



HILLTOP HERALD-OCTOBER 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. 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.



WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY - OCTOBER 4

World Communion Sunday is our yearly reminder that there is a unity and oneness given to us in Jesus Christ, and that God's will for the creation is peace and harmony.



In The United Methodist Church, World Communion Sunday is one of six Special Sunday offerings. On the first Sunday in October, our designated gifts benefit students around the world by providing scholarships, mentoring, and training. Your generosity can help support the work of the worldwide church and help raise up new leaders around the world, equipping them to be agents of change. Please mark your check or envelope with "Word Communion Sunday."

We will celebrate communion during our online worship, so remember to gather your bread and juice or whatever you want to use and have communion with Pastor Brad during the service.

BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER

As the waves break on the shores of our beautiful Madison lakes, so break through our lives, our church, and our community with new ideas, new hope, and the future you desire for us, O God. Break through anything that might hold us back and use each of us individually and together for unimagined new purposes. Amen.

Thank you for being a part of our praying community of faith at 6:06 am and pm. May God break through to each of us as we discern the future God wants for us.

OUR WEBSITE

Check out our improving website: www.mononaunitedmethodistchurch.org

- Join us for virtual Worship services on Sunday mornings at 10am by clicking the link on the front page.
- We have a **Giving** tab on our website to make a donation with your credit card.

PASTOR'S COLUMN

Dear Friends,

As you might guess, it is a privilege and challenge to be a church leader in this elections season. I am not primarily a political person. I struggle with how to talk about the worries I have for our country. And I certainly respect and value those whom I believe think differently than me.

But I also believe that a pastor should be ready to offer appropriate moral guidance from the Church's perspective when that is important.

If there is one passage I would point to in regard to the election, it would be Philippians 2:6-11.

Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any sympathy, ² complete my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, being united, and agreeing with each other. ³ Don't do anything for selfish purposes, but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. ⁵ Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus:

*⁶ Though he was in the form of God,
he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit.
⁷ But he emptied himself
by taking the form of a slave
and by becoming like human beings.
When he found himself in the form of a human,
⁸ he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
⁹ Therefore, God highly honored him
and gave him a name above all names,
¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus everyone
in heaven, on earth, and under the earth might bow
¹¹ and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Here is a portrait showing how Jesus models self-sacrifice and service, and where Paul tells us not to seek our own interests alone, but also the interests of others. These are qualities that I look for in a candidate. If I do not find them, I look elsewhere.

According to Jesus, God evaluates a nation based on how it treats the sick, the incarcerated, the alien or refugee, the poor, and destitute. That matters to me when I decide which candidate to support. Competence and wisdom also matter to me.

We have clear guidance from Scripture that what God requires of humanity is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God, and that makes me suspicious of any candidate who does not fulfill this mandate.

As your pastor and a citizen with a conscience and voice who cares deeply about our democracy, I want to encourage you to approach this election with your Christian faith and the above scriptural touchpoints in mind. Both faith and Scripture make clear that racism,

carelessness toward the poor, and destruction of God's beautiful creation are sins, and that we should vote not solely for personal interest, or party loyalty, or one single issue, but for the common good, as the New Testament says (Philippians 2:3-4 above).

I firmly believe that our faith as well as our best political insight should inform our voting, and I recommend this to you as you go to the polls or mailbox this fall.

Together in Christ,

Pastor Brad

OCTOBER MISSION OF THE MONTH

The Road Home Dane County

The Road Home Dane County (known as Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Madison Area) opened their doors on April 26, 1999 as an overflow shelter for families who could not be served by the existing shelters. In the years that followed, The Road Home played a growing role in securing funds and support for affordable housing and providing case management to help families find and maintain that housing. In 2018, they phased out shelter to focus on housing and support services. A 501(c)(3) organization, they currently operate ten housing programs and serve over 200 families with children in Dane County each year.

Our community suffers from a critical lack of affordable housing, pushing vulnerable families out of housing and leading to homelessness. Researchers estimate that there are between 7,000 to 27,000 more people in need of affordable housing in our community than there are affordable housing units available. They also predict that without intervention, this gap will grow. The cost of homelessness is high—putting families and children at risk for greater physical, emotional, and academic challenges.

While it might sometimes be hidden from sight, homelessness exists in our community. In just one year, 1,865 school children were identified as homeless in Dane County. On a single night in July of 2019, over 600 people in our community didn't have a place to sleep. There are currently around 150 families in Dane County without stable housing who are looking for a home.

At The Road Home, we seek long-term solutions to homelessness by helping families find and maintain stable, affordable housing. We work with families, not only to relieve the immediate crisis of homelessness, but also to build skills, resources and relationships that set the stage for long-term success. We provide a variety of types and levels of supportive services and stable housing programs that best fit families' needs and help them be successful.

We work together with partners such as other nonprofits, government agencies, United Way of Dane County, people with lived experiences of homelessness, volunteers, businesses, congregations and donors to create solutions that work.

Please support this Mission by marking your check or online giving indicating "The Road Home".

Thank you for your generous support of this beneficial mission.

Be safe.

The Mission Team

OUR SYMPATHY GOES TO

- The family of Bob Schumann, who passed away on September 13.
- The family of Nancy Zifka, who passed away on September 14.

SANCTUARY PLANTS

Can you adopt (rescue?) a plant or tree from the sanctuary? We are looking to reduce the number of plants that we have around the sanctuary and would love to send them to new homes before winter. Some may need to be repotted into larger pots and others just need a new loving home. Please contact the church office if you can take one (or two) home.

GRAPES ARE READY

Our concord grapes are ready for the picking on a first come first serve basis. If you have hankering for some grape jelly, please pick some for yourself.

BOOKS IN THE ENTRY

We have some books from our library and previous Adult Sunday School classes that you are welcome to take, read and return. The UMW book shelf is also available to check out a book.

JAVA JIVE

I found the following article on the equal exchange website. Another reason to support equal exchange!

Black Lives Matter. Equal Exchange stands in solidarity with people fighting for racial justice, against police brutality, and those bravely working to create necessary change. The horrific and senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, David McAtee and so many others, and the uprisings these deaths have sparked, have moved so many of us to action.

We know that for many of us, as individuals, organizations and businesses, the regular daily routine has been disrupted. Protests and calls to action have swelled in many cities where we live, work, and have allies. We are choosing to take this interruption as an important moment to reflect. We reflect on our core values, and on the connections that thread us together.

Equal Exchange was founded on a vision of changing the existing power structures, to create more fairness, equity, access, and hope. The way we do that in the world is to connect small farmer communities to consumers and to use an alternative democratic structure in our workplace. But these are just two components of the complex and layered work that needs to be done to change power structures. These efforts counter the “normal,” commonly-accepted way of doing things. We stand committed to racial justice, countering the unfair “normal” way things regularly function at many levels in this country, those that systematically oppress people of color. We recognize this moment as an opportunity to speak up externally, as well as one to reflect and act internally. We are accepting this opportunity.

For us all to succeed, we must continue to fight for change together.

Karelyn, UMW AFT member

JUST BAKERY

We can still enjoy the wonderful goodies from Just Bakery. Search for “Just Bakery” online to view their many products. You may call 608-598-0420 to place your order. Due to COVID-19 their store front is no longer open but their products are available for delivery in Dane County for a \$5.00 charge or you may pick up your order curbside on Saturdays (9:00 - 2:00) at 1708 Thierer Rd. Madison.

THE WALK THAT WASN'T VIRTUAL NF CELEBRATION

Due to the current restrictions caused by the COVID-19, the Great Steps 4 NF walk will become a “virtual walk” called THE WALK THAT WASN'T. We won't be walking (unless we want to). On **Saturday, October 17 at 10am** the entire NF Midwest community will celebrate. You can donate anytime on my new donation link:

<https://nfmidwest.rallybound.org/thewalkthatwasnt/TimEberle>. If you would rather send a check, my website will have the address. Many thanks in advance for your generosity! Please remember that no gift is too small.

Tim Eberle

VIRTUAL CROP HUNGER WALK October 18 – 25

CROP Hunger Walks are happening in a new way! To keep everyone safe and healthy, Walks are going virtual – either walking alone, with immediate, or a small group walking a safe distance apart.

The work of Church World Services (CWS) and our local hunger agencies continues – with the possibility of a global famine on the horizon, raising money for vulnerable people is more needed than ever.

Register for the walk or donate online: crophungerwalk.org/madisonwi

Gather your family and friends and create your action route:

- Spirit Walkers: Team members walk in Spirit
- Micro Walks: Families/small groups walk masked while social distancing
- Bike, Hike, Paddle, or participate in other safe activities
- Check online for additional ideas: resources.crophungerwalk.org/virtual-walks/

Reminder: 25% of funds raised stay local helping area food pantries and hunger organizations.

RIVER FOOD PANTRY / NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

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 is looking to start a delivery program for those that have a hard time picking up, and are looking for individuals to volunteer to make those deliveries. If interested, email Helen Osborn-Senatus, her email is: helen@riverfoodpantry.org. Feel free to mention your connection to Tim Eberle.

SAINTS DAY TO BE OBSERVED

Sunday, November 1 is All Saints Day, the day the church sets aside to remember those who have died during this past year, especially those from our fellowship and families. You are invited to email or call the church office with the names of people who have been a part of your life, who have died since last November. During the prayer time, we will read the names aloud as we light a candle for them.

SECOND HARVEST NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

<https://www.secondharvestmadison.org>

Volunteers are ESSENTIAL to Second Harvest Foodbank. And, Second Harvest Foodbank is ESSENTIAL to the community. **We are in need of volunteers** to help us fill pre-packed Care Boxes. Volunteer shifts are available throughout the day, 7 days a week.

There is a new location in Stoughton that is looking for volunteers to package Care Boxes. Please check out the website if you can volunteer your much needed time.

Care Boxes are filled with healthy foods, and are being distributed to those struggling with hunger through our partner agencies and our mobile pantries throughout our 16 county service area. An average of 2,600 boxes are being distributed per day! We need volunteer support to assist in packing these boxes.

We are committed to keeping our staff and volunteers safe by limiting the number of volunteers during shifts as well as adding new measures to maintain a clean and healthy environment.

**WHEN YOU VOTE,
ask yourself... how does my ballot reflect my faith values?**



VOTE Quilt designed by Elizabeth Tucker

We know we have a right to vote, but as citizens who live in a representative democracy, we understand that we have a responsibility to vote. How much do we cherish both that right and that 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? Hopefully you have had a chance to drive by the church and see the yard signs that reflect some of those values. Here are some examples of the issues:

- 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 support have the same values as we do? We can find out by reading their positions on the issues stated on their websites. Examining their voting records. Looking at how they are rated by organizations and individuals that we trust.

The coming together of the corona virus pandemic, continued racist acts against people of color, the unprecedented fires and hurricanes on each of our coasts, 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, the environment, 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.

Here is a link to a Voter Reflection Guide from Faith in Public Life and Interfaith Power and Light to help in asking questions of candidates for public office.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G7whUq0DFVT_6r9TuRTUjqnkqy_-F41y/view

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 share these desires, as well.

General Election Tuesday, November 3

LeeAnn Sinclair, Church and Society

Faith in Public Life is a national network of nearly 50,000 clergy and faith leaders united in the prophetic pursuit of justice and the common good.

www.faithinpubliclife.org

Interfaith Power & Light is mobilizing a religious response to global warming. The organization’s mission is to inspire and mobilize people of faith and conscience to take bold and just action on climate change.

www.interfaithpowerandlight.org

\$ Financial Report \$

Cash Flow August 31, 2020

<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Income	\$ 18,791	\$ 185,262
General Operating Expenses	20,272	178,836
Net Surplus (Shortfall)	\$ (1,481)	\$ 6,426

A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE - "TIS THE GIFT TO BE SIMPLE"

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free; 'tis the gift to come down where you ought to be
(Simple Gifts/Shaker Hymn, Joseph Brackett)

During the Covid-19 pandemic, most of us are living under conditions of enforced simplicity. There are fewer luxuries and entertainments to spend money on and for most of us, less traveling, shopping, and visiting. Although, some people find the forced confinement to be stressful itself, most people are, all in all, under less of the kinds of stress they usually experience.

John Wesley, in his sermon, "The Use of Money (#50)," insists that simplicity is essential for the Godly use of money. If we earn all we can honestly, then we are to save all we can, meaning retain all we can, by not using it wastefully. Rather than spending on luxury foods and personal ornaments (home, fashion, etc.), says Wesley, we should "be content with what plain nature requires." Nor, should we lead our children into an extravagant lifestyle.

Why, then are we saving? In order to serve God through 1) supplying your own simple needs, 2) and the needs of your family and household, and then 3) giving your surplus to the "household of faith" and to other people for their simple needs. We are not the proprietors of creation, but rather the stewards of it. So, when we are planning an expenditure, Wesley advises us to ask, 1) am I acting as a proprietor or a steward? 2) am I following Scripture? 3) can I offer this as a sacrifice to God, through Jesus Christ? and 4) will this action be judged as righteous?

There are plenty of churches and people in need during the pandemic. This is a good time to get even better at God's simplicity. As Wesley says in ending his sermon, "Give all ye have, as well as all ye are, a spiritual sacrifice to Him who withheld not from you his Son, his only Son."

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, 888-903-9863 or wumf@wumf.org

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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