On Sunday, May 17, I preached from Acts chapter 17, which reminded us that “God does not dwell in shrines made by human hands.” As Paul was talking to the Athenians, he wanted to remind them that the Lord is transcendent. It is not necessary to journey to a particular location, building, or address in order to be in the Lord’s presence. Rather, God is over and around all things. For some, this may translate into an idea that God is far away, but the truth is exactly the opposite. A transcendent God is not a distant God. Thanks to God’s transcendence, the Lord’s presence is right where you are.

While we are anxious to be back in “church” (the building) so that we may be in fellowship together, let us be mindful that we are in God’s presence wherever we find ourselves.

NOTE: in the coming weeks, we will be discussing the policies and protocols which will need to be put in place so we may once again occupy the building. Please pray for the church leaders as these preparations are made.

Ministry During Social Distancing

WORSHIP: We will be worshipping online until the restrictions for social distancing are lifted. Our pre-recorded worship services will be posted on the website early Sunday morning. Please visit www.umcbranford.org to view the most recent worship service. Previous weeks’ services can be found on the “Sermons” tab.

NEW! If you don’t have access to a computer to watch on-line services, UMCB is now using DialMyCalls to provide an audio version of the scripture and sermon each Sunday. Dial 959-202-4UMC (4862) to hear the most recent Sunday Service.

MEETINGS: Committee meetings will be conducted via Zoom. Please go to www.Zoom.us and click “Sign Up. It’s Free” to create your account. All committee members will automatically be sent an invitation to their meetings. If you would like to receive an invitation to join a meeting, please contact Pastor Kent ahead of time so you can receive the log-in information.

FINANCES: As a result of not meeting in the church building, we are not receiving the offering during weekly worship. If you can, please mail a check for your tithes and offerings to the church. Or visit www.umcbranford.org and click on the “Give Online” button (lower right side of page) to make an online donation – please be sure to select “Tithes & Offerings” from the drop down list and enter your envelope number. We will be making weekly deposits of offerings, which will enable us to stay current on all our financial commitments. We are also cutting expenses where possible. For example, we have cancelled the weekly altar flower delivery and the trash pick-up.

COMMUNICATION: Brenda is continuing her regular working hours in the church office from 9am to 2pm, Tuesday through Thursday. In the interest of social distancing, we are asking that you DO NOT VISIT the church office during those hours. If you must be in the office while she is working, please be sure to wear a mask.

Pastor Kent will not be holding scheduled office hours at this time. Please feel free to contact him for any Pastoral or ministry needs by text or phone (845-522-1233) or by email (umcbpastor@gmail.com).

Blessings,

Pastor Kent

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
Please note: While social gathering restrictions are in place, no events (including Sunday morning services) are taking place at the church. Committee meetings and some activities are happening online. Please contact your committee chair for more information. Info for online activities are included elsewhere in this newsletter.

June Events

Mon 6/1, 7pm: Finance Committee
Wed 6/3, 7pm: Church Council
Wed 6/10, 6:30pm: Learn & Play Advisory Council
Mon 6/15, 12:30pm: Ladies Luncheon
Wed 6/24, 7pm: Staff Parish Relations Committee
Fri 6/26, 6pm: Community Dinner (To-Go)

June Birthdays

1 Steven Anderson
6 Chris Furtak
10 Lisa Schickler
13 Eleanor Schickler, Anthony Torello, Melanie Viets
16 Benjamin Mazzucco, David Wells, Pastor Kent
17 JOHN WESLEY (b. 1703)
19 Brian Wolek
20 Paul Wezenski
21 George Klein
28 Robert McMahon
29 Jesse Rader
30 Grace Carr, Joey Steeves

June Anniversaries

4 Jean & Guy Sunny
13 Anne & Kent Jackson
14 Linda & Bill Beagle
19 Beverly & Scott Carr
20 Larry & Sam Appleton
24 Bob & Jean Massage

WEEKLY CALENDAR

MONDAYS:
10:10am Monday Morning Quarterbacking: During the quarantine we will be meeting by conference call. Please dial in at (425) 436-6385 using access code 841200#

TUESDAYS:
7-8:30pm Pastor’s Bible Study Group: Meeting online during the quarantine period. Please email Pastor Kent for a Zoom link or telephone number if you would like to join.

THURSDAYS:
10am Pastor’s Bible Study Group: Meeting online during the quarantine period via conference call. Please call (425) 436-6385 and use access code 841200#.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
The 20th of every month - please send articles to Lori Cartwright at loriahlcart@gmail.com

Missed a Sunday? Unable to attend worship?
You can catch the weekly sermon video at www.umcbranford.org

KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING AT UMCB:
https://www.facebook.com/umcbranford

“Where the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit converge to change hearts and lives.”
HOW TO ATTEND CHURCH ONLINE

GET OUT OF BED AND GET DRESSED
it will put you in the right mindset for worship

GO THROUGH YOUR NORMAL SUNDAY ROUTINE
minus the “hurry up, we’re late” part

GATHER TOGETHER AS A FAMILY
no multitasking; worship is a family activity

STREAM TO YOUR LARGEST SCREEN IF POSSIBLE
it will feel like you are really “there”

SING ALONG LOUD AND PROUD
it may feel weird, but it also feels weird to the people leading worship in an empty room

PREACH WITH THE PREACHER
say amen, clap, shout and take notes; have a time of prayer at the end; make your home a sanctuary
Great Minds Think Alike . . .

Pastor Kent recently received emails from two of our church members who shared a similar thought. Here are their thoughts:

First, from Carole Viel:
“Just a thought for my friends at UMC: please prayerfully consider helping with our current financial situation by donating a portion of your stimulus check for a "virtual fund raiser," since there will not be a spring plant sale, the golf tournament will be postponed or cancelled, and the train show was cancelled. You can help!! Amen.”

And from John Beatty:
“For the last few years, I have been advocating that those of us over 70 take advantage of the tax laws and use all or part of our RMDs to make our pledges to UMC Branford. In 2020, there is no RMD requirement, but that does not change the tax law. If you choose to make your pledges using IRA funds, you will get the same tax result. In addition, I see another opportunity: the FREE MONEY that is being dropped into your bank account as we speak. Everyone under certain income limits will receive $1,200, no strings attached and tax free. If you are fortunate enough not to need the funds, the church could use all or part of it to offset our loss of fundraisers because of the shutdown. Even if each member tithed part of the free money, the budget would look much better. If you can participate in this “Virtual Fund Raiser,” please write STIMULUS on the memo line of your donation check.”

God is not what you think;
Or even what you believe.
Because God is
A word unspoken,
A belief unbelieved.
So if you wish to know
This God, practice wonder.
Do what is good, and
Cultivate silence.
The rest will follow.

Meister Eckhart, Book of the Heart

Do you have a joy you want to celebrate?
Do you have a need that only God can meet?

We want to celebrate your joys and join in prayer with you!

Your joys and concerns are important to your church family and we very much want to pray and rejoice with you in what God has provided and for his answers to your prayers.

Please text your joys and concerns to Pastor Kent at 845-522-1233 or to his email at umcbpastor@gmail.com.

Community Dinner To Go

Friday, June 26, 6pm

We will be making food and serving to any and all via "curbside" pickup.

Please pull into the church parking lot and into one of the spaces. We will bring dinner(s) out to you wrapped up and ready for travel.

"Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

-- John 6:35 --

All Are Welcome...Come Be Fed.
As you are aware, the current pandemic has presented L&P with significant challenges. The Center is presently closed, but working on plans to reopen in late June.

**How Can You Help?**

Learn and Play is a vital ministry of UMC, Branford. As with any ministry, the funds available often limit how long things can be sustained in the event of an emergency that lasts as long as the current one has. This is where your help is needed. If you can make a special donation to this ministry, it would be...well...a Godsend!

Checks can be made out to Learn & Play and mailed to the church – please write “L&P Ministry” and your envelope number in the note. Or visit www.umcbranford.org and click on the “Give Online” button (lower right side of page) to make an online donation – please be sure to select “Learn and Play Ministry” from the drop down list and enter your envelope number.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact Laurie Gagné, facilitator for the L&P Advisory Council, at gagnes@snet.net or 203-676-4287.

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**Small Study Continue**

Our Tuesday 7pm and Thursday 10:10am Study Groups continue to meet online during the quarantine period. Please email Pastor Kent for a Zoom link or telephone number if you would like to join the Tuesday evening study. The Thursday morning group is meeting via conference call. Please call 425-436-6385 and use access code 841200#.

**PRAYER THAT MOVES HEAVEN AND CHANGES NATIONS**

“The Daniel Prayer is born deep within your soul, erupts through your heart, and pours out on your lips — words created by and infused with the Spirit of God quivering with spiritual electricity.”

Many people today find that their prayers don’t “work.” And like a broken cell phone, prayer gets thrown out as unnecessary “clutter” in most people’s lives. Anne has found that while prayer does work, sometimes the “pray-ers” don’t. So she turned to the prophet Daniel for help.

This book, based on Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9, will help you pray effectively for your nation, for your family, and for yourself. Anne answers questions such as:

- How do I know the God to whom I pray will listen?
- How do I know God cares about my prayer?
- How do I know God will answer my prayer?
- Why should I pray?
- Does it matter where I am when I pray?
- Are words in prayer all that matter, or does my attitude affect prayer?
- What difference does my prayer make?

**Monday Morning Quarterbacking**

An opportunity to dig deeper into the Sunday Sermon! Pastor Kent shares additional insight into the scriptures and the participants are encouraged to ask questions and share reflections on the material which was preached. Please consider attending on a weekly basis or occasionally as the Spirit moves. During the quarantine, we will be meeting by Conference Call at 10am. Please dial in at 425-436-6385 using access code 841200#.
Help Out - Take Out purchases gift cards from local restaurants and distributes them to Branford residents who have lost jobs, cannot work, or have had their hours reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Branford Home Delivery Service to help those residents who are considered at high risk for contacting the virus, including senior citizens and immunosuppressed individuals. This program is free to qualifying Branford residents.

If you lost your job, cannot work, or have had your hours reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, you may be eligible to receive a Food Gift Card.


SEWING FOR GOD

June & July: Still No Meeting at Church

During these two summer months, we'll work on some quilts tops for our friends across the street at Artis. When we meet up in August there will be a layering party.

We wish all of our friends to a wonderful and safe summer until we can meet again.

Please note that we are still making masks for Yale New Haven Hospital and other medical centers, and also for anyone else who may need them. Your donations to SFG has been greatly appreciated and will help us with layering the quilts in the future.

Ladies Luncheon - Summer Schedule

Ladies, mark your calendars as we will hopefully be able to get together for food and fellowship this summer.

June 15: Eli’s on the Hill, Branford
July 20: Lenny and Joes, Long Wharf, New Haven
Aug 17: Sam’s Dock Side, Branford

To All the Secret Pals

May you continue to keep each other in Thought and Prayer until we meet again.

Passing of the Peace - Video Edition

We are hoping to be able to share the Peace of Christ with each other, even though we cannot be in the same room. Please consider recording a short video of you and your family saying your name, a special message and end with "Peace be with you."

When recording the video: press start and count to 5 (in your head) before speaking. Then count to 5 (again, in your head) before hitting stop. This will give some buffer before and after so that the video can be stitched cleanly together with others.

If you will be contributing a video, please send it to umcbpastor@gmail.com by Friday. This will give Roger time to add them to the service video during editing.
Make a donation to your church in honor of an everyday hero who has made a difference to you. Then, post it on social media.

Your #IGiveUMC social media post can be either a photo or a video post. Get inspired by searching “#IGiveUMC” on Facebook or Instagram!

**Photo posts** are quick and easy. Simply post a photo of your honoree and include a written message.

**Video posts** can be created with your cell phone. Consider a “paper messages” video. Write a message on cards or poster board. During your video, show one page at a time so that viewers can read it.

Here is an example of a written post that could accompany either a photo or a video post. Be sure to include #IGiveUMC!

Today, I made a donation to my church in honor of my neighbor who sewed masks and gave them to neighbors and health care workers. I honor their service and dedication to the community. Join me, by sharing about an everyday hero you are proud to know and honor them by supporting your local church. Contact the church to find out how. Even $5 will make a big difference!

#IGiveUMC

**Thank you for your participation!**