

# First News

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

UMM News	2
Sewers Needed	3
“Prayer is the Voice of Faith...” by Dorothy Steinke	
Mission Minded	4
Outreach News	5
W.O.W. News	
Social Concerns	6
Birthday Calendar	
April Preaching Plan	8
2020 Blondena Kaiser Award Winner, Sharon Balka	10-11

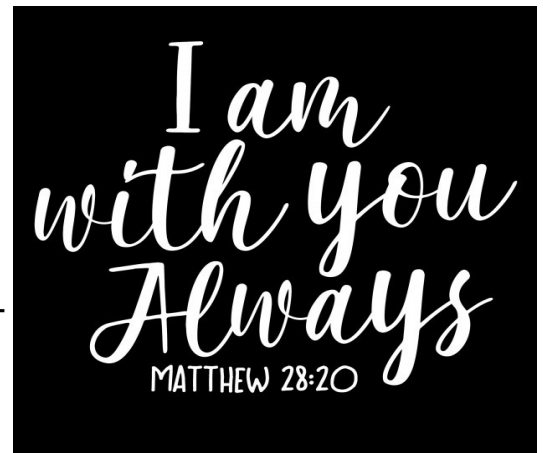
## A Note From Pastor Toni

Friends,

We are currently living in circumstances that are completely new to me, and to most of you, as well. Things keep changing—almost from one day to the next. We have to keep listening and adjusting our behavior and activities in order to stay well and to keep from infecting others.

Today (Monday, March 23), we have been instructed by our Governor to “shelter in place.” We’re to stay at home except for the essentials, so I’m guessing this means that tonight there will be another major wave of toilet paper and milk purchases, along with whatever else might still be on the shelves before the stores close, sanitize and restock for tomorrow.

Living in Indiana, I’ve grown to expect the rush to purchase TP before a big snowstorm. I’ve experienced milk in short supply. I’ve even had to make the decision about canceling worship on several occasions. I remember one January in particular when it seemed that a big snowstorm was



predicted every Saturday for 3 or 4 weeks in a row. It was crazy! Every weekend I stressed about what might happen. I don’t think we ever actually did have to cancel, but each week it was important for some folks to stay home. That white fluff and shiny slippery stuff made it clear that inside their home was the best place to be.

I can only remember one occasion of actually sitting on my couch on a Sunday morning, reading a devotional because we had to cancel worship. It just didn’t feel right. But it was necessary at the time.

*(Continued on page 7)*



Sunday Services  
will be available  
for online viewing  
each week on the  
church's  
Facebook page or  
on YouTube on  
the "First United  
Methodist Church  
of Plymouth,  
Indiana" channel.

## United Methodist Men by David Hogsett

**The United Methodist Men's Pork Tenderloin carry out originally scheduled for Saturday April 11<sup>th</sup> to raise money for the Boy Scout Troop will be rescheduled.** Members of the Methodist Men and the Boy Scouts will have tickets for sale: \$10 for a tenderloin sandwich and fries. In addition, you can get a pork tenderloin sandwich only for \$8.00; fries only for \$3.00; pop & water for \$1.00; and cookies or brownies for a donation at the car. Ralph Smith is providing the tenderloins and fries.

**WE WILL KEEP YOU APPRISED AS PLANS ARE FINALIZED.**

At the regular meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup>, Brian Liechty will be sharing where we are with Rebuilding First Church. There will be an opportunity to tour the church building. The men meet at 8:00 A.M. for breakfast.

### **Future Meetings**

May: Speaker from Elite Travel

June: Senior health

July: Cook-Out

August: Henderson settlement

*The men's bible study on Wednesdays at 6:45 A.M. at Christo's has been cancelled for now.*

*Note: There may be some revisions to the above schedule depending upon the coronavirus.*

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## “Sunday's Palms Are Wednesday's Ashes”

by Rae Whitney & B.F. White



Sunday's palms are Wednesday's ashes as another Lent begins; Thus we kneel before our Maker in contrition for our sins. We have marred baptismal pledges, in rebellion gone astray; now, returning, seek forgiveness; grant us pardon, God, this day.

We have failed to love our neighbors, their offences to forgive, have not listened to their troubles, nor have cared just how they live, we are jealous, proud, impatient, loving over much our things; may the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.

We are hasty to judge others, blind to proof of human need; and our lack of understanding demonstrates our inner greed; We have wasted earth's resources, want and suffering ignored; come and cleanse us, then restore us; make new hearts within us, Lord.

# Prayer is the Voice of Faith, Trusting that God Knows and Cares

by Dorothy Steinke

**Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well.** *1 Timothy 2:2*

Spring has come to Murray. Jonquils have been blooming since the first of March. The flowering trees are all in bloom. The weather varies between 50 and 70 degrees. We have received a lot of rain, so everything is very soggy. Like everywhere else everything is closed. We are all staying home. To celebrate my birthday my daughter and granddaughter came and "hung out" with Granny for an afternoon. There is a Sonic drive-in here - in the 6 years I have spent winters here I have never visited Sonic; they were still open for carry out so we had Sonic burgers for lunch.

I watched the March 15 Facebook church service. It was good to see all of you. I enjoyed the Choir and the anthem by the trio.

The Kentucky Governor had requested the churches to suspend services. The Kentucky Bishop agreed, and we have not had services here for the last 2 weeks. They televise the services, but my

cable service does not carry that channel.

I do not know when I will be able to return to Plymouth due to travel restrictions. I keep all of you in my prayers. We need to pray for our government as they work at containing this crisis and bringing us through this time with a healthy country and financial system.

## Mission Witness

Sunflowers turn according to the position of the sun; they "chase the light." On cloudy, rainy days, they turn towards each other to share their energy. When I am overwhelmed, low spirited, or helpless at meeting the needs of the most vulnerable of my society, I remember that lesson, and turn to the light, Jesus Christ, for my renewal.

## Catherine Mudime Akale

United Methodist Women Regional Missionary, Africa

(See page 2 for "Sunday's Palms are Wednesday's Ashes" which was included in Dorothy's submission this month. We sang this on Ash Wednesday.)

"We need to pray for our government as they work at containing this crisis and bringing us through this time with a healthy country and financial system."

## Volunteer Sewers Needed!

Miller's Assisted Living is looking for volunteers to sew face masks. All supplies will be supplied by Miller's. If you are willing and able, please contact Cindy Flagg at Miller's: 936-9801, ext 148. Your help is appreciated!



# MISSION MINDED

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## Missions Calendar for 2020:

*(At our meeting on March 3, we developed the following calendar of events. Since that time, things have become uncertain – everything is tentative and subject to change if necessary.)*

**March 15:** We were to get the profits from The Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast. That will be rescheduled for a different month.

**April 26 – 30:** Work Trip to Midwest Mission Distribution Center

**May 16:** Tenderloin Fundraiser – Drive-thru Service in the Parking Lot  
(Ralph Smith cooking)



**June 13:** Bake Sale at the Farmer’s Market



**August:** Corn Roast – On a Sunday, outside in the east parking lot

**August 22:** Bake Sale at the Farmer’s Market



**Sept. 19:** Fish Fry – Drive-thru Service in the Parking Lot (Ralph Smith cooking)

**October:** Work Trip to Henderson Settlement

**November:** Hacienda Fundraiser



Both the Marshall County Neighborhood Center and the Marshall County Bread of Life need donations of food. You can drop items off during the hours they are open; they will come out to your car so you don’t need to go inside. I imagine they will also welcome checks received in the mail and they can shop.

The Marshall County Community Foundation has set up a fund for people that are the most vulnerable during these times of uncertainty.



**THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE IS CANCELING  
THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH  
OF APRIL:**

Lunch Bunch

Dominos and Euchre

Blessed Bookies

Bad Girls

First Sunday Brunch

Knit Two...Pray Three



It seems strange to be speaking of “outreach” as we are all being reminded to “shelter in”. Even though we are not physically together this month, there are still ways we can “reach out” to others.

A greeting card, an email, a telephone call can lift spirits and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm reminds us that “even when we walk through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, because you are with me.”

We can reach out, in spite of our present circumstances, and the FUMC family will be stronger for it.

“...even when we walk through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, because you are with me.”

***Psalm 23***

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W.O.W. News by Donna Hemmig

In light of the current situation, we will keep members of W.O.W. informed about when we are able to gather again. Until then, stay well!





# Social Concerns by Mary Kaufman

During this Covid-19 pandemic, many people in our area are affected by layoffs which may lead to food insecurity. Most of us won't have to worry about where our next meal is coming from, but many in Plymouth do.



The Neighborhood Center (as well as Bread of Life food pantry) are helping even more clients every day. Items that they need to keep in stock are cold cereal, oatmeal, peanut butter, canned tuna and chicken, soups, canned vegetables and fruits, hamburger helper type meal starters, mac and cheese, pasta and sauce. Fresh bread, fruits and vege-

tables may also be donated.



To donate, call Neighborhood Center at 936-3388 and tell them that you have items to bring to them (402 W. Garro). They will meet you at your car and unload the items for you so you don't even have to go into the building.

Also, cash donations made to the Marshall County Neighborhood Center will be helpful in the near future when clients who have faced layoffs have difficulty paying rent and utilities.

God asks us to help others in need, especially at a time like this. Here is one way we can do that.

“God asks us to help others in need, especially at a time like this. Here is one way we can do that.”

Due to the Corona-virus, most if not all activities and meetings have been cancelled. Therefore, no regular calendar will be included in this month's newsletter. Stay tuned with us and see weekly Sunday services on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/plymouthfumc/> and/or Youtube: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwrzNV-DOWsznrBCqck\\_qmLg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwrzNV-DOWsznrBCqck_qmLg)

## April 2020

**First United Methodist Church**  
 400 N. Michigan St. Phone: 574 936-2943  
 Plymouth, IN 46563 Email: [office@plymouthfirstumc.org](mailto:office@plymouthfirstumc.org)  
 Love God ~ Love Others ~ Serve Others

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Stacey Kaufman	2 Mike Boys Keith Stewart	3	4
5 Ronald Smith	6 Angie Kelso	7	8	9 Connie Kendall	10 Tristan Cerrato	11 John Finlay
12	13	14 Anne Benner Michael Goebel	15	16	17 Erin Stidham	18 Lillian Grace Jackson Dick Tobias
19 Betty Lou Laramore Sarah Smith	20 Ruth Van Vactor	21	22	23 Juli Macey Jean Schricker	24	25
26	27	28 Herta Thomas	29	30		

## A Note from Pastor Toni (continued)

(Continued from page 1)



It's necessary at this time, as well. I'd so much rather gather together with all of you in worship in the same space on Sunday mornings. I love singing together, listening to God's Word, and seeing your faces as we consider what God might have to say to us. But for at least the next 3 weeks we'll be worshipping together from our separate places. I'll either be here at church with an abbreviated team of your friends to live stream our service, or perhaps I'll be doing that from home, hoping Gracie keeps her distance and doesn't decide to grasp a starring role (Gracie is Scott and my new little rescue dog, in case you haven't heard her story yet). We'll take one day at a time and give it our best effort, whatever happens, whatever we need to do.

What's important, I think, is that we remain flexible, patient, and faithful. This virus has overwhelmed the medical systems of other places, and we want to "flatten the curve" by minimizing transmission and staying well.

Occasionally a tinge of fear will nibble at me and I wonder how long this will last, how far will it go, how might our community, our families (church family and otherwise) be affected? But then I'm reminded of all those times I've read in scripture, "*Do not be afraid.*" "*Fear not.*" "*I am with you.*"

I don't believe that we're to ignore the problems that are happening in our lives or in our world right now. We're not to minimize or act like they make no difference. We're not to pretend that they'll just go away. But God is consistent in promising us that God is with us and that the times in which we're living are not outside of God's sight or beyond God's care. God is with us and is walking alongside us as we negotiate our way through this uncharted course.

Please stay in contact. I'll be sending out notes to keep you informed of what we're doing a time or two each week. I'm planning, but not quite ready to start a daily email offering words of encouragement. You'll receive a phone call or two from members of your church family who are just checking in to see how you're doing. We've already discovered in this past year that First United Methodist Church is resilient, strong and faithful. We still are. We're here. We're together. Even in our different places.

So—stay safe, stay well, stay connected, stay strong. God is with us. Do not be afraid.

*Toni*

## Preaching Plan for April

### APRIL 5

Palm/Passion Sunday

Text: *Mark 14:32-36*

Title: The Garden: Risking Temptation

Theme: Gethsemane is the moment when a chain of events begins that cannot be stopped. Once Jesus is taken into custody, there is no going back. So, we will pause with him in the garden just before his arrest, and we feel with him the temptations that arise when facing difficult circumstances—to run, hide, use whatever power we have to change things, fight it, perhaps even bargain with God. We walk among the sleepy disciples who just can't grasp what's about to happen. And we open to let the story remind us that no matter what we face, or how we fail to meet the demand of the moment, second chances are possible.

### APRIL 12

Easter Sunday

Text: *Matthew 28:1-10*

Title: Hope is Alive!

Theme: Resurrection!! New life!! New possibility!!

### APRIL 19

2nd Sunday of Easter

Text: *John 20:19-31*

Title: Easter Faith

Theme: It takes great faith to believe in the truth of the resurrection of Christ. In his presence, in his appearances to us, in the worship of the church, and in the mystery of our own lives, Jesus gives us the evidence we need to have faith in the reality of the resurrection.

### APRIL 26

3rd Sunday of Easter

Text: *Luke 24:13-35*

Title: Christ Returns...to Us

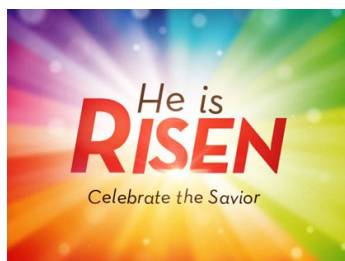
Theme: In his resurrection, Jesus Christ returned to us, was present with us in a new and mysterious though undeniable way. The resurrection is not something that originates in us or in our desires; it is an unexpected, unsought, surprising intrusion by a living, loving God. The Christian faith is a lifelong

training in receiving the risen Christ as he is, as he comes to us in all of his resurrected glory and presence.



**EASTER SUNDAY:**

**HOPE IS ALIVE!**



**ALLELUIA!**  
**CHRIST IS ALIVE!**



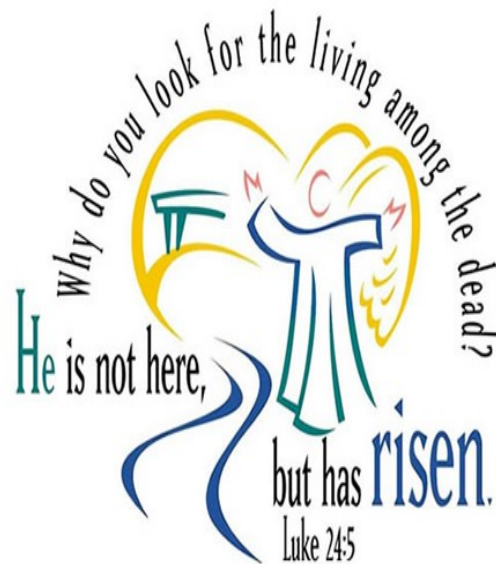
## A Reminder from Pastor Toni

I would appreciate your words of encouragement, scripture, and other writings for me to send out to everyone in a daily devotional that will begin soon. Please send to me at [tlcarmer@plymouthfirstumc.org](mailto:tlcarmer@plymouthfirstumc.org).

Your tithes and offerings, as always, are essential for our ministry.

Please keep us informed of ways we need to be praying for one another. Prayer is the most important connection of all.

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ChurchArt Online | [www.churchart.com](http://www.churchart.com)

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With live services cancelled, there is no need for liturgists, ushers, nursery workers, greeters, or sound techs so no schedule is included in this month's newsletter. New schedules will be listed as we go back to normal services.

Thank you!

Donald Huddle 6/24/26—3/19/2020

Grace Blanding, recently returned from Florida, contacted us to let us know that her long time companion, Don Huddle, has passed away following a brief illness. No services are planned at this time.



## BLONDENA V. KAISER MEMORIAL February 23, 2020

Today we are proud to present the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Blondena Kaiser Award. Mr. B.D. Kaiser established a trust fund after his wife's death in 1986, to honor her memory and to fund this award that is presented annually on the Sunday closest to her birthday.

The recipient chosen for this award must be a woman with high moral standards who has a strong love of children and a background of caring for fellow citizens and her church. She will receive an honor certificate, the altar flowers, and a monetary award based on the interest from the memorial fund.

This year's honoree has been a member of our congregation, along with her husband, since 1992. She is a very caring individual who shares her time and talents generously with her church, her family, and the community.

For many years she has volunteered as a Children's Church leader and substitute; a Children's Sunday School substitute teacher; and a Vacation Bible School volunteer. She has a kind and nurturing soul, and likes the opportunity to get to know the children of our congregation.

She has served on the Youth and Education Commission and the Worship Commission among others. She is part of the Thursday morning "Early Birds" Bible Study and is a member of WOW. She helps with seasonal decorating, and is always ready to help with preparations such as cutting out construction paper items for Sunday School or setting up the Fellowship Hall or picnic pavilion for a meal.

Today's honoree practices the teaching from 1 Peter 4:10 - *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."*

She is an excellent cook and is always willing to donate homemade food and volunteer to help serve it. Whether it is for Community Meals, Funeral Meals, the Casserole Committee, Cookie Sundays, Easter Breakfast, Meals for Methodists, Vacation Bible School, Smile, ASK, Bake Sales, or Special Events - she is ready to provide something tasty.

When our church undertakes projects that require sewing skills, she is ready to share her talents. For instance, the valances in this room and on the third floor of this building, and numerous "Change the World" sewing tasks.

Our recipient is a very caring individual who also embodies the teaching from 1 Peter 5:2 - *"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve."*

2020 Blondena Kaiser Award Winner,  
Sharon Balka

Left to right: Son-in-law Dirk, Sharon,  
Don, daughter Paige



She assisted and cared for both her mother and mother-in-law before they each passed. She continues to help out her step-dad. She helped raise her grandchildren, despite the fact that they have always lived out-of-state. She has provided assistance for her nieces and nephews and their families that live nearby. Additionally, she has been part of a strong support system for Barbie and Abi Pickut. Serving and helping others are some examples of her selfless service to others.

This busy lady has worked with Operation Quiet Comfort, making up care packages to send to our troops overseas. She has volunteered with their annual fund-raising benefit, helping with set-up, clean-up, and baking homemade pies.

As a retired Home Economics teacher, she still volunteers in the classroom. Her help is especially appreciated when the students are learning to sew. She has used her talents, both cooking and sewing, for the school's Madrigal Dinner. She also alters prom dresses, at no charge, so special needs girls can enjoy a magical night all dressed up!

She sets an example for all of us as instructed in John 13:34 - 35 - *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

We are honored to present the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Blondena Kaiser Award to –

**Sharon Balka!**

Past Recipients

1991 - Helen Crocker  
 1992 - Lillian Kenney  
 1993 – Betty Stewart  
 1994 - Mildred Fetherolf  
 1995 - Donna Lamb  
 1996 - Patricia Bates  
 1997 - Dorothy Huff  
 1998 - Joanne Boys  
 1999 - Irene Butler  
 2000 - Debbie Dunning  
 2001 - Jeanne Middleton  
 2002 – Pamela Michel  
 2003 – Karen Carmen  
 2004 - Marjorie Houghton  
 2005 - Sandy Thoden

2006 - Betty Lou Laramore  
 2007 - Bonnie Yeazel  
 2008 - Velma Butler  
 2009 - Deb Jung  
 2010 - Jean Schricker  
 2011 - Sharon Anderson (Westfall)  
 2012 - Diane Laudeman  
 2013 - Marilyn Rans  
 2014 - Sue Stinson  
 2015 - Carol Beiter  
 2016 - Becky Rettig  
 2017 - Irma Slack  
 2018 - Diane Hogsett  
 2019 – Lynn Gee

2020 Blondena Kaiser Award Winner,  
 Sharon Balka with husband, Don

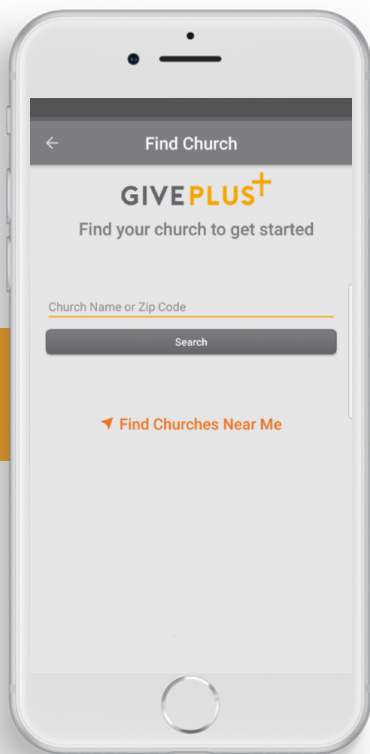


First United  
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org

Love God ~ Love Others  
~ Serve Others



Use your smart phone and scan the QR code to the right or go to **Google Play** or the **Apple App Store** to download the **GivePlus+** app to start online donations. Follow the steps to begin giving.



QR code

## Making Donations Using GivePlus Church

**OR**

Go to our website: [www.plymouthfirstumc.org](http://www.plymouthfirstumc.org)

and click on the gold **"DONATE NOW"** button to begin online giving.

Please continue to share your blessings generously with your church!

**GIVEPLUS+**