



The Circuit Rider

United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon



304 1st Street SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

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April 2020

PASTOR'S LETTER

Matthew 28:6-7...

He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.



April is cancelled – this phrase describes how I feel right now. April is Cancelled: most of what seems normal is no longer an option in our community, our state, our nation, or even our world. Even the president has asked that we don't spend time with more than 10 people in the same location. He's asked that we stay home as much as possible. We are now to socially distance so that we can flatten the curve – all of a sudden we have new vocabulary.

Here's the thing. We are adaptable. What have we done? We have come together – we have done what we know to do to fight for the health of our world. We have fought for those on the frontlines of our medical team. All of a sudden we are more grateful than ever for those who work in grocery stores and general stores, our health care professionals, and our day care providers, and our essential employees. Thank you.

Although the world has changed dramatically in a matter of weeks, and although we find ourselves separated by physical space, we are still the church. In fact we have an opportunity to be the church in new and unique ways. Although it feels like April is cancelled – we will still worship the Lord. We will remain in relationship with one another, we will celebrate Palm Sunday this Sunday, we will come to the cross and acknowledge the death of Christ on Good Friday, and we will celebrate the incredible resurrection of our Savior on April 12th.

Friends, we are a resurrection people, and like no time in my lifetime does this mean something amazing to us. Although we are surrounded by fear and anxiety – there is hope in our savior and Lord Jesus Christ. There is hope in the resurrection, and we will continue to raise up, care for, and celebrate our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If you have internet access, we hope you are worshipping with us at 10am on Sundays through our website or Facebook, the Baty's are offering praise music, and a worship set at 5pm on Sunday evenings via Facebook live. If you have no access to the internet, let us know and we will send you a sermon manuscript, and resources such as this as they become available. I'm hosting online prayer meetings at 9am on Wednesday mornings, and a Facebook Live devotional message on Thursday mornings as well. If you have not found us online yet, check out our Covid-19 page on our website, follow us on facebook, connect with me on Facebook, and we will be sure to get you included.

We are finding new ways to care and connect to one another. If you have a need, please let us know, we want to make sure it is met, and we have many that want to serve. Also – please let us know if you have any specific prayer requests. We would be honored to carry these to the Lord.

April may be cancelled, but the church is more alive than ever. Stay connected. We are here.

Blessings of Grace and Peace, Pastor Joy Mitchell

WORSHIP

<https://www.umcmv.com/covid-19-umcmv/>



Palm Sunday—Sunday April 5

Online worship including songs, sermon message and children's message will be posted on our website—let's gather together at 10 AM Sunday!

Good Friday

We will be providing a written outline of how you can do this in your home. Please stay tuned for this!

Easter Sunday - Sunday April 12

Online worship including songs, sermon message and children's message will be posted on our website—let's gather together at 10 AM Sunday!



Also on this page is music to inspire you, and other great resources to connect us in these times!

Giving to the church in times like these...

ONLINE GIVING is best at <https://bit.ly/2R5YVIu>



Care Circle

Dear friends,

First of all, hello and greetings to each of you. I miss seeing so many of you on a weekly basis or sometimes even more. Those that I have been fortunate enough to see on a zoom meeting or from a distance, I miss giving you a hug or handshake. I'm guessing most of you join me in the midst of this situation, still trying to make sense of life right now. We have been given lots of information the past few weeks, suddenly becoming much too familiar with the terms; Coronavirus, COVID-19 and pandemic. These are times that most have never imagined and quite honestly, must learn to maneuver the best way we can.

In various conversations I have had with friends in the past several days I found myself saying, "at least we are all in the same boat". At least my college student isn't the only one who needs to learn what it looks like to take the rest of his semester classes online. At least my high school student joins all other high school students throughout the nation in trying to develop a daily schedule at home, without all of the Spring school activities she had her heart set on. At least my eldest isn't the only theatre employee that no longer has a job for the time being and will be on the job hunt like many others. So, there is some comfort in realizing we are all in the same boat....at least in the BIG picture.

However, as I pondered this more while listening to an online sermon this past week I thought better of what I had been saying. I realized that while we are in the BIG picture together, truly all of our boats look just a little different. I enjoy the blessing of having all three of my children under our roof during this uncertain and fearful time, while others would really like this to be the case but are not able to be together for various reasons. Some households have healthcare providers who are fearful to go to work each day because of the unknowns, while others don't have a job to go to and carry financial stress. Some are young parents trying to entertain and keep their sanity while being quarantined with young children and working from home. Others have middle school students who are distressed that they can't spend time with their friends, and houses will become too small too soon to hold all the angst that family members carry. We all have our own situations, our own "boats" if you will, and they all look just a little bit different.

I think it is important for us to acknowledge that we are all in this together and that our boats look somewhat different. Now, back to the sermon that I mentioned before, because this is the most important part. No matter what your boat looks like, what we need to remember is that **Jesus is in the boat with us**. He is right here with us, each and every one of us. I truly believe he wants to help us through this fearful and scary time. In Matthew 8:23-27 the disciples were scared by a storm, so they shouted out to Jesus to save them, to keep them from drowning. He replied to them, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?". Then he calmed the storm. The disciples had no other choice than to call out to Jesus, he was right there in the boat with them. I think his disciples today, you and I, really have no other choice right now than to call out to Jesus. We need to remember that he is right here, in our boat with us, and we need to trust that he will calm the storm that we find ourselves in right now. It may not be calm as instantly as in the book of Matthew, but we know he will not desert or leave us.

Shout out to Jesus and let Him hear your prayer. Lean into Him during this time, for if this time reminds us of anything for certain, it is that our God is the one constant that we can always and forever count on.

Blessings to each and every one of you who are reading this letter. Our church family is connected by our faith and trust in God. Just as the disciples cried out for help and admitted they were scared, we can do the same. We can call out to Jesus and we can call out to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us all lift each other up when the other is down, helping to take care of each other as the hands and feet of Christ here on earth.

Love and HUGS, Julie Baty, Congregational Care Coordinator UCMCV

For the sake of safety and health,

our building is currently closed.

If you need support, someone to talk to, or other assistance, we are here for you.

We are doing virtual prayer sessions on Wednesday AM so if you want help joining that, please let us know.

Pastor Joy is doing Facebook Live Videos and our sermons are on YouTube, so if you need assistance finding either of those, just let us know.

Contacts:

Pastoral Support Contact Pastor Joy Mitchell 515-450-8994

Congregational Care Contact Julie Baty 319-533-2349

Communications Contact Alison Dix 319-573-4801



Mission of Hope Lunch April 22

We are supporting the Mission of Hope by supplying them with pizzas for a warm meal on our designated day. Most days the mission is handing out sack lunches and said the last time they had pizzas, everyone appreciated it. We will be supporting this financial option to allow for less contact due to the current affairs in our community, and will have the pizzas delivered. If you feel called, feel free to give to support this outreach we will be doing in the month of April, designating it to the "Mission of Hope LUNCH". We continue to support Mission of Hope Lunch and look forward to our next appointed date in September.

SE Linn Community Center & Meals on Wheels

We continue to work closely with this community partner and we were able to get their delivery of food to them from the Bulk Food offering we did in March 2020. Their director Nicole Alexander says they are doing okay and support about 60 to 70 families a week with deliveries of food. Meals on Wheels is supplying frozen meals and one hot meal from local restaurants to the those who are participating in that program. We will monitor their needs and as we hear about ways we can be in support or connection with them, we will let us know. Thanks so much for your continuous support of one another!



United Methodist
Church
of Mount Vernon

WE PROMISE

WE PROMISE...

...to stay connected with our church body...even when we can't worship together in person...even with the building is closed. This truly shows our church is the people of God, the church family, and not a place.

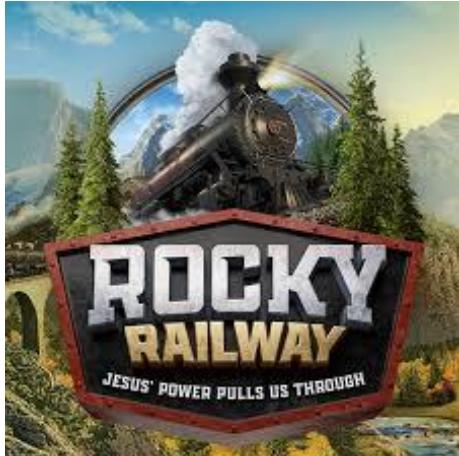
...that God is with us today, tomorrow and always. Our faith is such a gift in times of hardship and uncertainty and even when you have doubts, God is right beside you. Jesus promises, I will be with you always, even to the end of the age.

...to pray for one another, to call one another, to send cards, to have group chats, and virtual gatherings. This will make us stronger on the other side of this crisis. Also, please know time together with your family is a gift.

...to support those who are lonely, afraid, hurting, working when others get to stay home, and who are in need. We get the chance to show our strength in times like this and we are able to do God's work in our community. (posted on our FB page 3/25)

Vacation Bible School 2020

SAVE THE DATE



Hello VBS fans!

Despite the uncertainty right now, we want to share our **tentative dates for VBS this summer: July 26-30.**

Of course, this is tentative depending on the current Pandemic and recommendations that are in place as those dates draw closer. We just wanted to let you know so you can get it on your calendar and “save the date”!

We are hopeful that we will be able to have it this summer, and if we are able, we would love to have the involvement and energy of many volunteers so we can make it a wonderful week for our kids!!

Please, save the date, and more information will be forthcoming in the next weeks and months!

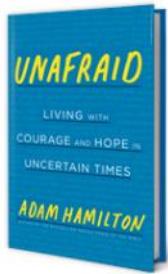
ALSO—if you are interested in being a volunteer for this event, [please let us know](#) and we will contact you once we are ready to designate spots to help lead this fund event!

Birthday-in-a-Bag UPDATE...

12 bags were delivered to SE Linn Food Bank right before they closed for visitors. With your generosity, we will be able to deliver another 24- you tripled what we had hoped to do! Thank you!



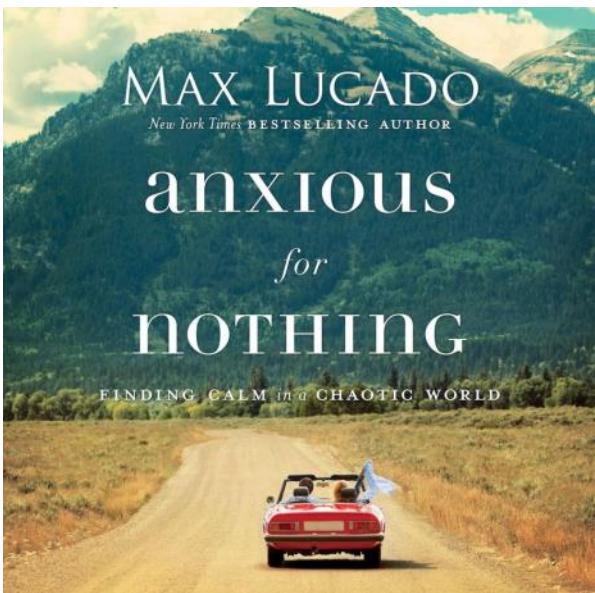
Resources to help in times like these...



Unafrain—Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times

Video sessions with Adam Hamilton

<https://my.amplifymedia.com/amplify/series/unitedmethodistpublishinghouse/14438-unafraid>



Anxious for Nothing

Resources

A great author that our church groups have used to study and grow that helps with worry from a Christian perspective.

5 Online Video Sessions with the Author

<https://bit.ly/2UzmJ9L>



If you know of a specific person at Hallmark Mount Vernon, or Lisbon Rehabilitation Center, you can go on their website, and send them a e-card and the facility will print it off and deliver it to them.

Go to ABCMCORP.COM, roll over the word Services in top Menu and choose Skilled Nursing & Long Term Care, click on services on that page, then pick the facility the person you want to send a card to is in from the right hand brown list, (Like Mount Vernon) click on the name of the town, then on the next screen, choose Greeting Card from the Squares on the page, and fill out the information requested once you click on Greeting Card. You do need to know the person's full name to send a card. Thanks!

EASTER FLOWERS

Lilies, our symbol of hope and rebirth for the church, in this time of uncertainty.

We have lilies and tulips on order for our church for Easter. Since we will not be gathering in our sanctuary and decorating it with these flowers this year, we'd like to offer this symbol of hope to those in our congregation and those in our community out there on the front line trying to keep us safe and healthy.

If you would like to contribute to this opportunity to show some folks out there some kindness and love, you can



send a contribution of \$11 per plant to the church office. Please send names, addresses and phone numbers, if possible, of those you'd like to honor by receiving a plant to Barb Shepley at 319-895-6566 or email at brshepley@q.com. Plants will be delivered to folks on Thur. April 9 thru Sat. April 11. If you are available to help deliver (using social distancing) please let Barb know. Also, if you think someone has an allergy to the lilies (as some folks do) please let us know.

Thank you and God bless!



Face Masks



If any one is needing a mask during this time of crisis, Barb Shepley is working with a team of people making fabric masks. If you are feeling like you need one and don't have access to one, please contact Barb and the team would be happy to bring you one. Her contact information is 319-895-6566 or email at brshepley@q.com

THANK YOU TO THIS TEAM– they have delivered them to the Lisbon Mount Vernon Ambulance, care centers and local hospitals!

Taking Care of Yourself Mentally

We have all faced times hard times, when we might have been separated from friends or family. It can help in these odd times to remember times like that. In any hard season, we are called to take care of what is going on inside ourselves as well as take care of our bodies. I have heard the thought that self-care is an act of gratitude for the life God has given us. I love this idea. Taking care of my mental health is giving thanks to God. Awesome. We want to be good stewards of his cherished people. So what can you do to take great care of you?

First, I think we lean into our faith. I truly believe that it is times like this that have taught me what prayer is. When I don't have all the answers, I turn to God to reassure me and take over some of my worries. Being able to pray to God, ask him for support and peace is reassuring to me. Knowing God will listen to whatever I have to say and that God will be there for me no matter what I am worried about is so comforting. Being able to thank God for all the blessings I have in my life is truly one of my favorite things because it helps remind me how truly blessed I am even when things are chaotic.

It is also good to remember that it is totally normal to feel like you aren't doing enough or that you have to do it ALL. There are times when you will feel like what you're doing is not big enough or impacting as many as you want to. That is a normal human feeling. God is calling you only to care for yourself and those in your circle and nothing more. It is also normal to want to control what you can by trying to do too much. When you do that, you empty out all your reserves, you may spin out of control going from thing to thing too quickly and then eventually exhaustion can set in. Caring for yourself means having grace for your limitations, knowing you will try to do what you can with what you have and that will be enough. You are enough. Repeat after me, you are enough.

There are ways to take care of yourself so that you are not thinking so negatively as well. Listening to positive music can take your mind off what is going on and give you a better outlook on life. I have made one or two playlists on Spotify to blare when I am needing a distraction or a pick me up these days. Podcasts are very popular these days and people are putting out so much wisdom and information that we can use to improve ourselves and fill up our cups. Recently I listened Adam Weber's podcast and it just gave me hope that while we all struggle, we are able to come together in times like these. (The Conversation with Adam Weber at adamweber.com)

Taking time to decompress, through reading or watching funny comedians on YouTube, is also a great way to keep your mental health intact at this time. Something about focusing on another story helps you breathe out the stress you might be holding on tight to. Laughter definitely releases stress tension and allows you to realize even in chaotic times, it feels good to smile, to laugh and to know eventually this will all pass. We will get through this.

Lastly, I want to encourage you if you are feeling really down, try to write down your thoughts. I find journaling to be the number one greatest release and reliever of stress for me. Even when I write how crappy I am doing, something about getting it out and onto the paper makes it a little less in me. Giving myself time to process, to think about what is happening and to know I can shift my perspective even just a little bit to see it is not as bad as maybe my mind has made it out to be. Working through your stress in journaling is a positive thing for our minds and bodies right now. Please take time to take great care of yourself. Taking care of yourself is what God calls us to do in all times. It is only by caring for yourself that you are able to care for one another. – Alison Dix

APRIL Birthdays

may your birthday bring
you as much happiness
as you give to everyone
who knows you

Happy Birthday

Marilyn Meyer	04/01
Scott Johanningmeier	04/02
Arlene Sand	04/03
Jordan Smith	
Clare Nydegger	04/04
Jacob Pratt	04/06
Kevin Zehms	
Kim Stoner	04/07
Calvin Kragenbrink	04/08
Jack Kragenbrink	
Ella Norton	
Don Stine	
Geoff Glenn	04/10
Camden Mertes	
Sydney Pratt	
Mike Stewart	
Courtney Micheel	04/11
Amy Conrad	04/12
Reagan Morf	
Holly Hotz	04/13
Clint Currie	04/14
Benjamin Nydegger	
Stacey Barber	04/15
Megan Fisher	
Kyle Jaspers	04/17
Pam Hunter	04/18
Gretchen Beckhlm	04/19
Annie Leopold	04/24
Eryn Jackson	04/25
Jo Sedlacek-Harman	04/26
Becky Mohn	04/27



Giving Opportunities

- UMCOR Sunday (to give to support UMCOR efforts)
 - <https://bit.ly/3dL9o5z>
- SE Linn Community Center
 - <https://selinn.org/>
- Mission of Hope Cedar Rapids
 - <http://www.missionofhopecr.org/>
- Neighbors in Need Fund– Local Support
 - mail donations to UMCMV or give online at <https://bit.ly/3dLADNo>
- FISH Fund– Community Efforts to support people in transition
 - mail donations to UMCMV or give online at <https://bit.ly/3dLADNo>

We will feature one area to support in the Midweek each week and if you want to be active with that organization, we welcome that. We also know this is a difficult financial time and want you to know we want you adjust your giving to only ones you are able to do at this time.

PRAYER LIST

Prayers for Healing:

- For all who are currently infected with the COVID-19 virus
- For Mike Nugent (Kevin Woods brother-in-law) who lives in Dallas and has cancer in a very serious form
- Continued prayers for Emily (Stoner) Bell as she progresses in her recovery from surgery
- Steve Staker (friends of Don and Judy Stine) who was recently diagnosed with cancer
- For Gavin Hayes (nephew of Roger and Marilyn Schnittjer) that his new stem cells will be effective in treating his cancer. The next three months are an important time in this process, as he will be spending it in isolation at home due to weakened immunity
- For all our friends and family members who are fighting the battle against cancer

Prayers for Comfort and Strength:

- For anyone who is working in the healthcare field or another "frontline" occupation during this pandemic and uncertain time. Prayers for their safety, strength and comfort
- For the family and friends of Dean Borg, who passed away on March 22nd
- For the family and friends of Marge Gaines, who passed away on March 17th. Marge will be greatly missed by her church family
- For those worrying and anxious about health issues
- For all who are struggling: emotionally and spiritually
- For individuals and families who are under financial stress
- For those suffering silently with anxiety and depression
- For this church, this building, these people
- Dick and Nancy Thomas
- For all not mentioned by name who are mourning the loss of a family member or friend

Prayers for Transition:

- For Pastor Terra Amundson (and her husband, Jay) as she completes her work as District Superintendent in the SW District and prepares to begin her ministry at UMCMV beginning in July and for Pastor Joy Mitchell (and Weston) as she continues ministry here at UMCMV through June and also looks ahead to a new appointment in Walcott, Iowa
- For the leaders of our church here at UMCMV to know how to lead us and what to do in these uncertain times
- For the United Methodist Church: including the global church, the Iowa Conference and our Mount Vernon congregation

Prayers for Sustenance:

- Prayers for the journey of Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University Class
- For the children in Sibiu, Romania being served at The Super Kids Day Center and the staff who are ministering to them. Specifically, prayers for Pastor Cristi and Ligia.
- UMCMV pastor, staff, lay leader, and committee members
- UMCMV Stephen Ministers and Care Ministers
- Mission of Hope
- Women at the Well United Methodist Church, Pastor Lee Schott, and the women of Iowa Correctional Institute for Women

Prayers for our World:

- For all people and countries of this world who have been and continue to be effected physically by the COVID-19 virus
- For all people across the globe who are concerned about financial implications of pandemic, both personally and beyond
- For national and state leaders to deal with the COVID-19 virus effectively
- Pray for love among all people
- Prayers for peace for people everywhere - peace worldwide

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Joy:

- Thankfulness for online methods of staying connected during this time of social distancing
- Gratefulness for the love and kindness shown to one another in times of crisis
- Thanksgiving for our small and wonderful communities of Mount Vernon and Lisbon
- Gratitude for our many blessings



United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon
304 First Street SW
Mount Vernon, IA 52314
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*United Methodist Church
of Mount Vernon Staff*

Senior Pastor Joy Mitchell
Director of Youth Renee Nydegger with Joy Mitchell
Praise Team Director- Interim- Clint Stanerson
Christian Education Director....
Sunday School Coordinator Brittany Booth
Congregational Care Coordinator Julie Baty
Office Manager/NewsletterAlison Dix
Admin. Asst./ Membership.....
Nursery Care..... Melissa Oxley
Director, Adult Handbell Choir ..Kristi Keast
Organist Karen Stoll
Chancel Choir Director Joleen Woods
Custodian Night Shift
Maintenance & Repair Director Trustees
Wedding Coordinator.....Barb Shepley
Financial Secretaries Richard Jacob,
& Jackie Morrical
Treasurers Mike Kragenbrink
Alison Dix



Sunday April 12
Online Worship

<https://www.umcmv.com/covid-19-umcmv/>

If you are unable to worship with us online, and would like a copy of the sermon message, you can contact Julie Baty at 319-533-2349.