

# The Leaven May 2020

## SOULE SEARCHING

In the midst of the Easter season, with the beauty of a Kansas Spring all around me, and Mother's Day just a few days away, there is evidence and celebration of new life everywhere! I am thankful for these spring gifts and the hope and energy they bring among us in this difficult moment we live.



The major topic of discussion this week has been about the re-opening of our communities, businesses and churches as we work our way through this time of sheltering in place and staying at home. This time has brought changes and innovations to how we have done our work as a church. We made the necessary changes using the equipment and skills we had on hand to keep one another safe and still worship and have some contact with one another. We have done well over these past two months and have been able to reach out to our community with help for those who needed food assistance.

Thank you for your help and support. I urge you to keep reaching out to other church members and neighbors. We certainly need human connection and interaction to remain strong, healthy and creative. We miss one another and being together. I am very glad that is the case. Some worry that this time apart from worship and meetings taking place on-line will become the new normal. While it does have some advantages, it does not fulfill our need to be with one another; we need one another!

So now we are in the midst of the conversation about how we begin to come back together. I wrote in my report to the Deacons this month that I hope we will return to the sanctuary in June. The Session will begin this discussion next Thursday evening. It was the topic at the Leavenworth County Clergy Association this week and with clergy colleagues in the Presbytery. All the questions about masks, social distancing, cleaning needs and disinfectants came up, along with safety and worries about those who were "more at risk." Some churches have detailed plans in place. Others are just starting to think through the issues and make plans. Everyone knows that their plans may change very quickly and often. One pastor commented that her congregation was having "difficulty thinking beyond two weeks at a time." Perhaps that's a comment more about me than this church, it certainly seems to ring true for me. Let's not look too far ahead because there are too many variables to make planning meaningful and productive too far out. The major takeaway from these discussions for me was that real changes that we have made to date are not nearly all we will need to make as we move ahead. When we come back to worship in the sanctuary, worship will look different than it did when we were last together in March. Seating will be in compliance with social distancing. There will be no passing of the offering plates or communion trays. Bulletins will not be distributed. Masks may be required and will certainly be encouraged. We will not pass the peace

as we have in recent services. Hand shaking and hugging will be discouraged. I say this just to let you know worship will feel different. Some who are regularly with us will not feel or be ready to return. That is okay! We will understand support your need to stay home as long as you need.

I cannot help but think about the disciples of Jesus that first Easter. They too, had to be uncertain and afraid of what lie ahead. Their whole world had changed, been turned upside down. They were "locked- in" until the Holy Spirit freed them and sent them out with new power and purpose on the Day of Pentecost and the world has never been the same. Pentecost 2020 is May 31<sup>st</sup>. It would be wonderful to be in the sanctuary that day. There are many decisions the session is responsible to make in preparation for our return. So, talk with your elders this week. Let them know your hopes and concerns for this matter. Then, pray for all who are asked to lead us at this time and for the Holy Spirit to give the insight and inspiration to lead faithfully even when we do not fully and clearly see everything that is ahead. Pray above all else, that we lead as people who serve the living God as made known to us in the risen Christ filled with hope and joy and peace even in the midst of very trying times.

Blessings to each of you,  
Tim

## **YOU HIT IT OUT OF THE PARK!**

The baseball equivalent of the congregation's recent response to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering for 2020 is a home run. Maybe even a grand slam.

Amid less than ideal circumstances, circumstances that prevented us from gathering at the church on a Sunday morning to worship the Lord during the final few weeks of the Lenten season, members and friends of the church contributed a total of \$2,505 to this year's offering, easily beating the total for last year when things were "normal." So stand up, that means "get out of your seat," and give yourselves a big hand! Yes, start clapping loudly like you would do if you were out at Kauffman Stadium and one of the Royals knocked the ball over the center field fence to win the game.

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering behind us, the next denominational offering for the year is the Pentecost offering, which is to be received Sunday, May 31. This offering benefits children, youth and young adults, and unlike the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, a portion of what is collected before, on or after Pentecost Sunday will be retained by the church for use locally as we best see fit. Last year, the 40 percent share we kept was used to support a youth ministry associated with the Salvation Army operation in Leavenworth.

More information about the Pentecost offering will be shared with the congregation later this month either from the pulpit, by way of email, or both. Regardless of the mode by which the message is delivered, please prayerfully consider making a generous contribution to the Pentecost offering this year because in so doing you will be making an investment in the young, the future of the church.

Rick Nichols, member, Faithful Discipleship Committee

## ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS

The Scholarship Committee consisting of Linda Barry, Judy Wiedower, Ginnie Strand, Chris Aus, Dody Marsh, and Linda Johnson (with additional consultation re: the process with Joyce Kirk and Jennifer Butler) has reviewed the applications, and selected those who will receive our annual scholarships. The Boatright Scholarship goes to church members for continued education, and will be divided evenly between Alexa, Chase, and Drake Allen. The Carol Ann Low Scholarship goes to a high school senior in the church to assist in their further education, and has been awarded to Jacob Litewski. The Cody Community scholarship goes to a high potential senior who may be financially challenged in pursuing further education, and was awarded to Parker Schmitt. We had applications submitted from Leavenworth, Lansing, and Basehor-Linwood High Schools. The schools where these students will pursue their education are Kansas State, Kansas City KS Community College, and the University of Nebraska. If schedules allow, when we resume gathered worship, we will invite these students to be recognized in the midst of our worship service. We are so proud of these awardees, and also have appreciation for all those who submitted applications. We have some very active, smart, hard-working young people in our community.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

**Immediate:** Jeannie (Barbara-Sue Rose), Adam Nelson, Brianna Hoffman (Cindy Scircle), Aunt Harriett (Dick Gibson), Jeff (Cindy Scircle), Mark Denny (Anna and Shirley), Genie Bowman (Miriam and Jerry), Nick Proctor, John Herbert (Carla Hathaway), Lonnie Hunt (Chris Aus), Maggie (Kirk's granddaughter), J.R. Shrite (Steve Finch), Zach Fletchall Family (Ginnie Strand), Arnold Family (Ginnie Strand), Sandy (Carolyn Anderson), Le Thomas

**Ongoing:** Joe Hudson, Judy Jahn, Gladys Griffin (Maria Traynham), Barbara-Sue Rose, Maria Gordon (Carolyn Tillotson), Twila Corley, Jayce Ward (Cindy Scircle), Priscilla Conley (Sally Azbill), Al Pursell, Rocky Flynn Lessman (Nichols Family), Paul Wilde (Carolyn Anderson), Mary Hickie (Linda Barry), Marilyn Ferbert

## WOMEN OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SPRING GATHERING

**has been postponed until JUNE (TBD)**

If you are not currently a member of one of our Circles and would like to join one, please contact Ginnie Strand at 651-0511.

## COMMUNITY MEAL



Because of the Covid-19 restrictions our community meal sack lunches were prepared at the Kirks' and distributed at the church on April 28. Pictured:  
Howard Kirk, Emma, Jennifer Butler,  
Rev Tim Soule, Marcus Butler (not pictured Joyce Kirk).

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

1-Finnegan Lane Davis 2-Le Thomas 3-Carolyn Tillotson 5-Jennifer Butler  
5-Tom Thompson 12-Norma Graham 16-Al Pursell 16-William Elwood Davis 21-Cindy Scircle  
24-Becky Stovall 28-John Graham

## MAY ANNIVERSARYS

23-Gary and Marti Auchard 27-Claude and Judy Wiedower 30- Jerry and Maria Traynham

