

THE MESSENGER

June 2020

Red Oak First United Methodist Church

www.redoakfumc.org

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Our new Administrative Assistant, Calleen Nelson. Calleen lives in Red Oak and has two children, Olivia and Logan. She has a bachelor's in business management. Her first day in the office is Monday, June 1st.



Lowell and Jan Burnison would like to thank everyone for making their 50th wedding anniversary an event to remember! The drive by-honk-toilet paper-cards-gift parade during the COVID-19 crisis was unique and so fun!

June Birthdays

06/06	Sandra	Guinn	06/16	Janet	Sharpe	06/23	Nadine	Torbett
06/10	Linda	Clark	06/17	Angie	Baier	06/25	Jason	Bodwell
06/12	Tom	Docker	06/19	Alyssa	Strebe	06/27	Thad	Bruning
06/12	Tory	Carrick	06/19	Nevaeh	Smith	06/29	Terry	Bruning
06/13	Shayla	Jennings	06/23	Brandon	Bergren	06/30	Barbara	Trumble

During the month of May, we collected diapers for Christ's Cupboard, located here in Red Oak. Even tho in-person worship could not take place in May, we came together to support our community. We collected 27 packages of diapers, sizes Newborn to 5. That's 1,547 individual diapers! Also, there are 21 packages of baby wipes collected.



Our New Pastor . . .

The Rev. Doctor Eric Z. Sayonkon is currently the pastor of St. James United Methodist Church in Sioux City, Iowa. He was appointed to St. James UMC in July of 2015. Prior to that, he served 5 years at Dallas Center UMC in Iowa. He has served churches from Liberia, Ghana, Kentucky, Missouri, and Iowa. He has over 21 years of ministry experience involving pastorate, discipleship, evangelism, missionary and chaplaincy ministries. He is an Ordained Elder in the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church and member of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

He served as part of the Healthy Church Initiative (HCI) consultation team helping churches to experience transformation from inward to outward focus with God's vision. Pastor Eric holds a BA in Pastoral Ministries from Central Christian College, an MDiv from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Garrett- Evangelical- Theological Seminary. He is endorsed by the United Methodist Endorsing Agency and trained as a chaplain.

He and his wife Eboni have two wonderful children, Luke and Abigail. He escaped the civil war in his homeland of Liberia and lived as a refugee in Ghana. While in Ghana he was a missionary pastor serving the mission of God. He says it is by the grace of God he is alive, and he is committed to be used for God's glory. It is his calling to lead and shepherd God's people to spread the reign of God through compassion, mercy, and justice throughout the world. His passion is to preach and teach God's word by loving and equipping God's people for ministry. He is committed to the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Red Oak First UMC church family,

Greetings and love to you all in the name of Jesus Christ. I am praying, excited and looking forward to coming to serve as your pastor. I am grateful to Bishop Laurie and the cabinet for appointing me to Red Oak First UMC. I am grateful for the congregation and leadership of Pastor Ron Bupp.

I take to heart John Wesley Covenant:

I AM NO LONGER MY OWN, BUT YOURS. Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you. Praised for you or criticized for you. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service. And now, O wonderful and holy God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, you are mine, and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it also be made in heaven. God bless you. Amen

Rev. Dr. Eric Z. Sayonkon

*Luke
Pastor Eric
Eboni
Abigail*





“RE-ENTRY” is the new catch phrase being used as the church begins to consider the

challenges of coming back together as a faith community. In Iowa, each United Methodist local church has been tasked to put together a “Re-Entry Team” to consider, plan, and implement the re-opening of our churches.

As you have observed in watching the events of the world since the epidemic began, each country, state, county, city and town is different in its make-up and how the virus is affecting people. Our governor has recognized this as well as our bishop and are providing guidelines accordingly. Here at Red Oak First we have put together a “Re-Entry Team.” The team is made up of our Safety Team, Trustees, and members who are health care professionals. This team will be guiding our church’s return to full operation.

Because this is all new territory and no one of us has dealt with or led an organization through a situation like this, we will learn-as-we go. As we consider government regulations, public health guidelines, suggestions from the annual conference/bishop’s office, and the expertise of our own health professionals, we will be opening the church back up in phases rather than all at once.

Sunday Morning Worship will resume on June 7th with a single service at 10:30am in the Main Sanctuary. Guidelines for worshipping amidst the Covid-19 epidemic are included in this newsletter, on our web site (www.redoakfumc.org), our Face Book page (Red Oak FUMC), and an all-church email (with postal letters going to those without email).

For now, there will be no other activities at the church other than routine operation of the church office, necessary cleaning by our custodial staff, and leadership meetings as needed. There will be no Bible studies, Sunday School (Adult or Children), or Youth Group. The church will not be available for parties or private gatherings, including funeral lunches, larger than 10 people. Please contact the church office if you have questions.

The “Re-Entry” Team will be monitoring all aspects of this situation as the days and weeks progress. The only thing we can be certain of is that regulations, guidelines, medical discoveries, and episcopal suggestions will change!

Thank you for your prayers & your patience,
Pastor Ron & The “Re-Entry” Team



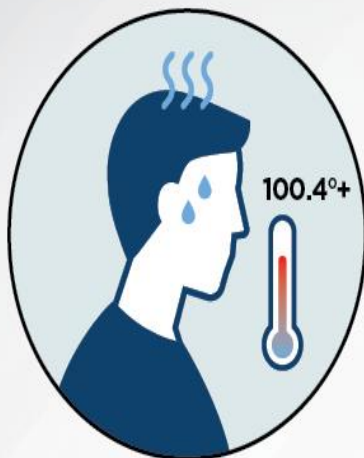
Returning to Sunday Morning Worship in the midst of the Covid-19 epidemic will be a little challenging for all of us. Red Oak First UMC will be returning to Sunday Morning Worship beginning June 7th. Much of the challenge we face is found in state and federal regulations, government safety guidelines, and direction from the Iowa Annual Conference and the bishop's office. Here is what you may expect . . .

- **One Service**— in consideration of the need to clean and disinfect between services we will begin June 7th with the 10:30am Sunday morning service in the Main Sanctuary.
- **Social Distancing**—
 - Families will be able to sit together
 - We must keep a 6-foot distance between ourselves/families and others
 - We will not be using all the pews: some pews will be blocked off to allow for distancing and the North Balcony will be open for seating
 - Please maintain social distancing of 6 feet as you enter and exit the church
- **Fellowship Time**— for the time being there will be no pre-service fellowship gathering
- **Rest Rooms**— Lounge rest rooms (behind Sanctuary) will be open and attendants will be in place to disinfect between users; please be patient
- **"Touchables"** — Bibles & Hymnals will remain in place in the pews but all other items (attendance pads, envelopes, pencils, children's books) will be removed
- **Offering**— there will be a container in the Narthex/North Lobby for you to place your offering
- **Children**—don't do "social distancing" so to keep your children from the chance of becoming infected with Covid-19, please keep your children with your family. There will be no Nursery
- **Masks**— wearing of a mask is optional, we strongly urge everyone to bring a mask with them, in the event of a weather emergency mask will be provided in the emergency shelters
- **Holy Communion**— will be observed the 1st Sunday of the month (beginning June 7th) and will be a self-serve liturgy at the end of the service followed by immediate exit
- **Ushers**— will be wearing blue vests and will be in place to assist and guide all worshippers

Senior Citizens and those with other health related issues are most vulnerable to Covid-19. If you have symptoms of Covid-19 we ask that you remain home. If you are feeling ill or are among the "most vulnerable" we urge you to remain at home. The service will be live-streamed on Face Book—Red Oak FUMC—and recorded for viewing on Face Book, You Tube, and our web site: www.redoakfumc.org.

Thank you for your understanding & cooperation,
Your Red Oak First "Re-Entry" Team

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19



FEVER OVER
100.4 DEGREES



COUGH OR
SORE THROAT



DIFFICULTY
BREATHING



CHILLS



MUSCLE PAIN



NEW LOSS OF
TASTE OR SMELL

FACTS. ■■■
OVER FEAR

COVID-19

“Come follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”
(Matthew 4:19)

My very first sermon here at Red Oak First, delivered on Sunday July 10th, 2016, was titled: “Called.” The entire scripture reading was Matthew 4:18-22. In this scripture reading Jesus was calling his first disciples—Peter, Andrew, James, and John to come with him; to follow him; to learn to preach and teach and make followers of Jesus Christ. Today, some 2,000 years later we have the advantage of knowing what happened— “At once they left their nets and followed him” (4:20). The rest is history, as they say. It was the willingness of these every day, regular men to “immediately . . . follow him” (4:22) that today there are more than 2.5 billion Christians in the world!

Even so, when they “left their nets . . . left their boat” left their families, their friends, their homes it must have been heartbreaking for everyone. They were needed by their fathers, they were loved by their friends and families, they were comfortable in their homes and lives. Still, when Jesus called, “immediately” they followed him. Answering the call to follow Jesus, to carry the mantle of Christ, is not easy nor was it ever supposed to be. While Jesus made his disciples “fishers of men” he also promised them suffering, persecution, and ultimately a martyr’s death.

Today, and for several centuries, when a Methodist pastor is called, we “immediately” follow. For it is our understanding and belief, underscored by our ordination vows, that the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ is at work. It doesn’t make it easier to leave a church family and friends. It doesn’t lessen the heartache and often the anger toward the Conference that can accompany the call for a pastor to go to a new church appointment. But the call to follow Christ, to drop everything to serve him and his kingdom, is beyond worthwhile. It is a privilege, but much more. And please remember, that Christ has called the new pastor specifically to Red Oak First!

When the Apostles went out into the world under Jesus’ Great Commission, everywhere they went they made new friends, new Christians, and life-long relationships. They were truly blessed. Jennifer and I have been blessed by being allowed to serve here at Red Oak First and thank you for the love and friendship we have received.

Pastor Ron