Food Pantry Challenge!!

Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” Matthew 14:16

Jesus had spent all day ministering to the needs of people through healing. As the hour was getting late, the Disciples suggested that Jesus send them home so they could get something to eat. Jesus declined their request and encouraged them to meet the needs of the crowd. The Disciples saw a scarcity of food, but with Jesus’ blessing upon the bread and the fish, they were able to feed the crowd of more than 5,000.

I believe Jesus’ model for a feeding ministry can be employed by us today. As faithful Disciples, we must also heed Jesus’ command to “give them something to eat.” The hunger around us may seem overwhelming, but with the Lord’s blessing we can also feed the multitudes!

Recently, as I prepared a sermon on the feeding of the 5,000, the Lord spoke clearly through my time of meditation that we as a community are being challenged to collect 5,000 cans of fruits and vegetables by the end of the year 2020.

Everything we collect will be donated to the local food pantries in Branford, Guilford, and North Branford. You are welcome to donate any non-perishable items, but we are specifically “counting” all the cans of fruits and vegetables that you donate.

Please place your donations in the green collection bin which is outside the front door of the church. Items are removed daily and stored inside the building for weekly distribution to the food pantries. Please spread the word and invite your friends and neighbors to join the challenge as we respond to Jesus’ instruction by committing to feed the hungry in our communities.

Please note: if it would be easier to make a financial contribution, please feel free to send a check made out to UMC, Branford, writing “Food Pantry Challenge” in the memo and mailing it to 811 East Main Street, Branford, CT 06405. We will use your donation to purchase cans of fruits and vegetables to be donated.

Blessings,
Pastor Kent

“Where the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit converge to change hearts and lives.”
September Birthdays
2 Jacob Rader
3 Amy Kapadia
4 Adam Jackson, Trina Bowman, Noah Rader
10 Karyn Capezzone, Diane Nerkowski
18 Michael Loukides
19 Pepi Capezzone
21 Bonnie Gregoire
23 Pat Steeves, Toni Ginnetti
29 Megan Wells

September Anniversaries
1 Cheryl & James Torello
3 Karyn & Pepi Capezzone
16 Lydia & Paul Wezenski
19 Robert & Joyce Emslie
30 Lori & Michael Cartwright

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#.

AA Online Meetings
For those in need, links to online and voice meetings can be found at: https://www.aa-intergroup.org/directory.php

“Where the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit converge to change hearts and lives.”
In-Person Worship Resumes Sept 6!

UMC, Branford has received approval by The New York Annual Conference to resume in-person worship in our sanctuary, with a limit of 25% capacity. Beginning September 6, those desiring to worship in the sanctuary are invited to do so. Please plan to arrive by 9:15 am so that we can complete the necessary protocols (temperature checks, attendance for contact tracing, etc) before the service begins at 9:30 am.

A list of “What to Expect for In-Person Worship” is being mailed to all church families and will be posted on our website at www.umcbranford.org.

We want to make room for everyone who desires to attend. We will NOT be taking reservations, but it would be helpful if you would let us know that you plan to attend. Please call or text Pastor Kent at (845) 522-1233 or email UMCBPastor@gmail.com and let us know how many from your family will be attending on a normal Sunday (this is a one-time request; you do not need to call every week).

For those not attending, we will be adding a live stream of the 9:30 am service, which may be accessed through the church website or directly on our UMC Branford YouTube channel (look for the account with the RED doors).

If you wish to participate at a later time, a recording of the service will be posted on the church website. For those with smart TVs, you can now watch the weekly service via YouTube. Open the YouTube app, search for umc branford and click on the picture of the church.

If you don't have access to a computer, you can use DialMyCalls to listen to an audio version of the scripture and sermon each Sunday. Dial 959-202-4UMC (4862) to hear the most recent Sunday Service.

Ministry While Practicing Social Distancing

PASTORAL CARE: Pastor Kent will not be holding scheduled office hours at this time, but is available for Pastoral Care “visits” either by telephone or individual Zoom meetings. If you would like to be in conversation to help process an issue you are dealing with or just to catch up, please contact him by texting or calling his cell phone at 845-522-1233 or by sending an email to umcbpastor@gmail.com to arrange a meeting.

MEETINGS: Our committee meetings will be meeting 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: Because we’re not meeting in the church building, we are not receiving the offering during weekly worship. As you are able, please mail a check for your tithes and offerings to the church. This will enable us to stay current on all our financial commitments. We are also minimizing expenses where possible.

COMMUNICATION: The church office is open from 9am-2pm. 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, please be sure to be wearing a mask.

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#.
DEAR LEARN & PLAY FAMILIES,

My name is Venera and I am so excited to introduce myself as the new Director of Learn & Play Christian Early Learning Center. I am honored to join such a hardworking team, who value the same principles and beliefs that I hold very dear to my heart.

Growing up in an Italian family, nurturing children has always run deep through my veins; being a caretaker was instilled in me from a young age. As I grew up, I took on many volunteer positions that were centered around the growth and spiritual development of children of all ages; as I worked my way up to complete a life-long dream of becoming the Children's Ministry Director of my home church in Waterford, CT. In a professional setting, over the past eight years I have taken on various roles within the childcare industry - working as a teacher has provided me with great understanding, knowledge and experience when it comes to all things childcare. I worked hard during my years as a Preschool teacher to provide my students with the safest, most creative, nurturing learning environment as I got them ready to transition into Kindergarten.

With so many changes going on in your child’s life, I would love to be a constant. My goal is to ensure that all children are healthy, happy, safe, and growing in their spiritual walk with God each and every day. I cannot wait to learn about each of your children's interests, to get to know their personalities and learning styles as well as being able to celebrate their successes & make them feel like a valued part of our Christ-centered community.

As we navigate all the changes that COVID-19 has brought onto the center, the staff and I will do our very best to provide the safest, most comfortable, and loving environment to these precious little ones. Once again, I am so thankful for this opportunity to serve at Learn & Play and to become a part of your wonderful community.

I look forward to meeting you soon!

Blessings, Venera Manuli

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MEET THE DIRECTOR:

Fun Facts About Me:

- My favorite color is pink!
- I love to scrapbook!
- Pasta is my favorite meal!
- I love chocolate!
- Fall is my favorite season!

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What joy! Amber Scovell became Director of Learn and Play two months ago. Under her care, our summer program began and completed. The fall program has begun. The State of CT surveyor inspected, giving high praise for the COVID 19 precautions in place. Today, I add “Interim” to Amber’s title as Director. Amber has a 10-month-old son named Parker. His doctors recently informed Amber that he is immunocompromised, and it is unsafe for him to be in childcare. After much thought and prayer, Amber made the difficult decision to leave Learn & Play to ensure her son’s safety. She is saddened and overwhelmed but knows that God has a plan for both Parker and the center. She is confident that the new director will be a fantastic addition to our Learn & Play family and hopes to stay in touch. Please keep the Scovell family in your prayers.

Venera Manuli our new Director of Learn and Play has begun under Amber’s orientation. Meet Venera! The following has gone to Learn and Play families and now to our church family.

Louise Lind, SPRC Chair
Small Study Groups

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#

I WILL! Nine Traits of the Outwardly Focused Christian by Thom S. Rainer
Could you be the answer to the problems you see?

Every day we are faced with the needs of those around us. Emotional. Physical. Spiritual. What are we to do about it? Are these problems for our pastors to address, or is there a way for the church member to make an impact that will last?

Bestselling author Thom S. Rainer answers these questions by offering nine simple traits that you can incorporate into your life, no matter your background, stage of life, or sense of capability.

You can do it. Now it's time to just stand up and say you will!
• I Will Move from “I am” to “I will”
• I Will Worship with Others
• I Will Grow Together with Others
• I Will Serve
• I Will Go
• I Will Give Generously
• I Will Not Be a Church Dropout
• I Will Avoid the Traps of Churchianity
• I Will Make a Difference

UMC Podcasts

Podcasts are a wonderful way to think about and grow in your faith while driving the car, getting some cardio on the treadmill, walking the dog, or folding laundry. Check out https://www.umc.org/en/ways-we-grow/tools-for-your-spiritual-journey/podcasts for interesting conversations that may offer some new ideas to consider or a new practice to try out.
SEWING FOR GOD

Wow, this summer has certainly broken heat waves. SFG has been busy making more masks for Yale New Haven, as the need is great in certain areas. We are currently making them for the Mental Health Dept. and will continue until they no longer need our help.

Note that our friends across the street at Artis are still in our minds. We will continue to work on making quilt tops and then assemble the tops, batting, and backings when we finally are able to meet. I also remind you that our Veterans are still not far from our thoughts! If you know of a group who might like to receive Veteran’s Quilt from SFG, please let us know.

I’m looking forward to when we can get together again to start sewing together!

Rosemary

Ladies, I’m sorry to say that, due to Church regulations regarding COVID-19, we are not able to have our monthly luncheons until further notice.

For those who asked: yes, there was an article last month, but it was omitted from The Cross and Flame before I had a chance to edit it.

If you have any questions, please call me (Rosemary) at (203) 589-1620.

KEEP SAVING YOUR SODA CAN TABS!

Look for the green collection bin outside the church. Drop them off anytime: before the community dinner – when you are out and about – before or after a doctor appointment. We’re hoping to collect at least another 2 to 3 bags by the end of 2020. Every tab makes a difference, just like you do.

Collecting pop tabs is a fun and easy way to support Ronald McDonald House of Charities of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. It’s easy! All you need to do is remove the tab from each can before you put it in your recycle bin. It’s fun! You can involve community groups and your family in supporting the cause without a lot of effort. It only takes a moment to help raise money that funds the operations of the Houses.

Rosemary & Tony

HI, SECRET PALS!!

Just a reminder: it’s been a long spring/summer... have you remembered your Secret Pal?

Prayers and thoughts do count, but a card would be nice, too.

Friendship isn’t a Big Thing
It’s a Million Little Things!

Secret Sisters

GOD’S WORK
OUR HANDS

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.
A PRAYER FOR OUR TEACHERS

Dear God,
Thank You for the amazing teachers who have given their lives to serve our children. As they prepare for the new year, fill them with the strength to lead, grace to guide, and hope to thrive in their classroom.
Bless them beyond measure for their willingness to pour into the next generation through education. Amen.

LOCAL CHURCH HISTORIAN’S SCHOOL

Are you interested in the story of your church? If so, a new course from the General Commission on Archives and History may be right for you.

The online course, offered for free and set to begin September 14, 2020, will cover a wide range of skills needed to become a church historian.

Those participating will benefit from a new consciousness of their heritage and legacy and be motivated to study their unique stories and proclaim it to those around them.

The Local Church Historian School is a 12-week long course that allows participants to move at their own pace through a series of exercises. Each week, participants will receive reading material and an assignment(s) via email. They can then move at their own pace to get through the readings and complete the assignment—even if it takes them longer than 12 weeks. During the course, they will have access to an assigned moderator for any questions that might arise as well as access to a closed Facebook group with other course participants. Once completed, the participant will receive a certificate from GCAH.

The Book of Discipline says the GCAH is “to encourage and assist the local churches in preserving their records, compiling their histories and celebrating their heritage....” This school provides United Methodists the opportunity to do just that.

More information and the registration form can be found at http://gcah.org/resources/local-church-historian-school. The only prerequisite for the Local Church Historian School is access to dependable email service. (Minimal computer skills are required.)

CELEBRATING TEACHERS
BY SUPPORTING MY CHURCH

Do you know a Sunday School teacher at your church that you'd like to celebrate? Do you know of a teacher from a local school that's active in your church? Honor them by making a donation to the ministry of UMCBranford in their name, then let them know about your gift. This thoughtful act not only shows your appreciation of them as individuals but also that you value their contribution to the work of your church. Share your teacher nominee via your Facebook feed and use #IGiveUMC so that we can celebrate them, too!