

First UCC Happenings



JULY 2020



Beloved First UCC Family,

It's time to move back inside for worship on July 12th at 10:30am. What will this look like? What precautionary measures are in place to ensure as safe an environment as possible? I'm sure we all have a plethora of questions, many of which I will address and answer in this letter, while understanding it is impossible to know everything, and therefore answer every question in a world that we have noticed is changing rapidly, giving us reason to pivot and adjust weekly while still trying our best to serve the congregation and continue worship.

First of all, what are some of the preparatory measures that have been executed in order to prepare for moving back inside for worship?

- 1) We have taken bids from five companies to clean our sanctuary and main office from the chains that hold the lights all the way down to the carpet, doors, vents, etc. The Building and Grounds committee has met and chosen one of the companies with the most thorough bid, not to mention the least expensive.
- 2) The staff is in the process of being tested for COVID-19 to ensure your worship leaders are safe and virus free. I did my test at Patient First on June 24th, and it was quick and painless.

- 3) I have purchased masks, an infrared thermometer, and gloves, should anyone desire to wear them. These items will be made available in the event people do not have them.
- 4) The Building and Grounds committee is seeing that sanitation stations and a mist disinfectant machine are purchased for our entry and exit as well as to sanitize the building after each use.
- 5) Here are a few examples of signs you will see when you arrive for worship:
 - a) Entrance sign will be on the east parking lot side entrance.
 - b) Exit sign will be on the east side and down the handicap ramp.
 - c) The bathroom on the cafe side at the rear of the sanctuary will be available and we will have a volunteer stationed ready to clean after each use.
 - d) The doors of entry will have one sheet posted with CDC guidelines, and our staff has developed a sort of 10 Commandments of “do’s” rather than “don’ts” in hopes to keep things positive. We are calling them our “Thou Shalts.” Example: Thou shalt spread the gospel, not germs, please sanitize thy hands.
 - e) Sanitation signs as you enter and exit.
 - f) You will notice signs closing various pews in order to contribute to safe social distancing.

So what will our experience look like when we arrive Sunday, July 12th at 10:30am?

- Please try to park in every other space in the parking lot.
- The entry door on the east parking lot narthex will remain open to eliminate many hands opening the doors.
- Please have a mask on, or pick one up as you sanitize your hands at the station upon entry.
- Make sure you smile BIG and with your eyes so we can tell you are happy to be here even with a facial covering!
- We are asking people to begin seating at the front, then moving backwards as others arrive to maximize our space and minimize close proximities.

- During our worship, we will have music, but we won't have congregational singing at the present time. As we pray the Lord's Prayer, do shortened responsive readings, and the like, we kindly ask that you speak in a hushed or normal voice so as not to project further than necessary.
- Our worship through tithing will continue to be collected by the deacons holding a fish net for you to drop any envelopes and monies.
- Upon completion of our worship experience, we would like for people to exit out of the side, handicap ramp door, starting with those in the front and working backward until everyone has safely exited.
- Please be mindful of keeping a safe distance in the parking lot as we leave and we hope your worship experience will be a positive one despite the adaptations we have been forced to comply with.
- The HVAC system will have the fan constantly on in order to consistently circulate the air in the room.

After worship each week the room will be disinfected and reset for our gathering each following week.

Whew, now that was a mouthful! Simply put, our goal is to provide a safe place to worship, while not instilling any more fear than already exists. We all know that some are excited to return to indoor worship, some really enjoyed our Park and Praise worship and I think we may revisit that from time to time, some will in no way wear a mask, while others would prefer to wear a mask, a face shield and so on.

Please understand that we recognize that there are some individuals with a medical condition that may prevent them from wearing a mask, BUT our church is required to following certain standards set by our state and local government as well as denominational suggestions and CDC guidelines. It is important that regardless of where we sit as individuals in regards to guidelines that we are very mindful of using this time to build up the body of Christ rather than take our complaints to the public square!

I hope you are growing in excitement to return inside as I am. It will look a little different. There will be some adjustments and technical difficulties along the way. We had them before, so this is nothing new.

In closing, think on these things...

- ❖ We have had more guests in the past few weeks than we've had in a long time.
- ❖ We have been forced to pivot and be creative in how we communicate the gospel which ultimately grows us and the kingdom here on earth.
- ❖ We now have followers of our online worship experience, that I know of, residing locally, in Maryland, Texas, and beyond.
- ❖ Our tithes and offerings have remained steady, coupled with the forgivable loan being added. We are blessed!

God has been faithful and good to First UCC during this global pandemic. Let us continue to “give of our best to the Master,” as we move indoors and continue our commission in our community and this world. May God continue to bless each of you and thank you for the privilege to worship and grow with you as your pastor!

Rev. Ed Lilley

Joys & Concerns

We pray for the continuing recovery of our members Celia Smith, who had pneumonia, Jane Smith, who is back at Morningside, and Pat Queensbury, who is home again but cannot receive visitors. Our other shut-ins are doing well.

Our deepest sympathies go out to our custodian, Jamille Hamilton, who has lost a family member. If you wish to send a card, her address is 906 Florida Street, Hampton, Virginia 23669.



From the Director of Music

Diane Drury

Update on Virtual Choirs

A lot of learning has been going on, as well as experimentation on my part, in order to try and see if we can create some kind of virtual singing experiences for our congregation. I am very happy to report that, YES, I am able to create musical recordings virtually in several different ways! Not only have I found ways to do this that I think we can manage, I have so far been able to do this inexpensively. It does take a lot of time on my part, I will admit, but it is totally worth it to have our First UCC musicians be able to join voices (albeit remotely and individually) to create music to worship our God. Because audio files are much easier to record and send over emails and texts, audio formats will be the way most of our projects will be recorded. Several choir members are able to use Apple devices (iPhone, iPad, Mac computers) to record a la the Cloistered Clones on the Acapella app. More of those presentations will be created using more and more people as folks become comfortable with the technology. My son, Chris, who was very active in all our musical groups during high school, has offered to help me in the mastering of these projects. His degree from JMU in Music Industry is invaluable right now!

Outdoor and Indoor Music Recording

During the summer months I will be recording in several different ways so that music can be shared in inside and through E-Worship. Several of our musicians have offered to record outside while wearing masks and keeping socially distanced, and some will record inside in the sanctuary individually or in small groups, wearing masks, and widely spaced. I am even experimenting with folks singing into the telephone while singing along to my recordings, while I record them on my end of the phone. Consider the method you are comfortable with. Because I am mastering these projects using my home computer software, I can combine all these types of recordings and everyone can be a part of projects no matter what their preferences are. I promise I will blend the voices as best as I can to make us sound optimal.

Zoom Musical Events!

Oh my goodness! What a joy it was to host our first (and certainly not our last) Zoom hymn sing! We had a great time singing and socializing, and discovered that the latency issues may be tolerable for singing together in certain circumstances. I will be hosting a variety of other Zoom musical events throughout the summer, so be on the lookout for invitations from me.

stewardship ALL THE WAY: THE WAY OF RESURRECTION

The biblical community of faith is neither an arena for religious devotion nor a seminar on religious questions. It is rather a community called to be the “first fruits” of the resurrection. ~Walter Brueggemann

In Jesus’ day, there were four competing ways of being faithful in a time of domination: Torah alone, righteousness alone, God alone, and country alone. The question the Sadducees posed to Jesus cuts to the quick about these competing visions of the future as they are all variations of living determined by biology or as if there is no resurrection (Luke 20:27-38).

For whatever reason, you may be living as if there is no resurrection, Jesus is assuring you, let it die. Distraught, let it die. Angry, let it die. Anxious when you watch the news and wait on election results, let it die. Still trying to negotiate for pride, let it die. Protecting privilege or position, let it die. Exhausting yourself with security, let it die.

Trust that God is the God of the living. Trust that you are a child of resurrection. And trust that your enemy or your opponent or your adversary is a child of resurrection, as well. Privilege will not be carried over, neither will money, nor prestige, nor health, nor marriage status, not even biology. Resurrection is the promise that the relationship will continue that began when God first called this creation and you into being and declared it and you good. As children of God we are children of resurrection for our God is the God of the living.

In the human landscape webbed with paths, the way of resurrection, like the ways of mercy, humility and gratitude, promises a future with hope. Join us on the way.



Building & Grounds

Dear First UCC Congregation,

As part of our preparation to resume open worship inside the Sanctuary, the Buildings & Grounds Committee has contracted with a professional company for cleaning of the facility. This will include a complete cleaning of the interior surfaces, pews, windows, shutters, drapery, lighting, ceiling vents, sanctuary bathrooms and waiting areas. Carpeting and tile flooring will be steamed cleaned in the Sanctuary, Parlor, Sanctuary restrooms, Café and Church Office. As a final step, these areas will be treated with a commercial sanitizing fogger. It has been many years since this level of cleaning has been performed at First UCC. As a requirement to address COVID-19, the safety of our congregation, and the long-term benefit for our church, Buildings & Grounds is appreciative of the support for this project. We look forward to welcoming all into our open doors beginning on Sunday, July 12th.

Regards,

Charley Bocklet



First UCC Weekly Offering

May 31	\$ 2,012.12	June 7	\$ 1,989.50
June 14	\$ 667.00	June 21	\$ 3,332.00

Thank you to all who have practiced stewardship through your gifts during this challenging time. Prayerfully consider your tithing to support the ministries and staff of First UCC. Thank you!



Treasurer's Report

General Operating Checking Account Balance \$ 23,444.91

Breakdown as of 06/22/2020:

Bills to be Paid through 07/01/2020 \$ 3,394.22

General Fund Balance \$17,367.19

Reserve Fund Balance \$ 1,007.41

UCC Local Mission Grant Balance \$ 342.15

Mission & Evangelism Balance \$ 2,341.35



Church-Wide Prayer: Pray with us each day at noon

July 1-15: Lord our God, our Father in heaven and on earth, we are thankful that you have a people to whom you say, "You are mine." Grant that we too may belong to this people. Strengthen us in the faith that we belong to you, so that we can come to know your rule and your justice. Protect us on all the paths we follow during our time on earth. The times are evil, but come what may, every single one of us has in his heart the certainty, "We are yours." You have long watched over us and kept us safe. Again and again we affirm, "We are yours, Lord our God, through Jesus Christ our Savior." Amen.

July 16-31: Lord our God, you want to be our God and you want us to be your people. Give us the inner integrity and the power to discern and reject what does not come from the heart, so that everything may be genuine among us. Then no lies and deception will creep in, and honesty and goodness will flow from our hearts to the glory of truth, to the glory of the gospel and the great hope you give us through the gospel. Guard our hearts. Protect the good that is planted in them, that it may grow and thrive and bear fruit. Amen.

Wider Missions & Outreach

The Wider Missions & Outreach Ministry prays that you all are staying well. Keep wearing your face coverings.

As some of us are getting out more, we want to remind you of the Hygiene Kits for Church World Service. The list of needs for the Zip-lock bag are reprinted here. If you are continuing to make kits, please bring them to the church when it re-opens.

- One hand towel measuring approximately 15" x 28" to 16" x 32" (no fingertip, bath, dish towel or micro-fiber)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb removed from the package
- One fingernail or toenail clipper removed from the package (either one is acceptable)
- One bath-size bar of soap in the original package
- One toothbrush in the original package
- Ten standard size Band-Aids

Please remember that HELP is in need of monies as more folks are having trouble getting groceries. The unemployment in our area really makes food buying difficult. Please be generous in sending your checks to HELP. The address is: HELP Ministries, Inc. 1320 Lasalle Ave. Hampton, VA 23669.

Another project we have had each year is collecting school supplies for Forrest Elementary. We will collect in August, but I know some like to buy a little at a time & take advantage of sales. Think about back packs, & the usual pencils, crayons & markers. Also think about the teachers' need for facial tissue & hand sanitizer. We will get a list from Forrest before our next newsletter.

Stay safe & healthy.

~Pat Kline & Carol Diehl

Notice: The east wing (sanctuary side) of the church will be closed on Wednesday, July 1st and Thursday, July 2nd for deep cleaning prior to reopening.



JULY BIRTHDAYS

4 John Richmond
9 Dana Lawson
10 Travis Henderson
11 Blair Rary
12 Joel Sanderson
16 Nhu Yeargin
19 Sean Quach-Yeargin
20 Maryanne Sanderson
20 Harold Sanderson
26 Christopher Edwards
31 Jacob Kline

If you have a birthday and it's not on the list, please let us know so we can correct our records.



July Anniversaries

13– Chris & Tami Henderson

If you have an anniversary in July, August or September, please let us know so we can correct our records.



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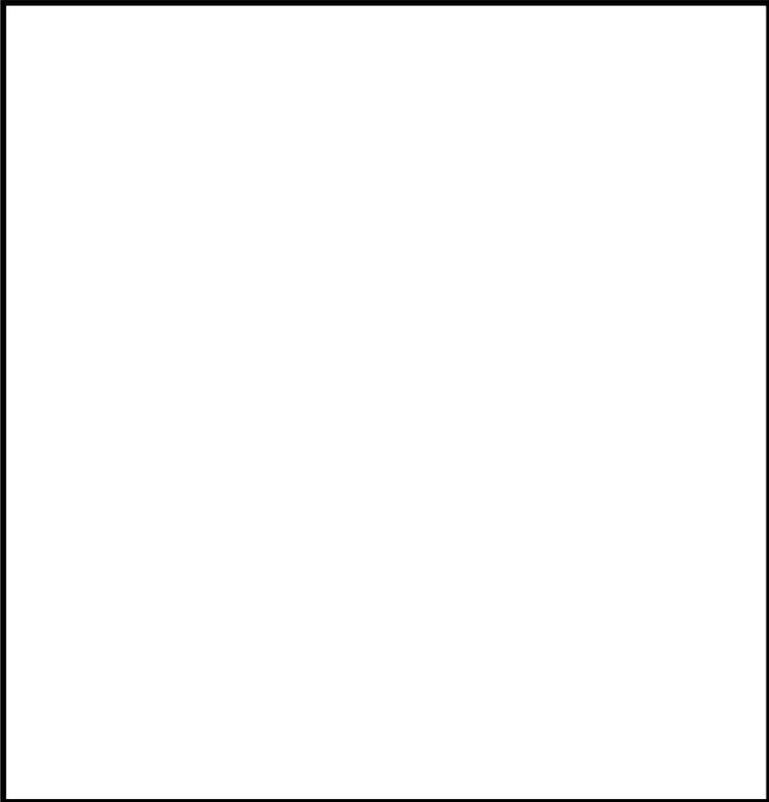


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TOGETHER

**Worshipping God
Growing Spiritually
Serving Others**

**We will resume indoor worship
services on Sunday, July 12th!
Please see the first article for
details, and watch your email and
our Facebook page for updates
and more information.**

**Together we are
First UCC!!**