



# Buffalo United Methodist Church

July 2020

1000 30<sup>th</sup> Street NE  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402



## A Pastoral Letter from Pastor Kathryn

Dear Friends –

As we're getting ready to return to face-to-face worship, I would like to share some of the logic behind steps being taken to prepare for this event. First, we are all excited to be back together in worship! While it is not impossible to praise God in solitary, it is certainly better to be working as a group. Corporate worship is both one of the joys of the Church and one of the responsibilities of Christians everywhere. We strengthen each other when we are together; there is a stronger sense of jubilation when we're together; and we are making visible to all our commitment to our faith. From the beginning of the Judeo-Christian life, we have viewed public worship as a necessity. We no longer have to practice ritual sacrifice (thank heavens--it would be a stopping point for me as the pastor!), but public worship remains an essential part of our life together.

Second. Yes, we will require everyone to wear a mask. We will have some available at the Church, but feel free to bring your own. This comes under the heading of "First, do no harm", one of the three Wesleyan Rules. While wearing a mask may not protect you from exposure, it does protect those around you from unintentional exposure. Any one of us could be an asymptomatic carrier. There's just no way to tell. It also means that we can sing and speak in worship. Without masks, it would have to be a silent service on the part of the congregation, since singing and speaking project thousands of droplets into the air. As United Methodists, I can't imagine church without singing.

Third. Sanitizer will be available, but if you have a sensitivity to some ingredients, feel free to bring your own. Instead of the passing of the peace, we'll have the spreading of the sanitizer.

Fourth. Social distancing must be practiced. We will have a volunteer pacing us as we come in the door so that we remain six feet apart. There will also be marked spaces on the pews where you can sit. You may not be able to sit in your favorite spot--but it's temporary, and it's for the greater good. Surely something so minor will not become a barrier to worshipping together.

Fifth. We will not resume Holy Communion until the first week of August, which gives us four weeks to practice our skills. Undoubtedly, we will discover some things that we need to modify to be safe in our practices. The corollary to this: we will not be doing anything food related for a while. We'll get there eventually. United Methodists consider sharing food to be a crucial part of our togetherness. Just not yet!

Sixth. Patience is a virtue. This is not forever; it's only a temporary accommodation to a serious public health crisis. None of this is worth getting bent out of shape over. Compared to the joys of life, health, and coming together in worship, these are all minor details that we can and will conquer. I'm thankful that little details are all we have to worry about. It could have been so much more tragic.

Finally. We will need to do some serious cleaning in the sanctuary since it has sat empty for three months now. If you are comfortable helping with that task, please join us. If not, it's okay. Basically it will amount to getting some fresh air moving and dusting/vacuuming. We recently cleaned all the carpets and pew cushions, so they should be fine. Most studies have shown that the virus lives for 2 to 3 days on hard surfaces. Since we only use the sanctuary every 7 days, Buffalo's worship center should not be a problem.

Most important. Let's celebrate with joy and enthusiasm! I'm sure we are all excited we're going to be back together on July 5, 2020 at 8:45 a.m.

Blessings on you all. ~Pastor Kathryn

## Concerns About Worship Service?

If you have specific suggestions or concerns about our plans for our first worship service on Sunday, July 5, please feel free to contact Pastor Kathryn, Barb Crawford, or Chris Gochenauer.

## Church Finances

During the COVID-19 outbreak the church still has utility bills to be paid and a lawn to be mowed and stamps to be purchased and a pastor's salary to be paid and conference apportionments to be fulfilled and on and on. Among your options for submitting your tithes and offerings are the following:

- Mail your offering to the church address (Buffalo United Methodist Church, 1000 30th Street NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402).
- Put your contribution in an envelope and place in the locked church mail box by the meeting room door.
- Attend the worship service on July 5 and share your offering at that time.

## Administrative Board Meeting Wednesday, June 17, 2020

The Board meeting was held in the Fellowship Hall, everyone wearing a face mask and maintaining appropriate social distancing. Since this was the Board's first meeting since January, they had a lot of business to cover, beginning with clarification on snow removal practices and a confirmation that the snow removal agreement includes clearing snow from the sidewalks. Other items on the agenda addressed the following issues:

- The church telephone problem has finally been resolved and we have received a \$30 credit from Century Link .
- All inspections for fire, termites, and other potential disasters have been completed and the building appears to be in tip-top shape.
- Because of the pandemic, the production of a new church directory is still on hold.
- The Board authorized Bob Marrs to contact West Music and obtain price quotes for a portable speaker system that could be used for activities in the Fellowship Hall and outdoor services.
- The pastor's office has been reorganized and cleaned and the painting has been completed.

- Although the Board members love ice cream, it was decided to cancel the upcoming Ice Cream Supper. Given the lingering presence of COVID-19 in the Cedar Rapids community, it is not a good time for us to be doing any group meals.

- After a lengthy discussion, the Board unanimously agreed that we would resume church services in the sanctuary on July 5. Masks would be required.
- Pastor Kathryn announced that UMC congregations in Linn County would now be part of a newly formed Northeast District with a new District Superintendent.
- The Iowa Conference is moving to a circuit model, an informal "subdistrict" arrangement popular in the 1980s and more recently in Great Britain with notable success. Participation in these circuits will enable churches to assist each other in projects too large or complex for a single congregation. The model is also perceived as a mechanism for enhancing clergy accountability.
- The Board members discussed with Pastor Kathryn the importance of consistent pastoral communication and engagement with the congregation. In support of that issue, Bob reported that when he was about five years old, perhaps his life was saved by a visiting Methodist minister who rescued young Robert from playing in a mud hole in the middle of a pen full of hogs (large sows to be exact).

## Oodles of Noodles

Homemade noodles for sale, \$2.00 per bag. The noodles are inside the doorway of the Fellowship Hall on the table. Place your money in the envelope by the box. Thanks.

## Hy-Vee Receipts

Yes, we are still collecting Hy-Vee Receipts. Yes, you can bring your receipts for our first worship service on July 5. Yes, you can bring your receipts to other worship services in July and August and September and . . . Yes, you can suggest neighbors and friends and co-workers and anyone you know share their receipts with you and thus expand the Buffalo collection.

*"All things must come to the soul from its roots,  
from where it is planted." ~Saint Teresa (1515 - 1582)*

# July 2020

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
O God, give us a collective imagination to dream of a new reality where all your children can thrive and live into their fullness as your creations. Amen.			1 Zip codes introduced in U.S. (1963)	2 Pres. Johnson signs Civil Rights Act (1964)	3	4 Independence Day
5 8:45: Worship Service at Buffalo	6	7	8	9 The 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment ratified (1868)	10	11
12 8:45 Worship Service	13	14	15 Donate Cookies for First Nations food baskets	16 Explosion of 1 <sup>st</sup> Atomic Bomb (1945)	17	18
19 8:45 Worship Service	20 Apollo 11 lands on the moon (1969)	21	22	23	24	25 St James the Great Day
26 8:45 Worship Service	27	28	29	30	31	

## No July Wedding Anniversaries but One July Birthday: Fred Himes

### To Wear or Not Wear a Mask?

Excerpt from essay by Rev. Dr. Lanette Plambeck, Iowa UMC's Director of Clergy and Leadership Excellence

When I think of the "have faith not fear" chant, I think of the many times we read the words, "Do not fear" in Scripture. But I do not think mask-wearing is about fear over faith; it is more about loving our neighbor. The parable of the Good Samaritan comes to my mind, a parable about compassion and sacrifice. It is about the willingness of the Samaritan to go out of his way and do what others would not; a willingness to give of his resources to care for another; a willingness to sacrifice his own immediate needs and preferences to consider the good he can do immediately before him. . . .

Hebrew Bible Scholar Vanessa Lovelace defines midrash as "a Jewish mode of interpretation that not only engages the words of the text, behind the text, and beyond the text, but also focuses on each letter, and the words left unsaid by each line."

In a Midrash Moment, one of our Ministry Directors turned to the story of the Good Samaritan and offered one group of folks a simple test: "Everybody wear a mask for 5

minutes. Now, remove them. Pass your mask down one person. And now put on your neighbors mask."

There were looks of discomfort and hesitation.

The Director said, "We cannot see what we cannot see. We do not know what we do not know. If you are not comfortable wearing your neighbor's mask, you should be as uncomfortable breathing their air.

"Also, were any of you worried about passing your mask to your friend, because you might have COVID-19, but don't yet know it? Then protect your friend and ask them to not put on your mask."

They continued with the words, "To best protect those around you, you should be committed to wearing a mask every time you gather in public spaces. . . . Wearing masks is one way of being a witness and looking after one another."

To the people of the Iowa Conference, I commend to you the question of Jesus raised in this parable in this Midrash retelling of the Good Samaritan story, "How can we be a neighbor to one who could become a victim of this unseen threat?"

Those in the room replied, "Be like the ones who show mercy and wear a mask." Jesus told them, "Go and do likewise."

## July Special Offering

On a Sunday in July we will be celebrating Rural Life Sunday. This special day is to remind us of the strong rural heritage of the United Methodist Church and to recognize "the ongoing crisis occurring in rural areas of the nation and the world today."

It is important we remember to lift up those many hands involved with putting food on our tables. The interdependence of our urban and rural communities mirrors the interdependence of the farmer and the land and the production and consumption of food.

Thomas Merton called this interdependence "compassion." He called compassion "a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another, and all involved in one another."

While we physically see this relation to soil, seed and sun, we are not always able to recognize the need for our compassion in the ongoing crisis in rural life. The challenges facing these communities--fewer family farms, more children living in poverty, a lack of jobs--are worthy of our compassion as the body of Christ.

**Buffalo United Methodist Church**  
**1000 30<sup>th</sup> St NE**  
**Cedar Rapids, IA 52402**

## Sung and Unsung Heroes

- Thanks to the ladies who have weeded the garden, the playground, the bioswales, and the areas around the trees and shed. They have done a great job.
- Thanks to Carla Lindball for tidying the flower beds she cares for year round.
- Thanks to Gary and Judy Hackney for checking the mailbox daily, insuring the Little Free Library is full of books, and keeping an eye on the church.
- Thanks to those who contributed to the Peace With Justice Sunday in June; \$45 was collected.
- Thanks to Pastor Kathryn for her Sunday morning sermons and music. Keep up the good work.
- Thanks for the baked goods and monetary donations for the First Nations Church food baskets. We will continue to donate items on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Cookies are to be packaged six in a package, and delivered to the church (place by the Fellowship Hall door) by noon on Wednesday. Next three donation dates: July 15, August 19, and September 16.
- Thanks for everyone's prayers, for their patience, and for their commitment to wearing masks.

