



Jarrett's Jottings



Dear Friends,

Lately, I've written much in this space concerning Covid, the pandemic, our response, and so forth. It's been fourteen months since our world changed, perhaps forever. Out of both necessity and precaution, we have adopted different practices and attitudes that might have been unthinkable not so long ago. Words such as "social distancing", "Zoom", and "protocol" have become a part of our everyday vocabulary, and we dare not leave the house without our mask. Along the way, we have witnessed a rapid erosion of trust in authority, media, and even one another. It has been a stressful season for just about everyone, in one way or another.

As we work our way closer and closer to "the end", one of the phrases I have both heard and said frequently is "I'm ready to get back to normal (whatever normal is)". Whatever normal is...I think that's an important caveat to make. What exactly is "normal" though? When I hear someone say they are ready to return to normal, I sense they are meaning a return to pre-pandemic life. A return to the days when we didn't have to wear something covering our face, where we could gather without being labelled as "spreaders", where there weren't so many rules and mitigations and protocols that had to be followed. For the church, a return to normal would mean a return to a time when we could sit where we wanted, when we could sing without a facial covering, when we could use "real" elements for Communion, and when the usual workings of the church happened.

I have asked myself throughout this season, "why do we want to return to "normal"? The best answer I can arrive at is the desire to return to what is comfortable and familiar. As a creature of habit and routine, I understand this desire perfectly. "Normal" is what seems right to us, it's what we've known and we have molded life around what we have known. By and large, we humans crave comfort. Comfort brings with it security. When we feel secure, we are less anxious and everything around us just seems calmer. That sounds pretty appealing to me! Normal sounds good to me!

There is, however, a potential danger or trap with "normal". The routine of "normal" can leave us unwilling or uninterested in seeing or doing things differently. "Normal" can leave us with the desire to simply remain where we are. Don't get me wrong; there are times when what is normal can be good for us. There are those times, though, when normal can be unhealthy and not the best

thing for us. For example, if my "normal" lifestyle consists of lots of junk food and processed food and little to no exercise or activity, that's not exactly good for me. For the church, I am left asking, "what did pre-pandemic normal look like for First UMC?" Here's my answer to that: Pre-pandemic normal at First UMC was not exactly exciting. We were simply existing--we met for worship, some stayed for Sunday School, we had a few meetings to take care of essential stuff, the same group would be involved in any Bible study or other group that was offered, and we saw less and less engagement. May I be frank with you? Pre-pandemic "normal" wasn't exactly cutting it and I think that's the LAST thing for which the church should be longing. As your pastor, my resolve is to lead us and invite us into the opposite of what was normal.

I understand the preceding sentences could be seen as unduly harsh. Let me assure you, no harshness is meant. Instead, perhaps we could think about the opportunities afforded us by the situation. I think there are two huge opportunities that lay ahead of us (but probably more):

1. A renewed focus--This can be true for us individually AND for the church. Individually, we can take this opportunity to consider what is truly important and to pursue it. For the church, this season of slowing down has allowed us to essentially rebuild, from the ground up! We can refocus, reshape, and rebuild the ministry of First UMC! As we do, our focus is simply going to be to connect people with Jesus. That's it. That's our focus and our purpose. What this necessarily means is that some things won't be the same as they were fourteen months ago. I anticipate there will be some noticeable differences going forward. The end goal will always be to connect people to Jesus.

2. Jumping in--The opportunity to be involved in the rebuilding and reshaping of ministry is, to me, both exciting and intimidating. On one hand, we get a front-row seat at what God is doing, in our lives and in our community. On the other hand, it can be a bit intimidating to blaze an unknown trail and chart an unknown path. Friends--I can honestly say that I have absolutely no idea where God is going to lead us, but I'm excited to see it.

Dear friends...I've said over and over that the best is yet to come. I firmly believe that Christ has given us this opportunity to pursue him more than ever. I also believe that Christ is faithful and that those who pursue him will find him and will find in him a life unlike anything they've ever imagined. So perhaps the invitation is to leave "normal".

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Jarrett



The
Mustard Seed

May

Ministry Team:

Pastor ~ Jarrett Wells

Office Manager ~

Andrea wells

Pianist/Organist ~

Jill Roegge

Choral Director ~

Tim Bartholomew

Financial Secretary ~

Lynne O'Hara

Treasurer ~

Susan Treadway

Youth Director ~

Andrea Wells

Custodian ~

Tonya White

Sunday Services:

Worship Service ~

9:00 a.m.

Sunday School ~

10:30 a.m.

Phone ~ 217-323-1257

E-mail ~

beardsumc@sbcglobal.net

Website ~

beardstownfumc.com

"Like" us on Facebook ~

Beardstown First UMC

Nurture Team

Birthdays

- 2 Jean Olson
Owen Quigley
Christopher McClenning
Brett Shores
- 3 Michael Dugger
- 4 Andrea Wells
- 5 Susan Treadway
- 9 Tanya Black Hager
Trent Murray
- 10 Riley Booth
- 13 Christopher Shores
Angela Robertson
- 14 Dick Robinson
- 15 Jamie Birdsley Comiskey
Sue Braner
- 16 Ola Quigley
- 17 Dale Robertson
Angela Robertson
- 19 Erin Bell
- 20 Tammy Elam
Billy Joe Robertson
- 21 Dan McClenning
Gerry Braner
- 22 John Rohn
Tara Black
Sara Brannan
- 24 Leigh Lamb
- 27 Travis Taylor
- 28 Rob Quigley
- 30 Brandi Miller



Anniversaries

- 10 Jerry & Peg Burgett
- 21 Richard & Karen Robinson
- 24 Jarrett & Andrea Wells
- 31 Levi & Jenna Vermillion

Prayer Requests

When a prayer need comes up, please call or message Andrea at (309)338-9462 or andreaajwells@hotmail.com. She will put all prayer requests out on the prayer chain as well as contact Julie Looker, Nurture team leader. Also, if a Pastoral visit is needed or requested, please include that so Pastor Jarrett knows there is a need. In this day, it is often uncertain if a pastoral presence is needed. Many people are very private or are still concerned about COVID. Pastor Jarrett wants to be present when needed but also dose not want to overstep boundaries or comfort levels. It is difficult to attend to the needs of the congregation if the needs are not made known.



Meal Trains

One ministry of the Nurture Team is providing meals for those who have been ill or hospitalized. This team has already provided meals for several people in our congregations. All call was put out for people to help provide those meals but did not reach all who receive our newsletter. If you would like to help provide meals for this ministry, please contact Julie Looker, head of the Nurture Team, at 217-248-6837. This is an important part of the ministry of the nurture team as it helps those who need the meals recover with out the worry of preparing meals for themselves.



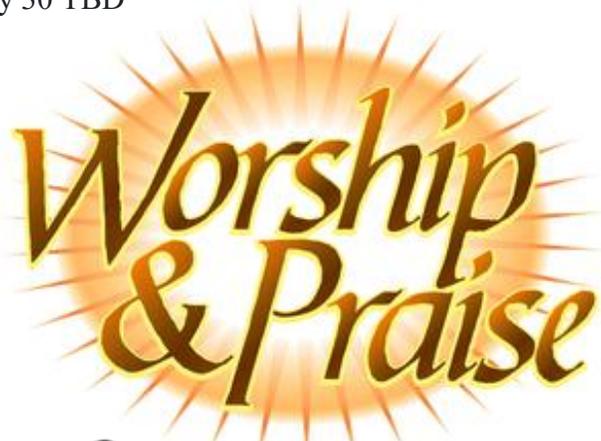
Worship Team



April Worship

Throughout April, we have been working through the Epistle to the Philippians, with the focus on returning to Christ as our first love. The overarching theme has been seeking to be filled with holy love, that we might love Christ and love one another. For the first few weeks of May, we will continue this slow journey through the Epistle; readings and message titles are as follows:

- May 2 Philippians 2: 14-3:4
 "Poured Out" (Communion Sunday)
- May 9 Philippians 3: 2-21
 "When Nothing Else Matters"
- May 16 Philippians 4: 4-9, 21-23
 "Rejoice!"
- May 23 Pastor Jarrett on Vacation; Leigh Lamb preaching
- May 30 TBD



Worship Time Change

Beginning May 9th, worship time will be changing back to 9:00 a.m. We are starting to see things get back to normal after the pandemic and this is one additional change that we are making to get things back to some sense of normalcy. Sunday School will remain at 10:30 as this time change will allow for our Sunday School classes to have the full hour to devote to fellowship and study.

This time change will not effect the Facebook Live stream every Sunday Morning, the "Go Live" time will just change as well. We will still continue to live stream our worship so those who are not able to worship with us in person can still worship with us in spirit.

If you have not worshiped with us in person recently, now would be a great time to rejoin us! No matter the reason for your absence, we invite you to worship with us again. We can't wait to see your smiling face!



Worship Leaders

A huge "Thank You!" to those who have been leading us in worship this past year, even when we had to "re-think" church as we knew it. You have added so much to our worship time while we were Facebook Live only and have also enhanced it since we have come back together. We could not have gotten through this without you all. Wendy, Jill, Brian, Brittney and Andrea, thank you!

We are looking to add to our line-up of worship leaders. We are planning, in June, to start having two worship leaders every Sunday morning. Not everyone likes to sing by themselves so having two singers each Sunday will hopefully include more people wishing to lead worship. If you have lead worship for us in the past or would be interested in joining a rotation of weekly worship leaders, please let Andrea know.





Mission & Outreach Team

Administrative Team



Team Meeting

Mark your calendars for June 6th right after Sunday School. The Mission and Outreach is ready to make some plans to be in mission. If you signed up to be on the Mission and Outreach Team, please plan to attend this planning meeting on June 6th. If you are unsure if you signed up to be on this team, check with the office or go ahead and come to the meeting. Be on the lookout for more information concerning this team in upcoming bulletins and the June Newsletter.

Open Position

The administrative team is still accepting applications for the position of Office Manager/Administrative Assistant. This position is 20-25 hours per week. Responsibilities include but are not limited to: directing and maintaining the office of First UMC, publishing weekly worship bulletins, monthly newsletter and other documents as needed, co-managing and maintaining church social media accounts, and other duties as needed or requested. The right applicant should display strong interpersonal and communication skills, have the ability to work independently, have strong organizational skills, be proficient in data processing, be proficient in social media and possess the ability to maintain a high level of discretion and confidentiality.

Applications can be picked up and returned to the church office. Application period will end May 31st. Please call the church office with any questions.



UMW Scholarships

As a crazy school year winds down, applications for the UMW Scholarship are still available. An application, along with requirements and criteria, can be picked up in the church office. Those eligible for the scholarship must be a member or child or a member of Beardstown First UMC. Deadline for the return of fully completed applications is May 31st.

Christian Love In Action

Currently C.L.I.A. is in need of *Hamburger Helper and Tuna Helper*. You can bring your donated items to the church again. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. CLIA hours are: Tuesdays from 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Thank you for donations. If you would like to contribute but don't have time / remember to shop, you can give money to Lynne O'Hara and she will pick up the items.

Cass County Food Pantry

The Cass County Food Pantry is another place that helps Cass County residents in need of food. To help with their mission, they are asking churches for donations for the month of **MAY: Cereal, Canned Tuna, Tuna, Chicken or Hamburger Helper.**

They are always in need of: *Peanut Butter, Jelly, Macaroni & Cheese, Canned Vegetables, Canned Fruit, Cereal, or Non-Perishable Food Items.* They have a walk in cooler or freezer to hold perishable items, and are able to take fresh produce items.





Beardstown First United Methodist Church
415 S. State St.
Beardstown, IL 62618

The Mustard Seed

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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