



Community of Faith United Methodist Church

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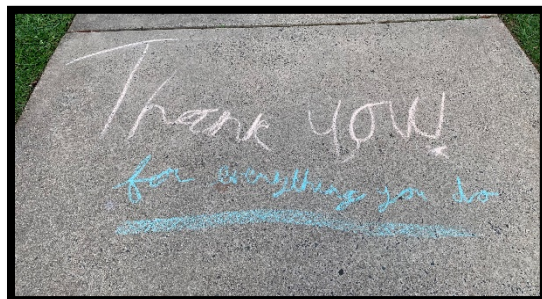
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Rev. Rob Vaughn, Ph.D., Lead Pastor

October 28, 2020

Dear Community of Faith members & friends:

I wanted to combine our mailing of an update on what's happening at CoF along with your third quarter financial giving statement. Our youth said it best with some sidewalk art while they packed bags to give to the children of our food clients, "Thank you." It's difficult not to say it enough, "thank you, thank you, thank you."



Your continued engagement through these months of the pandemic has been a powerful witness of Christ's presence in our midst. Your continued financial support has meant the ability to continue our essential ministry and keep employed the servant leaders in our staff.

When can we return to in-person worship?

We've set February 8, 2021 as the goal to reevaluate when we might return to in-person worship. The summer telephone poll of 90 individuals revealed that over 52% were not ready to return until there's a vaccine and only 4% read to return now. The rest of our church community's responses were highly nuanced as not being able to sing or have young children present made a big difference. We will continue to reevaluate and when safe, begin to offer in-person sanctuary gatherings for worship.

During October and much of November, we'll continue a *brief service of outdoor holy communion at noon on Sundays*. Limited to 15 individuals these require a reservation by simply completing a health form (you can find links in the Friday emails).

Faith Exploration & Sunday School

Our adult church school class has been meeting by Zoom at 9AM on Sundays and had record attendance. Most Sundays find 20-26 individuals participating as Mike Folsom leads. Kelli Timanus and Hannah Godfrey have been producing some great materials with a very brief video offering. Our youth group has recorded some super bible stories and prayers for our children as well. The materials are distributed by Kelli via email and the videos are offered through a private YouTube channel. If you've missed them, you can reach Kelli at bjkelli@yahoo.com. Other studies also are occurring such as a summer study on Race and a current Sunday afternoon study (both by Zoom) on the Sermon on the Mount.

The children continue to have other activities such as *Chalk the Lot* (check out the website or Friday emails for more info) and our confirmation group just began gathering again (it helps to be a small group!)

Food Distribution Ministry

Each Tuesday over the past months, we've served between 120-145 families each week (representing 550-700 individuals). Every day, food is received at CoF and on Mondays & Tuesdays, a herd of volunteers prepare boxes of food for distribution.

Thanks to a core of volunteers, many are blessed. Every client served is effusive in their thanksgiving for what is received here. Over the past few months we've benefited from the volunteering of missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) as well as our partners, the Service League of Oakton and the Bluebells (service groups for teenage young men and their moms and teenage young women and their moms). Cathy & Larry Spaine, Terry Metcalf and Brad Fries continue to help organize and maintain deliveries.



How can I help? – I'm so glad you asked! Our greatest need today is substitutes for daily pickups from donors. If you have a 2-hour block of time during the week to occasionally pick-up food from one of our grocers or restaurants, please be in touch with Cathy Spaine at cfspaine@gmail.com

A *mini-Scouting for Food* event occurred last weekend CoF received food from an Eagle Scout service project coordinated by **Jacob Hemrick**. Jacob solicited neighborhood donations, picked



them up, sorted them (along with a good number of helpers) and ended up producing over 150 boxes of food. That's a record for an Eagle Scout project. With collections occurring outside along with much of the lobby, narthex and sanctuary



offering shelter from the mid-40's damp weather, folks were able to both physically distance and get lots of work accomplished. Thank you, Jacob!

Scouting for Food

Will occur Saturday, November 14. S4F engages Cub Scouts picking up non-perishable food items from the community and bringing them to church. With pandemic protocols in place, the Cub Scout groups will drive in and our Boy Scout troop will pick up their food to take to the sorting areas around the church grounds (*think of how S4F was done 5 years ago, just utilizing more space!*). Volunteers are needed at 9:30AM on Saturday.

How are we doing financially?

Thanks to the generosity of our members and friends, all our bills are paid, and we've been able to keep all our staff employed. We received funds from the paycheck protection program which was

about equal to the amount of funds we lost due to our user groups not being able to gather. When our budget was prepared, we realized we may not be able to fully fund all our United Methodist apportionment giving. How much we can fund will be determined after an assessment of year end giving.

The food ministry has received record contributions from our church members and the community – most helpful as it has allowed us to purchase food to serve the increase in our client numbers. The gifts to the pastor’s discretionary fund enabled the purchase of gas cards, provide utility assistance, and helped maintain housing for many in the community.

In a few weeks, you’ll be receiving letters about our 2021 financial stewardship program. The Sunday where we will dedicate our Estimate of Giving commitment is November 22. I pray that your circumstances will allow you to generously participate.

How can I keep up with all that’s going on?

Our primary means of communicating is by **Friday’s email**. You can also keep up through the church site, www.OnRealm.org where there’s opportunity for online giving, a directory, calendar, place to register for activities and more. There’s also an app to provide for all that a well. If you don’t have an *OnRealm* account or just need help, connect with Di Hannum at DiHannum@gmail.com or 703-599-8212. You can also keep up with event at our website, www.cofumc.org. The church sends emails three times each week – Tuesday Vespers, Friday announcements, information, and events and on Sunday morning with information about worship, church school, prayer times and events.

How will we celebrate Advent & Christmas if we cannot be in the sanctuary?

The theme of our Advent & Christmas period is *“I Believe”* based on the words of Isaiah, “raise your voice, raise it and don’t be afraid” and that of an anonymous Jewish poet whose words were scrawled on a wall during the Holocaust: *“I believe in the sun, even when the sun is not shining.”*

Yes, our celebrations will be different, but our faith is the same. Some examples of how we’ll celebrate include a *Drive-By Live Nativity* on December 13 in the afternoon put together by our children and youth. Households will be encouraged to celebrate each day of advent in preparation for Christmas using a special gift that will arrive at your home before Advent begins. On Christmas Eve, we’ll hold outdoor services for with the option of staying in your automobiles listening to the service broadcast on our FM frequency (*especially if the weather is too cool*) in addition to an online Christmas Eve worship.

I hope this has caught you up a bit. It’s tough when you are not physically here seeing all that is occurring, touching lives, offering hope. Our children’s sidewalk walk said best what I want to say to you. Thank you for your continued work, support, engagement, and encouragement to all as together, we offer God’s love to our community.



Peace, Pastor Rob