

# LET'S STAY Connected

August 2020



Rev. Kent H. Little

## It's Hot

It's hot! That is an understatement I suppose, or at the very least stating the obvious. It is hot! I am not a hot weather fan. If I had to choose one extreme or another, I would much rather deal with freezing temperatures than hot ones. There is something about the heat, for me, just saps my energy, my attitude, and my wellbeing.

When it is this hot, I just want to curl up by the air conditioning vent and nap. It is hard to be motivated about anything at all. I have never

quite understood the summer practice of "laying out" to get some sun. The practice has always seemed a bit like crawling into a frying pan or over a pit of coals to be cooked. And some even seem to enhance the experience by slathering oil all over them to get a nice golden brown. Seems I remember reading various recipes about cooking something like bread or meat until it is a "nice golden brown."

Of course, for those of us who have encountered the nasty "skin cancer" as we have gotten older and been told it is the result of too much exposure to the sun when young, the thought of simmering oneself in the heat of the day loses just a bit more of our appeal.

These random thoughts are just my own though. I do agree that a tan does look nice. Perhaps it is just jealousy on my part. I have always had the skin tone that simply burns, blisters, peels, and turns white again. But I think mostly it is just hot, too hot.

I suppose in regards to our life and faith it is simply another witness to the fact that we are all created a little different. We have likes and dislikes and we do not all like the same things. If applied to our lives it makes things more interesting and the variety or color, taste, and entertainment makes our world a better place to live. In terms of our various faith journeys and encounters with God it makes for a wonderfully broad experience of who God is and how God interacts with all of God's children.

I believe God loves diversity because there is so much of it. So, as you go through the week, I pray you find those practices of life and faith that speak most deeply to your experience of God and give thanks for all your brothers and sisters in the love of God.

So here in my air-conditioned office I wish all the simmering, laying out, browning friends a tan summer. Be safe and don't forget the sun screen. As for the rest of us, I hope our air conditioners don't fail us now ... it's hot out there!

Peace and Light for Our Continued Journey ~ Rev. Kent



### CONCORD MEDIATION CENTER

problem solving processes for  
families and businesses

The Concord Center has begun its work here at FUMC in connecting with Staff and SPRC members. I know many of you have asked about where we are in the process and so I wanted to give some idea of total timeline and work.

It is estimated, depending on the number of church members who participate, the entire process will be over a two month period. I hope our entire congregation will consider participating in this important work as we continue to move forward. Thank you for your patience and your commitment to, and love for FUMC.

## Worship Schedule

### Sundays

Until further notice

ONLINE 10:50 am

[www.facebook.com/FUMComaha](http://www.facebook.com/FUMComaha)

### Taizé Worship

Canceled until further notice

### Pastor

Kent H. Little

### Pastoral Intern

Maddi Baugous

## Receive "Connect" by E-Mail

E-mail Lorraine Dalziel in the church office, [Lorraine.Dalziel@fumcomaha.org](mailto:Lorraine.Dalziel@fumcomaha.org) with your e-mail address and you will begin receiving the newsletter by e-mail.

## Church Office Hours

Due to COVID-19, our building is temporarily closed.

Please call 402-556-6262

or email [contact@fumcomaha.org](mailto:contact@fumcomaha.org) if you need assistance.

"We are a United Methodist congregation of all sexual orientations and gender identities making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We stand in solidarity with Reconciling Ministry Network working against injustice and discrimination through peace and justice."

First  
United  
Methodist  
Church



# Welcoming

## Welcome, Maddi Baugous Pastoral Intern

SPRC is pleased to announce the hiring of Maddi Baugous as our new pastoral intern. Maddi grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska and graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan University. In May of 2020, she graduated from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary with her MDiv. She has worked with and served as Co-Director of Micah Corps where she developed a passion for social justice, and encouraging college students in their faith and justice work. Maddi is working through the process of ordination in the UMC as an elder. Because Maddi is yet to be ordained, her role for now is pastoral intern. She will assist in pastoral duties, oversee Mercy and Justice activities, and supervise and lead the confirmation class. We hope that our relationship will prove to be mutually enriching, and that Maddi will remain a part of First Church through her ordination and beyond. Maddi is passionate about the Hebrew Bible, especially the Prophets, and how they can be used for justice in the world. In her free time, Maddi loves decorating her planner, journaling, and playing board games with friends. Maddi begins her duties August 4, and her contact information will be available soon. When you have the opportunity, please give a warm FUMC welcome to Maddi.



## Welcome, Anna Rodriguez Director of Communication and Membership



Hello, I'm Anna Rodriguez, your new Director of Communication and Membership! I was born and raised here in Nebraska, and come from a very large and unconventional family. I love spending time with them, am an avid moviegoer, and recently became engaged to my fiancé, Harrison. A recent graduate from the University of Nebraska Omaha, I graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BS in Communication. While attending UNO I volunteered as Operations Manager for the campus radio station, through which I won two national and regional broadcasting awards.

I have always been a strong believer in and fighter for equal rights and justice for all. I enjoy working with people, along with finding new ways that unite the community and bring in new opportunities. I'm very excited to be a part of your family and I'm looking forward to meeting everyone in person once it's safe again. I am here for you, so please feel free to reach out to me at any time!

## Worship on the Lawn

with Urban Abbey and FUMC Omaha

Sunday, August 2nd at 5:30 PM

Join Urban Abbey and FUMC for communion... tailgate style!

**It's BYO Everything**

Bring your own chair, bread, umbrella, blanket, bug spray, and worship guide.

**Everyone must wear a mask and be at least six feet apart on the vast green lawn of FUMC Omaha.**

We will pray together, hum a hymn together, bless and break communion bread together and we will see each other facemask to facemask and know there are smiles by the hope in our eyes.

URBAN  ABBEY

First  
United  
Methodist  
Church



This  
service  
is in  
addition  
to our  
regular  
online  
service at  
10:50 am.



# Mercy & Justice



## OTOC's 11th Annual Fundraiser Silent Auction 2020 Going Virtual

**Registration will be open on July 31.**

To Register, go to <http://bidpal.net/otocaucaution>  
Feel free to share this link with family or friends who may want to participate in our virtual auction this year.

Please Contact Carol Beaty at 402-332-8215  
If you have difficulty registering.

Bidding will open  
on **Saturday, August 8**  
and close at 7:30 pm  
on **August 16.**

**Over 300  
Items Donated  
For This Event!!**



Tender Loving Kindness

### Help us end elderly loneliness in Omaha.

Tender Loving Kindness (TLK), is a nonprofit, based in Omaha, Nebraska, formed in February 2020. Our network of volunteers, or kindness companions as we prefer to call them, across the Omaha metro desire to "show up and show kindness" that makes a lasting difference in the lives of seniors desiring companionship. TLK endeavors to partner with Big O organizations dedicated to supporting the well-being of seniors, from the Nebraska Department of Aging, to area assisted and long-term care facilities, care-at-home agencies and faith-based communities.

Visit [www.tenderlovingkindness.org](http://www.tenderlovingkindness.org) for more info

STREAMING

**ONLINE**

LIVE

## Livestream Operator

FUMC is looking for a couple volunteers who would be willing to be trained to run our Livestream system on Sunday mornings. This would include operating the cameras, some sound work, and monitoring the video feed during the worship service.

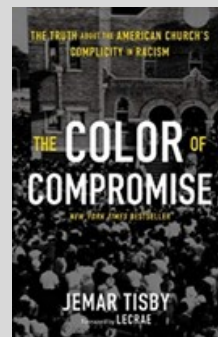
Please contact our Communication and Membership Director  
Anna Rodriguez, [Anna.Rodriguez@fumcomaha.org](mailto:Anna.Rodriguez@fumcomaha.org)  
or Rev. Kent, [Kent.Little@fumcomaha.org](mailto:Kent.Little@fumcomaha.org).

*We are eager to get our system in place  
and going for our online viewers.*

## Zoom Book Study

Claire Memorial United Methodist Church  
and First United Methodist Church

Join Pastor Portia Cavitt and Pastor Kent Little and our two congregations for a joint book study as we read and discuss Jemar Tisby's book, *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*, beginning **August 9th at 5:00 pm** via Zoom Video Conference Call. Contact Rev. Kent Little, [kent.little@fumcomaha.org](mailto:kent.little@fumcomaha.org), for the Zoom Link information to join in the study. This is a great opportunity to be together and better understand the systemic racism that plagues our land, as well as build and deeper relationship between our churches.



From the cover, ...Jemar Tisby takes readers back to the roots of sustained racism and injustice in the American church. Filled with powerful stories and examples of American Christianity's racial past, the historical narrative highlights the obvious ways people of faith have actively worked against racial justice, as well as the complicit silence of racial moderates.

This book will be available  
for purchase at the church.

## Church Council Meeting

**August 18, 6:00 pm**

Via **Zoom**

Email Rev. Kent at

[Kent.Little@fumcomaha.org](mailto:Kent.Little@fumcomaha.org)  
for Zoom link

## Clair Cares Food Pantry

### Please Help!

**Clair Cares is in need of your donations!**

The suggested donation is \$10 per person  
or \$25 per household. They need to raise \$500 per month!

**Please mail donations to:**

Claire Memorial United Methodist Church  
5544 Ames Ave, Omaha, NE 68104

For Information on Donations  
or Volunteering,  
Contact Judy Prenzler  
at [prenzler@cox.net](mailto:prenzler@cox.net)



# Supporting

## **Please remember in prayer these members of Our Church Family**

**For Continued Healing:** Roger Burns, Ella Gerber, Dorothyann Haar, Charlie Harper, Randy King, Ruthie Lees, Chad McBride, Marvin and Suzanne Morgan, Mike Niemants, Dean Pierce, Dene Pruett, Marlys and Ivan Richardson, Berdeen Roemmich, Eleanor Ruge, Barb Winfield.

**Sympathies to:** *All the families of those who have transitioned to new life.*

## **Submit your prayer requests to:**

Marylin Stewart at MarylinS@aol.com or call the church office at 402-556-6262 x1001.

Please follow these brief guidelines when submitting a request for the Prayer Chain:

- For yourself: Give a brief statement of the need - illness, grief, crisis.
- For others: Use names without describing the need. Give the first or full name and relationship - friend, brother/sister, spouse/partner, parent, child, etc.
- Get permission from the person to be listed on the Prayer Chain before contacting Marylin or the church.

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## **Racial Diversity Team News**

*Here is what we have been up to this summer...*

23 members of FUMC have attended 3-4 sessions of training through the Malcolm X Foundation using the White Ally Toolkit. We have learned about the racial issues of concern in Omaha, how to dialogue about racial issues, and important information about volunteering. Many of us are continuing our learning with expanded offerings through the White Ally Toolkit

FUMC members have provided funding in the amount of \$20,565 to the Documentary Film, **"How Much Sleep Have You Lost?"** produced by Nick Beaulieu. More info at <https://www.omahadoc.com/>. Much of the footage has been taken at racial diversity events at FUMC over the past 2 years at meetings and forums. *We will host a showing of the film at FUMC once it is completed.*

*Here are some things you could do...*

- Go to the website: [www.northomahahistory.com](http://www.northomahahistory.com) to learn more about North Omaha History. Website host Adam Sasse is a former student of Mark Schultz.
- Subscribe to the Omaha Star – the north Omaha newspaper. <https://theomahastar.com/>.
- Join a book group studying a book on race in a progressive United Methodist Church – go to website <https://omahainclusivechurches.org/>.
- FUMC will be hosting a book study with members from Clair Memorial United Methodist Church.
- Volunteer for the Clair Cares Food Pantry – the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of each month. Contact Judy Prezler at [prenzler@cox.net](mailto:prenzler@cox.net) for more information.



### **Rainbow Factory**

Rainbow Factory has announced our August 19th Jump Start date and our classrooms are prepped and ready to welcome students back with new safety measures in place! Teachers will return to the building in August for extensive training on the new guidelines and to prepare curriculum for the student's return. The theme of our first month will be the traditional Rainbows!

### **RECYCLE AT FUMC**

- We **don't** accept any bags (plastic or compostable), animal products, and plastics.
- We **do** accept plant matter, coffee grounds, limited paper (like coffee filters, or napkins.)

Bring your food waste in a small bucket, like an ice cream container, and dump it into one of the orange buckets by the dumpster on the northeast corner of the FUMC building. Add your compost to a bucket that is not yet full and be sure to put the lid on to keep out the varmints.



**What an easy way to lessen the carbon impact we have on the environment!**

## FUMC moves forward on creation care!

Eco Team member, Ron Roemmich, shares, "Most of us would probably claim we're kind to the environment and already practice good stewardship in this area. How true that is. But when 14 of us sat down in a zoom meeting with two Verdis planners, Sunday, July 19th, new perspectives were shared." In the words of Kevin Wycoff, "I learned a lot about specific ways we can become more sustainable and it is exciting to see us moving toward a "greener" way of existing."



Tree Dedication, April 22, 2018

In a process that started at the first of this year, staff and leaders of the church have been meeting with our partners from The Verdis Group. We had an all church forum in March and members were asked to fill out surveys of awareness and commitment to being better stewards. Verdis assembled the data from the surveys and data of energy usage at the church and then brought a small group together to brainstorm next steps.

Lots of ideas were shared as we affirmed how intentional we have been in the past. We're ready to build on those positive actions, knowing that there is much more to do. Vision and action are the critical pieces for future plans. Daniel Graham suggested organizing a friendly competition between churches in Omaha to inspire all of us to do better. Steve Nehrig reminded us that there are new technologies to be checked out that can help us reduce our energy usage. We also acknowledged that the pandemic is teaching us lessons about how to do some of our work together online, thus reducing our emissions driving to the church for meetings.

Stay tuned as we continue to dream for the Church and our community!  
In the words of Tim Fickenschier, "It's looking to a positive future, with actions!"

## Volunteer to register voters and Get Out The VOTE!



Sheran Cramer, Charlie Gould and Debra Mabry Strong, members of the PEATeam, registered voters at Clair in 2018.

The November elections may very well be the most consequential elections in our nation's history! Who our leaders are determines, in part, how the most vulnerable among us are treated. Public policies can either empower and include those who are marginalized OR oppress and exclude them. Voting is one way to exercise our power and your commitment to vote is important. BUT you also can help with voter registration and Get Out The VOTE (GOTV) efforts. In Nebraska we are very lucky to have Civic Nebraska and the League of Women Voters leading efforts for registering voters and GOTV. Check them out at: <https://www.lwv.org/local-leagues/lwv-greater-omaha> and

<https://www.lwv.org/local-leagues/lwv-greater-omaha>

Even in the midst of social distancing, there are ways in which you can help register voters and encourage them To Vote from the comfort and safety of their home...no excuses not to get involved!

If you would like to join the FUMC Salt and Light Core Team and find more ways in which you can link your faith with social justice, email [saltandlightfumc.org](mailto:saltandlightfumc.org).

*You are the salt for the earth... you are the light of the world.*

Matthew 5:13,14





# Spirituality

## Children and Youth

August: the Great Unknown.

School or no school? Church in-person or not, to gather or not to gather... This has been the most annoying virus ever!

I sit here in mid July wondering what to plan. Usually I would have events on the calendar thru Christmas... but, alas we have a new world. I have been taking it one week at a time.

So, August? No clue... but we have had some cool stuff happening in July!

We have been cleaning up the Prospect Hill Cemetery for over 6 weeks now. We work hard then go eat at Big Mama's. We have even added a visit to the Malcolm X Memorial near the Cemetery. Very Cool! Many folks may not know that Malcolm started his life right here in Omaha... So did Gerald Ford. I went to his birth site memorial... Malcolm's is cooler! So we venture on.



Our biggest Youth News is that we are ready to gather when the virus dies down. We have a new GaGa Pit thanks to Eagle Scout Paul Bierman. GaGa is not just a music artist, it's a great game the kids love and this is the most sturdy GaGa Pit I have ever witnessed. Here's to hoping we can play in it soon!



Paul Bierman with his GaGa Pit

Ga-ga is a variant of dodgeball that is played in a ga-ga "pit". The game combines dodging, striking, running, and jumping, with the objective of being the last person standing. Players hit the ball at each other with their hands, and are eliminated if the ball strikes them on or below the waist (occasionally the knee). The game can be played by a group of individual players or with teams, as well as in one-on-one matches. Rules, ball types, pit surfaces, and pit sizes can vary widely at different venues. . [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ga-ga)

For more information on youth activities and news, contact Bogart Nomad at [Bogart.Nomad@fumcomaha.org](mailto:Bogart.Nomad@fumcomaha.org).

### Opportunities to stay connected each week:

**Sundays: 10:50 am – Worship** now online! During the month of July, and for however long we need, we will be streaming our services online LIVE via Facebook. **You do NOT need a Facebook account to view the videos.**

Please go to [www.facebook.com/FUMComaha/](https://www.facebook.com/FUMComaha/) to participate in the live videos, and go to [www.facebook.com/FUMComaha/videos/](https://www.facebook.com/FUMComaha/videos/) to view our archived videos at any time!

**Wednesdays: 9:00 am & 7:00 pm – Devotionals** – Join Pastor Kent Live on Wednesdays as we share in a time to center our hearts and uplift our spirits together.

*We invite you to come as you are and invite your friends and stay connected!*

# Inspiring

## Giving

We want to encourage all to continue their spiritual practice of giving during this time. Because you give, the church is able to continue our support for local food pantries. Because you give, we are able to care for our Rainbow Factory Preschool and keep the teachers in contract through the end of the school year so they may provide at-home lessons and activities for all their students. Because you give, we continue to be a presence in the community and provide several online opportunities to keep our faith community engaged. Because you give, we continue to support our local artists to participate in worship. We understand financial circumstances may have changed for individuals recently, and we are sensitive to those changes. For those able to participate in financial giving, you may support your community of faith in these ways:

Mail your check to the church: 7020 Cass Street, Omaha, NE 68132

On our website: [www.fumcomaha.org/giving](http://www.fumcomaha.org/giving), On our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/FUMComaha](https://www.facebook.com/FUMComaha)

We give thanks for the continued generosity of our faithful members and friends. If you have questions regarding your giving, please contact our Finance Director, Noni Cambridge, at [Noni.Cambridge@fumcomaha.org](mailto:Noni.Cambridge@fumcomaha.org)

## FUMC Finance News

### Status of FUMC Pledges June 30, 2020

Carol Beaty FUMC Finance Chair

Here is the FUMC monthly report to the congregation on the status of our pledges.

Average monthly pledges needed to meet our budget of \$650,000 in pledge income = \$54,166

Jan 2020 pledges - \$90,458 13.92% of annual budgeted pledges received  
(some members paid entire year)

Feb 2020 pledges - \$54,487 22.30% of annual budgeted pledges received

March 2020 pledges - \$67,420 32.67% of annual budgeted pledges received

April 2020 pledges - \$68,050 43.14% of annual budgeted pledges received

May 2020 pledges - \$34,806 48.50% of annual budgeted pledges received

June 2020 pledges - \$41,087 55.26% of annual budgeted pledges received

To meet our pledge income budget for the year we will need to collect \$290,819 in the next 6 months which is equivalent to \$48,470 each of the remaining months of this year. We are increasing our monthly pledges, but it still appears that we will be short. If you are behind in your pledges, please consider catching up soon. We are hopeful that we will continue to improve and that we will have a successful fall campaign that will allow us to maintain our current staff and program budgets.

## A Message From the FUMC Foundation Board

### Watch the Foundation Video

Were you unable to attend the Foundation Forum earlier this year where our latest video on the FUMC Foundation was shown? You now can access this 6 minute, locally developed resource to see and hear what individual FUMC members say about our Foundation. This is just one more way to gain insights into why having a viable foundation is important to the sustainability and growth of First Church.



The video is now on the FUMC website. Just go to <http://fumcomaha.org/foundation/> or go to the FUMC website, [fumcomaha.org](http://fumcomaha.org) then scroll down and select FUMC Foundation.



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Omaha, Nebraska

### **FUMC Leadership Team Discusses Continued COVID-19 Response**

The leadership of FUMC discussed our continued response and building use regarding the COVID-19 crisis. We will continue our current closed policy at FUMC through August 2020. The Great Plains Annual Conference recommendations basically remain the same while allowing churches to make decisions they feel are prudent for their particular congregations in terms of in-person meetings. While we will continue to monitor governmental suggestions and our Conference information, two of our criteria for beginning to look at in-person gatherings will be a decline in the number of cases, as well as hospitals once again allowing visitors in our area. At the time of our meeting, cases continue to be trending upward and we see no indication of hospitals allowing visitors, other than on a very limited basis at two locations. We will continue to consider at least a two-week stable trend of decline of cases as well as allowing visitors to hospitals.

Along with this we will be putting together a small group to create a COVID-19 plan for when we do move toward opening the building up to in-person meetings. Of utmost importance, and our primary concern, is the health, wellbeing, and safety of our members and those who frequent our facility. It is for this reason that the leadership of FUMC has decided to continue our current policy of the church being closed, for all intents and purposes. There will be no in-person worship or gatherings in the building. The exception to this policy is that staff will be in the building part time and small committees, properly socially distanced and comfortable, will be welcomed by contact with the staff. Of course, we will continue online worship at 10:50 each Sunday. This will be the policy until the end of August. We will meet again August 20, 2020 to reexamine current virus case statistics and other measurements to assess how we move into August and beyond.

Thank you for your patience, understanding, and your commitment to and love of FUMC. We are all looking forward to that day we can be gathered together again. Until then be safe and well and know you are not alone!

Peace and Light for Our Continued Journey Together,  
Rev. Kent