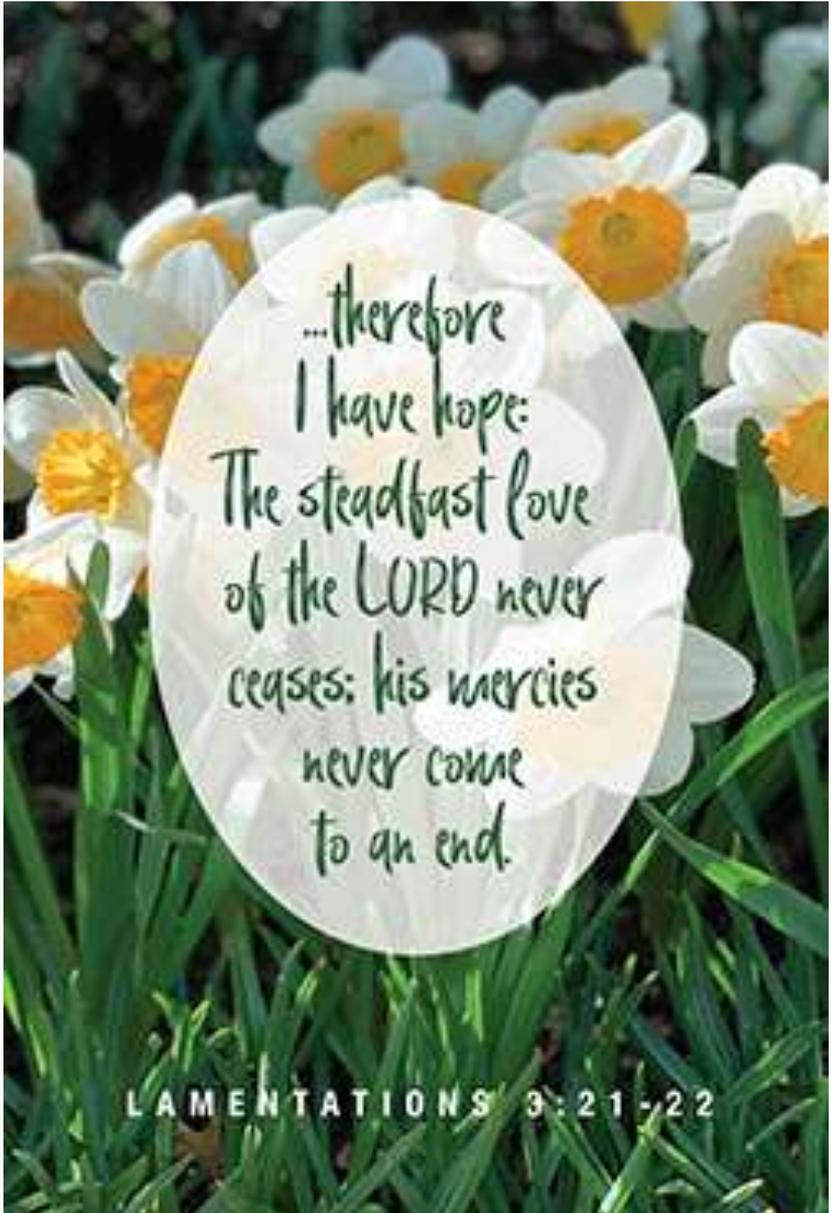


FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
"A vital church connecting with God and with each other...driven to serve"
Connections for April 2020

APRIL



...therefore
I have hope:
The steadfast love
of the LORD never
ceases; his mercies
never come
to an end.

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-22



FROM OUR PASTOR

When Carl and I first became parents, I had life pretty well scheduled. My son's personality was a predictable one – I could read the signs of illness. I could tell when something was wrong by the sound of his cry. I could usually predict when he would finally go to sleep and when he would likely wake up. Life had surprises, but for the most part, it was good.

Then my daughter was born, and all the rules changed. The only thing predictable about her was that she would be unpredictable! My nice, orderly world suddenly got very complicated. The good news is that I was able to find a way to navigate all that chaos by claiming a series of "new normals." As I got older, I learned that life is actually composed of seasons:

navigating chaos, changing & growing, re-ordering.

As I write this newsletter article, we are in "social distancing" but not yet "self-sheltering." Covid-19 has been birthed among us. "Normal" is now just a setting on your washer and a city in Illinois. The life we once knew will never be "normal" for us again. Our culture and our church have been thrown into a chaos from which we will never totally return. But the good news is that where we will eventually end up is simply a different place.

The newsletter this month reflects these things. There is a lot of information about how to stay connected, how to give, how to navigate the changes in the way we function as "Ames First UMC." It may also be possible that by the time we publish and mail this newsletter, things will have changed again. Yep – we are living in the moment for sure!

Such is the way of living in a season of chaos – it is an "in the moment" way of life. But I am confident that we will navigate it together, and that we will learn a whole lot of new things. Not only do we have each other, we have a God who will never lose us or let us go. That is one of the unshakable truths of our faith. If you have any concerns or needs, or want to be added to our email list, or want to know how to become a part of a group in this new, virtual world, call the office. We are all learning as we go, and we will share what we learn.

In the meantime, remember two things:

1. God did not send the Covid-19 virus to punish people. It is simply a reality of being a finite, mortal being on this earth. God's love for you has not changed one iota, and never will!
2. Hear this promise from Paul's Letter to the Roman Church, and to us: "*We know that **ALL** things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose.*" (Romans 8:28). Even in the midst of pain and suffering, God is there, working to redeem, to reconcile, to heal. Look for God's presence and kingdom opportunities to join in God's work, especially in light of the chaos and suffering that surrounds us. At the very least, we **ALL** have the opportunity to lift people into

prayer, and to shower even those we do not know with love and caring, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Lastly, please continue to pray for our leadership and staff, as we help situate our church for the next season of changing order and growth.

Continue to give as best you are able, so that we can pay our bills, care for our staff and members, and reach out into the Ames community. We are not sure what things will look like, but we can be assured that God's got this! We can, and will, work our way through this chaotic season. We know this because, ultimately, the Church belongs to Jesus Christ. And it is our privilege to serve Him through it!

See you "on-line" in worship!
Yours for the Journey,
Pastor Kerrin

How To Access Ames First United Methodist Church Livestream

1. Open your internet browser program from your desktop or taskbar (google chrome, internet explorer, safari, firefox, etc)
2. In the browser's address bar, type in the church website www.fumcames.org
3. Click on LiveStream on the menu bar of the homepage (towards the right of black bar across top)
4. **You made it!** A little before 8:30a.m. the Livestream feed will begin.
5. Once it begins, type your name and the names of anyone else viewing at the same location with you into the comment box. You can also use the comment box for any prayer requests to be lifted up during Joys & Concerns
6. If you'd like to view the worship service in full screen, click on the "box corners" at the bottom right of the current viewing window.
7. The livestream will now take up your entire screen. You won't be able to type in the comment box when you are in full screen. If you want to get back to smaller screen with comment box, just hit the Esc (Escape) key on your keyboard or click the inverted four corners button on the bottom right to Exit Full Screen.
8. During Offering time, take a moment to write a check, give online, or text to give - text the message: firstames budget \$10 to 73256. You can put whatever amount in place of the \$10 that you would like to give.



Matthew 6:34 says, “So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”

This passage has been on my mind a lot lately. It is one that speaks to my soul and yet, in these anxiety producing times it is a hard verse to follow.

How do we not worry when we hear the harrowing news reports and the pleas to stay home and away from people? As the news changes daily and we hear of more confirmed cases of covid-19, many of us find ourselves filled with anxiety and grief. We worry about what is coming next and how we can prepare.

The reality is we don’t know what will come next. We don’t know how long we will be asked to take these extreme measures of sheltering in place and quarantining. But we do know that today is all we need to focus on; tomorrow is too overwhelming. What can you do today to connect with God and one another? What action can you take today that will be good for your soul?

Calling a loved one?

Writing a letter?

Reading your bible?

Praying?

Journaling?

Baking?

Napping?

Planning your garden?

Reading a new book or rereading an old favorite?

Walking the dog?

Dancing?

Although these are anxious times, I am also filled with hope. I have seen ministry happen in new ways. I have seen the church be the church even without the use of the building. I have seen people connecting and checking in on one another. I have seen the love shown all around. Look to these things. Focus on the good around you. Do not worry about tomorrow but bask in the blessings of today.

God is still good. Jesus is still the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. The Holy Spirit is still moving.

Pastor Nikki

CHILDREN, FAMILY & INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRIES
NICOLE SMITH - COORDINATOR

Confirmation Corner

The Confirmation class started meeting via Zoom on March 25. They will continue using Zoom until we are told we can meet in person again. Confirmation is currently still set for April 26.

Children's Sunday School

Children's Sunday school met online using Zoom on March 22 and had a great turnout and lots of fun! It was so good to see everyone's faces. We will continue to meet via Zoom until we are told we can meet again in person except on Easter Sunday, April 12 as that was originally scheduled a No Sunday School day anyway.

Also-the children won't be singing or doing the palm branch processional physically "in" church for Palm Sunday but Nicole is trying to figure out a way that we can still do this virtually. She will work with you online through our Zoom sessions.

Easter Happening

There will not be a gathering on April 5 for our annual Easter Happening. We will have some online activities for children, families, and multi-generations to take part in. Look for more information in this newsletter and in your email.

Wednesday Night Kids' Club

The Wednesday night Kids' are invited to join the Zoom Sunday school sessions. Nicole is keeping up with the seedlings we planted the last time we met and will share pictures in Sunday school and midweek Zoom meet ups. She got the tomato, pepper, and zucchini seeds planted. Hopefully we will be able to make our shredded paper/recycled paper wildflower seed papers in person together once we are able to meet in person again.

Wonderful Wednesday Women

Nicole is inviting all of the Wonderful Wednesday Women to join the ALL Adult group that is meeting via Zoom on Sunday mornings at 10:30a.m. Carrie and Chad Copley are taking the lead for this. Groups will meet again in person when we are given the "okay" to do so again. If you need the link for the Zoom meeting or help setting it up, contact Nicole at nicole@fumcomes.org

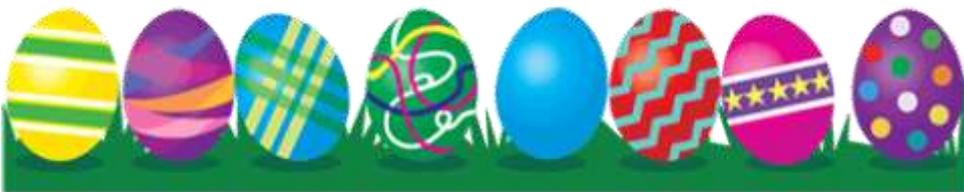
**CHILDREN, FAMILY & INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRIES
NICOLE SMITH - COORDINATOR**

Weekday Zoom Live Moments

Nicole has set up weekday moments through Zoom that are live times for children and families to gather. We have Move It Mondays, What's Up Wednesdays, and Try Day Fridays. We will have special guest hosts joining us to share their awesome skills for us to move to or try out. If you would like to be a part of this either as a special guest or just to participate, please contact Nicole at nicole@fumcames.org

Virtual Easter Egg Hunt

We would LOVE to take out a piece of paper and draw and color an Easter Egg or print one of the templates that were sent out in email (let Nicole know if you didn't get this email). Make some sort of special characteristic on your egg. For example, a purple triangle on the bottom right or a tiny lady bug on the top. Whatever it might be, Nicole would like for you to then take a picture of your Easter egg and email it to her at nicole@fumcames.org letting her know what the special characteristic is. She will be putting together a sheet of the special characteristics and then numbering all of the eggs and sending the information out in an all church email AND posting it on social media. Anyone can search through all of the images trying to hunt for those specific eggs. An answer sheet will go out on Easter Sunday. If you would like to make an Easter egg for this, please have your egg completed by April 1. Nicole will put everything together and have it out for Palm Sunday, April 5.



From Mary Greeley Medical Center

We are so grateful for the overwhelming community support during this situation. Many have reached out inquiring about making and donating handmade masks. We are working on getting the appropriate patterns and recommended materials from our Infection Prevention experts. If you're interested in sewing masks, please visit www.mgmc.org/foundation for the pattern and a list of materials!

As you know, things are always changing and we will send out updates via social media.

THANK YOU!

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS - KIM HEIDEMANN



Well. COVID-19 continues to offer opportunities for us to adjust, learn new skills and look at things differently. Of course, our youth ministry is not the same ministry it was just a few days ago. While we won't be meeting face to face, we are working on ways to engage the youth during these

unsettling times.

While COVID-19 modifies many of our daily habits, one thing that we can continue to participate in is the sharing of joyful news. Below are some items of interest, along with events that should be celebrated.

A big thanks to all that attended the UMM Valentine's Dinner. You were so very gracious to our youth servers. I'm so impressed with the youth that helped. There kids that worked for hours on the dinner prep, decorating, serving and clean up. Thanks to all the adults that helped to guide them as well. It was awesome and I'm already looking forward to next year!

Do you want to get involved in youth ministry? I hope so! We need you. More importantly-your youth need you. We are always looking for people that can be helpers in the rooms on both Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings. Besides these opportunities, we will have more ways to get involved. We are working on the structure of the youth ministry in general-which is super exciting! Please stay tuned for more information on this. In the meantime though-think about getting involved.

Congrats to Adam Heuer and Ainsley Jurgens for being selected as the next round of Ames First UMC youth reps to attend the Simpson Youth Academy. Please make sure to say something to them when you see them next!

96 lbs of food! A big thanks to all that brought food items for "Souper Bowl!" Sunday. Carol Miller, UMW President, delivered the food to MICA and it came out to be a whopping 96 lbs! That's awesome! There was also about \$32 donated. That money will be used to purchase paper products that will also be given to MICA. Thank you again!

As always if you have questions or comments, feel free to email me at: kim@fumcomes.org.

Thanks! -Kim Heidemann, Youth Ministries Coordinator

We would again like to honor our high school graduates by having a seniors bulletin board. Please mail a small senior picture of your child to the church by April 30.



STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Today's health crisis facing our community, state and nation is causing great anxiety and stress. During times like these, we all need to reach deeply to our faith to find comfort and support. Ames First UMC's mission statement, "*Make Disciples of Jesus Who Serve Beyond the Walls*", has new meaning today when our church building is closed to our use to protect our health and safety. How can we support our church community at this time? The first step is to remember and reflect on the commitment we made when we joined to support the church through our....

- **PRAYERS** – Please continue to pray for all those who are vulnerable including our older citizens, people with underlying health risks, health care workers, first responders, our pastors and church staff, and all those being impacted economically by this crisis.
- **PRESENCE** – Although we cannot be present in body at our church service, we can experience a sense of community by participating in our livestreaming service. Our pastors, staff and volunteers will do their best to help us come together in spirit. The leadership will be exploring other ways for us to be present with each other virtually.
- **GIFTS** – We encourage you to continue your church giving to the best of your ability. The ongoing ministry of our church is dependent on your offerings. Although we are not having regular weekend worship services or small group meetings, we still need to financially support our pastors, staff and church ministries as well as maintain our church building. Our giving has to be modified to accommodate the new reality of not gathering in person for the near future. You can do this by:

*Mailing your check to:
First United Methodist
516 Kellogg Ave., Ames, IA 50010

*Creating an electronic funds-transfer (ACH) from your account directly to the church. Please contact the church office for additional guidance.

*Logging into Realm (<https://onrealm.org>) and make an online gift. You can also use the Realm smartphone App: Realm Connect. If you have not used Realm before, call the church office and you will be connected with someone who will help you. You can also go to the Realm Help section for assistance at the following: http://help.onrealm.org/#realm_congregants_give_and_make_payments.html

*Making a contribution with your smartphone by texting to 73256 the following "firstames budget \$10". You can use any amount in place of the \$10. You will receive a

confirmation message reply with a link to access the payment form.

- **SERVICE** – We all need to think about how to serve others in need. If you know someone who is self-isolating, give them a call or email asking if they need anything. Just hearing from someone to know they are thinking of them can be uplifting.
- **WITNESS** – Difficult times like these call for us to demonstrate our Christian faith to all those around us. Invite a neighbor who cannot attend their normal worship service to join our livestreaming service. Share our “The Path to the Cross” Lenten study resources with others.

We are all working together to.

*Grow our relationship with God.

*Grow our relationship with our church community and the community beyond our walls.

*Grow our service to those communities.

Our United Methodist membership commitment calls us to make the world our parish one neighborhood at a time

UMW UPDATE ...

There's a saying, “the best laid plans.....”. Well, we **WERE** planning for an exciting day when the Bishop would come to our church along with many fellow United Methodists from around the conference. We **WERE** so happy that many people volunteered to help by baking, setting up, cooking and serving. Then along came Covid-19! The Laity Day event had to be cancelled as we all learned to socially distance ourselves. But don't worry! Thank you to all who volunteered, we still have your names and we're hoping the event will be rescheduled so we can ask for your help once again to welcome our friends from all over Iowa to Ames FUMC.

Dear Ames FUMC Family,

As we are all adjusting to routines that are different than normal, we want you to know that we care about how you are doing. Additionally, we are working to identify new and meaningful ways to maintain connections with each other and help one another through this unprecedented situation.

We hope you will take a moment to complete this short form so we can begin to identify needs and strategies to help satisfy them. This form will stay up and will be accessible at any time. If you don't feel like filling it out today, or if your situation changes you can always come back to it.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOa0uY0TdcJA2nrxd3EE-VtFk2uCaNz4HWnFr6Aku2Sa7ZA/viewform>



Dear Brothers and Sisters of Ames FUMC,

Our Church Council met last night via conference call to frame a plan of action for both short- and long-term responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Nobody has yet tested positive in the Ames area, but we know we will face that reality at some point.

Our first concern is to protect those who are most vulnerable as well as our staff - who have over the years made personal sacrifices out of love for the people in our congregation. We want and need to support each other during these historic times. Our Member Care team is working on a strategy to ensure those in self-isolation have support from all of us. As part of that, we will be sending out ways to communicate what sorts of help or assistance the congregation can provide. Please prioritize helping others as part of your normal daily activities.

For the safety of our staff, the Council has decided to close the church building to the public, effective immediately. It is the only way to ensure that essential staff and key volunteers can continue efforts to keep us informed and connected to each other and our community.

**SEE CHART ON OPPOSITE PAGE FOR
DETAILS...**

Lastly, and most importantly, please pray!

Prayer for your pastors, staff, and leadership. Pray for your neighbors and friends. Pray for those on the front lines – medical personnel, police officers, fire fighters, military personnel. Pray for the sick and vulnerable ones in our community. Pray for those who are now more isolated than ever, and those who live “on the edge” of society, with few resources available to them. Ask God to lead you to respond in action to concerns in caring and love for others, as you are able to do. Call the office if you have ideas or ways to care for each other that you would like to share.

Remember, dear friends, that we are never without hope, for we are never alone! We serve a Risen Lord who is bigger than any pandemic or trouble. It may not be a walk in the park to make our way through it, but we will find our way through it, together!

**In Christ's Service,
Pastor Kerrin**

Here is what that means:

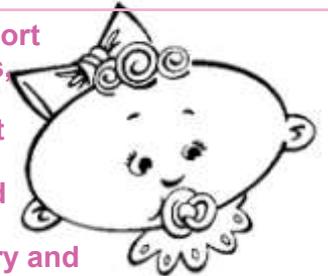
<p>There will be no groups of any kind gathering in the church building</p>	<p>Includes Sunday morning and Wednesday evening activities. The protocols for responding to the spreading virus are shifting daily, and we want to keep you as up to date as possible. We are not alone in figuring things out; we will continue to monitor government, school, and other community communications, and will follow their lead.</p>
<p>We will be offering on-line worship at 8:30 Sunday mornings</p>	<p>Please plan to access worship live or on YouTube via our website, using any device that connects to the internet: smart phone, tablet, computer. Live worship will include some ways you can interact in worship, such as sharing prayer concerns and announcements. You will also be able to “sign in” so we can add your on-line worship to our attendance records!</p>
<p>Key staff will be working in the office 8:30am-4:30pm to answer the phone, respond to emails, and other necessary administrative tasks</p>	<p>If you need to drop off or pick up something in the church building, please call ahead. Access to the building will be allowed by appointment only.</p>
<p>Pastor Kerrin will be accessible and available as much as she can be for pastoral emergencies</p>	<p>When Pastor Nikki returns next week, we will meet to discuss how she is able to be present for you as well. We will be communicating via phone and internet whenever we can and may be able to meet in person for some extenuating circumstances. Nicole and Kim will be working from home and will be communicating programming resources and updates. Deb will be managing the office, and Reid will be available for financial questions. Steve and Matt will come in as necessary. Please do not hesitate to contact anyone on the office staff if you have questions or concerns.</p>
<p>Please continue to give via snail mail, auto-debit, text, or Realm</p>	<p>For help to use one of the giving applications, please contact our office, and we will find someone who can walk you through what you need to do.</p>
<p>Please watch your email, our website, and our Facebook page for important updates</p>	<p>If you are not getting our email communications and would like to receive them, please contact the office by phone or email. Our leadership is continuing to create other areas of outreach, resourcing, and communications. We will find ways to travel this pandemic wilderness together!</p>

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First United Methodist Church
516 Kellogg Ave
Ames, IA 50010

Thank you for all the love and support given to our family! The gifts, cards, meals, and prayers have been so appreciated. Baby Ellie and the rest of the family are doing well. After a much needed leave for healing and learning how to be a family of five, we are excited to be back in ministry and can't wait to find new ways to connect with all of you! Blessings!



The Ross Bishop Family