



First Church News

June 2020

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Church continues to support Welcome Table

We have continued to support Welcome Table during the time of the shut down by supporting local businesses.

In April we had Golden Chick tenders and cookies from The Pastry Nook. In May we called upon Barnstormers for chicken salad and cookies with other needed side dishes from Jumbo Foods.



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OPEN YOUR HEART PROJECT: JUNE

Our Open Your Heart Project for June will continue our preparation for fall as we help Learning Tree with needed supplies.

Should the church remain closed at the beginning of June, you can continue to send your checks to the church made out to FUMC with Learning Tree in the memo line.

As we are able to return to the church building we will provide a list of actual supplies you can donate. Thanks for your continued support of Open Your Heart projects.

Drive-thru baby shower set for Robnetts

A drive-thru baby shower for The Reverends Michael and Emily Robnett will be held from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Sunday, June 7 at New Hope United Methodist Church.

Drive through the New Hope UMC parking lot – please stay in your car the entire time – and leave a gift or card.

Baby boy Robnett is due to arrive in mid-August.

The couple are registered at www.babylist.com/baby-emily-robnett

Donations continue for Blessing Box ministry

Thank you for continuing to provide food for the Blessing Box during our time of shut down!!

If you drive by the church, you may have seen fresh fruits and vegetables as well as needed

staples.

What a blessing you have been. No virus can stop the love and care of God's people!

Let's continue to remember those in need as the summer unfolds.

PASTOR EMERY'S TAKE:

Time for our best selves

By The Rev. Emery Mason
Senior Minister

One result of the coronavirus is that it has made it inescapably obvious that our personal choices have more impact than we have normally acknowledged. Our choices impact not only our own life but also the lives of others. Whether we are thinking of an impact as significant as life or death or one of making ourselves and/or others miserable, it is all there.

Each one of us is a mixed package, though. In the same way that Paul wrote of the conflict of two natures in Romans 7:14-25, we know what it is to have inner conflict. Sometimes we show up as a hero and make everything better. Sometimes we end up being ashamed of ourselves later as we remember our words, actions and attitudes.

It is within our realm of choices to provide servant leadership, caring interaction and to make the world a better place. We can choose to love. We can consider not only our own desires and self interest but also consider the well-being of other people.

The movies have taught us that when the music swells and the chips are down, that's when leaders arrive and when heroes are made. It turns out, that's not how it works. Our work is what happens in all the moments. The person that we are is created and experienced by the world in our choices at each moment of our lives. Who we become today will be a stepping-stone towards who we will be tomorrow. Moments that we thought were small have larger consequences than we dreamed.

It is always most desirable that our "best selves" show up. Now is a time when it is certainly needed. For our own sake, the sake of



A member of the Rahab Circle spreads kindness during the COVID-19 quarantine.

our loved ones, and for the world itself ... we must each choose to be the best we can be.

Likewise, the world needs the Church to truly be the Church.

Join me in choosing each moment of each day to be a Jesus follower. I pray that God will help us all to be Christ-like.

Your Pastor,
Emery

"Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV)

PASTOR SUSAN SHARES: God is not 'locked down'

By The Rev. Susan Southall
Minister of Discipleship

If you read our daily prayers on Facebook or receive them via email, you know that one of my favorite “go to” sources is a minister named Peter Traben Haas. His book entitled *Centering Prayers – A One-Year Daily Companion for Going Deeper into the Love of God*, has become my favorite mechanism for entering into a time of Centering Prayer each day. His prayer for May 11 seemed to really touch me and got me to thinking about this time of Pandemic. I even copied it into a special journal I have started called my “Pandemic Journal” where I am jotting down thoughts, quotes, ideas of things I am learning during this totally unexpected and weird time in the life of the world.

The prayer, which I will share below, has sparked within me thoughts about how God is not “locked down” during this time AND, in fact, has been hard at work showing us things we had learned to take for granted. This time

has been called a “stop,” a time to hit the “restart button,” and even a “wake up call for humanity.”

I would like to think that this time has been a time God has begun to plow some fallow ground in preparation for all the seeds of new learning, awakened loving and simple gratefulness that can begin to grow as we move into the next phase of this new and different life given to us.

See what you think and perhaps use this prayer for your own time of reflection or journaling. Find a word or phrase that has special meaning for you right now:

“Spirit of God:

You are the gift my soul has been waiting for in the silence and throughout all the seasons of my life – even when I didn't know it.

Plant your Word in my heart and birth your wisdom through me in ways I can't begin to comprehend, to bless others through counsel, friendship, and a joyful countenance.”

Changes made to some upcoming events

By Martie Oyler
FUMC Lay Leader

Greetings in Christ!

As we are called to live out our lives in faithful community with one another, a risen Christ promises us that he is always with us. Being in community together has taken on a new and challenging meaning, but at First Church I am grateful for our church family and the ways we are able to connect. We grow through challenges and this time of physical distancing is a reminder of our call to love and serve one another through the midst of life's challenges.

At First Church, we have much to be grateful for and I am pleased to share upcoming events that have changed a bit since publication of the

May Newsletter:

- Reverend Emery Mason's and Reverend Michael Robnett's last Sunday at First Church—**Sunday, June 21**. Reverend Mason has asked in lieu of an in-person celebration, we reach out in the way of cards, emails or phone calls. He would love to hear from you and feels this is the safest way. If you would like to honor his time in Enid with a financial contribution, you may send a check to the church, please put in the memo line “designated Emery Mason.” The funds will support UMCOR (United Methodist Commission on Relief) and be given in Pastor Mason's honor.
- As most of you know, Michael and Emily Robnett are expecting a baby. Emily is serving as

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Learning Tree plans to begin school September 8

By **Ginger Diel**
Learning Tree Director

It is great to be back at Learning Tree typing away at my desk!! Teachers will be returning soon cleaning and disinfecting classrooms, as well as organizing closets, classrooms and preparing for next year.

Our theme for next year is “Learning Tree is Out of this World!! We are planning on beginning school as normal on Sept. 8. However, we

will continue to follow Enid Public Schools and FUMC’s lead on dealing with COVID-19.

Enrollment is open, even though the church is closed.

You can call and enroll over the phone and registration fees can be paid online. Several of our classes only have a few spots available. So, tell your friends and family to enroll soon.

Looking forward to actually being able to see everyone in person. But for now, continue to stay safe and wash your hands!!!

Oyler:

the senior pastor at New Hope United Methodist Church. They will be honoring Emily and Michael with a “Drive Thru Baby Shower” and have invited First Church to join in the celebration. The shower will be held at New Hope United Methodist Church, 614 N Garland, **Sunday, June 7**, from 1:30 –2:30pm. New Hope invites all to come and drive through the parking lot and leave a gift or card for the new family. Baby Boy Robnett is due to arrive in mid-August. They are registered at <https://www.babylist.com/baby-emily-robnett>. This will be a wonderful way to reach out to both Michael and Emily and share in their joy.

- Retirement Celebration and Send off for Reverend Susan Southall—**Sunday, June 28**. Susan will be leading worship June 28th and July 5th. Reverend Southall has chosen a drive through reception to celebrate her service to First Church and retirement from active ministry in the United Methodist Church. It will be held after the worship service June 28. Plans are underway to provide a time for Susan to wave and chat with friends and members as they drive through the north parking lot of the church. You can send a card to her at the church (401 W. Randolph Ave, Enid, OK 73701) or bring one on the 28th when a box will be available.

- Welcome Reception for Reverend Devon Krause **Sunday, July 12**. This will be Devon’s First Sunday as senior pastor. We are still working on the details and will provide them to you when they are finalized.

First Church lay leadership (Jessica Caruthers,

SPRC Chairperson; Aaron Harmon, Finance Chairperson; Marsha Scott, Administrative Council Chairperson and I) and Pastor Mason continue to meet regularly to discuss, oversee and discern everchanging issues and opportunities. We take our roles and the opportunity to serve thoughtfully and appreciate the manner our church clergy and staff support the challenges we are facing. The Coronavirus Leadership Team made up of laity, staff and clergy is working out the details of reopening our church and having worship in the sanctuary. Chairperson Marsha Scott has divided the group into three subcommittees; worship, facilities and communication. The date of worship in our sanctuary will be decided soon, and the details will be shared with the congregation shortly thereafter. The plan is to get the information out in several ways to make sure we reach everyone, that includes: First Church website, Facebook, email and USPS mail. These times are uncertain and sometimes bumpy, but we do not walk it alone. We walk it with our sisters and brothers in Christ, with community of faithful people standing up with love and hope. And we walk it with God. As John Wesley said, the best thing of all is God is with us.

I look forward to seeing my church family in worship, until then continue to pray for our church, our congregation and our clergy. The prayer I shared March 1, gives me great comfort and peace:

“Lord, surround First Church with your Presence. Fill us with wisdom, hope, and love.”

A MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL:

Animal Crossing: Building community

By The Rev. Michael Robnett
Youth and Modern Worship

There's a new video game offering the world a modicum of comfort during a time in which it is desperately needed. It's called "Animal Crossing: New Horizons" for the Nintendo Switch console. Animal Crossing (AC) was originally released back in 2001 but has since spawned multiple iterations across various gaming platforms.

The game itself is a far cry from what typical pop culture gaming has been for some time (think first-person shooters akin to Call of Duty, or battle royale matches like Fortnite), and yet AC is finding resounding success. The gameplay loop (the stuff one actually does in the game) for AC revolves simply around one thing: building community.

Players begin the game on a deserted island, and are tasked with cultivating, crafting and eventually terraforming said island until it has become a place where others want to live. When played properly, it is a slow, peaceful grind. There is a rhythm one enters when getting into the game. For me, that rhythm looks a little like: completing daily chores such as



shaking trees to gather fruit, sticks and bugs, conversing with the islanders whom I've invited to live in my crafted paradise, digging up fossils to display in the local museum, and crafting items to enhance the look and feel of my island. It is nothing like most other video games being played today.

While it may sound a bit droll when compared to the run-and-gun action of many games, AC offers gamers a chance to unwind, relax and create. And in times such as these, where many of us are still practicing social distancing in one form or another, the opportunity to be part of literally any community is a gift - even if it's just a silly game.

I believe AC's current popularity stems from the fact that our community, our nation, and our world is not doing so great right now. Video games are, at their base-level, forms of escapism. And when one can escape into a world where things are just plain better and people actually work together, well that's enticing!

I love playing AC, as do millions of others, but I know I'd like it a lot less if the real world were just a little more like this fake, digital one. If everyone worked harder at building community instead of tearing it down, life in general would be more palatable for the masses.

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VBS, Choir Camp Canceled

By **Giavanna Woods**
Children's Ministry Director

After careful consideration with church leadership, children's council and CDC guidelines, the children's department has voted to cancel Vacation Bible School and Choir Camp this summer.

Our hearts are truly broken as we have been pushing forward

with the planning process in hopes that we would feel it was safe to hold.

We unfortunately do not feel it is safe for the children or volunteers and have decided as a team and church that these events will not take place.

We hope to see you summer 2021 at each of these events. God Bless.

Worship online each week

Our Website:
www.firstchurchenid.com

Our Facebook Page:
[First United Methodist Church Enid, Oklahoma](#)

Our YouTube Channel:
[First United Methodist Church Enid](#)

Care Ministry continues on phone

By **Mary Miller**
Director of Care Ministries

These past days and weeks have been like nothing we have ever experienced. I know that some of you are wanting to get out and about! I feel the same way. This has made us aware of how much our friends and our church family mean to us.

It has been my pleasure to visit with many of you on the telephone. I will continue to work from home at the present time. The Stephen Ministers join me in offering to care for you. You are most welcome to call me on my cell phone at 548-3780. I'm happy to hear from you.

Please know that you are in our prayers.

Welcome Table :

Thanks to all those who have helped support this effort financially!

A very limited number of volunteers from FUMC helped prepare the take-out meals that have been handed out at Central Christian Church on Sunday afternoons. At the time of this writing (still in mid May), we do not know how things will unfold for our June Welcome Table date (June 14).

Stay tuned for more details as we move forward.

Animal Crossing:

Ultimately, I don't have an answer to our current plight. All I can do is encourage you to pray, as I have been and will continue to do. Pray for healing, for comfort, and for hardened hearts to soften. And after you pray, make sure your actions reflect the words you spoke to God, because its action that builds community – so let's work harder than ever to build something better. I give Animal Crossing: New Horizons for the Nintendo Switch a solid 10/10.

401 W Randolph Ave—Enid, OK 73701

580-237-2041—umc@firstchurchenid.com—www.firstchurchenid.com

