

THE PULSE

MCFARLAND UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

a church with heart - weekly newsletter

"I will put my teaching in their minds and write it on their hearts..!"
Jeremiah 31:33

May 6 - 13, 2021

HAPPENING EVERY WEEK

You can find brief descriptions of these weekly programs on our website:

mcfarlanducc.org



SUNDAY Morning, 10 am Zoom Worship

<https://zoom.us/j/97010988439> Password: **bettogether**



SUNDAY Morning, 11:45 am Bible Study

<https://zoom.us/j/262314649>



MONDAY - FRIDAY, 8 am Morning Devotion

<https://zoom.us/j/94276813637>



TUESDAY Eve., 6:30 pm Bible Study & Discussion

<https://zoom.us/j/95481817891>



WEDNESDAY Eve., 6:30 pm Midweek Inhale Spiritual Practices

<https://zoom.us/j/123020606>

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

(In addition to regular weekly programs listed above)

Second COVID Vaccine Drive-Thru Clinic

(for those who received the 1st vaccination)

Friday, May 14 (10-2 p.m.)

UPCOMING EVENTS



Update about MUCC's Drive-thru COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

Thanks to Fitchburg Pharmacy and a host of MUCC volunteers, we held a very successful first shot Pfizer vaccine clinic on Thursday, April 22nd. . The **second shot clinic will take place on Friday, May 14th.** Thanks again everyone for serving our wider community in this way!

Pastor Bryan On Vacation May 17st -- May 31st

I've written a bit more about my vacation plans in my "Few Words From Pastor Bryan" piece at the end of this Pulse. **Here are details however regarding programs and pastoral coverage.**

Pastoral Care: Pastor Kris Gorton of Memorial UCC in Fitchburg will be on call in case of emergencies. Her phone is (608) 438-6307 (pastorkris@memorialucc.org). Many of you know her from her time as interim pastor during Pastor Kerri Parker's sabbatical. Kris is an absolutely delightful person and very approachable and I am grateful that she is accessible if needed.

Sunday Morning Worship: Our own Tom Ludwig will lead worship on May 23rd and May 30th. Tom will offer the message on the 23rd and Dawn Cogger will offer the message on the 30th. Please show up and give them lots of support and encouragement!

Sunday & Tuesday Bible Study: Those of you who regularly attend these are well acquainted with our "lectio divina" approach. One of the best things about this is that you do not need a leader or an "expert" to listen for God's Word through the text and each other. So please just see who shows up and do your best without me and without a designated leader. I have complete confidence in you! And it's also fine to just say hello to each other, check in a bit, and close with a prayer or silence.

Wednesday Midweek Inhale: Trish Kalhagen will lead so no changes here.

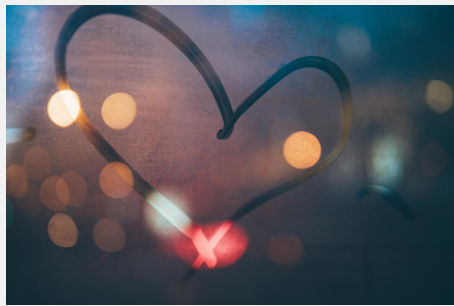
Monday--Friday Morning Devotions: These will take place as usual and leaders for each day are already in place. Wonderful!

Younger Youth and Teen Youth: There will be no meetings until I get back. We'll regroup at that point and make some summer plans together.

Implications of the Recent CDC Statement

Outdoor Worship Begins Sunday, June 20th!

Well that was quite an announcement yesterday, May 13, 2021 by the CDC that vaccinated persons can now be unmasked in most contexts! We discussed this at our Monthly SaLT Meeting last night and decided that we will begin our reopening process with outdoor worship services beginning on Sunday, June 20th (Father's Day). We'll continue to be on zoom as well. We decided not to make any further decisions last night regarding opening the building for groups and/or for Sunday morning worship, and we will revisit this discussion at our next meeting on June 3rd. If you are feeling a bit strange in light of yesterday's announcement that is more than understandable! It's great news and it is also a bit confusing in many respects. We'll figure this out together as we go and continue to follow the science, but I wanted to share this much with you since I know many of you will be wondering how this impacts our reopening plans. We're getting there! Many more details to come as we approach June 20th.



GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

Click the button below to view this month's financial summary.

[General Fund Summary](#)



A Few Words From Pastor Bryan

Well as most of you know I'm going to be on vacation the last two weeks of May (from the 17th through Memorial Day weekend). I'm going to head to the Boston area to visit my daughter and her family, and then I'll visit a few other friends on the East Coast. Hopefully the pipeline crisis won't get in the way of my plans!

In case you're curious, my pastoral contract with our church provides me with 4 weeks of vacation each year, a week of continuing education, and another week

for a trip to Haiti if and when that's possible. That is very generous on your part and I am truly grateful. I will most likely take the remaining two weeks allotted later this summer, but I do not have anything planned yet.

Vacation time in the deepest sense is extremely important. I think the key is to take it before one "needs it" if possible. It shouldn't be a matter of recovering from burn out or total exhaustion. It's part of the rhythm of Sabbath that was given to us to help us avoid total exhaustion and to experience "recreation"—literally "re-creation" on a regular basis. I'm looking forward to spending lots of time reading, praying, hiking, exercising, enjoying nature, and enjoying my family.

I am delighted to say that I'm not the least bit burned out. In fact I feel great. Oh I'm ready for a break to be sure. But thank God, I have learned over the years how to take care of myself and to rest and pray and re-create even when my life is full and busy and demanding. And as I've said often, I thank all of you as well. You really are a delightful bunch of folks to serve as pastor. Without one single exception in 2 and half years now, you have been respectful of my needs in every way, and treated me with kindness and compassion. There has been no undercurrent of negativity in our congregation, and in my experience that is the thing that most commonly burns pastors out more than anything else. Not only has there been no negativity—there has been the exact opposite. LOTS of positive, creative, soulful enthusiasm for spiritual growth, worship, being in loving relationship with each other, and reaching out to others. Even during the pandemic and this crazy year 15 months in the world, we have shared lots of laughter and light-heartedness together. You make it easy and fun to be your pastor.

I also think it is really healthy for you to get a break from me! Tom Ludwig and Dawn Cogger will do a fantastic job of leading you in worship, and it will be good for you to hear messages from someone other than me. In fact, while I enjoy preaching and teaching and am not looking to do less of that, I think it would be a healthy thing for all of us to hear more messages from some of you members even when I'm around! For now, just let this possibility swim around in the back of your minds. I know many of you have a "testimony" (to use a loaded but wonderful term) that would be meaningful for you to share with the rest of us, and great for the rest of us to hear.

I'll be back in the saddle on Tuesday, June 1st, and will be eager to figure out our reopening process. In light of the CDC's announcement we will likely be gathering in our building again sometime later this summer. We'll take it step by step, beginning with outdoor worship. We'll follow the science and come back together inside as soon as we feel the time is right. The sooner the better, but

we'll keep doing what our leadership team feels is in the best interest of us all.

Much love and blessings to you all, and I'll see you soon!

Pastor Bryan

P.S. I'm really going on vacation, which means there will not be a "Few Words From Pastor Bryan" in the Pulse the next two weeks unless I somehow feel particularly led to send something for Melissa to include.

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