

The Circuit Rider

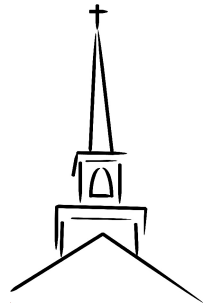


First United Methodist Church, Harlan
Monroe Chapel United Methodist Church

JULY 2020

CHURCH WORSHIP & ACTIVITY STATUS

WORSHIP at First UMC: The Administrative Council met June 23 and unanimously voted to **continue with online communication and virtual worship until the number of active cases in Shelby County goes down for two consecutive weeks.** Once again, this decision involved much discussion and was not arrived at lightly, but for everyone's continued safety the church building will remain closed. [See page 2 for Pastor Mike's article.] Worship is recorded with 10 or less participants, then made available on our website and Facebook page, as well as played on the local cable stations. *If you would like a DVD of the service, along with a printed bulletin, call or email the church office and we can mail them to your home.*



WORSHIP at Monroe Chapel: The Administrative Council is conversing weekly and will **continue with virtual worship at this time.** You will be informed when the decision to return to in-person worship is made. **FAIR WORSHIP:** Unfortunately due to restrictions and changes to the Shelby County Fair format, First UMC will not be hosting the annual worship at the fairgrounds. We will look forward to sharing our ministry next Summer.

CHURCH GROUPS: The Prayer Group communicates online, committee meetings are conducted via Zoom, and UMW meetings are suspended at this time.

KID CORRESPONDENCE: Ronda continues to provide all kids (PreK-12 grades) with weekly content that will continue throughout the Summer. Planning is underway for MYF this upcoming academic year, with three different possible plans under development. We will take into account what the school system decides, but please know your ideas, comments, concerns are appreciated. Ronda may be reached at fumchcec@harlannet.com.

SUMMER SERMON SERIES: Moving Forward in Difficult Times – A Look at Exodus

We are in the midst of our Summer series going through the book of Exodus, looking at how Moses and the Hebrews, including many interesting individuals within that group, continually moved forward into the wilderness in uncertain and difficult times. In the process we will see lessons for our own lives as individuals and community as we continue living in our own difficult times.



July 5: Freedom! [Exodus 14-15]

July 12: Struggling in the Wilderness [Exodus 15:22-27; 16 & 17]

July 19: Receiving Wisdom [Exodus 18]

July 26: Receiving the Law [Exodus 19-24]

Aug 2: Blueprints from God [Exodus 25-31]

Aug 9: The Sin of Familiarity [Exodus 32]

Aug 16: Moving Forward [Exodus 33:1-6; 40:34-38]

ANNUAL BACK PACK OFFERING

During the **month of July** you are encouraged to donate to the annual back pack offering. Packs are donated by the Salvation Army and SCCO asks for donations to get supplies to fill those packs. Packs are then given to local qualifying Shelby County children prior to school starting. They have handed out 160-170 packs the past few years and expect the number to increase this year. Back packs are valued a \$25 a piece and we try to contribute funds for 25 packs, or \$625. *Donations payable to First UMC.*



SPECIAL MUSIC for RECORDED WORSHIP

Thank you once again to all those who've assisted with recorded worship on Fridays. We greatly appreciate your time, effort, and talent! **Contact Sandy**, 712-343-2492 or carrolls@iowatelecom.net, if you're able to offer special music for recorded worship on Fridays at 9:00am.



A MOMENT WITH MIKE

The Harlan First United Methodist Church's administrative council met recently and voted unanimously to continue having worship services and meetings online until positive cases of COVID-19 in Shelby County decrease for at least two weeks. We used to re-evaluate this decision every month, but we have now decided to go strictly by the number of active cases in our county. Monroe Chapel United Methodist Church has also decided to remain online for now and will re-evaluate at a later date. You may be wondering why we are continuing to have services online when so many other businesses and churches have opened. There are three facts that guide our thoughts on this:

- 1) COVID-19 is a public health emergency.
- 2) Active COVID-19 cases are increasing, not decreasing, in Shelby County.
- 3) The health risk is just as real now as it was when we moved to online worship in March.

These facts do not change because businesses and some churches are opening. They do not change because we are tired of the sacrifices we have to make to keep others safe. They remain the facts. As your pastor, I am not responsible for the health and well-being of the community at large or for other congregations, but I am responsible for our two congregations. I take that responsibility very seriously. I know there are some who disagree with the decision to refrain from in-person worship, but there are also some who are uncomfortable returning to worship because they do not feel it is safe. Even if you feel comfortable returning to worship, it is still a high-risk activity, and the idea that only those with underlying health conditions are in danger is a myth. This pandemic is dangerous for everyone, and returning to worship without precautions is dangerous for everyone. Even when we eventually return to worship with precautions in place, there is still some risk involved for everyone who attends.

That's the bad news, which is really the same news we have been dealing with since March. Now, here is the good news. Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead, showing us the immense love that God has for all of us. We are all loved by God, and we can continue to be the Church and act as a community of faith even while this pandemic persists. We must keep the faith and remain resilient as we grow in our faith, worship God, and do what we can at the same time to slow the spread and protect others.

One way we are continuing to be the Church in Harlan is by hosting the summer feeding program. Last week, there were days the program fed at least 275 kids, and they still had to turn people away! They are looking at making more food as demand keeps increasing. Having the food distributed from our church's central location in town makes the food more accessible to kids. We are glad we can make this possible and are grateful to those who are running the program.

As we continue to be the Church during this pandemic, I want to let you know about an opportunity we have to literally gather together. We are working on a time when we can gather for a special worship service at Pioneer Park in Harlan sometime in July. As details for this event become more clear, we will update you with specifics.

God bless,
Pastor Mike


PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED


We THANK EVERYONE for their continued patience and understanding with the current situation. We know it has been difficult adjustment.


Please let us know if you or someone you know is in the hospital, dealing with medical issues, or would benefit from communication with Pastor Mike. We like to be kept inform of both joys and concerns, so even if you think we know, give us a call or shoot us an email anyway just to be sure!


CHURCH DONATIONS

Thank you to all who continue to faithfully support First UMC and Monroe Chapel! Below are options for giving.

Mail: First UMC, Box 28, Harlan Iowa; Monroe Chapel, c/o Jan Curtis, 1370 Road M36, Harlan Iowa. 

Drop Off: drop donations for either church at First UMC, 1202 9th Street; push the door bell button next to the alley door entrance and you will be let in. 

Online: go to www.harlanmethodist.com, click the "Make a Payment" button on the main page, and instructions will follow. 

Auto Withdrawal: contact Anne in the office with interest in setting up monthly automatic giving. We lift up to you the need to remember the ministries of our churches and the importance of your financial support, as well as your prayers at this time. 

ONLINE STREAMING SERVICE REMINDER...

Amplify is a streaming service that offers videos from different Bible studies and speakers on many topics. Study participants have used this service to watch their study videos online, but all of you are encouraged to make use of this resource.




Amplify's website is:


<https://my.amplifymedia.com/harlanfirstandmonroechapelum>

Once there, you will find a button that says, "Click here to enter your code." Click the button and enter the access code **JNLGKX**. Once you do, you can set up your free account and begin watching. After your account is set up, when you come back to the website, you can simply login with the username and password that you have created. There are videos for adults and kids as well, including Deep Blue videos, which our children watch during M.Y.F. In addition to the computer, you can access the Amplify channel using Google Play, Apple's App Store, Amazon's App Store, and on your Roku. *Let us know if you have any questions or technical problems.*




LOOKING AHEAD...

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS - The start of Wednesday night youth fellowship will be here before we know it. The exact layout of Wednesday evenings is uncertain at this point, but please keep in mind that we are always in need of volunteers - whether that be in the kitchen, in the classroom, or help in the classroom. If you have a heart for service, we can find a place for you! 

COOKIE WALK - At this point the UMW ladies will plan to host the annual Cookie Walk and Lunch on December 9. Please be thinking of items you can contribute to the cupboard. The cupboard contents and proceeds have greatly increased the last couple of years, which allows for increased mission giving and we'd like to continue that giving! 

FIRST UMC YTD FINANCES


 Thank you to all for the support you have given to the mission and ministry of First UMC this year! We are a bit behind in apportionments, which is normal for this time of year, but all of our expenses are paid. We are also right in line with income/expense totals when compared to previous years. These are unprecedented times we are in and to see church members and friends continue to faithfully support the church is very uplifting. We look forward to the time when we can again worship together in the Sanctuary!

REMINDERS...

CHURCH BUILDING - due to suspended activities, the church building is locked. You may push the doorbell button to the left of the alley entrance door, signaling you are there, then someone will come and let you in.

 We appreciate your patience!

WORSHIP - service is recorded on Fridays with Pastor Mike and various worship assistants. No visitors please.

 Thank you for understanding!

AIRING OF WORSHIP: you will find the service on our website and Facebook page. You may also watch it on TV. Listings are below.

 Let's work to stay connected!

10:00am: Mondays, Mediacom #18

7:30pm: Mondays, HMU #15

1:00pm: Tuesdays, FMCTC #48

7:30pm: Wednesdays, HMU #15

