

We Want to Stay in Touch with You



April 2020

Even more than ever, we may be realizing how important it has been to attend worship, share in the Lord's grace, see our friends and neighbors during coffee fellowship, and simply visit with each other in person. That is one reason we decided to finish our April newsletter, even though there is not a lot of 'news' to report and there are still so many unknowns in our future. As it turns out, we recently resurrected our telephone prayer chain which helps get the word out among so many who do not live in the digital world. I'd like to thank Dodie Denman for her initiative in that area and Marian Durkee who has managed our prayer chain for many years. Any of you can become a part of the telephone chain if you are not already. All you need to do is contact Dodie (616-490-3792).

For those with email, if you are not already on our Central Church e-mail group list for prayers and other announcements, you can be added by emailing or calling the church office (616-374-8861) and leaving a message. I have also recently updated our telephone/address list for current members and constituents. Many changes have taken place over the last few years since our beautiful directories were published. You can request a new list be mailed to you by contacting the church office as well.

As an update, I have been working from home but not without issues on my antiquated home computer system. I am now able to check emails daily and can respond to your questions.

At this time, I plan to be in the church office on Tuesday mornings only. Pastor Dominic will continue with his weekly reflections going out on Tuesdays. This will also allow me to pick up mail, process checks, pay bills and payroll, check voicemails and cover any other business needs to keep things running. If you need access to the building for any reason or want to drop off your tithes, please arrange to do so on Tuesday mornings.

As always, if there is an emergency, please call the parsonage (616-374-8294) or Pastor Dominic's cell (269-941-3787).

Please stay safe, reach out to your friends and family, and pray for a quick end to this current crisis. ~~ Kim Stoeper, your church secretary

PASTORAL REFLECTION (continued from Page 1)

And during this period of Coronavirus Crisis, remember the Lord's Word from Isaiah 43:1-6; 41:10
"But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, he who formed you, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

May the Lord watch over you and me while we are absent from each other. ~~Pastor Dominic

Central United Methodist Church is located in downtown Lake Odessa at 912 4th Avenue.
Contact us at 616-374-8861; info@centralchurch-lakeo.org or pastor@centralchurch-lakeo.org.
Check out our Facebook page for current activities, weekly dinner menu, and youth activities.

PASTORAL REFLECTION

Dear Central Members and Friends: Be Strong as a Community of Faith!

In times of crisis, people need community—especially their church community. But when a pandemic raises great concerns as the COV.19 virus has, or a hurricane hits, gathering together becomes more difficult (or impossible) for many churches, social gatherings, and even work. That is the case currently around the globe. On a spiritual part, I believe there are some steps we can take to bring unity in the community of faith. Here are things you can do to take care of one another, or use it to bring calmness and hope.

1. **Pray:** Of course, you're praying for the crisis to resolve and for those affected. But you still want to keep praying for each other's "everyday" requests. When we can't meet together, it can be hard to communicate information on everyone's needs. I know, many of you don't have email for instant information, but the old system of phoning, at least, is still available. Read your devotionals, sing a song, go out in your yard and get some fresh air. Maintain your daily momentums. Talk to God about what is going on around the world, and about you.

When there is need, share your concerns and request prayers and then see how to support others through the ministry of prayer. Central Church understands this as we send weekly concerns and prayer notes out through emails and phone calls. We hope if you hear or see something, you notify the office or call Pastor Tommy.

2. **Give:** When those affected need financial support, raising money is an obvious way to show the love of Christ. I cannot emphasize enough how the **Helping Hand Fund** at Central Church is helping those in need. And since we cannot meet at our regular place of Worship, please remember your church by mailing in offerings on a regular basis. Online giving is available for those who can do it at Central Church's website 24 hours/day. As we are standing in a double edge situation—that of the Coronavirus Crisis and Pastoral transition—the Church needs your support, prayers, and offerings more than ever before.

3. **Serve the Lord with Gladness:** Think of practical ways to provide relief and ways to share your efforts. For instance, you could offer to do grocery shopping or errands for those most at risk. Call on the seniors, check on the them as often as you are able. This is the time to use your Church directory—call each other. Activities in our building (except for the Blood Drive) are now cancelled through at least the end of April; please check the events and birthdays listed in this newsletter. We'll continue to share updates and reminders through emails.

Remember, no one wants a crisis to come, but church communities can grow stronger in spite of it. The mission of the church is **"to equip the Church to grow in the light of the Bible."** Let me add here, "no matter what." Central Church support is here for you every day of the week; all you need is to call and make your request known, and we'll do our best.

Finally, due to COV.19 virus restrictions from area hospitals on pastoral visits, pastoral visits are limited. However, if you are in the hospital, your direct bedside phone number or cell phone can be helpful for prayers and conversations, if it's available to you. Tell your loved ones to **call Pastor Dominic 269-941-3787**, or the church office for non-emergencies (616-374-8861). Another alternative is the use of hospital chaplains. Just let the Chaplain Department (available in every hospital) know your needs.

(Continued on last page....)

CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays	04/27 Peg Faulkner
04/01 John Jackson	04/29 Warren Courtney
04/02 Christy McDonald	04/30 Marti Lind
04/03 Julie Klynstra	Anniversaries
04/10 Aaron Reiser	04/19 Allen & Kathy Decker—45 years
04/14 Rachel Cobb	04/21 Bob & Karen Avery—58 years
04/19 Rita Bigelow	04/21 Bob & Char Kendregan—36 years
04/20 Michael Helmick	04/25 Tom & Shelly Reiser—28 years
04/25 John Gentner	04/29 Brandon & Jackie Spagnuolo—3 years

UPCOMING EVENTS

FRESH FOOD DISTRIBUTION—DRIVE THRU ONLY
Tuesday, April 7—2:00 pm (Volunteers at 1:30.)

BLOOD DRIVE—STILL ON! See related notice.
Monday, April 13—12 to 5:45 pm

Due to the government directives, there will be no worship or other gatherings through the month of April.

CROP WALK IS GOING VIRTUAL!!



You can still join us in our community-wide event to raise money to combat hunger locally and around the world! One-fourth of the funds raised locally support the mission of the Lakewood Community Council.

The 2020 Annual Lakewood Area CROP Hunger Walk will be held "virtually." If you'd like to "WALK," you can sign up at www.crophungerwalk.org, then recruit pledges. You can still walk on your own if you'd like. To support the CROP Walk, you can include a donation through your church offering by indicating it on your envelope or portal, sending a check to the church made out to "CWS/CROP," or go online to www.crophungerwalk.org and search for our Lakewood Area walk, then click the team button and enter Central UMC. You can contact Kay Barcroft (269-945-4518) for more information or if you have any questions.

Memorials

We recently lost another member of our Central Family: Helen Miller. Helen was 84 years old and a member of Central Church since her childhood. She was also a member of the UMW, the Alethians, and she served in various capacities over the years in Central's programs. You may feel at loss for not being able to say good-bye due to this pandemic. It is possible the family will have a memorial service in the future and we will let you know if that is scheduled.

The family has suggested we keep Helen's memory alive by accepting donations to Central Church's Memorial Fund. You may make those with your regular offering by notation on your envelope or check.

We would also like to thank all of the donors who recently contributed to the Julie Nelson Memorial Fund. Your gifts totaled \$560.

PRAYERS OF CONDOLENCE

Family of Helen Miller



OUR HELPING HAND FUND

This designated fund was created to assist our church family members with urgent, immediate needs. It is intended to be available to persons in a financial crisis related to medical bills, rent, utilities, etc. Monies are dispersed at the discretion of the pastor and overseen by the Missions Committee. The requests are handled in a confidential manner for those receiving the gift.

This fund is only sustained by donations from our church family. There is no budget; no fundraising. If you should find yourself in such a crisis, please contact Pastor Dominic. If you are able to donate to this fund, please do so by noting that on your offering or check.



It is unfortunate that the 2020 Easter Egg Hunt which we have sponsored for many years has been cancelled. We all hope and pray that life can return to normal soon.

Thank You

Dear Friends of Central Church,
 On behalf of the Lakewood Community Council, I would like to thank you for your generous \$1,212.62 donation for the Christmas Basket program. It's support from area churches and community groups that make this program possible.

In addition to purchasing food items and other necessities, we also provide meat/dairy gift certificates to the recipient families. So your donation is most welcome!

We would extend our most sincere thanks for the use of your building again this year. We are so very grateful for the convenience of your facility and for your hospitality!

Again, thank you for your generous gift, which will help us care for Lakewood families in need.

Sincerely,
 Kay Barcroft, Treasurer
 Lakewood Community Council, Inc.
 501 (c) (3) charitable organization

State of the Church Report

Stats for February 2020

Average Attendance:	50
Operating Fund:	
Receipts	\$11,682.68
Expenses	\$11,195.53
Other Designated Giving:	
Building Fund	\$ 365
General Missions	\$ 100
UMCOR	\$ 100
Missionaries	\$ 20
Human Relations Sunday	\$ 5
R.A.V.E.	\$ 77
Julie Nelson Memorial	\$ 560
General Ed Fund	\$ 59

Upcoming Blood Drive

Red Cross Blood Drive
Monday, April 13
12 to 5:45 pm



Blood supplies are critically low and the need is great. The Red Cross will be following strict guidelines to provide for the safety of donors and their staff. If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Dodie Denman (616-490-3792).



DRIVE-THRU
Fresh Food Distribution
Tuesday, April 7, at 2 p.m.
At this time only Cargill volunteers are allowed to hand out food.