



CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Weekly Newsletter

March 15, 2021

Sunday, March 21st @ 10:30am: Fifth Sunday of Lent. Pastor Jack continues our *Words To the Cross* message series with "A Word of Witness."

From your computer or smartphone, watch at facebook.com/waterfordcumc/live or at facebook.com/waterfordcumc/events.

Dear Central Church Family,

Waterford Central United Methodist Church is taking on four initiatives over the next 12-18 months. These initiatives are at the heart of the ministries you've told us are important to this congregation. Like all ministries, to be successful we need support. Below are descriptions of each initiative and the persons who have led the initial concept phase of each. These individuals may or may not continue beyond the initial phase. Please prayerfully consider each initiative and, if you feel called, please volunteer to be part of one of the teams that will carry these initiatives forward. You can sign up by emailing or calling the church office. We aim to kick off each initiative in April.

Engaging with Remote Worshipers

WCUMC has been able to reach many new worshipers through our Livestream services. As we plan to return to in-person worship, we will continue to Livestream the services. This initiative seeks to expand the worship ministry to our on-line audience by envisioning new ways to connect with this community and putting in place a sustainable plan that ensures we can help this community grow in its faith. Members of this team will expand upon the ideas formulated during conception of this initiative which include worship, small groups, pastoral care, and giving, as well as measuring success.

Concept Team: Robin Danek & Pastor Jack

Congregational Care System

Expanding upon efforts already in place to reach our congregation, including homebound and convalescing members, this initiative seeks to establish a Congregational "Shepherd" Program. This program will train laity to care for a segment of our church members and friends. These "shepherds" would be responsible for a cluster of 20-30 people that will ensure all our members—active, inactive, homebound, and new visitors/members—would be cared for through this ministry. Volunteers for this initiative will expand on the concepts already envisioned, define training needs and resources, and initiate a pilot that will grow after momentum is built.

Concept Team: Kelly Cortese & Pastor Jack

Hunger Ministries

WCUMC already supports many hunger ministries through partnerships (Baldwin Center, Blessings in a Backpack, etc.) and our own missions (Food Pantry, Good Sam, etc.). This initiative seeks to expand efforts with a local focus, supporting a new food pantry at Kettering High School. Volunteers for this initiative will approach Kettering, determine how best to support them, and create a means to provide food and/or funds.

Concept Team: Catrina Cortese & Rev. Cora

LGBTQ+ Inclusiveness

The objective of this initiative is to create a safe and welcoming church community to which LGBTQ+ are drawn to worship, enrich their spiritual journeys, and become part of a greater family of Christians. Beyond simply welcoming

LGBTQ+ into our Sanctuary, WCUMC must change its culture to truly accept this community of persons as family, educate ourselves on what a safe congregation is, and practice creating a congregation for all. Volunteers for this initiative will leverage several resources, including but not limited to Reconciling Ministries and interviews with congregations which have successfully become reconciling congregations, to define inclusiveness for WCUMC, build a plan for LGBTQ+ inclusiveness, conduct small group meetings, and work toward achieving the goals of being reconciling and inclusive.

Concept Team: Rev. Cora, Pastor Jack, Ken Cortese, Joe Humphrey, Sam Osborn, Mark Strobel

Again, if you feel called to participate in any of these new initiatives, call the church office. For more information you can call Pastor Jack, the people listed under each initiative or me. Thanks for considering these important areas of ministry that reflect our Mission Statement: Central UMC - Connecting with God, Connecting with Others, Changing our World with Christ's Love.

Thank You and God Bless,
-Mark Strobel, Church Council Chair

Get Ready for In-Person Worship—May 9, 2021!

After many conversations with other church leaders and considering the present decline in the rate of infection and deaths, we are planning to begin in-person worship on May 9. That's right, Mother's Day. We wanted to strike a balance between the various levels of comfort that people have in gathering with others and the level of protection that vaccinations offer. By the beginning of May, the hope is that most of our church, especially those at risk, will be vaccinated and herd immunity will have begun.

Initially, we will observe the same safety measures that were created in June of last year; wearing masks, socially distancing and not gathering in various areas of the church so that there is a safe flow of people in and out of our building and Sanctuary. We will not have bulletins to pass out, nor will we have the passing of the peace or sing. People who wish to socialize before and after worship can do so outside and away from our church building.

There is lots of work to be done between now and May 9. Those who have expressed interest in being a worship host will be contacted for training and scheduling. We will be reaching out to ushers and greeters who may help with this present concept of being a host, keeping everyone who comes to worship here at our church building safe. Let our church office know if you would like to help with our process of coming back to worship in-person. In the meantime keep safe and God bless!

Family-Friendly Easter at Home

Is your family looking for a resource to help you prepare for Easter at home? Register to receive a Holy Week Box!

Holy Week remembers the days from Palm Sunday to Easter (March 28-April 4). In the Holy Week Box, families will find a short and very simple daily devotion guide adaptable for families with children from preschool to middle school. Each day, participants will read scripture, affirm a truth, embody a tangible ritual, wonder about the story, and pray. These acts can be done over a meal, as a morning daily ritual, or the final ritual before going to bed each day during Holy Week. The box will also include some small items to serve as symbols of the week. Delivery to families within 15 miles of the church will happen before Palm Sunday. A digital version will be emailed to those outside the delivery radius. [Sign up for your Holy Week Box \(http://bit.ly/holyweekbox21\)](http://bit.ly/holyweekbox21) by March 23.

Catch Up with Your Church Family

Central member Bob Swartz is scheduling fellowship events via Zoom for members and friends of the church. He has two sessions scheduled for Thursday, March 18th at 7pm and Saturday, March 20th at 7pm. If you'd like to attend one or both, please contact Bob (racerbob@comcast.net) for the Zoom link.

Scholarship Applications Are Available

Scholarships applications for high school, college, and skilled trade students can now be accessed on our church website at WaterfordCUMC.org/forms/. The application deadline is May 3, 2021. These scholarships help Central Church members reduce the financial burdens of their continued education and are funded by memorial gifts and generous members. If you would like to establish a continuing education scholarship in your name, please contact the church office at info@waterfordcumc.org or (248) 681-0040.

Blessings in a Backpack

Blessings in a Backpack is looking for volunteers on the first Tuesday of each month at 9am for about an hour to take delivery of the food that is distributed to students. We need eight volunteers to receive the delivery. Consider adding

yourself to the delivery volunteer list; you won't need to work each delivery. You'll receive an email about a week before asking if you can help out. To be added to the volunteer delivery list, please email Rachel Pierre at info@waterfordcumc.org.

Thank you for your commitment to this important local ministry!

Song of the Week

It's hard to believe that we are about to mark a year since we have met in-person. My thoughts are ever-present with each of you, and I wish you and your families peace of mind and tenderness of heart as we continue to navigate our respective situations. I have found myself reflecting on how far we have come in both positive and negative ways. I continue to miss each of you, I miss making music together, and I certainly had hopes and plans for the last year that weren't able to be pursued in the midst of everything. However, I am also reminded of what a great congregation we have, seeing active nurturing of our connections despite the distance, see evidence of our hearts constantly open to the needs of our world even as we navigate our personal stretches, and I have found some peace myself in the opportunities to reflect on these thoughts and my own self-care routine of learning, caring, and making music that I have stumbled into over this past year. I wish you each peace of your own.

This week as I have been thinking about Women's Day and the past year, I found myself drawn to a song by one of my favorite, and in my opinion underrated artists, even if they were very popular in their day—Diana Ross and the Supremes. I think we remember them as a pop band without a lot of substance, but every time I hear their songs, I am drawn to the depth of their music and how much they say about society within the context of popular love songs. But more than that, it is easy to overlook how much of an influence this group had. Even though Motown already had some great artists, none would keep up with the Supremes in their early years. They were the first female group to hit #1 on the charts and they would lead Motown with 12 #1 hits from 1964-69. Motown might not have the legacy it does were it not for the Supremes, who started there by hanging out at the studios as teenagers from the Detroit projects offering their services to sing backup, provide handclaps, or anything else that the studio would allow them to do before being signed. They are a success story of ambitious women. Their music helped to provide a soundtrack for the civil rights movement, honoring Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy, and providing a model for mainstream success across the color divide of the time. They were among the first black groups to regularly appear on TV, and Diana Ross went on to have a screen career that included hosting talk shows, headlining movies, and singularly convincing Hollywood to invest in taking *The Wiz* from the stage to the silver screen. When Motown was being sold to MCA, it was Diana Ross that came in to consult on the legacy of the studio, and though it was sold to MCA against her counsel, she was brought back to the label by MCA as a part-owner of the Motown label. She was also named Humanitarian of the Year in 2003 by the We Are Family Foundation. And her song 'I'm Coming Out' continues to be an Anthem for the LGBTQ+ community to this day saying so much more than just what's in the lyrics and melody just like all of the great hits of the Supremes. Diana Ross and the Supremes have been major influences on so many of the artists who have been timeless such as Michael Jackson, Madonna, and Beyoncé. Their influence is felt in so much of popular music today.

I have always been moved by female vocalists and gravitated to great female singers in my listening preferences, and the Supremes have long been one of my favorites. But more than that, they constantly stir my emotions. My eyes tear up so often at the subtle implications of their songs and how they deliver them. I feel the pain of the protagonist in 'Love Child,' and I revel in love in 'I Can Hear a Symphony,' but none sticks out more to me than 'Reflections.' It is ultimately a song about hope for the future, but through the lens of loss. I think we all feel that right now when reflecting upon the past year. I love who we are and how we've come through this year while lamenting what I wanted for us. But I have ever more hope of what is to come for us in this next year, and I hope all of you feel that as well.

[Reflections - Diana Ross and the Supremes \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV72YrB1454\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV72YrB1454)

With Love,
-Kevin

Jail and Outreach Ministry Collection

Instead of packing Easter baskets, we are collecting funds through March 18th to purchase items for Easter baskets and Easter dinners for families of inmates. Please mark your check JOM on the memo line.

Sympathies

Our condolences to Debra (James) Hayden-Smith and family on the passing of her father, James Hayden and to Greg and Lisa Kelley and family, on the death of his sister Pam Collins. Our prayers are with both families during this difficult time.