

# The Circuit Rider



First United Methodist Church, Harlan  
Monroe Chapel United Methodist Church

MARCH 2021

## LENT SERMON SERIES

We are in the series **Living the Jesus Way**, which will take us through Easter. As Christians, we claim that we are followers of Jesus, but what does that mean? Join us as we take a look at some of the teachings of Jesus and discover what it means for us to follow him by living as he did.



February 28: The Futility of Violence (Matthew 5:21-26, 38-48)

March 7: Wealth and Worry (Matthew 6:19-34; Mark 10:17-31)

March 14: Judging Others (Matthew 7:1-5; John 8:1-11)

March 21: The Narrow Way (Matthew 7:13-27; Luke 16:19-31)

March 28: A Clash of Priorities (Matthew 21:1-11; 23:37-38)

April 4: Go and Make Disciples (Matthew 28:1-20)

## UM WOMEN

UM Women Executive Committee meets Wednesday, March 3, 9:30am in the church kitchen.

UM Women offers friendship, support and fellowship, and many opportunities to join with other women in service. There are 3 circles that meet. *Call the office with questions or interest.*

## WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

All kids PreK-12th Grades are invited from 6:00-7:30pm for a meal and activity.

The remainder of the schedule for the Spring is: Wednesdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and April 7.



## HOLY WEEK

The end of March marks the beginning of Holy Week. During Holy Week we recall the events leading up to Jesus' death by crucifixion and his Resurrection. Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' humble entry into Jerusalem to observe Passover, Maundy Thursday marks Jesus' Last Supper with his Disciples, Good Friday commemorates Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, and Easter Sunday is the celebration of Jesus' Resurrection. Join us for:

Good Friday Worship at **7:00pm at First UMC on Friday, April 2nd**, where we will focus on the ultimate show of God's love on the cross.

Easter Sunday Worship at **8:45am at Monroe Chapel and 10:30am at First UMC on Sunday, April 4th**. We will celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ with special music and a message of celebration and hope.



✠ *Watch for information on ordering an Easter flower in memory, in honor, or in celebration of someone special.*

✠ The live performances of the dramatization of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" which are traditionally performed during Holy Week, are again postponed this year and are rescheduled for 2022.

## THANK YOU'S

◆ Dear Church Members & Friends – Thank you all for your greetings and messages for our birthdays and our 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Harlan and First Methodist Church are HOME to us. We are happy and well cared for here, but nothing replaces the many years of living in Harlan and the friends and happy memories - the people, the choir, the kitchen, the fellowship hall, and the pastors. God bless you all. From our hearts, we thank you. – *Rand & Mary Louise Petersen*

◆ Thank you to the church member who is volunteering time and effort to do various updates to the Sanctuary's audio/visual system. We greatly appreciate your knowledge and help with this important worship asset.

### A MOMENT WITH MIKE

As we enter into March, we are well into the season of Lent. Lent is traditionally a season of self-reflection, during which we look at our spiritual lives and think about how we can continue to grow closer to Jesus. As we do, we also look ahead towards the celebration of the resurrection on Easter Sunday. In addition, I think that we are looking forward to other things. This has been a particularly brutal winter, so I know we are looking forward to spring and the new life it brings. Vaccines are becoming more readily available, and some of you are looking forward to getting the vaccine. From a church perspective, I look forward to the time when the vaccine can be readily available to all, and the conference gives us the o.k. to return to what they call “green light” status, which would allow us to return to more of a normal mode of operation.

I would like to take a moment to respond to some of the fears I have been hearing about the vaccine itself. There is concern among some that the vaccine may have been rushed and that it is not F.D.A. approved. While it is true that the vaccine came out faster than any vaccine in history, it has not gone through any shortcuts in the process. Vaccine development happened so quickly because organizations and governments gave enormous amounts of money to make it happen. With unlimited resources and with much of the technology in place beforehand for the creation of such a vaccine, the process happened faster than ever before. Nonetheless, no safety shortcuts were made, and so scientists believe this vaccine is safe. One thing that is different is that this vaccine has not gone through the process of a full F.D.A. approval. Instead, the F.D.A. gave the vaccine an emergency use authorization because of the deadly toll the virus is taking in the world. So the F.D.A. is still behind the vaccine, although the approval was emergency based, because this is an emergency. Nonetheless, the vaccine has not yet been approved for children because trials have not yet been completed, and they refuse to cut corners, especially when it comes to safety.

Vaccines, in general, are one of the greatest, safest advances in the history of medicine, and all signs point to that being the case for the COVID vaccine as well. Once it becomes available for me, I will get it as soon as possible, and I hope you will as well. By doing so, you not only protect yourself, but you help protect those who will not be able to get the vaccine for a while, including children, and you also protect those who may never be able to get the vaccine due to an immune deficiency disease. For such people, herd immunity must be achieved through vaccination. Vaccination is the quickest way to get back to a new normal, and I think we can all agree that would be a wonderful thing.

God bless,

Pastor Mike

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### FINANCES & THE FUTURE at FIRST UMC



As mentioned in the last newsletter, we ended the 2020 year in the red with general expenses, as well as owing on the apportionment obligation. Even though 2020 is behind us, the 2021 year is expected to bring a whole new set of challenges to the church. It is a hard time all around right now and the outcome is unknown. The unfortunate reality at First UMC is that church membership is declining, young families are not joining, and current volunteers are burning out. The future of the Christian Education program is uncertain. Without a children’s program, the congregation dwindles further. We do not know the answer at this time and encourage everyone to think about what First UMC means to you. What kind of church are we or should we be? It will take all of us working together to create a positive outcome.

Although the 2021 budget is decreased by \$7500, we are likely to face additional financial issues as the year progresses. The Finance Committee will monitor income and expenses closely and will communicate when and if there will be further expense cuts. Detailed financial reports are always available in the office.



Thank you for your continued support. – Finance Committee

