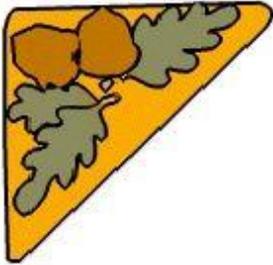




The Beacon

Volume 9 No. 11

NOVEMBER 2020



A Thanksgiving Prayer

Samuel F. Pugh

"O God, when I have food,
 help me to remember the hungry;
When I have work,
 help me to remember the jobless;
When I have a home,
 help me to remember those who have no home
 at all;
When I am without pain,
 help me to remember those who suffer,
And remembering,
 help me to destroy my complacency;
 bestir my compassion,
 and be concerned enough to help;
By word and deed,
 those who cry out for what we take for
 granted.
Amen."



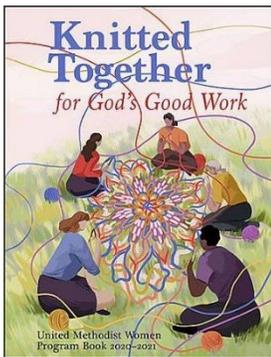
HAPPY
thanksgiving

It's Church Conference Time ...



Jan Lyon - Lay Leader, Sandy Mallory – Administrative Council chair, and Roger Noonan – Pastor/Parish Relations chair, consider conference forms to be presented at the Annual Charge Conference.

The Annual church conference is scheduled on November 17 at Frankfort UMC. The Pastor Parish Relations team will meet with the District Superintendent at 6:30 PM and the charge conference will follow.



UMW MEETS NOV. 10

The United Methodist Women - Empire unit will gather in Fellowship Hall (with masks, social distancing) for their November meeting at **11:00 AM**. At each meeting, the “Knitted Together for God's Good Work” themed programs for 2020-21 will explore how we as children of God are joined and linked together into the whole body of Christ. Even at times when social distancing or other obstacles may keep us physically apart, we are knit together in community to transform the world. Pat Smith will present the November program; the annual **Thank Offering** will be collected, and a business meeting will follow.



Advent begins

NOVEMBER 29

Advent is a season of four weeks including four Sundays. *Advent* derives from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming." The season proclaims the comings of the Christ—whose birth we prepare to celebrate once again, who comes continually in Word and Spirit, and whose return in final victory we anticipate.

Each year Advent calls the community of faith to prepare for these comings; historically, the season was marked by fasts for preparation. Each Sunday of Advent has its distinctive theme: Christ's coming in final victory (*First Sunday*), John the Baptist (*Second and Third Sundays*), and the events immediately preceding the birth of Jesus Christ (*Fourth Sunday*).



*Survey Letter sent to the Church Family
 On October 25, 2020*

Dear Church Family,

As announced, worship services at Johnson Park have ended. Pastor Melody's weekly sermon will continue to be shown on Facebook and sent by email/US mail to your home. Due to concern for her family's health issues and doctors' recommendations, Pastor Melody will not be conducting worship services in the church building until further notice. When we return to using the church building, Pastor's weekly sermon will be shown on the large TV screen.

Many of you have expressed a desire to return to the church building for worship services. **The Safety Team needs to know how many people would attend if worship services are held in fellowship hall on Sundays at 10 AM, as we need to plan accordingly for safety.** (Please answer questions on page 2)

The following **SAFETY PROTOCOL** has been developed to maintain safety and provide for the common welfare of the EMPIRE United Methodist Church congregation, guests, and visitors until further notice. Those persons who feel unwell or who feel unsafe gathering in public should stay at home and engage with alternative forms of worship and spiritual development



The EMPIRE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAFETY PROTOCOL shall apply to all areas of the building and all activities and events therein. It takes into consideration all aspects and data concerning Covid-19 from reputable professional sources which include: Centers for Disease Control, State of Michigan Department of Health, Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church, and Benzie-Leelanau County Health Department.

Masks and/or face coverings will always be worn by all persons upon entry and within the building.

- Social distancing (6' apart) and separation will be practiced during all gatherings
- Gatherings will be limited to 30 or fewer people.
- Appropriate signage and arranged seating patterns indicated by tape on the floor will provide for safe distancing.
- All areas of the church will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to reentry.
- All meetings are expected to be scheduled using the church event calendar.
- Restrooms will be cleaned and sanitized prior to, and immediately following worship.
- Sanitary & cleaning supplies will be available in each restroom.
- Signage will be posted in all areas instructing occupants concerning masks, distancing, and sanitization.
- The kitchen, lounge, nursery, and classrooms will be posted as "Off Limits".
- The church office area will be restricted to two persons or less, practicing social distancing.
- The Pastor's office will be restricted to two persons or less, practicing social distancing.
- Those persons who feel unwell or who feel unsafe gathering in public are encouraged to stay at home and engage with alternative forms of worship and spiritual development.
- Gathering for worship will include hand sanitation, sign-in and remote temperature recording.
- Seating will be designated with taped lines on the floor.

WHEN WE RETURN TO THE CHURCH BUILDING ... Here's the procedure we will follow:

- **Pay meticulous attention to safety protocol**
 - **Use west parking lot and enter/exit through this door ONLY – with MASK ON**
 - **An usher will greet you at the door and take you to the Check-in area**
 - **Check-in Procedures: use hand sanitizer, sign in with registrar, temperature scanned, temperature recorded, answer health questions.**
 - **Usher will seat you in designated area (Pastor's weekly sermon via Facebook will be viewed on AV/Tv screen Leader)**
 - **Do not move chairs – they are to remain in place**
 - **At end of service, remain seated. Usher will escort you to the door (one at a time)**
- Usher escorts congregation individually or by family to the seat or exit. **Reason:** To keep Social distancing **Social distancing (6' apart) is mandatory! NO singing, NO hugging or shaking hands, NO bulletins, NO collection plate passed during worship service.** There will be no "coffee hour" or socialization period following worship.

6 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR EACH SERVICE: [continued on next page]

Leader (for announcements, scripture readings, joys & concerns) [1 volunteer]

AV/Computer operator [1 volunteer]
 Sanitize Fellowship hall and bathrooms [2 volunteers needed]
 Usher [1 volunteer]
 Registrar [1 volunteer]



Please read the **SAFETY PROTOCOL** on page 1, and answer questions #1 and #2 below.
 return your response by the date shown.

1. Are you willing to attend church under **SAFETY PROTOCOL** conditions? []YES []NO
 2. Are you willing to volunteer for one of the positions needed? []YES []NO
- (1-Leader, 1-AV/computer operator, 1-usher, 1-registrar, 2-clean/sanitize)

If you received this letter as **email**, please reply by email before **November 1, 2020**
 If you received this letter by **US mail**, please respond by calling the church office at **231.326.5510** and leave message with your response before **November 1, 2020**

Blessings and Thank You for your consideration,
 Sandy Mallory, Chair

Administrative Council

SAFETY TEAM: Pastor Melody Olin, Jean Petersen, Jan Lyon, Kay Coombs, Kay Wilcox



November 1 United Methodists believe in saints, but not in the same manner as the Catholic Church.

We recognize Matthew, Paul, John, Luke, and other early followers of Jesus as saints, and countless numbers of United Methodist churches are named after these saints.

We also recognize and celebrate All Saints' Day (Nov. 1) and "all the saints who from their labors rest. "All Saints' Day is a time to remember Christians of every time and place, honoring those who lived faithfully and shared their faith with us.

On All Saints' Day, many churches read the names of their members who died in the past year.

However, our denomination does not have any system whereby people are elected to sainthood. We do not pray to saints, nor do we believe they serve as mediators to God. United Methodist believe "... there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5-6a).

United Methodists call people "saints" because they exemplified the Christian life. In this sense, every Christian can be considered a saint.

John Wesley believed we have much to learn from the saints, but he did not encourage anyone to worship them. He expressed concern about the Church of England's focus on saints' days and said that "most of the holy days were at present answering no valuable end."

Wesley's focus was entirely on the saving grace of Jesus Christ.



ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL NOTES



NEXT MEETING - NOV. 16 - 4 PM

AGENDA: District matters (voting on proposed budget, NWD Leadership, 2021 Proposed budget); Local Christmas giving to families (Giving Tree gifts); Christmas gifts to staff; Advent/Christmas season planning (Worship Team); Financial reports; Other Business.

- Reminder: The Annual church conference is scheduled on November 17 at Frankfort UMC. The Pastor Parish Relations team will meet with the District Superintendent at 6:30 PM; the charge conference will follow.
- The Committee on Nominations & Leadership is

looking for volunteers to fill various positions for 2021. Please consider volunteering when contacted.

- **Chairs for Staff Pastor-Parish, Finance, Trustees, Worship & Nurture, Education, Memorial:** If you have not held your quarterly meeting, please schedule as soon as possible. Vacancies need to be filled and goals for 2021 need to be generated.

Safety Team: A survey letter was sent to the church family regarding safety protocol when we return to the church for worship. (see copy in this newsletter)

Treasurer's Report as of September 30, 2020:

(Please note: 2020 Ministry Shares [apportionments] have been paid in full)

	JAN-SEP 2020
INCOME Income for 2020 includes: Member contributions, equitable compensation, US Gov grant, other Misc income	\$99,025.00
EXPENSES Expenses for 2020 include: church operations, church programs, missions, clergy & staff salaries, outside services, Ministry Shares (apportionments <i>paid IN FULL in Oct</i>)	\$90,882.00
Net Income	\$8,143.00

Our Vision Statement:

A community who goes out, serving in love, sharing Christ.
"Go, Serve. Share Christ."



**BIBLE STUDY
THURSDAYS
2:30 pm**



(via iPad, Cell Phone, Laptop, desktop & computer)

We are studying the Book of Isaiah. Contact Tom Petersen if you would like to participate in the weekly Bible Study Class.



NOVEMBER

United Methodist Student Day Special Offering

Support United Methodist students with our prayers and gifts

United Methodist Student Day is just around the corner. We will celebrate United Methodist Student Day on November 29, 2020. Last year our church, along with other United Methodist

congregations, gave \$370,123 to the offering. This year, the world has experienced some unprecedented times, but we hope that you will give as much as you can to help our United Methodist students. When you give to the United Methodist Student Day offering, your gifts support the Gift of Hope Scholarship program that is awarded to United Methodist students annually. Thank you.



Thank you for your generosity. Without your gifts, we could not continue this ministry.

Blessings,
THE MISSIONS TEAM

Make your donation by check payable to: Empire United Methodist Church with note: UM Student Day Special Offering or give online. Thank you for your consideration.

The United Methodist Church's special giving structure ensures your generosity blesses as many people as possible in sustainable, strategic ways. Through your support, and our church, we fund many projects each year.

Praise to the Lord



Please continue to support the church by mailing your offerings to:
Empire United Methodist Church, PO Box 261, Empire 49630
or by contacting Roy Pentilla [erpentilla@aol.com]
for on-line giving

(we still need to pay for utilities, staff, and other bills to keep the church going).

If you wish to contribute to the **Pastor's Discretionary Fund**, or **this month's Mission: UM Student Day Special Offering**, please make the notation on your check or on the envelope.

COVID-19 HAS SHONE A LIGHT ON THE MILLENNIA-OLD BALANCE BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE WORSHIP

By Samuel L. Boyd October 28th, 2020 MINISTRYMATTERS.COM



As religious services went online to protect congregants from the coronavirus, a paradox emerged: Worshippers were connected via the internet to a potentially wide community, but it felt like a more private affair.

Yes, such Zoom services are viewable by audiences worldwide. But this diverted attention, if not attendance, away from many small, local congregations struggling to survive. While [many have liked this new format](#), there has also been [criticism](#).

This is not the first time tensions between private worship and public expressions of religion have been felt. As a [scholar](#) of the Bible, Judaism and Christianity, I am aware that even thousands of years ago [private piety and public expressions](#) of religion existed in a delicate balance — one that is not a simple either/or proposition.

Biblical roots

Many cultures in antiquity incorporated elements of both private and public aspects of religion. For example, in ancient [Babylon](#), approximately 3,800 years ago, private religious practices were conducted [in the household](#). These religious practices were largely distinct from the publicly supported rituals that occurred in temples. The Hebrew Bible also contains a mix of both public and private practices of religion. The texts have a number of examples of public expressions of faith alongside passages that have become foundational for personal prayers and expressions of individual religious devotion.

In the book of Leviticus, for example, the rituals of [sacrifice](#) that took place in the temple are devoid of any personal prayers. The high priest of ancient Israel makes a confession of sin for all of Israel at one point during one sacrifice, but this hardly counts as a personal prayer. Some rituals conducted at one of the temple altars, where a particular type of sacrifice called a burnt offering took place, were done in public view.

Yet moving expressions of personal piety also exist in the Psalms, a collection of poems in the Hebrew Bible. Many of these may have been [liturgical recitations](#) sung or recited at certain occasions and times of the year, such as at feasts and festivals in the religious calendar. When Babylonians in 586 B.C. destroyed the temple in Jerusalem, the place where public sacrifices occurred, it sparked a [crisis](#) that changed the way people worshipped.

According to religion scholar [Susan Niditch](#), the destruction of the temple, as the center of institutional religion, resulted in much more personal, private expressions of faith. This shift toward personal religion happened as the population in Jerusalem, the capital of a land believed to have been given to Israel by God, was exiled to Babylon. With the loss of the temple and the land, the former inhabitants of Jerusalem had to find new ways to worship. It had to take place without the public support of the temple. Additionally, this community no longer had their traditional family networks in the homeland.

Practices in antiquity

The shift to a more personal expression of religion continued with books like [Job](#) and [Ecclesiastes](#) in the Hebrew Bible, which were written after these tragedies. These books are about the manner in which suffering happens to good people and about the difficulties of divine justice in the world.

Both Job and Ecclesiastes portray the agony of the sufferer in a first-person sort of narrative, infused with individual expressions. More than in previous writings from the Bible, these books highlight how an individual character in the book — Job or Qohelet in Ecclesiastes — struggles to understand why bad things happen in the world.

At the same time, being a part of the Hebrew Bible, Job and Ecclesiastes have shaped how religious groups have understood the relationship between individual suffering in the context of a community. When Jewish and Christian groups read these books, the interpretation of these texts shaped the communities as well.

When read in religious groups, these books are not simple stories of individuals but rather become narratives of virtue that inform religious congregations of what righteous suffering and profound questions can look like. This tension between public and private expressions of religion continued into the first centuries B.C. and A.D. In these centuries, the Latin term “[religio](#),” from which came the English term “religion,” often referred to civic, public expressions of [ritual](#) in service to traditional Roman gods and goddesses.

During this same time, Jesus of Nazareth encouraged his followers to [pray in private](#) and not to make a public show of prayer. The latter might, according to Jesus, promote hypocrisy and lavish displays of religion meant to promote oneself instead of care for others.

Prayers said in private rarely stay private

However, personal reflection and concerns for communal identity were never far from each other. The history of religions is replete with examples of individual, personal piety, offering alternative access to God from priestly, temple-based or church-based hierarchies. An example is [monasticism in Christianity](#), which often cultivates private prayer practices and meditation. In each instance, however, private piety is typically connected in some fashion to community, such as [orders](#) in monasticism.

As a result, [scholars of religion](#) as well as [political scientists](#) have questioned any absolute divide between notions of a private, personalized religion and public expressions of faith. The idea of a retreat of religion from public view into privatized experiences is never fully accomplished, nor, as some would argue, [possible](#).

Private practice and public sphere

This history of how communities adapt to tragedy could help explain the tension today between public and private practice of religion. The effects on smaller congregations is evident when individuals prefer a pick-and-choose menu of services worldwide, such as [Central Synagogue’s](#) livestream service in New York, instead of engagement in local communities.

Even beyond religious communities, Zoom has made the expression of religion increasingly a private affair at the same moment that [the election](#) and [the Supreme Court](#) hearings have thrust religion in the [public sphere](#).

It is worth remembering that whether historically or in the current era, one’s personal piety is never too far from the public sphere.

**Serving as the Hands & Feet of Christ
136 Years in Empire
1884 - 2020**

The Beacon is published monthly by The EMPIRE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH. Our mailing address is: PO Box 261 - 10050 Michigan Street, Empire, MI 49630. We can be reached at 231.326.5510 or www.empireumc@centurytel.net. Information and items for publication must be received at the church office by the 3rd Wednesday of the month.



EUMC Mission Statement

"To live out a faith in Jesus Christ through our efforts to hear others, share in God's truths, join in worship, and celebrate in the Joy of God's grace."

SUNDAYS

10:00 AM **Worship Service**
8:00 PM AA Group

MONDAYS

9:00-1:00 **Church Office open**
10:00 AM Worship Team

WEDNESDAYS

9:00-1:00 **Church Office open**
8:00 PM NA Group

THURSDAYS

9:00-1:00 **Church Office open**
10:00 AM Worship Team

**THE CHURCH BUILDING IS CLOSED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE
CHECK YOUR EMAILS - FACEBOOK - WEBSITE
FOR CURRENT INFORMATION**



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TO:

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