



in the First Place

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Dear First Church,

I pray (fervently) that you are well and experiencing the comfort of God in these anxious days. While we must be vigilant in our social distancing, through the power of the Holy Spirit, there is no such thing as “spiritual distancing.” We may not be in physical proximity of one another but we are as connected as ever. Like everyone else in the world, First Church is making moment to moment decisions to adjust to what is going on. Here are some of the most recent decisions:

Worship: We will worship solely online Sundays, March 22nd, 29th, and April 5th. If you live streamed the service this past Sunday, you know that it was a meaningful experience. In fact, we had 250 computers log on through our website and 60 watch on Facebook. If you consider there were multiple people in each home watching, we had a pretty good attendance! It is likely that we will not have in-person worship beyond these dates, but we are trying to take this a little bit at a time.

Church Office: To protect our staff and their families, we have had to close the church office. All of our Program and Administrative staff will be working from home. Our Maintenance Team will continue to deep clean the building and make needed repairs. Keeping the rest of the staff out of the building is a safety precaution for them as well.

Even though we won't be at the church, we are still here for you. All of our staff are available by phone or email. We all have our office lines forwarded to our cell phones. Please call or email if you have any needs. Regretfully, if you call the main line, you will get a recording. Simply follow prompts to the directory of extensions. I hope you understand and will be patient as we make these adjustments. My email is dfreeman@fumclr.org, my extension is 204, and my cell number is 479-409-4893.

Adopt-a-Member: Donna is organizing an effort to keep our members connected. She's looking for healthy members who are willing to be partnered with people who have a higher health risk. If you are willing to make phone calls or even pick up a bag of groceries for someone who can't get out, contact Donna and she'll get you connected (dhankins@fumclr.org, ext. 208). We don't want anyone to feel isolated and disconnected.

Online Learning: Brittany is working with Sunday School Classes and Small Groups who want to meet online or by phone. If you are interested in joining in, please contact her (bwatson@fumclr.org, or ext. 205). We are also uploading learning experiences for children and youth to our website. If you have questions, please contact Tammy (tfelder@fumclr.org, ext 210) or Brandon (bbates@fumclr.org, ext. 206).

Community Engagement: Haley (hjones@fumclr.org, or ext. 219) is continuing to monitor opportunities to serve our community with food and other resources. We are trying to do this in a safe way that limits people's exposure. For example, the Wednesday FANN group will meet next week but in a “drive through” style. This FANN group is made up of families with children and we received word many are going through food quicker than usual because the kids are home from school. Therefore, making sure this FANN group gets these resources is critical.

Giving: Because we won't be worshipping in person for many weeks, our opportunities to give our tithes and offerings to God will be limited. Please consider giving through some of our online giving options. You can make a gift on our website or our mobile app using your credit card. If you use this mode, please consider increasing your gift by 3% to cover the service charge. Our preferred method is for people to set up an EFT (Electronic Fund Transfer) that gets transferred from your bank account. This saves us from paying credit card fees. It works just like paying your water bill through automatic draft. To learn how to make you electronic offerings, contact Sonja Taylor-Larkowski (stlarkowski@fumclr.org or ext. 209). She will be happy to safely and easily set this up for you. Of course, you can always mail a check to the church.

First Church has always held an incarnational theology, meaning we relate to God best by understanding God in physical form. That means community is highly valued and tangible acts of love are central to our faith. However, we are in a time that physical connection is a detriment to community. Therefore, we need to embrace a more Spirit-led understanding of God. We must place our faith in God's transcendence to keep us connected. With this comes the opportunity to relate to God in deeper more profound ways. Thank you for BEING the church in this time.

Gratefully,
David

723 Center Street • Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
501.372.2256 • www.fumclr.org

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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - LITTLE ROCK

NEW & EVENTS

Classes and Small Groups

Through the gift of technology we are able to continue worshipping together each Sunday! But it doesn't have to stop there- if your small group or Sunday school class would like to meet by phone or even video conference, we can set you up with everything you need. Please contact Rev. Brittany at bwatson@fumclr.org if you would like to learn more.

Opportunities for Virtual Gathering:

Facebook Live Sunday School: Join Rev. Brittany on Facebook on Sunday at 2 p.m. for a discussion of how we are experiencing our Brick and Mortar faith during these unprecedented times. We will talk faith, food, and social distancing.

Virtual Small Group: Connect with other First Church friends on Wednesday at 7 p.m. through a virtual small group! All you need to do is download the Zoom app on a computer, tablet, or phone. Contact Rev. Brittany at bwatson@fumclr.org for the call in information. There will be time to check in, explore scripture, and pray together.

Facebook Live Prayer Time: Join us on Tuesday morning at 10 a.m. for a time of prayer and reflection through Facebook Live. This will be a powerful way to share prayer requests, focus on our faith, and unite together in prayer. We will have more opportunities for praying together through technology, so keep an eye out of future opportunities!

Prayer Team

Prayer is one of the ways we commit to supporting our faith community when we take the vows of membership. It is both a personal and powerful way we connect to God and to one another, whether we are praying publicly or privately. Did you know our church has a prayer team? Each week they include a list of our church family and friends in their prayers. If you would like to join this group of prayer warriors and receive a weekly list of prayer requests, please let me know. dhankins@fumclr.org

Adopt a member

Physical separation does not have to mean social isolation. One of the ways we are caring for our faith community during this different time in our lives is through adopt a member. This effort seeks to connect those who are healthy and willing with those who are at greater risk. Specific needs will vary by individual and case to case, but generally the idea is to reduce feelings of isolation by nurturing a sense of community. Adoption could be as simple as regular phone calls and maintaining contact as best you can, or perhaps delivering a bag of groceries. We don't want anyone to feel as though they are on their own during this time of social distancing.

There are two ways you can participate. One, volunteer to adopt someone or two, let me know you'd like to be adopted. I have a list of people who I think would appreciate this type of connection, but I may not know your particular circumstances so you might not be on my list. If that is the case, I'd love to hear from you.

If you would like to connected with someone from our church family in this fun and meaningful way, please let me know. We need each other all the time, and now more than ever. I'd love to hear from you, dhankins@fumclr.org or 501-372-2256. - Donna

Lenten Sermon Series : Who Do You Say That I Am?

Jesus is called many things; Son of God, Holy one of Israel, Messiah, Christ, Lamb of God, etc. Each description of Jesus has a specific meaning about who Jesus is. But, who do you say that Jesus is? Or maybe even more so, how does your life proclaim who Jesus is? Each Sunday during Lent, we're examining different scripture passages in which someone makes a declaration about who Jesus is. From these stories, we'll discover who Jesus is and how that is reflected in our everyday, ordinary lives.

5 Ways to Give.

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MAIL

Mail to the church.
723 Center Street
Little Rock, AR 72201



AUTO DRAFT

Call Finance Manager
to set up Electronic
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ONLINE

From your computer
or mobile device, visit
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to give online.



CHURCH APP

Click on Give from the
FUMCLR Church App.
To download app, visit
your app store and
search for FUMCLR.



TEXT

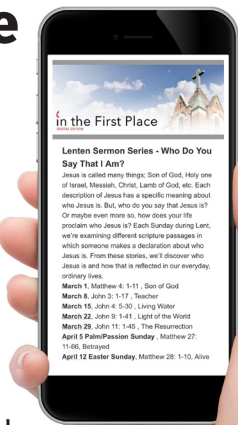
Text FUMCLR to #77977
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screen instructions
to give..

QUESTIONS? Contact Communications Director Lesley Andrews. Email landrews@fumclr.org or call 501-372-2256 Ex. 207.

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

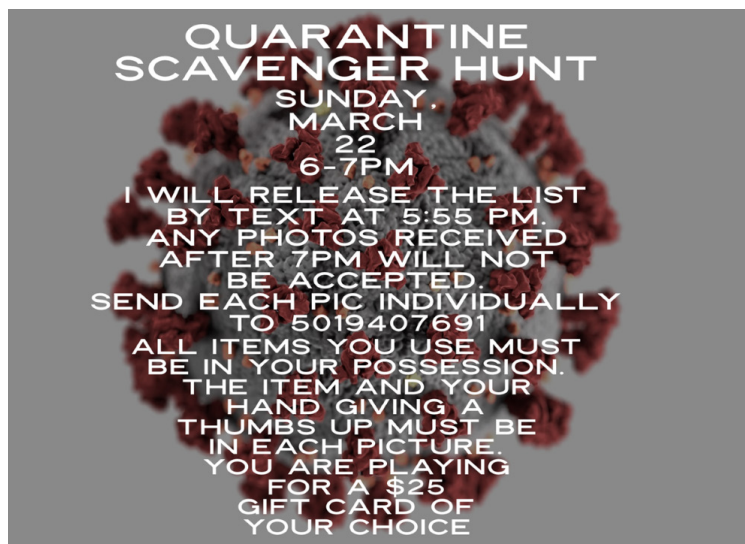
Wednesday FANN, Volunteers needed to Adapt March 23, 3:30pm Fellowship Hall

We are in search of a 3-4 volunteers who can help us adapt our Wednesday FANN for one meeting. Parents are in desperate need of food since their children are at home. In order to limit contact, we are looking for 3-4 volunteers to help unload the food from the Food Bank, divide into baskets, and roll them out to FANN parents in their cars. If you can help next Wednesday, March 23 at 3:30pm, please email Rev. Haley at hjones@fumclr.org.

Faith Promise COVID-19 Response

Your Faith Promise pledge directly supports organizations that are helping curb food insecurity during the pandemic. Organizations like AR Hunger Relief Alliance, FANN, Backpacks for Kids, and Stewpot are all supported by our extra mile Lenten giving program Faith Promise and are helping children and families at this time. Have you turned in your pledge card? You can mail it in to the Church office or give online at www.fumclr.org/giving.

YOUTH



KIDS@FIRST

Hi friends! We have all been struggling with isolation and feeling left out. I miss getting to see my friends every day. I'd like to challenge you to do something. Would you be willing to write a letter or draw a picture for someone you care about and send it in the mail? I love getting mail and I bet you do too! Maybe you want to send them something you made, maybe it's a nice note to say hi, or maybe a poem or a drawing. Everyone loves to get mail. Give it a try!

MUSIC

It's finally happened; that sweet, angel-faced baby for whom my wife and I waited so long is now a precocious toddler. A toddler with ideas and opinions.

I won't pretend that it's all exhausting, though (that being said, we're only on day number three without daycare). Some of it is very, very good. It's generally accepted that he feeds the dog in the morning. If reminded a few times, usually his shoes end up in the appropriate location in his room. And he sings. Oh, does he sing!

Christen and I run through songs on Saturday before our First Word service to give me the opportunity to sing through them before I make a fool of myself in front of the band at our official rehearsal. It's become a very exciting time for Felix; he grabs his toy guitar (the one that looks like a dog) and sings along and dances. Invariably, he'll ask for My Feet Are on the Rock by I Am They, Hello My Name Is by Matthew West, or Shake by MercyMe. These three songs are his absolute jam. He becomes very serious about his dance moves and his timed clapping. Whether he knows it or not, these songs are his connection to his Sunday morning family. They wrap him in the lovelight of the church all week long as he sings them from his car seat to pass the time (seriously, we listened My Feet Are on the Rock on repeat all the way from Shreveport to Little Rock last week).

In these somewhat isolating and difficult times, I hope you take a few moments to use the technology you have at your disposal to refresh your connection to your church family. It's as easy as clicking on a link to a playlist. Visit our Facebook page for the links to the playlist or email me (jstanley@fumclr.org).

James Stanley

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9 & 11 am**

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