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**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

May 12, 2020

**Greetings and Grace and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,**

There is much news for this week, so I will try to share it as clearly and concisely as possible.

Again, thank you to those who joined our 8:30 am Zoom worship and to all who came to our 10:30 am Drive-In service. Your faithful presence is deeply appreciated. It is such a joy to see you in Zoom either by computer or telephone. It is also a delight seeing you physically in your cars at the 10:30 Drive-In service. (We gather for worship via 8:30 am Zoom and 10:30 am Drive-In Worship on the front steps of Center United Methodist Church to celebrate this wonderful day. The drive-in service follows the COVID-19 guidelines including distancing. Bulletins were slipped through the window as well as emailed before Sunday. The church is not open which means, unfortunately, the restrooms are not open.) If you are vulnerable or feel ill next Sunday, as much as we would love to see you, please remain at home and join us for the Zoom worship. It is my prayer that all of you do what you feel is necessary for maintaining your health and protecting yourself.

We will continue the 8:30 am Zoom worship as joint Center and Saguache church group for those who are not able to join us physically or who are vulnerable to COVID-19. On June 14, 2020, the Center church will begin our reopening process. We will follow the COVID-19 updated guidelines which may change as we move closer to the reopening date. Right now those restrictions require 25 people or less in each room wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. According to the state and county guidelines, a family unit can count for 1 person and do not need separate. Non-touch temperatures will be taken and anyone with fever will not be able to enter. Restrooms will be available but with posted restrictions to follow. Unfortunately coffee and fellowship can't occur at this time, but you are welcome to bring your coffee or drink in your container. Again, if you do not feel safe or you do not wish to follow the precautions or if you do not feel well, please join via Zoom and we will look forward to gathering together when we don't have to follow so many of these precautions and it's safe.

Remember, if you wish to participate in our virtual service via phone or computer, Zoom worship will occur at 8:30 am. If you have internet access, at 8:15 am, type in [www.GetTogetherOnline.org](http://www.GetTogetherOnline.org) in your browser and hit enter and it will bring you to our worship website. If you wish to use your phone (cell or landline) without internet call 646-876-9923 if you are asked a code, enter 440748229#. You can call Gene at (719)873-5311 if you need assistance.

*To help us open up and celebrate God's goodness, we are honored to host an evening of worship and praise June 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm with the New Legacy Project leading us in worship and proclaiming the gospel through the timeless music of the Blackwood Brothers, as well as new country and gospel hits. You can check them out at <https://vimeo.com/256270962/b84a28caec> or on our FaceBook page or at [www.umcofcenter.com](http://www.umcofcenter.com). We will take a love offering and they will have their albums for sale at the event as well. The church will open at 6:30 pm so that we can follow the safety protocols and there will be an overflow area once we have met the seating limit for the sanctuary.*

There are plans for Church in the Wildwood at Beaver Creek to occur June 7<sup>th</sup> and the camp is planning to open for campers July 1<sup>st</sup>. Of course, Church in the Wildwood is contingent on whether the governing authorities allow Beaver Creek to open up. If Church in the Wildwood does happen, there will not be a Drive-In service, instead, I will stream the service live from Beaver Creek. If you or anyone you know is able and willing to help get the camp ready for summer activities, please contact Gene Haning (719)873-5311 about a time to go and work. Gene has been so gracious to host our worship services and help us with our website [www.umcofcenter.com](http://www.umcofcenter.com), so we are hoping that several of you will want to get out of the house and take a trip up to South Fork to help get the camp ready.

In case you missed it last week, we are preparing for Heritage Sunday in May and wish to include a fun activity, but we need your help. We are asking that you take a family photo with a caption and send it to Hannah at [umcofcenter@gmail.com](mailto:umcofcenter@gmail.com) for a special service on May 24<sup>th</sup> – Aldersgate Day and Ascension Sunday, we are planning that day both via zoom and drive-in. It can be a silly or serious picture of the family together or just of yourself. Please put a caption with your picture. Hannah has only received one picture and she is very sad that we may not be able to make this happen unless she gets more photos, so please get those captioned photos to her as soon as possible. It doesn't have to be a professional picture; a cell phone photo will work.

I want to thank the Valley District's clubs Woman's Citizenship Club and Town and Country for their donation to our food pantry. We are going to be working with Center Food Bank from now through the end of May collecting protein items which can be canned meat or frozen one-pound package of meat. These can be dropped off to Linda Clutter at Tommy's Plumbing from 8-noon and 1-5 Monday through Friday. She will get them to our local food bank as the donations come in. I met with Linda Warsh and

we will be making up meal bags to also bring to Center Food Bank during this time of need. If you know of anyone in need, please have them call the social service office. They have been given funds and can help in ways they haven't been able to help in the past.

I would like to deeply thank you for your generosity especially during this difficult time. Thanks to you we have been able to meet our obligations both local and connectional giving. We have truly been blessed by God and wish to be good stewards as we move forward. We deeply appreciate all who have graciously supported us with their donations. Online donations can be made at [www.umcofcenter.com](http://www.umcofcenter.com) or you can text the amount you wish to give to (719)628-1830 which will walk you through the secure donation. There is a fee that is charged the church when payments are made online and by text. Both the online and text options are secure and the funds are immediately processed into Center UMC's bank account. Of course, you can always mail in your donation to Center UMC, P. O. Box 626, Center, CO 81125. Again we are urging Saguache folks to mail their donations to Center UMC, P.O. Box 626, Center, CO 81125. Please note for Saguache UMC in the memo area of your check. We are can deposit those donations into First Southwest bank into the Saguache's church account. We do appreciate your support.

Our Mountain Sky Annual Conference will be held digitally June 19-20. Since there is no travel involved which has caused us not to be represented at annual conferences in the past by laity, this would allow us to have voting representation from our laity for this annual conference. If you are interested in being the laity delegate for our church, please let me know as soon as possible, so that I can get you registered. You would need to have a computer and internet access, but that can be provided at the church if you don't have that capability.

The Story Behind Our Songs continues on our Center United Methodist Church FB page live between 1-1:30 pm on Wednesday. The videos are available on the Center United Methodist Church Facebook page. I'm continuing Children's Moments this Sunday immediately after virtual worship which feature activities with kids about Jesus parables. We began a 9-week sermon series on Biblical characters who struggled with depression. In June we will begin a Disciple bible study on Under the *Tree of Life – The Writings – John- Revelation*. If you are interested, please let me know whether you would be interested in doing this as a Zoom Bible Study or in-person Bible Study or both. Please contact me by phone, text, or email so we can make plans to start in June. Our AA group has resumed virtually on Saturdays at 10 am. If you are interested in that, please contact Pastor Debbie via text (504)261-8860.

Please feel free to reach out to me to ask how to share in this unique time, especially with prayer requests and concerns. I am available via phone or text at 504-261-8860. You can always reach me via email [dupton@liff.edu](mailto:dupton@liff.edu) or message me via our Center United Methodist Church FB page. Stay safe and remember we are all essential people in the family of God.

Peace and grace for the journey,

*Rev. Debra Upton*

Thank you and have a blessed day.

Rev. Debbie Upton (504) 261-8860, [dupton@liff.edu](mailto:dupton@liff.edu)

Pastor of Center and Saguache United Methodist Churches