



The SPIRE

First United Methodist Church

www.albionfirst.org

find us on Facebook

600 East Michigan Avenue

Albion, MI 49224

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Dear Friends,

Seven Sundays have come and gone since we last gathered to worship. It seems like not that long ago, and yet forever, since we have been able to be the church as we knew it.

I'm sure you are asking, as I am, when we will "get back to normal." The simple answer is that we don't know. We don't know when it will be safe to open the church to daily business. We don't know when it will be safe to gather in worship. We will listen to the guidance of our secular leaders, our Bishop and common sense as we engage in that process.

Bishop Bard began that conversation (see page 2) and more information will soon be coming from state leaders. I expect that in the days ahead we will have much more to say on how and when we will be able to be together again.

In all this uncertainty, I know one thing for sure. We have not stopped being the church. We continue to engage in ministry and mission in new and creative ways. We still provide food, diapers, financial assistance and care for those in need. Nearly 20 of you were involved in the Easter project creating gifts for one another. You are engaging in online worship and we are checking in on one another regularly.

The people of Albion FUMC are proving over and over again that God's love in a shared community of faith cannot be contained within the walls of a building. I will be forever grateful for all that you have done to offer hope, comfort and grace in this challenging time.

Leslee

May 2020

Bishop Bard Letter	2
A Little Extra Care From the FUMC Kitchen Leadership Listing Prayers	3
Church Finances Holding Their Own During Closure Technology Enables Some Church Activities to Resume	4
Calendar	5

Follow Jesus; Love Everyone



*Dear friends in Christ,
I greet you in the grace
of our Lord Jesus
Christ, the love of God
and the peace and
power of the Holy
Spirit.*

**Echoing again the
words of Paul, “I
thank my God every**

**time I remember you, constantly praying with
joy in every one of my prayers for you, because
of your sharing in the work of the gospel from
the first day until now.”**

**Thank you, Michigan United Methodists for
your patience, your persistence, your
energy, your creativity in being the church in
ministry for Jesus Christ in the face of the
coronavirus pandemic. Thank you to the
Michigan Conference district superintendents
and staff for your tireless work in supporting
local churches and pastors in their ministry. To
you all, your work brings me joy in this
tremendously difficult time.**

**In mid-March, when I first asked us to refrain
from in-person gatherings, including worship,
who could have known we would be here as
April comes to an end. In Michigan over
38,000 people have been diagnosed with
COVID-19 and we’ve lost over 3,400 of our
fellow Michiganders. The African-American
community has been hit particularly hard, as
have the elderly.**

**In late-March I told you when we next were
able to gather, I would declare it to be
Easter, but honestly coming back together
will be more like the raising of Lazarus, slow,
awkward, aching, a strange mixture of joy
and tears. By week’s end the Michigan
Conference will provide a set of questions for
us all to consider as we think about coming
together again. Next week we will share a
more detailed resource on re-opening. This
time between now and May 15, when I’ve asked
us to continue to refrain from in-person
gatherings, should be used to consider**

important plans for returning to church
buildings for gatherings and activities.

**In addition to providing guidelines for
churches, the Michigan Conference continues
to look at options for Annual Conference
2020, and announcements about this are
coming soon.**

**Friends, we have and are giving up a lot.
I miss not being with you in your churches. I
miss the simple gifts of a handshake or hug,
and I grieve that such gifts will have to wait
even longer. This is such a time of grief and
sorrow, and for many the grief is profound.
I am also moved by you, the United Methodist
Church in Michigan. We are giving up a
lot. The very idea of “church” conjures up in
our imaginations gathering together. We are
giving up a lot, but self-giving is part of our
identity as followers of Jesus, who emptied
himself, who gave of himself. We stay home,
not only for our own health, but for the well-
being of others. We will wear masks, awkward
as that may be, out of love and concern for
others.**

**Easter came and it is still a way off, but we
remain Easter people. Every day to us is
Easter, with its resurrection song. Every day
we proclaim in our self-giving, in our loving,
the resurrection, the ultimate triumph of
grace, kindness and love. It is an honor to be
Easter people with you. Thank you.**

Thank you. Be well. Know God is with you.

David A Bard



David Alan Bard
Michigan Area Bishop

Prayers

Dave Seely, Tom Hartwell,
Jasmine Luce, Greg Metzler,
Kelly Wilder, Fred Wilder,
Tom Chisholm, Marilyn Knibury,
Susan Connor, Julia Landon, Hilda
Ebbinghaus, Barbara Slaughter, Eva
Rottenbiller, Ken Bentley, and Pastor Tom
Hollowood @ home

Barb Stowell @ Maplewood, Marshall

Edward Sobie, Jr. @ Chippewa Correctional
Facility, Kincheloe

Donna Gaskell @ Copley, OH

Betty Beese @ Glazier Assisted Living, Chelsea



A Little Extra Care From the FUMC Kitchen

To help feed the increasing number of people feeling food insecurity, Teri Nelson and Barb Lange have spent many hours in the church kitchen (separately for safety) turning odd ingredients and left-over supplies into delicious foods, including soups, pudding, BBQ chicken, cookies, muffins and more.



The recipients of this fresh, delicious food have been truly grateful for their kindness.

Leadership Listing

Lay Leader	Sharon Hostetler shostetler@albion.edu
Church Council Chair	Mark Robison majerobi@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sally Ammerman sallya@wowway.com
Trustees Chair (Building & Property)	Barbara Rafaill plantgirl@rafaill.com
Staff-Parish Chair (Personnel)	Steve Noble steven.noble820@gmail.com
Finance	Rick Lange langehome.1@gmail.com
Pastor	Leslee Fritz pastorleslee1@gmail.com
Missions Co- Chairs	John Williams Donna Williams
Memorial Chair	Carol Maynard
Choir Director	Drew Dunham
Music Director/ Pianist	Jan Fourn
Administrative Assistant	Cindi Klingel albionfumc@gmail.com
Housekeeper	Lynn Markovich
Custodian	Larry Maynard

Church Finances Holding Their Own During Closure

Small businesses of all types have felt the impact of needed stay-at-home orders during the pandemic (please shop local restaurants and retailers whenever you can!). Church budgets are not immune. Without a regular Sunday offering, giving typically declines. In addition, our church is without rental income from the myriad of events usually held in our space this time of year.

At this point in the year, we would have anticipated receiving slightly more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the \$162,140 in pledged giving as well as a roughly equal share of the expected \$28,000 in unpledged contributions for the operating budget. While final April numbers are not yet in, we expect to be somewhat below those expectations. Many of you have continued to send in pledges and we are grateful for your on-going faithfulness. **Please do all that you can to remain current with your pledge by mailing checks to the church, dropping them in our locked mailbox just inside the Oswego Street glass doors (open 24 hours) or setting up an automatic payment with your bank.**

To help ensure that we can continue to meet our financial obligations, including paying our staff, the Finance Committee and Church Council voted to apply for a Paycheck Protection Program loan available through the federal CARES Act recently passed by Congress. We were approved earlier this week for a loan of just under \$19,000 to be used for payroll over the next several months. If used as allowed under the act, we expect that the loan will be converted to a grant after 60 days, thus eliminating our requirement to repay it. This small step will help ensure that we remain financially sound regardless of how long our needed separation lasts.

If you have any questions about the PPP loan, or other financial issues, please just ask Pastor Leslee or Rick Lange.

Technology Enables Some Church Activities to Resume



The Board of Trustees gather via Zoom to debate church business during their April meeting.

With the aid of technology, some church activities have restarted in the last few weeks. Standing committees, including the Church Council, Finance and Staff Parish have held meetings.

The kick-off meeting of the Wesley Renovation Team was held (you'll hear more about that soon) and many congregants are re-connecting during the Sunday morning Virtual Coffee Hour.

No doubt, technology will continue to help us stay connected in the days ahead. The church's zoom account can be used (without additional cost) for meetings of all kinds. If you're a part of a group that would like to try it, just let Pastor Leslee know.

Sunday Schedule:

9:30 Choir

9:30 Fellowship

10:00 Worship

11:00 Fellowship

11:30 Sermon Discussion

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday 8:00 am - 12:30 pm

Friday 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

May 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Worship via YouTube 11a Virtual Cioffee Hour via ZOOM 4p Scouts BSA Parent Meeting - online	4 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158 online	5 4p Finance via ZOOM 5:30p Church Council via ZOOM	6	7	8	9
10 Worship via YouTube 11a Virtual Cioffee Hour via ZOOM	11 5:30p Wesley Renovation Team via ZOOM 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158 online	12	13	14 6:30p Trustees via ZOOM	15	16
17 Worship TO BE DETERMINED	18 5:30p SPRC via ZOOM 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158 online	19	20 5:30p WU/SIS Mentoring TENTATIVE	21 12p  Blood Drive	22	23
24 Worship TO BE DETERMINED	25 MEMORIAL DAY Church Office Closed 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158 	26 3p Food Hub Distribution 	27	28	29	30
'31 Worship TO BE DETERMINED						