



# September



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE	2 6:15pm Confirmation Parent meeting 7:00pm Trustees	3	4	5 6:00pm Worship
6 9:15am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship	7	8	9 9:00am Sew 'N Sews 7:30pm Youth Group	10 7:00pm Bible 101	11	12 6:00pm Worship
13 9:15am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship 7:00pm Women's & Youth Bible Studies	14	15	16 9:30am UMW 7:00pm Ad Council 7:30pm Youth Group	17	18	19 6:00pm Worship 6:45pm Fellowship Dinner
20 9:15am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship 7:00pm Women's & Youth Bible Studies	21 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	22	23 9:00am Sew 'N Sews 7:30pm Youth Group	24 7:00pm Bible 101	25	26 6:00pm Worship
27 9:15am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship 7:00pm Women's & Youth Bible Studies	28	29	30 7:30pm Youth Group	Pastor Mike vacation		
Pastor Mike vacation						

DATE	USHERS	SCRIPTURE READER	CHILDREN'S TIME	AUDIO	REFRESHMENTS
6 Sep	Cindy Peabody	Stephanie Leisinger	Pastor Mike	Christensen	Christensen
	Bobbie Cline				
	Kevin & Carol				
	McGregor				
13 Sep	Barb Summers	Barb Summers	Kathy Pierce	Miller	Sew 'N Sews
	Charlotte Burr				(Bobbie Cline)
	Marlene Kriha				
	Kay Reed				
20 Sep	Brandon & Betty	Betty Jacques	Brandon Jacques	Holcomb	Sandy Sell
	Jacques				Christyne Eckloff
	Kevin & Carol				
	McGregor				
27 Sep	Charlotte Burr	Stephanie Leisinger	Amy Holcomb	Rockefeller	Hospitality
	Marlene Kriha				(Linda Keiper)
	Kay Reed				
	Bobbie Cline				



02– Dolores Woodward

10– Dan Sell

24– Kelly Murr

02– Roger Kenkel

10– Korben Kenkel

25– Alan Mayfield

02– Nate Evans

11– Larry Snavely

25– Carrie Leisinger

03– Nathan Zwink

12– Tegun Catlin

26– Tara Tracy

06– Leon Smith

12– Piper Zwink

26– Brian Leisinger

07– Shane Rockefeller

16– Cory Morgan

26– Brooke Bendfeldt

07– Paige Peterson

18– Katlyn Bailey

29– Lois Benson

08– Harlie Brown

19– Aiden Middleswart

30– Richard Rose

08– Florian Carr

19– Cy Feeken

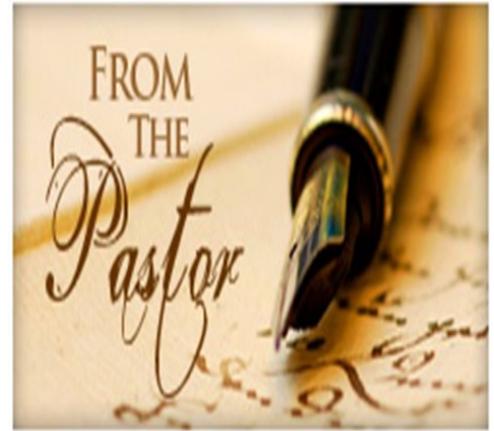
30– Noah Summers

10– Lee Slater

19– Kaleb Leisinger

# Normal has never felt so good

OK, I know we're still a long ways from the normal we used to know. I'm as sick of masks as everyone else, but I know it's the best option right now so we can keep having some sense of normalcy. Our world still looks far different than it did 6 months ago, and it's hard to say when there will be an end in sight. Some people keep throwing around this phrase of "the new normal" but there is way too much about this I'm not ready to accept as normal. But I do agree there were elements about what was just "normal" before that I would be fine not returning to. This season, like every season, is a chance for humanity to do better than we've done before. Unfortunately we're no closer to agreeing on what that normal is.



But I've been excited as this fall draws closer and we're able to have some semblance of normalcy again. Our Confirmation service was definitely different than in the past, but I can't tell you how good it was for my soul to see those youth again, to be part of the traditional laying on of hands, and celebrating their accomplishment. As I write this article I'm making preparations for another year of Confirmation – my 6<sup>th</sup> class in a row at Faith United.

Like most parents, I had conflicting emotions as my boys went back to school. I'm so thankful for the staff who pour into my kids. I'm thankful for the chance they have to interact with friends again – depression from social isolation is a huge concern I have for all children and youth. And it was nice to have some routine back in life, including a routine of "date day" with my wife. But I'm nervous about it all as well. Everything about this school-year is more stressful. And while the school has done a great job with precautions, in many ways it's only as successful as the least committed person. It feels like waiting for the other shoe to drop wondering how long it will be before schools have to shut at least temporarily. But we'll take some normalcy in whatever dose we can get.

I think humanity is wired for some semblance of routine. I know some people are very spontaneous and "roll with the punches" pretty well. I know that's not me personally. But I think even those most adventurous – life on the edge of your seat – people still crave some normalcy and routine. We may love to travel but there's something nice about being home. We may crave vacation time, but there's comfort in our work routines. That's why so many people fail at retirement! Or our dose of normal may be smaller – having our favorite meal, or curling up in our favorite chair to watch our favorite show. Those little pieces of routine or normalcy are so essential to our wellbeing.

But I confess, I'm worried about what impact all this chaos will have on the church. I completely understand why our church – like most – is seeing a decline in attendance. Even with Online included now, we're down about 30%. My fear is when and if that rebounds. For some, church has always been the norm. But after 6 months of uncertainty, I worry that a new routine of not attending will take hold. I know God loves us all personally, and church attendance doesn't make someone a true Christian. There are definitely ways to feed our faith even without corporate worship. But that meaningful method of connecting, learning, and growing together is a normal I hope people don't give up on. Find ways to stay connected. It may not be fully normal yet. But we can't lose such an essential part of our faith.

# Faith United – By The Numbers – shows COVID struggle



This was definitely a year filled with unexpected twists and turns! But while we sometimes feel overwhelmed with the chaos of our culture, our mission as the church remains the same. Faith United has been on an incredible journey since our Paragraph 213 restart process in 2014-15. We are a very different church today. Although the shut downs and social distancing have certainly impacted our church, sometimes a closer look at the numbers helps us get a better gauge of where we're at. Church health can't be fully quantified by statistics, these measures help us see where we're at compared to where we've been. Here's

some stats you might be interested in:

## Attendance (weekly average):

<b>Yearly:</b>	<b>2020YTD – 62*</b>	<b>2019 – 81</b>	<b>2018 – 85</b>	<b>2017 – 87</b>	<b>2016 –90</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>2020– 74**</b>	<b>2019 – 67</b>	<b>2018 – 69</b>	<b>2017 – 86</b>	<b>2016 –65</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>2020– 52</b>	<b>2019 – 67</b>	<b>2018 – 70</b>	<b>2017 – 76</b>	<b>2016 –71</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr.</b>	<b>2020– 52</b>	<b>2019 – 84</b>	<b>2018 – 85</b>	<b>2017 – 89</b>	<b>2016 –90</b>

\* Includes online attendance for the first year ever, 19 a week YTD for 2020

\*\* Includes Confirmation which is normally in spring



**So What's it mean?** It's no surprise that our attendance has been down. While the online worship option is added this year for the first time, it's a great option for some, it's not for everyone. It was expected that we would see a downturn in attendance this year. Every church is. The real question is whether the numbers come back up and when.



## Offering (weekly average):

Year	Year To Date:	1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr:
2020	<b>\$2,718.43*</b>	<b>\$2,624.80</b>	<b>\$2,779.74</b>
2019	<b>\$2,796.68</b>	<b>\$2,800.36</b>	<b>\$2,806.22</b>
2018	<b>\$3,055.20</b>	<b>\$3,181.87</b>	<b>\$2,963.94</b>
2017	<b>\$2,750.89</b>	<b>\$2,587.90</b>	<b>\$2,852.75</b>
2016	<b>\$2,596.29</b>	<b>\$2,745.73</b>	<b>\$2,647.22</b>

\* Includes online giving for first year ever

**So What's it mean?** Our year-to-date giving is down slightly from last year, by \$75 a week. And our July and August stats (not yet complete) indicate those months may actually be up in giving from a year ago. We know that in turbulent times like this not every family can keep giving as generously as before. But we also recognize that this may mean trimming our spending. Compared to 2018 our giving is down more significantly which means we'll need to adjust our budget in the years to come.

## The Budget, Bills and Future:

<b>2020: \$178,555</b>	<b>2019: \$183,098</b>	<b>2018: \$171,869</b>
<b>2017: \$161,052</b>	<b>2016: \$120,648*</b>	<b>2015: \$142,738</b>
<b>2014: \$140,630</b>	<b>2013: \$146,252</b>	<i>* Part-Time Pastor</i>

**So What's it mean?** Giving peaked in 2018, but our budget did not. Some smart planning in the past few years allowed us to build cash reserves to weather the financial ups and downs. But we know our budget needs trimmed

in order to maintain our financial health. Our goal is to get back to a budget around \$165,000 in the next few years. But in order to make that happen we'll need to make some tough decisions on staffing. The bulk of our costs is staff. We are in decent shape financially, but we want to remain that way. So, we're being proactive.



# Church Leadership moving to new model

It seems there's always more to do than there is time to do it in! As the pace of life continues to pick up and the demands on our time keep growing, Faith United has been prayerfully considering how we can help people serve without taking too much of their time. The answer comes in a new ministry model in our Book of Discipline called the One Board Model. United Methodism prides



itself on having laity-led churches. That is, it's not the pastor who makes the decisions and assures the success of the church – it's the people! Historically the way this was done was through a variety of Committees. Churches can have as many committees as they want, but were always instructed by our Book of Discipline to have at least 4 – Finance, Staff or Pastor Parish Relations Committee, Trustees and Administrative Council. And many churches, ours included, have many more committees beyond that such as Memorial and Endowment. But that meant that

pastors, and some key leaders in the church were attending multiple meetings each month. In a church our size it's not uncommon for people to serve on multiple boards. Plus, many times, the decisions would involve multiple committees, or approval from multiple groups before it could happen. So, out of a hope to streamline the process and still remain lay-led, the One Board Model emerged.

In this model, teams of 3-5 people tasked do any of the needed "prework" needed for these various committees, and bring a recommendation to the Administrative Council for final approval. So, instead of a committee of 9 approving the budget, and then taking it to Ad Council (where half of the people from the original committee were there again). Last year we voted to eliminate our Finance Committee and put that work in the hands of a small task force of Ad Council. This fall we voted to do the same with our SPRC. Other committees will consider if this model makes sense for them as well.. Currently our Trustees have too many irons in the fire to merge, but that may look different in the future. But, this shift does mean that our Administrative Council team will grow. But our hope is to maintain a great ministry without quite as many meetings!

## Parsonage projects slow, loan shrinks

One year after our new Parsonage was move-in ready, nearly all the "to-do" list items are completed. Finishing the garage, a fenced back yard, new shed doors, a deck, and finishing out the rest of the basement were all goals we had on the "someday" list for the new parsonage. As of today, only a few finishing touches on the basement remain to be completed. While the current health concerns have delayed any sort of formal Open House, we wanted to keep everyone aware that work is continuing.

When this project was moving from the dream to reality stage back in 2018, our church envisioned loan for up to 20 years to finance such a huge project. But 12 months after moving in, our remaining loan balance is just over \$15,000! That's truly amazing, and only possible because of your generosity. Once the loan is paid off, our Head Start rent can go to Trustees for facility needs, therefore reducing, or even eliminating the need for us to do future Capital Campaign drives! God is so Good!



## 3 bible studies offer ways to connect

Faith United will have three different bible studies returning this fall or already underway! Each is an opportunity to connect and learn together.

**Bible 101** meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday each month at 7pm. This group is a mix of ages and a chance for both men and women to study together. The group reads through the bible together and brings insights from their own lives or their favorite bible teachers to share with the group.

Our Sunday Night **Women's Bible Study** will resume on September 13<sup>th</sup> at the church. This group of ladies will gather for some social time at 7:00 and start a lesson at 7:15. The group has not picked a curriculum for the fall – a decision the group will make together. This is a great chance to deepen your faith as you walk together.

**Youth Bible Study** will also resume on September 13<sup>th</sup> and hopes to meet most Sunday's this school-year. This is a student-led group for any high school or middle school student. The group decides what to study together, read and discuss the material in class so no prep is needed outside bible study time. While we hope all youth take part in the big Wednesday night youth group, this is a chance to go a little deeper and practice your faith with peers.

There is also a Sunday morning Sunday school class for adults at 9:15 each week. The group of mostly retired men and women are always open to more people joining them! If you have questions about any of these programs, please feel free to contact the office or Pastor Mike.



## Ad Council meetings open to anyone

Committee meetings get a bad rap. In the busyness of life, it often feels like meetings are just one more task to complete. But these are also great opportunities to celebrate and dream for the future. Faith United's Administrative Council meetings are almost always on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 7pm. These meetings are open for anyone to attend. There are specific leaders in the church who can "vote" during these meetings, but everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the discussion. Our church is constantly changing, and the best changes happen when we work together! Join us and be part of shaping how our church changes lives today, tomorrow, and into the future!

## Church Conference set for Oct. 18

Connectional, and congregation led. That's part of what makes United Methodism so unique. On Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 3pm all members of Faith United are invited to join us in our own Sanctuary for a live-stream teaching, chance for fellowship and opportunity to finalize the business of the church. At this meeting, we will approve our budget, 2021 leadership, and discuss our vision for the future. How we do ministry, how we change the world is not a decision for just the pastor or a few leaders to make. We are the church together! Join us as we continue to learn and grow as Faith United!



**Church  
Conference**

## Two Pastoral vacations on books for fall



Pastor Mike has scheduled two different vacation times for this fall. He and his family will be gone from September 24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> and again November 5<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup>. During those times our Administrative Assistant Gina Christensen or Lay Staff member Linda Keiper can be contacted. If a specific Pastoral need comes up, an area pastor will be available to meet with you.

Please also note that the Staff Parish Relations Committee has updated their policy on pastoral office hours. Pastor Mike will no longer have set office hours, but will be available by phone, text or email whenever possible, and will be available to meet by appointment.

## 2,020 diapers goal for pantry collection

You read that right. The comma was intentional. We're hoping to collect 2,020 diapers this month for use at our pantry! God has blessed us with a number of food resources in the past few months. We are able to buy bulk food items for huge discounts, and we are part of the new Farmers to Families program through the USDA providing us free produce and dairy items for distribution. But diapers is another huge need at our pantry and we're hoping our church family will help us meet the need.



Our pantry tries to stock 3 different sizes of diaper size, 2, 4, and 6. Brand doesn't matter to us! While any size diaper is fine, it's challenging to try and keep all sizes in stock at all times. But by having these 3 sizes most families can make them work!

Every Sunday in September we're asking people to bring diapers to worship and place them on the altar area in the Sanctuary. We'll have a running tally of how many diapers have come in and display them in the front of the church. Let's crush this goal together!

## Printed newsletters return, save on mailing

As of August, we will again have printed copies of the newsletter available for pick up at the church. The risk of COVID-19 transfer on items has been found to be minimal, and since newsletters and bulletins are not passed back and forth, but are taken home by a family, we believed it was time to return to this option. Over the last few months we have only distributed the newsletter through mail and email. After this month, those who wish to continue receiving the newsletter in the mail are asked to contact the church office and let us know. We understand some people are not yet ready to return to in-person activities or just prefer to have it mailed. But, in an attempt to be good stewards of both our time and resources, we'll only mail to those who request it.



## Saturday meal back with Pulled Pork sandwiches



The Saturday night crew will be serving Pulled pork meal on Saturday September 19th at 6:45pm for anyone who wants to join. This takes the place of our normal potluck.

In an effort to keep everyone healthy and comply with guidance from the CDC, state, insurance company, and Great Plains Conference, we've decided that instead of a potluck, we'll make all the food, and serve you at your table just like a restaurant! Our Fellowship Hall is set up to allow 6 feet between tables, and up to 5 people sitting at each table. Just like at a restaurant, you can choose if you dine with friends or extended family, or if you'd like to be at a table with just those in your own household.

Anyone is welcome to attend. You can join us for worship at 6pm, or just come for the meal afterward at approximately 6:45. Our menu this month will include pulled pork, cheesy potato bake, salads, drinks, and a dessert. Come, find your seat, let us serve you and enjoy some socially distanced fellowship!

## Wednesday Youth Programming returns on Sept. 9

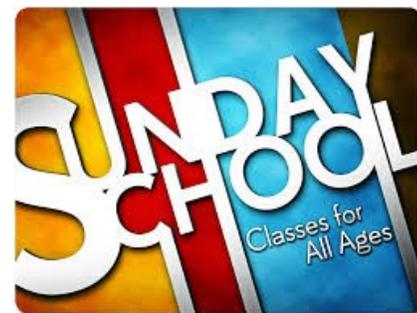


Faith United's Wednesday night programming will resume on September 9<sup>th</sup> for youth. The program is open to all youth in 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades and runs on Wednesday nights from 7:30-8:30pm.

This is, of course a different year for ministry (and everything else!). In order to assure both a fun and safe environment during this crazy time, there will be additional policies and practices in place. Those policies will include spaced seating, no contact games or activities, smaller groups, and so on. A full list and explanation of the policies and practices are posted on our website as a separate page in the "Reopening Policies" link of our homepage. Or, parents can have a copy of these policies sent to them in email or printed and sent via U.S. mail by request.

## Kids Sunday School back Sept. 13 with new format

Children's Sunday School will start back up on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> as a Children's Church option during the second half of worship. Children from preschool through 5<sup>th</sup> grade are welcome to attend the kid's class. With the busyness of life, we wanted to find a way for children to have the great Sunday School experience, and allow parents to worship at the same time. In order to make this ministry work efficiently, we encourage all parents to take a turn teaching or assisting in the rotation. That way no one has to miss worship all the time!



Kids will start out in worship with their family and then, after the children's sermon, go into the Sunday School room for a bible story and craft. Parents are also welcome to keep their children with them during worship. Our goal is not to "keep" kids from worship, but to offer a way for busy families to participate.