



OFFERINGS & REFLECTIONS

OUR DOORS MAY BE CLOSED BUT YOU ARE DOING GOD'S WORK



Photo by Gordon Connell

Richard recently reminded me that it was Bob Dillon who coined the phrase: "The times they are a changing." What a true statement for the time we live in today. We don't yet understand the magnitude of all the ways life post covid19 will be different from life before the pandemic, but we know there is no going back to what we knew as "normal". In many ways, this is an age in which we are learning much about what it is to be human, what it is to live in one big community that spreads across—not just rivers—but oceans, and borders, and time zones, and the divides of language, and culture, and religion. One thing that I've seen, even as we've had to isolate ourselves, is the world coming together in some beautiful new ways:

1. Symphonies are being performed in perfect harmony from the privacy of the musicians' homes thanks to the use of modern technology and creative minds.
2. Neighbors are checking in on one another and learning more about one another now that most of us are working from home
3. Families are eating more meals together at the dinner table and engaging in more face to face conversations.

It has been so life-giving for me to hear about so many of our children, youth and adults sending mail to our home-bound members and to health care workers in the community. (some of you did this as part of the 7 challenges I invited you to invest in a few weeks ago!), Others of you have been diligent in making calls to each other as you remember my challenge for us to call the 3 families listed prior to our name in the church directory and the 3 families whose names are listed after our name in the church directory. You have donated food to help feed families in this community and you have engaged in ZOOM chats to check in with one another, give a listening ear and offer prayer. While the doors of the building have been closed, you've been doing the work of the church – You are actively serving as the hands and feet of God who loves us completely.

This time apart can cause us to feel isolated if we let it, but as we continue to reach out to one another, each of us can be assured that we are seen and cherished. Not only do you matter to your church, but you deeply matter to the God who holds you so tenderly, the God who inspired the writer of Psalm 139:

"You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways."
(verses 1-3)

May you feel seen, cherished and comforted by your church and by our love-lavishing, oh so generous and gracious God and may the positive changes we are experiencing together become habits we take into the "new normal" post Covid-19.



Because He Lives,

Becky Shirley



Worshiping in Love



Growing in Love



Serving in Love

WORSHIP MINISTRIES

Services Online

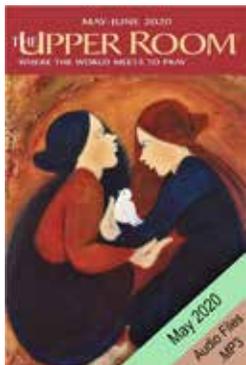
Although the doors of our church campus are temporarily closed due to guidance and directions from the State government and health care department. We are following the guidelines of the South Carolina DHEC and Bishop Holston's recommendation to continue to suspend in-person worship services – and all gatherings, meetings and events – through May 20, 2020. We will continue worship activities as a community of faith online via



Worshipping in Love

- PUMC Website
- PUMC Facebook
- PUMC Children's Ministry Facebook
- PUMC Children's Ministry YouTube
- Adult Sunday School Zoom
- Women's Bible Study Zoom

If you would like to have a church group or committee meet via Zoom, contact Maggie at Maggie@pumcfortmill.org to learn how!



"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." - John 14: 27

The Upper Room is available. Hard copies are bagged individually and in a box at the entry door under the portico. It is also available online. For those of you who are not familiar with the Upper Room, it is a Methodist daily devotional. It derives its

name from an upper room in John Wesley's house where he went daily for prayer and meditation. The cover of this edition depicts Ruth and Naomi.

Reopening Plans

Members of the Church Council along with Pastor Becky and staff are working on a PUMC Reopening Plan. Although we will all rejoice at being able to physically see one another and worship in community, we will still need to engage in responsible and safe social distancing practices.

Above all, remain faithful in your prayer. We serve a loving God whose word is a light that brightens our path even when it is difficult for us to see. The time will come when we will be together again physically. In the meantime, I know that you will remain persistent in finding ways to be in community with your sisters and brothers in Christ.

CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES

YouTube Channel

While much of the created material continues to be posted on the PUMC Children's Ministry Facebook, the Children's Ministry has created its very own PUMC Children's Ministry YouTube channel to post videos created for the ministry! This channel has become invaluable during the quarantine because the ministry was able to distribute newly created Sunday School lessons and fun outputs for children and parents who could not see the content otherwise. What started out as a tool of necessity can now become a permanent feature to enhance the Children's Ministry and reach a larger audience with our original content. Please share our YouTube Channel with you friends.



ROCKY RAILWAY VBS UPDATE

Given the continued uncertainty of the near future and many unknown factors associated with the Coronavirus, Philadelphia United Methodist Church has sadly made the decision to cancel VBS for this summer. It is unfortunate, but we think it is best for all involved. Be assured that Rocky Railway will be geared up and ready to roll down the tracks in the summer of 2021! Our proposed dates for next summer are June 21-24th, 2021. We are also looking at other fun and faith events for later this summer. We will provide updates as soon as possible.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Reminder - Church Building is Closed

The PUMC church building facility is currently closed. Staff is working from home except to prepare the digital worship and incidental purposes such as deliveries. If there is an urgent need for a church member to enter the building, please first contact the appropriate staff person and make suitable arrangements. Thank you for understanding and playing your part to ensure we remain safe and healthy during this unusual and uncertain period brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic.

CHURCH COUNCIL, FINANCE COMMITTEE AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE TAKE THE LONG VIEW ON OPERATIONS & EXPENSES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19



Our church has applied for a loan through the Payroll Protection Program (PPP). As you may know, due to severe quarantine disruption, this is a program of the Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide funds to small businesses and non-profit organizations to help meet payroll expenses. The SC United Methodist Conference approved churches to apply under their guidelines. We applied through SCBT for the purpose of meeting payroll for 2 ½ months. As long as the loan is used primarily for payroll expenses, it will be forgiven requiring no repayment.

The SBA approved the loan and these funds have been received. The Finance Committee set up a special account to receive these funds and payroll is withdrawn from that account so that the funds are used for their intended purpose and we will easily be able to provide documentation for the loan's forgiveness.

Making this application was not a trivial decision. It was discussed and debated at length by Church Council in their meeting on April 19th. There were two important matters raised before Council:

1. There is a risk of government entanglement in matters of the church.
2. There could be small businesses out there with greater need than ours and we would use funds that should flow to them.

Council noted that we have members out of work or with sharply reduced incomes. The primary concern was the economic uncertainty of this year as a whole. We are not in a financial crisis at this moment, but these funds will help to bridge us until we are able to resume normal church activities. Therefore, Council felt it in the church's best interest to utilize this opportunity that is specifically intended for the current economic uncertainty.

The Finance Committee is keeping a close watch on our funds. As we move into the fall/winter we will have a better feel for our continued financial stability. If it is evident that through our tithes and offerings that we have more than our normal cash on hand at year end, the Church Council has agreed that funds over general budget needs will be used for special mission or ministry projects.

The Church Council deeply appreciates your continued financial support of the work of Philadelphia UMC. Staff and ministry leaders have prayerfully made adjustments to the budget based both on the financial situation and changing needs due to these times. In these unusual times, your church remains a vital part of the lives of our members and our community.

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCIAL REPORT

\$63,651 is needed each month to meet our annual budget of \$763,387

144,919 has been received as of 3/31/20 towards the General and Building Funds

\$162,874 has been spent as of 3/31/20 from the General and Building Funds

\$1,143,808 Loan balance for Building and Parsonage as of 3/31/20

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE



The mission statement of the PUMC Evangelism Team is "Invite, Inspire, Involve and Include". With sheltering in place and social distancing it appears difficult to fulfill this statement, but we encourage you to invite others to our online opportunities. Inspire your friends and neighbors to get outside and see God around them. Involve yourself in mission work by sending cards to healthcare workers, paramedics, police, firemen, etc to thank them. Include those who might be alone in conversation via phone, text or email. The Evangelism Team wants to extend an invitation to new members and frequent guests to reach out to our team via email to jmanring.jm@gmail.com with questions regarding our church, services and ministries. The team wants to

"hit the ground running" lending assistance at the physical reopening, graduation celebration and fall festival. Let us hear from our church community so that we can answer your questions to help you get inspired and involved.

Growing in Love

GOD IN OUR WORLD - SUBMISSIONS OF STORIES OF GOD AT WORK

We are happy to present some stories that will hopefully renew and invigorate your soul.

1) Children's Hospitals Outreach

Taylor Pittman, granddaughter of Donna Schaefer, who is member of PUMC and attends the Disciple Sunday School Class, is working on a wonderful project for Children's Hospitals. The project consists of providing items for the children that are in the hospitals to have as their own and take with them when leaving the hospital. The Disciple's Class was happy to donate money, so that Taylor could purchase items for her gift bags.



Serving In Love: These items will make up gift bags to be given to children in the hospital at this time. Created by a teenager, this is a beautiful example of being the hands and feet of Christ.

2) Love In the Neighborhood

(Reprinted with permission from a neighborhood newsletter.)

One night this past week, our dog was having a barking fit and refused to quiet down. I looked out the door to see three young people in our driveway. Apparently, they had been headed to our door but the barking changed their minds. One of them ran to a lawn chair and left something there. They ran off, but I discovered this rock all painted and decorated with flowers and the word LOVE on one side and instructions on the back that I could change it or keep it the same but it was intended to be passed on. It is so lovely and unique that I told them I was going to keep it for my garden. I don't know who the youngsters are – or who the parents are that came up with such a beautiful idea – but I want to say "Thank you for brightening my day!" and my garden, even if I kept all the love? *(Editor's note: Other "Love" rocks have been spotted in the neighborhood. Thanks to the youngsters for their kindness!)*



Serving In Love: PUMC youth anonymously spread LOVE all around their neighborhood.

3) He Is Risen *(See Gallery of Crosses on page 7 & 8)*

Our congregation was asked to display crosses as a sign of Jesus' triumph over the grave and an outward celebration of Easter. Members could then engage on a scavenger hunt via car to find the crosses. Some also encouraged their neighborhoods to create cross displays. What a creative way to be evangelistic while social distancing. "... I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (Isaiah 49: 6b) Let the light of Jesus shine through you. A simple Christian symbol in your yard could be the seed that God wants you to plant in all those who pass by.



Serving In Love: Jennifer Gaia teamed up with the PUMC Ladies Bible Study this month to share the Love in a "Bag of Books" project.

4) Love in a "Bag of Books"

In keeping with one of the tenets of the church's mission statement - to Serve in Love - and knowing that reading is a good way to spend the time while South Carolina was under stay-at-home orders, the PUMC Ladies Bible Study Group organized to collect books and share with fellow PUMC members and attendees. Jennifer Gaia collected the donated books from front porches of donors, bagged them up and delivered them to the door steps of some in the congregation.

5) What's Best?

Yesterday evening as I dropped my teenage daughter off at work, I noticed a family sitting on the curb in the parking lot with a sign saying that they needed food. I have not before seen beggars at the Harris Teeter in Fort Mill. (Well, that is not entirely true, the week before there had been a well-dressed man playing the violin. I assumed he was just doing a good deed-

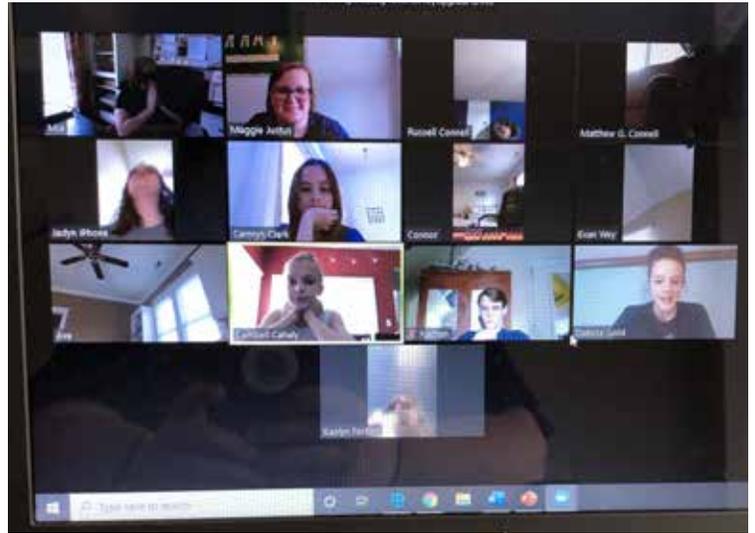
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PYG - PHILLY YOUTH GROUP

The youth have continued working on their Sunday School curriculum: Introducing the Old Testament by Rev Anne Robertson. We will be finishing up this book in the next couple of weeks and will move on to Introducing the New Testament.

We have been having a ton of fun during PYG every week! We have been playing a game, doing a devotional, and spending some time in prayer together. We love having the ability to see each other and hang out as a group even when we can't be together in person! We have played so many fun games including Pictionary, Trivia, and an indoor scavenger hunt! Most recently we played "Where In Fort Mill am I?" which required youth to identify a well-known location in Fort Mill (think Peach Stand and The Greenway) using a zoomed in Google Earth image! We have continued to have a great turn out week after week and we look forward to having more fun together in the weeks to come!

While the youth have been disappointed that school will not resume in person this year, we are hopeful for a fun summer together (either virtually or in person)! We are so grateful for all of our youth and their families who have made it possible for us to stay connected even while we are social distant. The youth meet Sundays at 9:45am for Sunday School and 5:00pm for PYG. All youth grades 6th-12th are invited to join! Please email maggie@pumcfortmill.org so you can be added to our email list!



Worshipping In Love: The youth have fully transitioned to an online program during these times of social distancing.

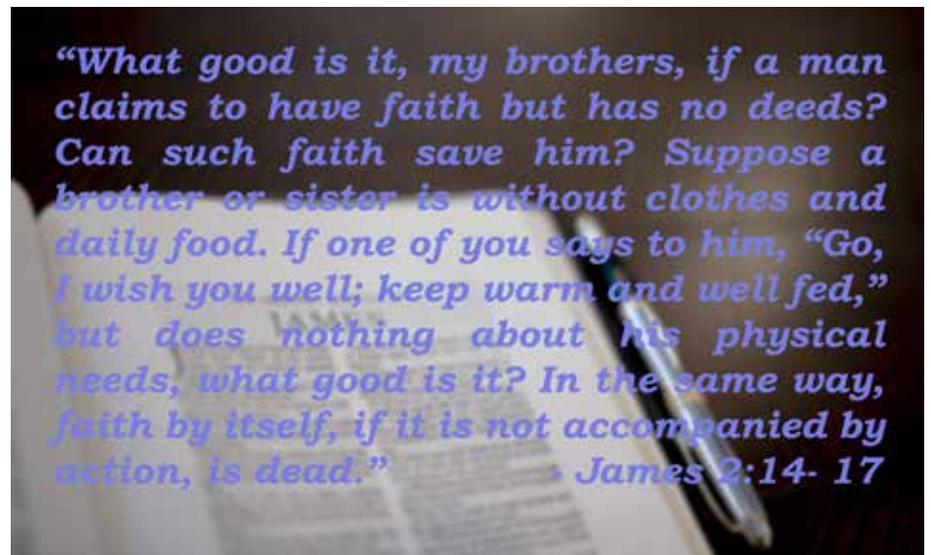
GOD IN OUR WORLD

continued from page 4

making everyone feel good with his music, but it wasn't until I was driving past that I realized he was "begging" for money because he was unemployed due to Coronavirus.)

Anyway, at first, I decided to avoid this family sitting by the side of the road. I drove circles through the parking lot in order to avoid them, but then I remembered the Bible study my son and I had done that day. We read James 2:14- 17. "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." I realized that my prayers would do very little for this family right now, so I gave them some money. I probably could have given more, but I gave enough for them to get something to eat.

This event has stuck with me. I think I will be seeing a lot more of it now. I am really struggling with what is the best course of action for our country. Yes, we need to protect vulnerable citizens. As of this writing, there have been over 70,000 US deaths attributed to Covid-19. I have seen studies that indicate that home quarantine



plays a role in controlling the spread of this Coronavirus. Yet, we also need to get healthy people back to work. I have found studies that link unemployment with up to a 50% increase in mortality from any cause. And unemployment is not the only risk factor of our current shelter in place. Another article reported a near tripling of domestic abuse reports since the lockdown began from around the world, including child abuse. Other studies have found that loneliness is as detrimental to your health as smoking 15 cigarettes per day.

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MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Fort Mill Care Center

The FMCC remains open to serve the FM community. They are providing drive through services for those in need of food and other emergency services. It is a completely volunteer organization that relies 100% on donations.



Items that are particularly needed in May are canned fruit, canned tuna, grits, jelly, dish washing liquid (not for a dishwasher), laundry detergent, fresh and frozen meat. Cash contributions are used to purchase fresh produce and other pantry items not donated as well as life saving prescriptions and emergency dental extractions. Check out FMCC on facebook. Donations can be brought Mon., Wed. and Fri. mornings 9:00AM - Noon. Donors should pull into the gravel drive in front of the storage building (the windowless building) and someone will come to you - 2760 Old Nation Road in Fort Mill.



Serving in Love: Can't get out to deliver? Contact Pat and Jim Broome via email at (pfbroome@comporium.net) or Dave and Cindy Shuff at (shuff@netsync.net) and they will pick up items from your doorstep and deliver to the Care Center.

Urban Ministries



We partner with Urban Ministries to provide shelter for men through Room in the Inn. They have a program called Operation Sandwich and serve 800 sandwiches most days of the year – that's almost 300,000 sandwiches on an annual basis. For more information visit [Urban Ministry Center](http://UrbanMinistryCenter.com) online.

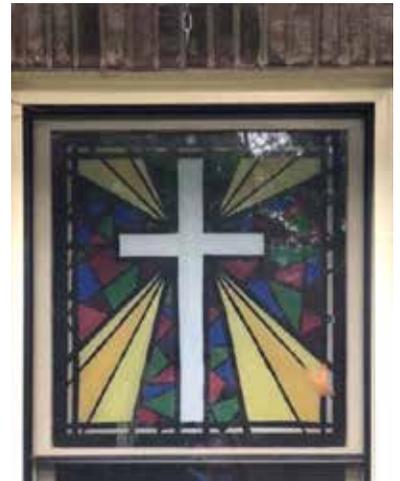
GOD IN OUR WORLD

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I believe that there is so much more to our current Corona situation than the extremes of "everyone stay in your homes" and "just go back to normal." To these extremes, I am reminded of a passage from Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis in which he is discussing the problem of extremes. Lewis writes, "I feel a strong desire to tell you- and I expect you feel a strong desire to tell me- which of these two errors is worse. That is the devil getting at us. He always sends errors into the world in pairs- pairs of opposites. And he always encourages us to spend a lot of time thinking which is worse. You see why, of course? He relies on your extra dislike of the one error to draw you gradually into the opposite one. But do not be fooled. We have to keep our eyes on the goal and go straight through between both errors."

I do not think going back to normal is possible at this point: too much of our corporate psyche has changed. There IS a new illness out there that is catastrophic for some people, and yet staying home is catastrophic for others. I do not know the best course of action, and I am sincerely grateful that I am not the one who has to make those decisions. Ultimately, I do not think the answer to whether we should all stay in quarantine or immediately reopen everything is a simple one. Nevertheless, I do think the solution lies in between these two extremes.

Gallery of Crosses



WORSHIP MINISTRIES

“What I Did During the Covid-19 Lockdown.”

Remember when you started school each year and your teacher asked you to write an essay, “What I did last summer.” We all had our stories then and we all will have our unique stories now when we come out of this ‘stay at home’ and time of ‘social distancing.’ I can truly say that Debra and I have a unique story. We sold our home in Clover, closed on March 31st, and moved in with Debra’s sister and husband in York. We are awaiting the closing of our new home hopefully in May, but this makes us technically ‘homeless!’ (I am in no way comparing our situation with those who are truly homeless, living on the street and in shelters!) But, I think this has truly taught us lessons about how important family is and how it is important to put our trust in God when times are tough.



Worshipping in Love

My on-line devotion of April 30th (PUMC Facebook) cites the 23rd Psalm which says: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” And in these times we must remember: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

Stay safe and well and look forward to the time when we can gather together as a church to worship and fellowship as the body of Christ!

YouTube channels for devotional and uplifting music:

Contemporary YouTube Channel Link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXDB6QlhJTbgrAr-bnbPOsfPJqugFW5xe>

Classis Anthems YouTube Channel Link: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXDB6QlhJTbi9-49cDGZjo6KqwL_31UMv

Peace & Alleuia! Jim Lowder

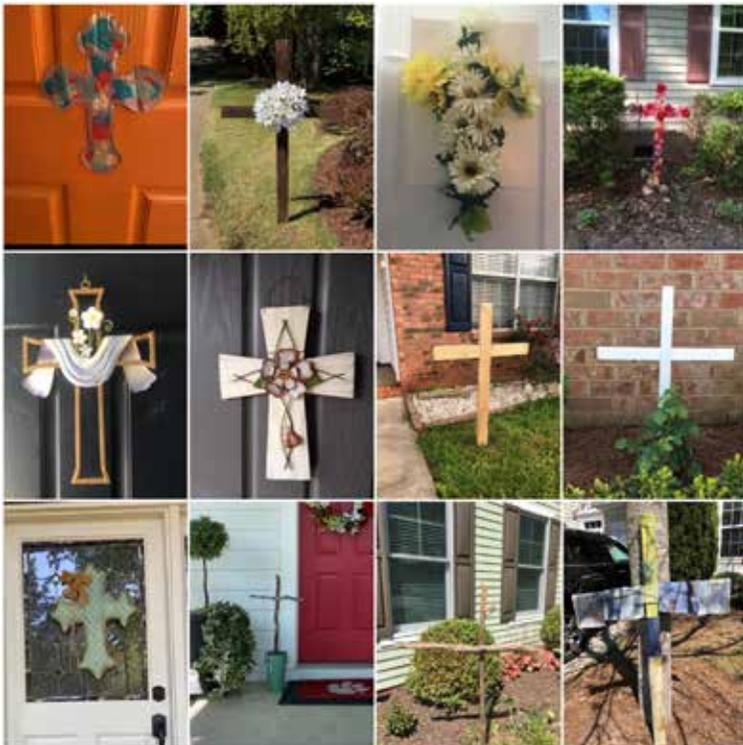
NURTURE COMMITTEE

Prayer Walk Guide

A Prayer Walk is basically any walk that you take and spend some purposeful time in prayer. Pray for yourself, your family, your neighborhood, your state, your country, your church. You can walk by yourself or with your family. It can be obvious that you are praying or no one but you and God need to know. This current time of “shelter in place” is a wonderful time to begin a practice of Prayer Walking. While the practice of Prayer Walking is as individual as any person, here is a guide for beginning your practice.

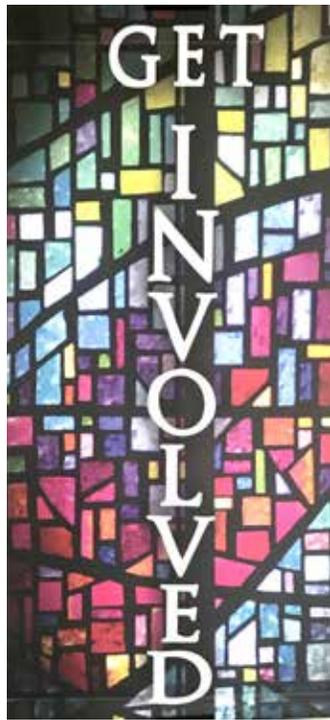
Blessings to Pray Over the People in Your Area

- B- Body: pray for physical needs to be met.
- L- Labor: pray for the labor of the people’s hands to bless other.
- E- Emotions: pray for emotional needs to be met.
- S- Social: pray for healthy relationships among one another.
- S- Spiritual: pray for spiritual needs to be met.



Worshipping in Love: Members made beautiful crosses for all to see in celebration of our risen Lord and His redeeming salvation.





SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES MEETING ON ZOOM

Adult Sunday School

Adult Sunday School is now on Zoom. Have you ever thought about joining an adult Sunday school class? Here is how to connect.

Logos and Disciples meet together – Sundays at 9:30am

For the next 6 lessons, we are learning about the Parables of Jesus. The class is Bible focused. That means we learn more about Scripture, but it's not Bible Study. We don't memorize verses. No previous familiarity with Bible details is required. There is no lesson book; no required daily readings. The sessions are discussion style and will have personal meaning for you. Next we take up an 8-lesson series on the Old Testament called The Bible Jesus Read. This is good stuff about the Bible as used by Jesus.

Contact Bill Ray to get a link. billnoneray@yahoo.com, or 404-414-4649.

Seekers – Tuesdays at 7:00pm. No one is a stranger! We are multi-generational, vocal, engaged, informal and we love to laugh. Currently, Kristin Gommer is facilitating our discussion on some of Paul's letters. Short scripture readings are helpful to engage, but not required.

Contact Cindi Cahaly, cahaly@comporium.net.

UNITED METHODIST MEN



Our next Men is the Mirror is May 16th at 7:30am via Zoom. This group brings spiritual renewal to men. As a result they are stronger and better husbands, fathers, and friends. They are better able to live a life that exemplifies Jesus Christ in their daily walk. It is not a class and no preparation is required. This monthly one-hour get-together is simply a biblically focused discussion of the challenges men face and the spiritual support provided by their faith and the others present in the group. About three dozen men are involved - but any one session typically has a third of that, so if you are new to the group you fit in easily.

The topic for this month is: **House-Bound or Bound for Home.**

Contact billnoneray@yahoo.com for the Zoom link.

Serving in Love: The men are able to help shut-ins and work outside in lawn clean up as shown by Ron Jacoby. Others cut up a large tree that had fallen and repaired a treasured clothesline at another home.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



It is always a privilege to honor our PUMC graduates each year with a luncheon of Southern proportions! Unfortunately, we will not be able to have a covered dish with 100 people in the fellowship hall this year. We are coordinating with the graduates to develop a plan for a special celebration that will give the congregation a chance to congratulate the grads on their success while being meaningful to them. Please be on the lookout for an email this month about the planned activities.

If you have a graduate and have not received an email asking for pictures and info, please contact Cindi at cahaly@comporium.net for more information.

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Director of Children & Family Ministries - Nic Gold
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