



The Messenger



Selah United Methodist Church

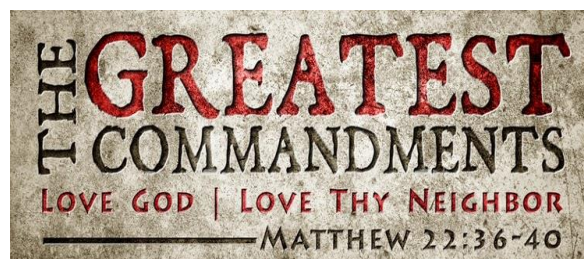
May 2021

I know we all are longing for things to return to normal. We have been in this pandemic for over a year now. We long to be back in church with our family and friends. I know for myself; I am excited to return to church. But when and how this will happen, we need to continue to be patient. I know most of the churches in Selah are open and are worshipping together again. People are asking why can't SUMC be open as well? This is a legitimate question. The short and easy answer is we want to keep everyone safe. The long answer is the structure of the United Methodist Church. As your pastor, I am appointed to SUMC by the Bishop and cabinet of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference. In the PNW we have what are called districts- we are in the Seven Rivers Missional District. Each district has a Superintendent, which we refer to as the D.S. Currently, the Bishop has made it clear our churches will practice caution on re-opening. "We are to do no harm." The Bishop has a detailed plan on how and when churches will be re-open. <https://greaternw.org/reimagining-life-together/> Here is a link to the Bishop's plan for reopening.

What does this mean for SUMC? We have a team, led by Rev. Kevin Dow, that has put together a plan so when the time is right, we can reopen SUMC. The plan needs the approval of the D.S. If you want to see a copy of this plan, please let me know and I will get you a copy. The Church Council in April also made the decision to explore the option of doing an outside service in lieu of inside service, for now. There is a team in place to begin this process. This request also needs the D.S. approval before we can move forward.

This is a friendly reminder- Church will not be the same as it was prior to the pandemic. As we move forward, please remember what I preach every Sunday - LOVE GOD with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. Second to that is LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR as yourself. We need to practice patients as we move forward. We all are in this together and will make it through it together- stronger.

Shalom Pastor Dirk





Mission Outreach

- Rod's House has moved entirely into its homes in Yakima and Sunnyside. The Yakima house feeds about 25 homeless youth each midday. Many of the young people stop in throughout the day for pocket snacks. The Rod's House wish list always includes all sizes men and women's underwear, sweats and hoodies, full sized toiletries, and individually packaged snacks.

- With the addition of new shelters at Camp Hope and remodeled space in Wapato at Noah's Ark, they are able to increase their services and meals to more homeless people. In April, Wesley UMC prepared a tater-tot casserole meal for 100 residents at Camp Hope plus 50 residents at Noah's Ark. Recently, the Camp Hope residents were applauded for spearheading a collaborative clean-up day on April 10th. Area volunteers joined with Camp Hope people to remove six tons (that's 12,000 pounds!) of trash from different locations throughout Yakima and Union Gap, including along the Greenway.



- Our small food pantry continues to be well stocked and visited by community members. Sweetened cereal and dry pet food seem to be favorites for those who make use of the pantry.

WORSHIP NEWS

When an expanded Worship Team was first tasked with developing a set of protocols that would be used to help protect worshippers from catching COVID-19 over a year ago, I think probably everyone on the Task Force thought we were functioning on a short timeline. Perhaps we would be back in worship in the Sanctuary by Easter (2020), but certainly by the 4th of July. We called on the best information we could find, and developed a plan that would become effective when four conditions were met:





- 1) When the District Superintendent had approved our protocols (check).
- 2) The Bishop of the Pacific Northwest Conference approved United Methodist churches to move to AT LEAST Phase 3 of the Conference Plan which allows for in-person worship, weddings, and funerals for up to 50 people while wearing face masks and utilizing proper sanitizing and physical distancing.
- 3) Approval by the Governor's Office and the State Department of Health approval for religious gatherings indoors of up to 50 people.
- 4) Approval by the Yakima Health District for indoor religious gatherings of AT LEAST 50 persons.

At the first meeting of the Task Force the group “discussed and rejected the idea of holding outdoor or drive-in worship services”.

Leaping ahead to March 2021: The Worship Team decides that it would like to have an Easter Sunrise Service, and holding with local church tradition, would like to hold that service at the fire-pit behind the church. Bob Ruud would be asked to light a fire for the service, and the worshippers would all observe COVID protocols (spaced six feet apart by household, wearing masks, with no singing or group recitations). Plans for that service were published in *The Messenger*, and Pastor Dirk received a call from the District Superintendent reminding him that we were not authorized to hold outdoor worship services. Dirk explained what the plan was and the precautions that were to be observed, and the DS authorized the service (pictures from that service are below). The service was well received, but it was suggested the Worship Team revise our request on outdoor worship, and to request approval to move to a new category – Phase 2.1 for in-person worship.

This new phase sets some new criteria for determining when it is deemed safe, statistically, for in-person gathering, using criteria that considers local conditions but applicable by each church in the state. When those conditions are met in the county, in-person, indoor worship can be held up to a limit of 25 persons. The determination is made on each Monday, using a website www.covidactnow.org, where each church can determine whether it is safe (yellow or green) to meet indoors. To read more about Phase 2.1 and using *covidactnow.org*, go online to: <https://greaternw.org/bishops-covid-19-notice-9-nov-9-2020/>

At the Church Council's April meeting, the Council voted to approve and forward the revisions allowing Selah UMC to move to Phase 2.1 to the District Superintendent. The Council also authorized a Task Force to plan for the implementation of outdoor worship, now that weather is more suited for outdoor gatherings. When those plans are complete, they will be forwarded to the District Superintendent for approval. Keep your eyes open for updates on the work of this new Task Force.

Kevin Dow



Easter 2021 pictures:



Below is the latest letter from Bishop Stanovsky concerning in person worship:

Dear Siblings in Christ,

We are making progress, but we are not quite there yet. It has been over a year since the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted life as we knew it. We continue to persevere, exhausted at times, yet anticipating the day when we can gather, greet each other, share communion and other precious rhythms of life and spiritual practice in person without risking harm to one another. Hopeful also that we now carry with us new learnings and practices, hard lessons of necessity that will continue to connect us in new ways in life and ministry.

The rapid vaccine rollout gives us hope that we can enjoy more freedom to gather as families and faith communities soon. Vaccinations coupled with continuous strict adherence to safety protocols are expected to lower infection rates, hospitalizations and COVID-19 related deaths. Overall, we have seen the number of cases decline since the winter peak in many places, but progress has been stalled by premature re-openings, the easing of restrictions in some places, resistance by some to being vaccinated and observing simple safety practices: washing hands, social distancing, wearing a mask. I hope that each of us is continuing to follow these practices, as well as being vaccinated, consistent with medical advice, as soon as we are eligible.

I was surprised by the deep joy that welled up in me when those shots went in my arm, protecting not only me but also everyone I encounter from the dangers of this virus. I'm



grateful to every person who is able and willing to join this movement toward health and safety.

As Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reminded us in a briefing earlier this year: *“We may be done with the virus, but clearly the virus is not done with us. We cannot get comfortable or give in to a false sense of security that the worst of the pandemic is behind us – not now; not when mass vaccination is so very close.”*

Permissible not Necessarily Beneficial

In an article for *The Atlantic*, Dr. James Hamblin of the Yale School of Public Health points out, *“Our social lives can resume, but only when the whole community is ready. The turning point does not arrive for individuals, one by one, as soon as they’ve been vaccinated; it comes for all of us at once, when a population becomes immune.”*

With this understanding, we are advised that the number of coronavirus cases needs to decrease further before we resume regular activities, especially in light of the arrival of new fast-spreading variants of the virus. A premature reopening, even if allowed by the state, may run the risk of not just stalling but even reversing the recent progress we have already achieved.

I am reminded of Saint Paul’s admonition that things that are “permissible” are not necessarily things that are “beneficial” to the common good. (I Corinthians 10:23).

While we should celebrate the good news of vaccines providing a layer of protection already for a significant number of members in some of our congregations, the church does not belong solely to those who are vaccinated. Especially as we have just now reached a time when all adults are eligible to receive a vaccine, we must continue to be patient to allow them the privilege of receiving this gift of security before we consider letting our guard down. At the same time, we will need to find ways to protect and include children in church life while continuing to wait for vaccination eligibility to be extended to them.

As the church, God calls us always to do things that are beneficial because we bear responsibility towards the well-being of others, especially the most vulnerable among us.

A Posture of Hopeful Caution

The progress we see in vaccinations, tempered by the potential threat of variants we race, leads me toward a posture of hopeful caution; we are almost there but not quite there yet. Even as our hope is renewed with the increasing percentage of those



vaccinated, our decisions and actions must continue to manifest the utmost concern for one another as an act of love in response to Jesus' command for us to love one another as he had loved us (John 13:34).

Accordingly, I am asking churches to remain vigilant in their planning and decision-making processes. The COVID-19 Response Team, made up of lay and clergy members from across the area, is continuing to review and amend its guidance to local churches. By May 5th, we will release updated guidelines for Phase 3, shifting more responsibility to local leaders to guide their congregation's, camp's or other ministry setting's COVID-19 response.

I am grateful for each of you and your faithfulness and commitment, especially during this long time of physical separation due to this pandemic. May the hard lessons learned as we have persevered, and new skills developed as you have adapted, empower our work together and witness to God's love which never fails us.

"Those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength." (Isaiah 40:31)

With love and grace,



UMW NEWS

I want to highlight one of our missionaries serving in Central America this month. Selah UMW supports 5 missionaries each year. We send birthday cards, cards letting them know we are thinking of them, and send \$25.00 toward their mission work.

Ellyn Benson Dubberly is currently working in Central America as leadership development coordinator. The Evangelical Methodist Church in Central America is a young community of about 1000 members of whom half are children. It also has many young adult participants. What we don't hear a lot about is that Central America has gone through a great deal of social upheaval in recent years. Ellyn has found the people to be resilient and are committed to reconstructing their country and committed to human rights, health, and economic prosperity. The Methodist Church has become an expression of social conscience through programs and projects.

Ellyn interest in Central America began with her husband, who felt called to serve the young church there as a long-term volunteer. Her husband came to realize a more concentrated



attention was needed there. Ellyn worked on being commissioned as a missionary. She was commissioned in 2013.

Selah UMW next meeting is May 18th at 7:00 pm via Zoom using the Dirks daily check in link.

Tressa Cummings, Selah UMW President

Thank You

Ron and I want to thank our church family for the help we received when unexpectedly we both were recovering from surgery and limited in what we could do around the house. I had scheduled shoulder joint replacement surgery early in March and Ron was doing a great job taking care of me and the various things needing to be done at home. Then on March 24 the retina detached in his right eye and he had emergency eye surgery to repair it the next day. Vision in his left eye is very poor, so after this eye surgery, he was virtually blind for two weeks. We had volunteers from UMM come over and pick up debris in our yard from winter storms, several families fixed dinner for us or dropped off goodies, provided transportation for Ron’s eye doctor appointment in Ellensburg since I could not drive and checked in on us regularly. We greatly appreciated all of this. We are blessed by our church family.

Becky Johnson

May Celebrations

Birthdays

- 2 Mary Goss
- 4 Gwen Chaplin
- 4 Kyan Helseth
- 6 Beth Barranowski
- 13 Virginia Mackey
- 19 Dan Shelton
- 23 Jessica Johnson
- 24 Marilee Brothers
- 28 David Kaumheimer
- 28 Mary Tayer
- 30 Len Hoselton
- 30 Kim Coburn
- 31 Cheryl Hulse.

Anniversaries

- 10 Dave & Denise Mettie
- 18 Roger & Kim Coburn





MAY CALENDAR

Pastor Dirk is on National Guard Assignment, but available via Zoom for Church worship and meetings.

- 2 Bible Study with Pastor Dirk via Zoom @9:15 am Continuing every Sunday
Sunday Worship via Zoom @ 10:30 am - 5TH Sunday of Easter
Communion – remember bread and juice - Link on next page to join via Zoom
- 3 Daily Check-in via Zoom with Pastor Dirk @ 10:00 am
Continuing Monday - Friday unless canceled by Pastor Dirk.
See link on next page to join via Zoom
- 5 Cinco de Mayo
- 6 National Day of Prayer
Pub Theology via Zoom @ 6:00 pm - Continuing every Thursday,
See link on next page to join Zoom Meeting
- 7 Friendship Day
- 9 Bible Study with Pastor Dirk via Zoom @9:15 am Continuing every Sunday
Sunday Worship via Zoom @ 10:30 am - 6th Sunday of Easter
Mother’s Day/Christian Home - See link on next page to join via Zoom
- 11 Book Bunch via Zoom @ 7:00 pm. **See link on next page to join Zoom meeting.**
- 13 Ascension Day
- 15 Peace Officer’s Memorial Day
- 16 Sunday Worship via Zoom @ 10:30 am – 7th Sunday of Easter
See link on next page to join via Zoom
- 18 UMW meeting via Zoom @ 7:00 pm - **.Use morning check-in link on next page**
- 19 Church Council meeting via Zoom @ 6:00 pm
- 23 Sunday Worship via Zoom @ 10:30 am - **Pentecost – Wear Red**
Heritage Sunday **See link on next page to join via Zoom**
- 24 Aldersgate Day
- 25 Book Bunch via Zoom @ 7:00 pm - **See link on next page to join via Zoom**
Newsletter articles due
Camp Hope Dinner prepared and delivered by Wesley UMC.
Watch for food requests from SUMC, if needed, the week before.
- 30 Sunday Worship via Zoom @ 10:30 am - **Trinity Sunday (White)**
See link on next page to join via Zoom
- 31 Memorial Day



ZOOM LINKS

SUMC Sunday Service & Bible Study

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://greaternw.zoom.us/j/692949701?pwd=Lz1NSWYyT1BGUzNhVHc0ME9ydnBLQT09>

Meeting ID: 692 949 701 Password: 021416

One tap mobile: +12532158782,,692949701#,,1#,021416# US (Tacoma)

ZOOM CHECK-IN WITH PASTOR DIRK

Monday – Friday @10:00 am daily check-in via Zoom. Join Zoom:

<https://greaternw.zoom.us/j/669186246?pwd=NmsxRGsrNktoaUI1NWdKaUxhbnlNQT09>

Meeting ID: 669 186 246 Password: 848493

One tap mobile: +12532158782,,669186246#,,1#,848493# US (Tacoma)

ZOOM PUB THEOLOGY ON THURSDAYS

Thursday @ 6:00 pm via Zoom. Join Zoom:

<https://greaternw.zoom.us/j/95829189054?pwd=cGJwYmw3M2UrTDk4Ml1TVUUySVI3QT09>

Meeting ID: 958 2918 9054 Password: 013652

One tap mobile: +12532158782,,95829189054#,,1#,013652# US (Tacoma)

Selah United Methodist Church

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Growing Into the Image of Christ

How to get hold of Pastor Dirk:

Cell phone: (509) 388-1218

Email: pastordirkrobinson@gmail.com

Newsletter articles for the June
newsletter are due May 25

Articles can be emailed to
bjoh461@fairpoint.net

Mission Statement

“As a sacred body that worships God, we feed the soul of our communities, serve the needs around us, and open our hearts in respectful acceptance of all.”

Vision Statement

“To be an energized faith community.”