

So All May Know Joy

BUMC Weekly Connection—Sept. 4

This Sunday, September 6, 9:00 am

on Buffalo United Methodist Church's Facebook Page & YouTube!

Why do we Gather Together? —September 6

Our very own Curtis Rieck will be asking the question "Why do we Gather?".

Please join Curtis and the Youth Group this Sunday and watch the livestream on our Facebook page at 9 am!



Communion This Sunday

Our worship this Sunday will also include Holy Communion, so remember to gather your items representing the bread and the wine as we gather in spirit around Christ's table. If you don't have bread and grape juice, crackers and water are a great substitute.



Resilient: Lessons from Joseph, September Worship Series

Starting September 20 - October 11 Pastor Bill will be sharing about a man with a gentle faith and a powerful trust named Joseph. Joseph's life is a great case study in how to trust God when life is difficult. It shows character & integrity when God's instructions and the World's values/actions don't meet. The more we are different from our culture, the more our trust must grow.

Worship Now on YouTube as Well as Facebook!

Worship now on YouTube as well! For those who prefer to not use Facebook, you'll now find a YouTube link to our Sunday worship on our church website. The link will be posted each Sunday morning on the "Worship" page of our website BuffaloUMC.org. So join us each Sunday for our Facebook Premiere Viewing Party at 9:00 am, OR use the posted YouTube link to watch any time.

Do you have a Prayer Request?

We have a new separate email address specifically for prayer concerns/requests. Debbie, our new Ministry & Worship Coordinator will directly receive your emails and put your prayer requests on the Prayer Circle. The email address is Prayerrequests@buffaloumc.com



Other Ministry Updates

Sunday School, Confirmation, Youth Group to Remain Online this Fall

BUMC will continue to follow the recommendations of the Minnesota Annual Conference Phased Regathering Plan for Churches, meaning we will commit to distance discipleship for these age group for the remainder of the year, monitoring the Regathering Plan status and Wright County COVID transmission for a possible change in January.

Sunday School Registration is open!

We will start Sunday School next Sunday, **September 13** with online sessions. To register online, please go to our church website



www.BuffaloUMC.org and register online OR print a registration form to send to our church office.

Stories of Resilience Sought

Have you overcome something in your life, and perhaps come out even stronger? Do you know someone who has done so? In the midst of trials it is often hard to see our way forward, but God can use our difficulties to make us stronger, to learn things we didn't know, or to prepare us for a future we can't see. Our fall worship series is on stories of resilience, and we'd love to hear from you! Talk to Pastor Bill ASAP if you might have a story to share.

Now Hiring Children's Ministry Coord.

Buffalo UMC is taking applications for Children's Ministry Coordinator position to oversee children's discipleship (birth - 6th grade), including Sunday School and special events. Qualified individuals will have a vibrant faith in Jesus and a passion for children and family ministries. This is a part-time position (15 hours per week) that reports directly to the Senior Pastor. Please share this information with anyone you know who might be interested in applying! The full position description and application form are found on our church's webpage at www.BuffaloUMC.org.

Staying Connected during Pandemic

Pick up the phone or drop a note or email to your church family to offer a word of support to stay connected during these crazy times, especially with those who live alone!

Confirmation Sunday & Classes 2020-2021

The confirmation of our 9th graders will happen in our online worship September 13. Don't miss it! Orientation for all new and returning students, faith partners, and Table Leaders is on **Wednesday, September 9 at 6 pm** via Zoom. Classes for 7th & 8th graders resume via Zoom on **Wednesday, September 16** with our first Faith Night. Sunday School classes resume **Sunday, September 13 at 10 am**.

Ways to Give Your Tithes and Offerings

God continues to work through the ministries of Buffalo UMC, and your offerings allow it to happen. For options of all the ways you may give to the church, see our website or call the church office.

Happy Trails...

As I head off to Montana on a new adventure in life, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to everyone at Buffalo United Methodist Church. You have richly blessed me with your acceptance, grace and friendship. I have so enjoyed my time here working with you. May God pour out his blessings on you all and continue to grow and prosper his church.

Blessings, Patty Steer

Welcome

Please welcome our new Bookkeeper, Sarah Williams. Sarah brings a wealth of experience as a bookkeeper with large organizations and is also both familiar with and committed to our church family as one of our members. To get ahold of Sarah, please email her at sarah@buffaloumc.com or call the church office.





Other Ministry Updates

Coming Up in Ministry

- Sept. 6 **9:00 am Online Worship & Communion** with Curtis Rieck preaching on Facebook!
- Sept. 8 **7:00 PM Leadership Team Meeting**
- Sept. 9 **6:00 pm Confirmation Orientation** via Zoom
- Sept. 13 **9:00 am Online Confirmation Service**
10:00 am Fall Kick off.

Learning about Racism

The Adult Discipleship Vision Team (ADVT) wants to continue the conversation on racism and encourage us to continue learning. To that end, they invite us to share our personal thoughts on some of the books, movies, podcasts etc. we have learned from. Please send your contributions to Rita Varner-Otness at healinghands.dc@bwig.net or call Rita at 763-682-5256.

The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross

Revisit this six-hour series that chronicles the full sweep of African-American history.

Presented
and written
by Harvard
scholar
Henry Louis
Gates, Jr., the
series draws
on some of



America's top historians and primary sources, guiding viewer on an engaging journey across two continents to shed new light on the experience of being African American. Among those interviewed are Kathleen Cleaver, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, Congressman John Lewis, civil rights activist Diane Nash, and more. The series schedule is below.

The Black Atlantic Sunday, Sep 6 at 3:29 pm TPT 2
The Black Atlantic Monday, Sep 7 at 1:31am TPT LIFE
The Age of Slavery Tuesday, Sep 8 at 7pm TPT 2
The Age of Slavery Wednesday, Sep 9 at 1am TPT 2
Into The Fire Tuesday, Sep 15 at 7pm TPT 2

Office Hours—by Appointment

The building is closed but we continue to receive phone calls during regular office hours. You may also email or phone staff members and make arrangements to stop by church.

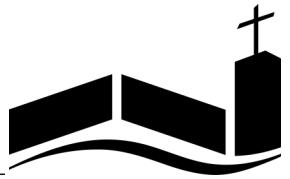
Scripture Readers

If you are considering reading scripture for our online worship, please call or email Michelle. She is currently putting together a schedule of awesome volunteers. Its fairly easy and instructions will be given.

COVID-19 Precautions Update From Pastor Bill

As much as we have all hoped for a break from COVID-19, the case rates and viral reproduction rates in Minnesota, and Wright County, have been increasing rather than subsiding. Because we have already been observing very stringent contact precautions, much has remained the same in this update. Sections that include changes are prefaced with the word NEW.

Phased Regathering Plan. The basic rules of thumb that Bishop Ough has asked all Minnesota United Methodists to follow (John Wesley actually asked these of us first) are to: 1) Do no harm; 2) Do all the good we can; and 3) Stay in love with God. It's the desire to avoid doing harm to those most vulnerable in our community that is the primary motive behind our Phased Re-Gathering Plan for Churches (<https://www.minnesotaumc.org/regatheringplan>). If you haven't yet had a chance to read the Bishop's plan, please do so. We remain in the "Yellow" phase of our regathering plan. Here's what that means in practical terms: **Everyone** should wear a mask, frequently wash hands, and observe at least six feet of physical distance when sharing the church building and church grounds with others. Using hand sanitizer is an alternative when handwashing is not practical. Nobody should come to the church building or church grounds if they have a fever or other symptoms consistent with COVID-19.



Other Ministry Updates

Church Staff continue to work remotely whenever possible and deliberately stagger building use with other staff. Church office hours are by appointment and the church telephone continues to be answered during business hours. Staff remain available electronically and by telephone.

NEW **Church Ministry Groups** are asked to continue to meet electronically, or to meet outdoors while wearing masks and observing safe physical distances of at least six feet. If there is a compelling reason that it is necessary to meet in-person and indoors, then the standard precautions should be followed (see next item), but most church ministry groups can best avoid doing harm by continuing to meet with a lower risk, either electronically or outside. Please check with the church office for a list of cleaning and other hygiene requirements for meeting indoors at church (see guidelines under **Outside Groups** below).

NEW **Children's and Youth Ministries**. Per the Regathering Plan, all children's and youth ministries such as Sunday School, Confirmation, and Youth Group will meet online for the first semester of the school year.

NEW **Outside Groups**. The AA program has a unique need for in-person meeting and is well-suited for small meeting sizes in a remote part of the church building. Under the "Yellow" phase of our regathering plan, we are inviting AA groups of 10 or less to gather in the Education wing of the church using standard safety measures such as not sharing coffee or food, mandatory mask wearing, removing tables to increase physical distancing, sanitizing surfaces after meetings, and entering and exiting through the doorway closest to their meeting room. Our church will also serve as a public polling place in November, as this is an essential community function that must take place indoors.

Funerals and Burials. Pastor Bill may conduct outdoor graveside memorial/interment services with attendances limited to below 50, provided masks are worn and it is possible to maintain a distance of at least six feet between groups that are currently living together. These are not full funerals, but are intended to help grieving families and friends say goodbye to loved ones.

NEW **Baptisms**. Weather permitting, Pastor Bill is available to conduct hybrid in-person/online baptisms. Families will record their portion of the baptism outdoors, with parents or sponsors administering the water, and the congregation will participate later during the online broadcast of worship.

Membership. Virtually nothing we do as the Body of

Christ requires church membership, and we have always encouraged people to begin living into what it means to be a part of our church before joining. Membership is, however, a meaningful covenant involving the gathered community, and we look forward to receiving new members again once we have resumed in-person worship and determine a safe and meaningful way to celebrate that covenant.

NEW **Outside Gatherings**. Gathering together outside is significantly safer when the Minnesota weather (and mosquitos) permits it! Masks and physical distance should still be observed. Meeting outside is a viable option for many church ministry groups while the weather remains hospitable. However, please note that we are asking that Children's and Youth gatherings remain online for now.

NEW **In-Person, Sanctuary Worship**. This type of gathering is the most challenging in terms of maintaining a safe environment, largely because of the factors of poor air flow, larger numbers, confined space, and extended exposure duration. Nevertheless, there WILL come a time when we are ready to resume in-person sanctuary worship. The first step toward will be watch parties, where physically distant groups will meet indoors, with masks, to watch online worship broadcasts on Sunday morning. With the rise of COVID prevalence throughout the Midwest this August, plans for the first watch parties were postponed. We hope to reschedule our first watch party when there is a reduction in the spread of the virus. Meanwhile, the church is collecting bids on AV technology which will allow us to continue online broadcasts even after we have transitioned into more regular indoor worship.

NEW **Summary**. This continues to be a challenging time for everyone. Although the church has never really closed, I do understand the pressing desire felt by some to return to our church sanctuary, as well as the stark reality faced by a significant percentage of our congregation that are at an elevated risk for serious COVID-19 complications. We will continue to monitor the guidance given to us by the Minnesota Annual Conference, as well as State and Wright County epidemiological data such as 14-day caseload per 10,000 and the virus reproduction rate. Meanwhile, please patiently endure the uncertainty that we all must face in these days for a while longer. I'm so encouraged by the large of you who have been creative and flexible in adapting to the new ways we are adopting to be in ministry these days. Have a good idea for trying something new? The staff, Leadership Team, and I would love to hear from you.