



# HILLTOP HERALD-AUGUST 2020 MONONA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH & IGLESIA METODISTA UNIDA EL LIBERTADOR

## ALL ACTIVITIES CANCELLED

At this time we do not know when we will be resuming regular activities. If you are not receiving our email updates but have an email address, please send your address to [secretarymumc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:secretarymumc@sbcglobal.net). If you need anything at all, please call the church at 608-222-1633 or Pastor Brad at 414-534-8791. We have cloth face masks available in the entryway to pick up if you are in need of one or they can be mailed.

## REOPENING OUR CHURCH

The Reopening Committee is meeting regularly to work on what needs to be done to reopen the Church. Things being discussed include how to conduct a worship service, cleaning processes, requirements for entering the building for worship or meetings, and how to implement contact tracing. A survey was sent out to get the pulse of our congregation to understand how ready everyone is to return to in-person worship and willingness to accept precautions (mask wearing, temperature taking) before entering the building.

There is an extensive amount of work to be done before a comprehensive plan can be approved by the Ad Council. As always, the committee will be making decisions based on what science is telling us. Given this, we expect to continue online worship services only, through the month of August.

Dick Van Dreel, Reopening Committee Chair

## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

The adult class will be starting Karen Armstrong's book *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* on **Sunday, August 2** at 11:30am. If you would like to join the class, please contact the church office so we can send the Zoom link. You should purchase your own book.

*"One of the most original thinkers on the role of religion in the modern world—author of such acclaimed books as A History of God, Islam, and Buddha—now gives us an impassioned and practical book that can help us make the world a more compassionate place.*

*Karen Armstrong believes that while compassion is intrinsic in all human beings, each of us needs to work diligently to cultivate and expand our capacity for compassion. Here, in this straightforward, thoughtful, and thought-provoking book, she sets out a program that can lead us toward a more compassionate life.*

*The twelve steps Armstrong suggests begin with "Learn About Compassion" and close with "Love Your Enemies." In between, she takes up "compassion for yourself," mindfulness, suffering, sympathetic joy, the limits of our knowledge of others, and "concern for everybody." She suggests concrete ways of enhancing our compassion and putting it into action in our everyday lives, and provides, as well, a reading list to encourage us to "hear one another's narratives." Throughout, Armstrong makes clear that a compassionate life is not a matter of only heart or mind but a deliberate and often life-altering commingling of the two."*

## PASTOR'S COLUMN

Dear Friends,

In a recent email I told a colleague that I have been thinking about Anne Lamott's book about prayer, Help. Thanks. Wow. Three crucial prayer words. I told my colleague that, at this point of the pandemic, I am focusing on the first—Help—while trying to remember to include Thanks and Wow. Because I do think maintaining a sense of gratitude for particular people, events, and things helps me keep my head above water attitude-wise. And still being able to appreciate the occasional moment of wonder ("Wow.") and take it in, this can be life-sustaining as well.

But these days I'm mostly focusing on the prayer of Help. The world needs God's help. Our country needs it. Our church needs it. I need it. But it's such a humbling prayer word. To pray it is an admission that I can't get out of this myself, that I need someone to intervene. We don't pray it willingly.

Then I noticed the same need popped up on Lamott's Facebook page. In the most recent long essay she posted, she tells about her church's grief over the death of the pastor's sister, and about doing wrong to someone through a mean email she had sent. She responded to her stress and failings by being hard on herself, really beating herself up in her self-talk. At this point, I'll let Lamott tell the story:

"But then I remembered that one other thing was, [I could] awake what people in the recovery community call my higher power. My higher power sometimes looks like a dark skinned Middle Eastern Jew, and sometimes like Bette Midler. So I turned to the two of them, and said the great prayer: Help.

That's all. Simple: I'm stuck, help me. Jesus always reminds me that I am crazily loved and forgiven, no matter what I do or think, and while I often only half believe this, it helped. And Bette reminds me that we are all in this together, through the tears, fears and joy; we stick together, laughing and crying, and this turns out to be enough.

In the absolute silence and stillness of the early morning, they came to me, pulled me to my feet and dusted me off. I made myself coffee, fed the dog, wrote a heartfelt and contrite email to the man, and asked for his forgiveness. I knew he'd forgive me because he is a good guy, but me? That's the hardest work I do, and I can't do it by myself.

As the old riddle goes, What's the difference between me and God? the answer is, God never thinks He's me. I need so much help. I hate this! I like to be a helper, the girl valued as the flight attendant to her damaged family.

When my son was five or six, we were visiting my friends in the city, when all of a sudden we heard a tiny distressed voice. We turned toward the sound. Sam had managed to get his head stuck in the slats of a chair he had been clamoring on.

He stared at us like a dwarf in the stocks of Salem. He said, "I need help with me."

I live by these words. The two friends had his words calligraphied and framed for us. I have it on the wall of my office. I need help with me.

Half an hour ago, I breathed this in. I need help. We all do and it is how it should be. My pastor will need all hands on deck to help her bear the loss of her sister. My country will need millions of people joining together for justice and reconciliation. We need help with us. It is the prayer of the miserable and scared and very stuck, who still against all odds believe that we can be changed and freed. It is my prayer for us now.”

Whether you need this reminder or not, I do. And so I say, “Thank you, Anne, I needed that.” This year as we face four societal Super-Disruptors at once—a recession, a pandemic, mass protests, and an intense election\*—there are worse prayers for our country to be praying than “Lord, help us. We need help with us.”

Strength, wisdom, and courage to you in these days,

*Pastor Brad*

\*Our adult education class identified a 5<sup>th</sup> concurrent Super-Disruptor: the climate crisis.

## **AUGUST MISSION OF THE MONTH**

### ***Nuestro Mundo Elementary School Backpack Meals Program***

Monona United Methodist Church in partnership with eight east-side churches (Seeds of Peace churches) provides weekend take-home meals for students who receive free lunch during the school week. The Monona UMC Nuestro Mundo team packs and delivers weekend meals for over 70 students each Friday school is in session. Madison Metropolitan Schools will open this fall with 100% Virtual Learning until at least October. The Monona UMC Backpack team is not sure how they will deliver the meals during this period. However, there are too many area families experiencing significant food insecurities not to continue the program. Mark Buffet will be in contact with the school administration to determine a delivery system.

Please consider supporting this wonderful mission that works to feed hungry children in our community. Please mark your check, envelope, or electronic giving “Backpack Meals”.

Thank you for your continuing generous support of this mission and many blessings.

The Mission Team

## **OUR WEBSITE**

Same URL/address with a new look! [www.mononaunitedmethodistchurch.org](http://www.mononaunitedmethodistchurch.org)

You can find the link for our Sunday morning virtual worship here. We now have a **Giving** tab to make a donation with your credit card.

## PLEASE HELP OUR NEW RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Due to the critical need for blood, Monona United Methodist Church will host the August Seeds of Peace blood drive on **Tuesday, August 18, 1:00-6:00pm**. Blood donors and volunteers are needed. Please contact the church office for more information. **We are also looking for some extra fans to help move the sanctuary air conditioning into Fellowship Hall.** If you have one that you could lend the church, please contact the office.

**Please know that The Red Cross has implemented additional precautions to ensure the safety of donors and staff, including:**

- Checking temperatures of staff and donors *before* entering a drive to make sure they are healthy.
- Providing hand sanitizer for use before the drive, as well as throughout the donation process.
- Following social distancing between donors in all areas.
- Increasing enhanced disinfecting of surfaces and equipment.
- Donations are only with appointments and no guests allowed (e.g. children).
- **Donors are asked to wear their own face mask.**

### **More Volunteers Needed:**

- 2 volunteers at 11:30am to help unload
- 4 volunteers, per shift 12:30 – 6:30pm to help with initial screening, registration, and in refreshment area
- 2 volunteers at 6:30pm to help reload

### **General Donor Information:**

- Height/weight requirements
- General good health
- Rapid Pass saves 15 minutes
- Bring donor card or government ID
- Questions on eligibility 1-866-236-3276

**Our generous supporter, Amazon, would like to offer all donors, who come to donate blood, a \$5 Amazon.com Gift Card via email.**

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

During the pandemic, our school supply drive will take on a different look. Bridge-Lake Point-Waunona Neighborhood Community Center is only looking for the following supplies for when they can resume programming:

- white liquid glue
- erasers
- pencil sharpeners
- boxes of tissues
- sanitizing wipes
- bottles of hand sanitizer
- backpacks

If you would like to donate funds, we will split the amount with BLW Center and Goodman Community Center. Goodman is providing filled backpacks to children in their programs. They have a list of requested items on their website, but the safest way to help, may be just to provide a monetary donation. Please mark your check or envelope with “School Supplies.” Thank you for your help.

## **CARING COORDINATOR COLUMN**

Back on the sunny, pleasant first Sunday evening in June, with some apprehension, Sally and I ventured downtown to the State Capital area. We parked near the Kohl center and walked toward Library Mall, at the end of State Street, to join in on a march to the Capital. We weren't sure what to expect. As we approached the Mall we passed the Pres House, the church in which we were married (some thirty years ago), and where both boys were baptized. And almost immediately we were struck with the slow crawl of thousands of people. The beauty of colors, hushed voice and conversation, of creative homemade protest signs. As it turns out there were nearly 10,000 of us masked and gathered for a Black Lives Matter Solidarity march organized by the African American Council of Churches. Leaders, members, and allies from churches, temples, mosques, and synagogues from around the Madison area together in one spirit for one cause. Racism.

As we joined the crawl to the Capital we heard a voice over a megaphone coming from the lead group up ahead just on State Street. We couldn't hear what was said but moments later all began to quiet and a wave of kneeling people began coming toward us. There, by the steeple of the Pres House, Sally and I knelt in silence and prayer. All remained silent and kneeling for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. It seemed like a very long time.

Later I read about some of the words spoken at the rally by Everett Mitchell, senior pastor of Christ the Solid Rock Baptist Church and Dane County Circuit Court judge, "...we've been dealing with the virus of racism for over 400 years. If they want to create a vaccine, let them go create a vaccine for racism; let them go create a vaccine for hatred; let them create a vaccine to stop tearing apart our Black men and women and families. So we can be the just community we were meant to be."

If you'd like to broaden your understating of implicit and explicit racism, of anti-racism, check out Victoria Alexander's Anti-Racism Resource Guide at <https://www.victorialynnaalexander.com/antiracistresourceguide>

Caring & Coordinating, Mark Buffat

## **OUR SYMPATHY GOES TO**

- The family of Ella Tkach, who passed away on July 19
- Tammy Conrad and her family, upon the death of her father, George
- Sheila Becker, Kristin Buskager, Jason Becker and their families, upon the death of Roger on July 30

## **WEEDS ARE LOOKING GOOD**

Thanks for all the help in removing our weeds from the patio! Please continue to stop by the church and pick some weeds, rest on the bench for a while and check out the beautiful flowers blooming in our front patio. Take a walk through the garden and see what has started growing. Maybe pick some raspberries or currants.

## **THANK YOU**

Dear Monona UMC,

THANK YOU so much for being the host site for Monona Munchies this summer. Your kitchen facility was perfect! Kay and the staff were wonderful, kind, and helpful. We served about 150 lunches each day.

Margaret Clark

## JAVA JIVE

Greetings Everyone, miss seeing you folks, but we will be together again sometime. Just don't know when!! But we are together always in God's Love. We are doing what we need to do at this time of COVID. EEx is experiencing many changes as are the farmers that Ex partners with locally and globally.

I attended some sessions of EEx virtual summit a month ago. Interesting and inspiring. Will share info in another Java Jive. But I have also been in conversation with Bethany, an interfaith representative at EEx, that I want to share with you. Some Good news and some Not so good news.

### GOOD NEWS:

1: In 2019 MUMC was in #20 of more than 7,000 congregations in US with our purchases.

2: In 2019 MUMC was in spot #3 of all 850 participating UMC in US.

Bethany says- WOW, I agree.

3: EEX sends 15 cents of every pound sold by all UMC to UMCOR for their Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) which is improving farm practices and nutrition of small scale farmers in rural communities in Africa. EEx does total of all UMC and Bethany said 55,386 pounds purchased and EEX sent \$8,307.86 to UMCOR SAI.

4: I send this quote from Bethany "You folks at MUMC are continuing to show solidarity with small farmers which we sincerely appreciate. Year after year we're impressed by your commitment to the UMCOR Coffee Project and your consumer work and food justice. You all are amazing."

Small farmers do not have a place at the market table of bigger companies.

And now the Not so good news:

Many churches and temples are completely shut down and locked so sales in the interfaith program are down 38,000 pounds compared to this time a year ago which has a real impact on EEX and farmer partners.

So churches and temples are trying to set up ordering by e-mail and phone with their congregations. Very Thankful MUMC is open M-F 9-2 and have our protocol set up, which is working very well and easy; sales have actually increased.

I wish to give a MEGA THANKS to the AFT Team for their support and help - and to all of you THANKS for your purchases.

THINK of all of God's farm families, we along with many, have helped stay on their farms by providing a market place with EEX. In doing so they avoid poverty wages and in doing so help keep God's planet safer and curbs climate change by their sustainable farm practices. A Joy for MUMC to be part of this UMW Mission.

In Mission together,

Kay Mackie - a team coordinator of Monona UMW AFT Mission.

## RIVER FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

The River is currently accepting 18-count egg cartons until further notice. Also, The River is NOT accepting clothing or household items until further notice. If you have items to donate, please check with either Agrace or Boomerang. The FDA has told them to stop reusing the plastic grocery bags until the COVID-19 virus is no longer an issue, so for now please recycle those (or save them for the backpack meal program). You are welcome to drop off egg cartons, paper bags, non-perishable food, or personal hygiene items at church daily from 9am until 2pm. You can put them in the entryway if you don't want to come all the way into the building. We have also been disinfecting the entry doors and other surfaces often. Tim Eberle said that you could drop items off at his home by his garage door.

## RIVER FOOD PANTRY SUMMER NEWSLETTER:

### DONOR SPOTLIGHT: TIM EBERLE

As a longtime resident of the Elvehjem neighborhood, Tim Eberle has been supporting The River for nearly four years. He first discovered the opportunity through his son-in-law, who regularly works with communities in need.

As a vocal advocate for The River, Tim makes weekly deliveries to The River with donations of food, egg cartons, paper bags, and other necessities, which he collects from 50 regular supporters that he has recruited. He utilizes social media to connect with his neighbors and places a donation box outside his front door for all who walk by. His new group on the app Nextdoor, titled "The River Food Pantry Donation East Side," has already gathered at least 140 supporters from the Elvehjem and Buckeye areas.



Neighbors are proud of Tim for providing an easy way for the community to donate, and Tim is happy to share his resources and time, stating he and his wife, "don't have everything we want, but we have everything we need." Due to the pandemic, the Elvehjem Neighborhood Association has decided to donate extra event funds to The River, which surely was influenced by Tim's hard work in his community.

Thank you, Tim, for supporting The River in such compassionate and innovative ways!

## **WHEN YOU VOTE - ...ask yourself... how does my vote reflect my faith values?**

We know we have a right to vote, but as citizens who live in a democracy do we understand that we have a responsibility to vote. How much do we cherish both that right and responsibility?

What a convicting statement that is, but if we vote as Jesus taught, how will His words inform our decisions when we turn in our ballots?

Jesus said, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your might, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

This is a tall order. What issues are reflected in the values of our faith? Here are some examples:

- Stewardship of creation—the global environment and clean air and water
- Welcoming the stranger—immigrants and People of Color
- Visiting the sick—healthcare reform
- Turning our swords into plowshares—gun violence prevention
- Visiting those in prison—prison reform
- The Good Samaritan—caring for those who are different from us

In Matthew 25, Jesus said what you do for the least of these you do unto me.

*"The ones on His right, His sheep, will ask, 'Master, tell us when did we see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?' Then Jesus will say, 'I'm telling you the truth: Whenever you did show compassion and justice and tended to the needs of someone who was overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'*

*I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,  
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,  
I was homeless and you gave me a place to sleep,  
I was shivering and you gave me clothing to keep me warm,  
I was sick, and you came to visit me.  
I was in prison, and you brought me words of hope."*

Do the candidates we choose to support have the same values as we do? Read their positions on the issues that are stated on their websites. Examine their voting records. Look at how they are rated by organizations and individuals that you trust.

The coming together of the corona virus pandemic, continued racist acts against people of color, and the widening economic disparity in our nation and the world force us to look at the positions and policies of our leaders as we consider their fitness for office. Where do they stand on poverty, safety, homelessness, racism, education, hunger, fair wages, health care, incarceration, and other critical issues?

Perhaps now, more than at any other time, we must base our decisions about how we vote upon the strongest foundation that we have—our faith.

Of course, we will not find "perfect" candidates whose views are an absolute match, but we need to select representatives whose values mirror our own, leaders who, hopefully, will be willing to listen to our voices and may even learn from the people they represent.

God created humankind in his own image, and He saw that everything He had made in the world was very good. God desires that we live in a just and loving world. All faith traditions share these desires. Those who are elected to serve us must, as well.

**Wisconsin Primary Election Tuesday, August 11  
General Election Tuesday, November 3**

LeeAnn Sinclair, Church and Society



## ...FOR THE LOVE OF GOD'S CREATION...

### ...consider the plastic you use...

**Plastic is both a blessing and a curse.** Now, when many of us are spending so much time at home, it might be worthwhile to consider our plastic use.

Some of us remember when we purchased our food in glass jars or bottles or brought it home wrapped in paper. Then we remember when plastic became a reality and how we marveled at these new bags we could carry things around in and that our food products soon became packaged in. On account of being virtually impervious to water and numerous pests, plastic is ideal for food packaging and has become indispensable in assuring food safety and reducing food waste, and it is now a necessary element in the food retail establishment.

Plastic is one of the modern miracles of science. It was invented in 1907 and was introduced into the world just some 70 years ago. Over time plastic has worked its way into virtually every corner of our lives. It is found in electronics, vehicles, appliances, furniture, construction materials, clothing, and much more. And when purchasing items, we find that they all come wrapped in plastic.

Over the years, however, plastic pollution has become one of our most serious environmental problems. It impacts the climate, the environment, and the health and wellbeing of all living creatures, and we, the people who live on this earth, have all contributed to this problem – mostly unknowingly.

Plastics are made from hydrocarbons derived from oil and natural gas. The problem with them is their non-degradable nature. Most of the plastic ever made is no longer in use. But it is still around, eighty percent of it, in landfills or scattered in the environment, amounting to nearly seven billion tons of plastic waste. Only nine percent has been recycled. And about twelve percent has been incinerated, which is the only way to permanently dispose of plastic.

Plastic pollution is now recognized as a hazard to life on earth. Chemicals leached from some plastics used in food/beverage storage are linked to an increased risk of chromosomal and reproductive system abnormalities, impaired brain and neurological functions, cancer, cardiovascular system damage, adult-onset diabetes, early puberty, obesity and resistance to chemotherapy. Heating food products in any kind of plastic containers could make chemical leaching even worse.

Plastic can be especially harmful to wildlife. Unable to distinguish common plastic items from food, fish and marine birds often starve because they can't digest the plastic that fills their stomachs, preventing them from eating real food. Birds and other larger animals often become trapped or ensnared in plastic debris. Plastic that is consumed by marine organisms, as well as the toxins they absorb from the water, accumulate along the food chain making seafood potentially dangerous for humans to eat, as well.

It is important to remember the connection between plastics and climate change. It is estimated that the production of plastic products accounts for eight percent of global oil consumption. The drilling for oil and processing it into plastic releases a number of harmful gas emissions into the atmosphere. And note this, some five ounces of carbon dioxide are emitted for every ounce of PET (Polyethylene terephthalate) produced, the plastic most commonly used to make water bottles.

While plastic never fully degrades, over time it breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces. You may not realize that clothes made from synthetic materials release tiny particles of plastic when washed. Microplastics, are now present in our waterways, our soil and even in the food we eat. When we drink water or eat fish and other seafood, or when we add salt to our meals, chances are we could also be ingesting tiny pieces of plastic. Once plastic enters the bloodstream of an organism, it will never be processed out.

Microplastics don't just come from the breakdown of plastic debris. Some are microbeads, tiny pieces of especially manufactured polyethylene plastic that are added as exfoliants to health and beauty products, such as cleansers, toothpaste, facewash, soap or shower creams.

Plastic, introduced into our world just some seventy years ago, has turned into both a blessing and a curse. Plastic has done miracles to ensure food safety and reduce food waste. It has become a major and practical component of numerous items in our lives. However, it turns out to be non-degradable and therefore, when plastic items are no longer useful to us, they are hard to get rid of. Today plastic waste overflows our landfills and litters the environment including huge areas of our waterways. While plastic does not decompose into harmless substances, it does break down into pieces too tiny to see, and as such is becoming a health hazard to all living beings in the world. While we may think that recycling is the answer to plastic pollution, next month we will examine this mitigation method along with other means of responding to the plastic crisis in our world.

Siv Goulding, Church & Society

Based on information from the following sites:

<https://www.plasticmakeitpossible.com/plastics-recycling/>

<https://www.earthday.org/wp-content/uploads/Plastic-Pollution-Primer-and-Action-Toolkit.pdf>

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# \$ Financial Report \$

## Cash Flow June 30, 2020

<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Income	\$ 18,222	\$ 150,726
General Operating Expenses	18,712	134,556
<b>Net Surplus (Shortfall)</b>	<b>\$ (490)</b>	<b>\$ 16,170</b>

## A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE - GIVING: WILL YOU BEAR FRUIT?

*As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."*

*(Matthew 13:22-23)*

What is a church to do in these difficult times? It is to be hoped that each church would continue to perform its mission and ministry as it has always done and strive to do it even better.

This summer, I am working with two churches, on opposite ends of the state, that have chosen at this time to undertake significant fundraising campaigns for debt reduction and building renovation. Each has a six-figure goal that is 1½ to 2 times its annual giving.

The Foundation interviewed 30-40 people from each church. What they shared with us is (1) an enthusiasm for the ministry and mission of the church, (2) a practical stewardship of the building and budget, and (3) a disregard for worldly worries and concerns. Not that they are ignoring the challenges of the Covid-19 epidemic, rather they will not let it deter their mission, their ministry, or their financial giving.

People from both churches noted that the greatest strength of their congregation is engagement in community outreach. They want to continue this outreach during the pandemic and grow it in the future. This they can do most effectively if they act now to reduce indebtedness or address needed building renovations. So, at a time when some congregations are simply waiting and some Christians are holding back on giving, these congregations are starting major Capital Campaigns.

Join me in praying for their success and in discerning what you can do to support the mission and ministry of your church.

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, 888-903-9863 or [wumf@wumf.org](mailto:wumf@wumf.org)

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### **MONONA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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The HILLTOP HERALD is produced monthly for distribution to the members and friends of Monona United Methodist Church & Iglesia Metodista Unida El Libertador.

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