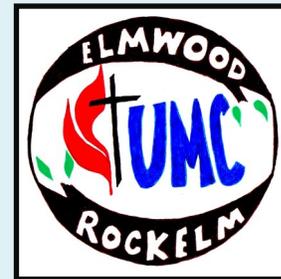




The Good News



ereumc.org

A Newsletter for the
Elmwood and Rock Elm
United Methodist Churches

Dear friends,

The past few Sundays we have been traveling through parts of Matthew. We are in the part where Jesus tells a series of parables that begin with, “The kingdom of heaven is like...” Often we think of heaven as a place where we go when we die. We know God is there, Jesus is there, and so are the angels. We also believe that our loved ones who have passed are also there.

But in these parables Jesus is not talking about that place where we go after we leave this earth. Jesus is talking about the rule of heaven as it comes upon our earth in the here and now. It is almost like he is saying, “If God’s precepts and commands were active among the people of the earth, it would be like heaven come down.” That is my rough interpretation and doesn’t really quite capture it. Suffice it to say, that Jesus was trying to give us a glimpse of what the world would be like if all God’s people took the teachings that Jesus gave seriously.

One of my favorites of these parables is the woman who had mixed yeast into flour. *“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”* Matthew 13:33

This one gives me the feeling that when God’s people behave as if the kingdom of heaven was upon us, heaven spreads out to those whom they touch. When people are kind, kindness spreads; when people love, love spreads. When people put other people first that is noticed and spreads as well.

In one of my earlier newsletters, I mention that even though we can’t meet in church like we would like to, the church still exists in our community and we still have the opportunity to bring the kingdom of heaven to our world. Right now, our world may not seem like heaven with the struggles it is having, however, God is God all the time and heaven still exists. It is up to us whether we work to bring the kingdom or let the world dominate our actions.

As St. Francis put it, “At all times preach the Gospel. Use words when necessary.” It is our actions more than words that say who we are as Christians.

Today as I arrived at the office, our neighbor across the street offered me some cucumbers from his garden. I complimented how nice his garden looked and he told me the secret was using horse manure. Now you know the secret. He and his wife have always been kind to me and I always look forward to greeting them on Wednesday mornings. The kingdom of heaven is like...

I pray that your summer is going well and that you have had time to enjoy the weather.

Grace and peace be with you all,

Pastor Mike

Sunday Services:

Rock Elm 9:00

Elmwood 10:30

Michael Weaver, Pastor

Jeanne Friedell, Secretary

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Stewardship Corner.....	2
Announcements.....	3,4
Forrest Wells Reflection.....	5
Authorization Form.....	6

OF INTEREST

- Sunday school for elementary children during worship service
- United Methodist Women
- Contemporary and traditional music
- Open minds, open doors, open hearts

Our Mission Statement

Connecting - Inviting new people, welcoming them into the life of the church with active hospitality.

Growing –Providing opportunities to experience meaningful worship and to grow in one's faith.

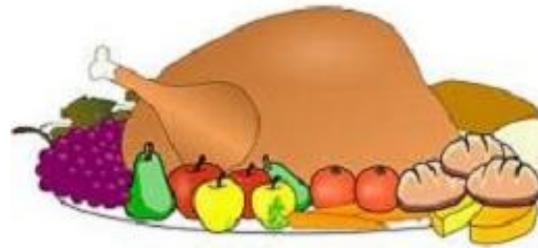
Serving - Risk-taking mission and service in the community.

Harvest Dinner

Wednesday, October 28th

Take-Out Only

(No Dining In)



CONNECTING, GROWING, SERVING

I will never forget your precepts because through them you gave me life again.

Psalm 119:93

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.

Staying Connected

There are now three ways to participate in worship services!

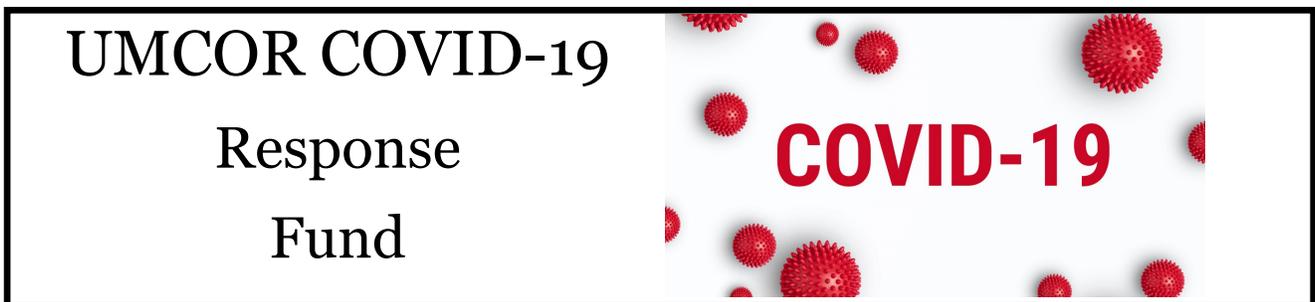
We are continuing on-line Sunday worship services through Virtual Church, which is a collection of video recordings of worship services conducted by Pastor Mike. You can access them from your computer, tablet, or smartphone. Each week we send out an email with the link to the latest video. You can also access them through our Facebook page or our website. You can also access the channel by using the following link.

[Elmwood Rock Elm Virtual Church](#)

Parking Lot Church Services began at Rock Elm on Sunday, July 26th. Worshippers remain in their cars, watch the service through their windshields, and listen to the service on their car radio. Services are at 9:00 am. Tune your radio to 93.5 FM.

In-person service is also available at Elmwood, following CDC guidelines for social distancing. Services are at 10:30 am.

All services are cancelled for August 9th.



Since the start of the novel coronavirus outbreak, UMCOR has been working with health boards, medical professionals, disaster management coordinators and faith leaders to prevent the further spread of this disease. Now it is clear that the impact of COVID-19 will be far-reaching and demands an even greater response.

Through the UMCOR COVID-19 Response fund, grants will be rapidly released to equip partners to assist vulnerable populations around the world impacted by COVID-19, including racial/ethnic and indigenous communities in the United States. Grants from this fund will be disbursed quickly and efficiently to address health concerns, food insecurity, water and hygiene limitations and other pressing needs. Even as you shelter in place, you can be there for others.

When you say "yes" to supporting the UMCOR COVID-19 Response, you will help bring God's love to life for those who need it most. Questions or comments? Please contact Tom Farley, Director of Development at tfarley@umcmission.org, or call (800) 862-4246.

You can give to this advance either by clicking on the link below or by sending your money to the church via mail. Be sure to mark your offering for COVID-19 relief so we can be sure to send it in.

If you use the UMCOR web page there is a place you can indicate which church should get credit for the offering.

<https://advance.umcmission.org/p-2025-umcor-covid-19-response-fund.aspx>

Birthdays and Anniversaries: August

Birthdays-Rock Elm

20 Emily Herman

Anniversaries-Rock Elm

5 Mike & Kathy Miller

16 Gary & Ruth Lukes, Scott & Sheryl Kendall



Birthdays-Elmwood

3 Cassandra Berg, Sharon Vandenberg, Alisyn Weaver

11 Jim Moe

12 Joe Vandenberg

21 Alex Mortitz

23 Lisa Pitre

30 Tristan Pitre

Anniversaries-Elmwood

1 Bill & Donette Stewart

16 Russ & Sandra Price

22 Butch & Lila Welch

28 Nolan & Janet DeMarce

31 Dan & Linda Vivoda

Daily Scripture Readings

Aug. 1 Psalm 120:1-7	Aug. 9 Philippians 2:1-4	Aug. 17 Romans 8:31-39	Aug. 25 1 Corinthians 12:5-6, 12-27
Aug. 2 Colossians 3:12-17	Aug. 10 Hebrews 4:12-16	Aug. 18 Philippians 4:4-9	Aug. 26 Matthew 22:36-40
Aug. 3 Psalm 104:31-34	Aug. 11 Luke 15:1-3, 11-32	Aug. 19 Matthew 5:13-16	Aug. 27 Philippians 3:10-14
Aug. 4 Hebrews 12:1-3	Aug. 12 Isaiah 40:28-31	Aug. 20 Isaiah 43:16-21	Aug. 28 Ecclesiastes 3:1-11
Aug. 5 John 17:1-8	Aug. 13 Matthew 19:13-15	Aug. 21 Matthew 6:9-13	Aug. 29 Matthew 25:31-46
Aug. 6 Psalm 46:1-11	Aug. 14 Psalm 40:1-10	Aug. 22 Galatians 5:16-25	Aug. 30 Psalm 3:1-8
Aug. 7 Job 37:14-24	Aug. 15 James 4:13-17	Aug. 23 Mark 16:9-20	Aug. 31 Romans 8:18-28
Aug. 8 2 Corinthians 5:17-21	Aug. 16 Luke 14:15-24	Aug. 24 Luke 18:18-23	

Reflection for July 29

A Common Greatness

By Forrest Wells



My cousin Marilyn Bevington died last week after a long illness (she did NOT have COVID-19, though therapy that would have been a benefit to her health was suspended due to the virus). I made a quick trip to Indianapolis to be present to celebrate her life at her Monday funeral.

You have never heard of Marilyn. You would not have read about her in People Magazine and she had no Twitter following. She wasn't rich, didn't possess a special talent or ability, wasn't famous. Marilyn was a plain, unassuming, common, family person, yet there was an aura of greatness within her. One man said, "There was never anyone more positive than Marilyn; my enduring image of her is of laughter and love." Marilyn had the gift of connection. She wrote notes and cards and made phone calls checking on others during the months she spent in the nursing home. Even in the midst of her long illness she had an inner peace and joy and faith that allowed her to put others first. She never complained and was always more interested in learning and caring about others rather than focusing on herself.

Marilyn's life and death have given me pause.

Like Jesus' first disciples, life is often lived as a competition to attain higher status, more money, and greater influence. Marilyn was great without possessing any of those things. Her child-like faith and trust in God, coupled with deep humility and love for others gave her the peace which passes understanding. Marilyn's life exemplified the spirit of two key teachings of Jesus. I would like to be more like Marilyn and be known for joy, laughter, faith and a servant's heart. In a time of pandemic, fear and divisiveness, people who take more joy in serving others than themselves would be a great gift! Thank-you God, for the common greatness of your servant Marilyn!

"Whoever wishes to be greatest among you must be your servant." Matthew 20:26

"So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." Matthew 18:4

Elmwood UMC located at:
307 S Main Street,
Elmwood WI

Rock Elm UMC located at:
170th Street
Elmwood WI

(about 6 miles west on 72)

Mailing Address: PO Box 52,
Elmwood, WI 54740

Our worship style is a blend of traditional and new. We combine older hymns with praise choruses. You can come as you are, people dress from semi-casual to casual. Blue jeans are very acceptable. If you come from a church background, been away for a long time, or maybe have never been to church, you will feel welcome here.

OFFICE

Michael Weaver, Pastor

Jeanne Friedell, Secretary

ereumc@gmail.com

Website: ereumc.org

715-639-5831

Office hours are 9-1 on Wednesdays.

Follow us on Facebook [Rock Elm & Elmwood UMC](#)



Want to be on our email list? Send request to elmumcrock@gmail.com

Elmwood ~ Rock Elm United
Methodist Churches

P. O. Box 52
Elmwood, WI 54740

Phone: 715-639-5831
ereumc@gmail.com
Website: ereumc.org



PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE