, we are bereft of our community hub, file manager, calendar keeper, and all-around helpful person. Our thanks go out to Dee O'Brien for being in the office to help, and Missy Andrus, who is sorting and filtering the email Mary Ann receives, some of it information, invoices, and such that we do not want to miss. Thanks also to Susan Forlano, Susan Koppelman, Carol Legenc, and Sharon Miller for putting together lists of parishioners organized by who prefers emails, text messages, and hard-copy letters. Their work will help us stay in touch with as many as possible within Tecumseh UMC.

Please be patient and extend grace to we who are covering for Mary Ann in her absence. Thank you.

Charge Conference Season is Coming Soon

Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us that there is a season for everything under heaven and our Heritage District Office tells us that the season for Church/Charge Conferences has arrived. Our conference is Monday evening, September 21 and will be done online using Zoom.

In case you may be unaware the yearly church/charge conference is mandated by The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline, our book of church law. Just prior and during the conference, reports in a variety of area about the church are filed with the District, which holds them for the Conference. During the conference, which is chaired by the District Superintendent, votes are taken on several things—the pastor's compensation package, recommendation of persons to enter ministry in the UMC, and confirmation of Lay Servant Ministry candidates. (By the way, a charge is the unit to which a pastor is appointed. It may

be, like Tecumseh UMC, a single church, or it may be several churches, which comprise a multi-point charge.)

Paperwork for our church/charge conference have been distributed and needs to be submitted to the Heritage District by September 11.

Please help with not only diligence to completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of reporting but also with patience and grace since our Administrative Assistant, Mary Ann, who normally fills in a lot of the paperwork, is unavailable to help this year. Thus, Pastor Mark will most likely be picking up all that she was doing in addition to the reporting he is responsible for.

Like everything else going on right now in Coronavirus Country, we'll get through it, and getting through it early this year will free us up for the holidays to follow.

Fellowship Ideas

The Coronavirus pandemic is isolating and we need to opportunities to get together, even if only online, other than Sunday worship. Here are several ideas. Let us know what you think:

- Zoom Bible Study or Small Group Class for learning.
- Zoom discussion group that would take a current and hot topic and talk it through without any one person leading the conversation or being the resident “expert”. For example, the topic of discussion might be Black Lives Matter. All would have a chance to offer their views. If anyone has attended a “Pub Theology” event, this will be familiar to you.
- Brown-bag recipe potluck. While potluck and buffet tables are risky right now, we could yet break bread together by bringing our own meals and table service. Appropriately distanced, we should be able to share a meal safely. To make it a potluck, we can share a buffet line of recipes.

As mentioned earlier, these are just ideas—nothing is scheduled yet.

What your you like to do?

For anyone who thinks the Bible is not Relevant Today

– By Pastor Mark

Most clergy that I know have a verse or passage from the Bible that resonates so strongly with them that it provides both guidance and encouragement for their vocation in Christian ministry. Mine is 2 Timothy 4:2-5 –

Preach the word. Be ready to do it whether it is convenient or inconvenient. Correct, confront, and encourage with patience and instruction. There will come a time when people will not tolerate sound teaching. They will collect teachers who say what they want to hear because they are self-centered. They will turn their back on the truth and turn to myths. But you must keep control of yourself in all circumstances. Endure suffering, do the work of a preacher of the good news, and carry out your service fully.

This is some of the Apostle Paul’s coaching of his young protege, Timothy, who was a skilled theologian and evangelist even as a young man (Paul advises him to ignore those who give him a difficult time because of his young age).

If Paul were alive today, he might repeat these verses just as he gave them to Timothy so long ago. Some people today do indeed resist the truth of things, often preferring instead to accept as fact only what they want to believe. They turn to myths, whether they be partisan political spin, conspiracy theories, bald-faced deceit intended to manipulate, or misinformation. And we do not need to look far to see this stuff. With a general election coming soon, we are being flooded with campaign commercials that spin, twist, and lie in order make the opposing candidate appear like a beast from Hell. Social media is rife with

propaganda, misinformation, and manipulative lies (be very careful what you “like” and “share” in Facebook). It is no surprise that the word of truth can be both inconvenient and provocative.

I have to admit that I have not always followed the brief passage above as well as I should have, in particular, the part that reads, “**Correct, confront, and encourage with patience and instruction.**” Instead, I’ve too often pulled my punches to avoid angering parishioners.

As a work in progress—as a preacher, pastor, and person—I am still growing into the brief passage above. And one day, I will stop pulling my punches, correct and confront when people deny the truth, encourage with the good news, and do it all when it is most inconvenient . . . not because I will want to start a fight, but because I care deeply about the faith and souls of those I serve. If I did not care, I would probably be doing something else, maybe working as a bartender . . . (“will that be two olives or three?”)