

Agape

Greek for “Love without Limits”

North Olmsted United Methodist Church

Vol. 54 Issue 6

July 2020

Update for Reopening NOUMC

On June 4, there was a Zoom Congregation Meeting to provide updates and discussion about the process of considering when and how we reopen the church building. The "Reopening Team of NOUMC" represented by 12 church leaders met on June 11 and discussed in further detail considerations for reopening the building for small group gatherings, office work, and in-person worship.

The "Team" is forming a plan which may allow small NOUMC groups and committees to meet with masks, hand sanitizer, social distancing practices, and other safe measures during the summer months. Outside groups such as the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday Alcoholics Anonymous groups or people desiring to gather for social occasions and family celebrations may not use the building at this time in respect for maintaining prevention of the spread of COVID-19 and in consistently keeping surfaces sanitized and cleaned.

The office staff will continue to work remotely from home in communication with each other and the congregation. Small social gatherings outside the church with safe distancing of vehicles and people is being discussed as a future possibility.

In-person worship, fellowship, and Sunday School at NOUMC is *preliminarily* targeted for Sunday, September 13 depending largely on guidance from the Bishop and her cabinet, the Governor and his staff, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and respect for the health and safety of everyone. When Sunday morning activities do resume, they will be experienced differently compared to pre-COVID-19. From the parking lot to entering and using all spaces in the church, guidelines for: masks, sanitizers, social distancing, greetings, ushering, receiving the offering and Sacrament of Holy Communion, limited or no use of hymnals and bulletins, possibly no singing, and cleaning surfaces will need to be practiced in order to optimize people's health and safety.

The Team is placing a high priority on offering our ministries in an inclusive way so that people who are not able or choose not to gather with future in-person, reopening activities may connect with one another via phone or other electronic communications. Group leaders and committee chairs are asked to keep this point in mind when it is announced that you may consider meetings in the building. Zoom meetings or similar computer tools are strongly encouraged as an alternative to in-person meetings.

Please note that returning to the building for in-person worship, small group gatherings, and office work is not without risk. We can't guarantee that it will be completely safe to gather together in regards to COVID-19.

Finally, please note that the Team will provide updates about reopening the church building as they become known while seeking out more ideas and thoughts from the congregation.

Mark your calendars: The UMW FUNDrive is coming this month!

For dates, times, and more information see page 5.



COVID-19 Reminders

Worship with Us Online!

Live-stream worship on Sundays at 10:30 am

Join us online as we live-stream worship on Sundays at 10:30 am! Visit our [YouTube channel](#) to worship with us. The videos will also be available to view later. For more information and assistance, visit www.noumc.org or our [Facebook page](#).

Visit <http://www.noumc.org/worship-remote-worship-resources/> for bulletins and weekly announcements.

Office Hours

To protect the health and well-being of you and the staff, we will be working from home whenever possible. Please conduct business with the staff by phone or email, when possible. If you leave a voicemail at the church or send an email, a member of the staff will respond. If you need to conduct business in person, please call ahead to be sure someone is in the office to assist you, or contact a staff member and leave a voicemail to make an appointment.

Pastoral Care

Please reach out to Pastor Hoyte by using his cell phone or email address at hoytewilhelm@gmail.com if you have any questions or want to schedule an individual time to talk as he will be working remotely much of the time from the church office consistent with the rest of our support staff. Pastor Hoyte continues to keep you in his thoughts and prayers. God *IS* with us!

Stay Connected—We Are Not Alone

If you would like to subscribe to receive weekly e-newsletters, up-to-date email announcements from Pastor Hoyte, and prayer concerns from the congregation, email office@noumc.org.

Financial Contributions to North Olmsted United Methodist Church

Please continue to be faithful with your financial gifts by sending your stewardship contributions to the church office to the attention of the Financial Secretary, Ed Brewster.

August Agape Deadline

July 15

Please email articles to office@noumc.org or mail them to the church, attention Megan Howe by July 15.

Church Staff: 440-779-6634

Pastor: Hoyte Wilhelm
hoytewilhelm@gmail.com
ext.16
cell: 330-428-1545

Christian Ed.: Wendy Cooper
sundayschool@noumc.org
ext.13

Youth Director: Katie Chapman
youth@noumc.org
ext. 14

Admin. Assistant: Megan Howe
office@noumc.org
ext.10

Music Director: Gabriela Martinez
gabrielamarmar@aol.com

Organist: Marlene Dirksen
mkdpteach@sbcglobal.net

Social Media: Hanna Moore
social@noumc.org

Improving NOUMC Sanctuary Technology – Please Help

Friends in Christ:

I trust that you are well and finding ways to stay connected with NOUMC.

We have continued to offer live-streamed online worship services to keep our members safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you to John and Phil Wolter, Marlene Dirksen, Gabriela Martinez, Javier Gonzalez, Michelle Wolter, Hanna Moore, the support staff, special musicians, and many members who have contributed greatly to the success of the services which have been well-attended with positive feedback.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to contribute to improvements to our sanctuary audio, video, and live-streaming capabilities when we return to in-person worship later this year.

We have offered 14 online services from March 22 through June 21 with plans to continue this form of worship for at least the next several weeks. Most of the church's active members living in North Olmsted and the surrounding area have attended these services along with many people residing in other cities and states. Online services have provided a much-needed outreach ministry to our faith community and with those desiring to connect with us during a difficult time.

We are currently planning for NOUMC to resume in-person services this year with a preliminary target date of Sunday, September 13. The date is subject to change depending on the spread and health risks associated with COVID-19. A "Reopening Team of NOUMC" has been established to focus on creating reopening guidelines for use of the building and grounds with in-person activities of worship, study, mission, fellowship, and administration. The 12-member team is well-represented by leaders of the Administrative Board and support staff. Information, resources, and guidelines provided by The East Ohio Conference of The UMC (<https://www.eocumc.com/>), the Ohio Governor's office (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home>), and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) will be foundational in creating guidelines for reopening NOUMC. A Zoom Congregation Meeting was held on June 4 and the Reopening Team met on June 11 to review feedback from members and to begin their work in drafting reopening guidelines.

When in-person worship does occur, there will be many in our community that will benefit from the church continuing to offer live-streamed online services in their homes or professional health care facilities. Many members will not feel safe in the church building until a vaccine and/or break-through medical treatments for COVID-19 are implemented. Irrespective of the virus, there will always be NOUMC members who are shut in and not able to attend services in the church building. Many members often travel to other geographical locations throughout the year and our extended faith community includes people who do not live near North Olmsted.

With all this in mind, it is important to note that the "NOUMC Technology Team" represented by eight members of the church has determined that the communication technology supporting the church's worship services is outdated, and is a significant barrier to meeting the needs of our members, guests, and outreach community in 2020.

- Smart use of technology to supplement our services is increasingly critical to our mission at NOUMC. *Our Faithful Journey*, at its heart, seeks to transform NOUMC. Modernizing the way we conduct worship services in our sanctuary is completely consistent with that goal. The two principles that are most relevant to this project are: (1) *We actively serve our neighbors in the North Olmsted community and in the world.* Having the ability to reach out into the community (and beyond) online allows us to serve them in new ways. (2) *We provide varied opportunities for people to grow in their faith.* This effort supports this principle by taking faith-building opportunities to people who are shut-in or who are away from North Olmsted (temporarily or permanently).

Improving Sanctuary Technology, continued

- The audio capabilities (microphones, speakers, mixing console, etc.) in the sanctuary are not reliable, are not easy to operate, and often are a distraction during worship services and other church events.
- Video display capabilities in the sanctuary are badly outdated, rudimentary, and hardly ever used.
- The church has no capability to record or livestream services or events in the sanctuary.
- Our communication capabilities should enhance worship rather than be a distraction. Members of all ages will expect or strongly desire modern audio and video capabilities during worship.
- Improving these capabilities would enable the church to host events for the North Coast District or East Ohio Conference, or other affiliated organizations.

The "Technology Team" has set an ambitious goal to completely modernize our sanctuary technology by Labor Day, Monday, September 7, 2020 and has undertaken a project working closely with the Worship Committee and others to address specific capabilities.

Implementing these new capabilities will require funding above what is currently in our operating budget. To purchase the new equipment, install it, and train volunteers to operate it is expected to cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000. Thankfully, to date, three NOUMC families have stepped forward to contribute a significant portion of the funding. In doing so, they want to provide an incentive for others to join them in supporting the new capabilities.

Two families have pledged to match any contributions up to \$8,000 for this project. That means anyone else who wants to contribute will have their donations doubled. Our hope is that enough members will make contributions in response to this generous offer which will allow for the completion of technical installations by Labor Day.

Please consider making a financial donation to help with this important expansion of our ministry. To do so, you may address your check to NOUMC to the attention of Ed Brewster, Financial Secretary with a memo line of: "Sanctuary Equipment."

Thank you for your support for the advancement of worship experiences at NOUMC.

Faithfully in Christ, Pastor Hoyte

Lunch with Friends

Thursday, July 16, 11:30 am

We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 11:30 am for food and fellowship. In light of COVID-19 concerns, we will keep this date open, and if we need to keep a safe distance, we will plan a virtual opportunity for fellowship instead. To RSVP, leave a message with Carole Bettinger.

Our Guiding Principles

- We appreciate and invest in our youth.
- We actively serve our neighbors in the North Olmsted community and the wider world.
- We provide varied opportunities for people to grow in their faith.
- We welcome and nurture a diverse congregation who become extended family.
- We foster lasting personal relationships, which are especially important in a digital world.

*Our Faithful
Journey*



Opportunities to Give and to Serve

Support the UMW FUNDrive

Friday, July 24, 6 pm - 8 pm

Saturday, July 25, 11 am - 3 pm

Sunday, July 26, 1 pm - 3 pm

We appreciate you holding onto your FUNDrive donations for so long and are thrilled to finally have dates to share with you. There will be a trailer in the church parking lot starting on Friday, July 24. Please drop off your items during the times listed above because this is when someone will be stationed by the trailer to help you. If these times don't work for you, you can call Barb Andrews or Judi Wager to arrange a time. The trailer will be available on Monday, July 27 and Tuesday, July 28 by appointment only.



As a reminder, soft goods should be bagged in large garbage bags and other items should be packed in manageable-sized boxes that can be closed. Accepted items include clothing, shoes, bedding and towels, accessories (hats, gloves, scarves, ties, socks, purses, wallets, backpacks, belts, and jewelry), CDs, DVDs, electrical items, toys and games, kitchen items, knick-knacks, and sporting goods. No furniture and large house-hold items, baby gear, cleaning products, flammable items, or building materials, please.

Oxcart Pantry Collection

*Collecting canned fruit, juice,
and spaghetti sauce for when we meet again*

To keep from having an overflow of food for the Oxcart Pantry, we are not asking for a new item this month. You can continue to store fruit juice, canned fruit, and spaghetti sauce that we will collect from you when we are together again.

Free Community Meal Carry-Out Only

Thursday, July 30, 4:30 pm - 6 pm

The menu for July is barbecued chicken thighs, potato salad, baked beans, and dessert. The meal will be carry-out only in an effort to protect everyone's health. For more information, contact Barb Linton at blintonofnr@aol.com.

Thank you!

We collected \$535 on April Penny Sunday for The Greater Cleveland Food Bank! Thank you for your generosity and your commitment to this mission despite being apart.

An excerpt from the thank you note:

Your generosity is a lifeline to our hungry neighbors all year round, but it especially makes a difference as our community faces an increase in need during these uncertain times.

We are in awe of the kindness and compassion of our community towards us at the Food Bank, each other, and the many people who find themselves in need.

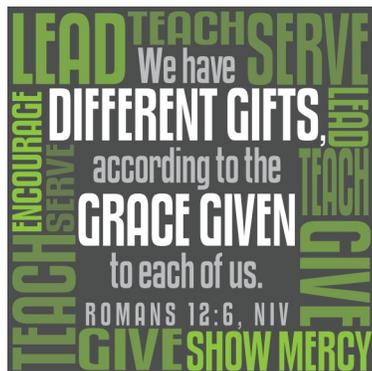
Thank you, NOUMC!

*We always thank
GOD for all of you
and continually
mention you in
our prayers.*

1 Thessalonians 1:2, NIV

Christian Education

Consider Teaching Sunday School This Year!



It's already July, and summer is flying by! Fall will be upon us before we know it, and hopefully that will also mean a return to Sunday School depending on COVID-19 and placing a top priority on every one's health and safety. When we do re-open for church activities, which has not been determined at this time, we will need several volunteers to teach classes on all levels. Please consider teaching our children, youth, or adults this year! We offer elementary, middle school, high school/young adult, and adult classes. All classes welcome new teachers into their rotation! Please contact Wendy at sundayschool@noumc.org if you are interested in signing up or if you have any questions!

Sunday School CANstruction Mission Project

We continue to collect donations to the CANstruction Mission Project until John Wolter and the CANstruction team need the funds. Although we will have no further fundraisers, you are still welcome to donate. All donations will ultimately end up benefiting The Greater Cleveland Food Bank and those in need across the area. Please send any donations to the church, attention Wendy Cooper or Ed Brewster, and write CANstruction in the memo. Thank you for your generous support!

A Message from the Stephen Ministries Team

One-to-One Ministry by a Trained, Caring Friend

During my ministry as a hospital chaplain I was often called to spend time with family members sitting in waiting areas. Perhaps their loved ones were in surgery, maybe having a procedure performed, or having some tests run to gain a diagnosis.

Waiting rooms are difficult places to be. Time seems to stop when you are the one staring at the clock. While you've been promised updates from the medical staff, those updates never seem to come as quickly as you'd like (even when they are prompt). Some family members draw into themselves very quietly (perhaps reading a book, working a puzzle, or simply drinking a cup of coffee while praying). Other family members talk incessantly, pace the hallways, or search the cafeteria and gift shops, unable to sit still. All of these are valid ways to cope with the stresses of waiting rooms.

As a church we are in a proverbial waiting room. We've learned that the "diagnosis" is Coronavirus (COVID-19), and now we await word on the next steps. We have a trusted team of leaders who are guiding us as we wait (Bishop Malone, Governor Dewine, and the CDC). We have Pastor Hoyte who is leading our community in a way that both honors God and keeps us safe. We have a committee in the church focused on the re-opening guidelines for when we are able to gather again. And we have our Stephen Ministers, the caring friends who can make encouraging phone calls as we wait to re-open our doors.

If you are beginning to feel the fatigue of waiting, call the church office and leave the Stephen Ministers a message. We are here for you...to talk by phone...and to offer encouragement and prayer. Please know that you are not alone in this waiting room. We are all in this together. And God *IS* with us. May you experience God's peace as together we wait.

Blessings, Alice Walsh

Church Family News

4	Donald J.
5	Neil D.
7	Megan H.
7	Brian R.
8	Tammy M.
8	Paul T.
12	Frank O.
12	Jeff R.
13	Abby B.
14	Rae S.
18	Gabriela M.
20	Wilbur S.
22	Mary Lou F.
23	Amber F.
24	Kelly B.
28	Jane B.



Birthdays & Anniversaries

10	Jane & Ray B.
13	Jo Ann & Larry K.
16	Leslie & Neil D.
26	Jennifer & Alex K.
27	Georgia & Don A.

Support Laura's Home Women's Crisis Center

Penny Sunday is July 19

Our July Penny Sunday offering will go to provide meals at Laura's Home Women's Crisis Center. In 2019 alone, Laura's Home provided 81,316 hot, filling meals. *Make checks payable to NOUMC and write July Penny Sunday in the memo. Send checks to the church office, attention Ed Brewster, Financial Secretary.*

Prayer Concerns

First Responders
Victims of natural disasters
Those suffering from mental illness
Those affected by gun violence
Those who are homeless
Stephen Ministers, Care Receivers
Those under quarantine in their rooms in assisted living facilities
Keith A.
Gwen H.
Mary Lou L.
Josh W. and family
Barbara B.
Dave L.
Sterling B.
Bev, lifted by Josh O.
Tina, Brenda F.'s niece

Viola C.
Amanda, Jane P.'s granddaughter
Pippa & Heather, Ron's sisters
Rita R.
Carl, friend of Rita R.
Darlene, friend of Barb A.
Susan W.
Uri, grandson of Michael & Jennifer
Donna, sister of Carol N.
Adrienne, lifted by Tom M.
Bill and Vince, brothers of Reba Y.
Russ, friend of David L.
Andy, Faye W.'s son
Dusty, nephew of Reba Y.
Israel, Sarah's student
Dawn, friend of Susan W.

DeNiro and family
Connie C.
Jim, friend of Bill & Marilyn R.
Donna friend of Judy K.
Kevin, friend of Barb & Ron C.
Zack, son of Jennifer G.
Brian R.
Steve, son of Mary Ellen M.
Carol, lifted by Jane & Ray B.
Selene, lifted by Carole A.
Those in Military Service:
Christopher Y., USAF,
Matthew F., USAF
Lt. Col. Bill G., USMC
Cpl. Trevor C., USMC



North Olmsted United Methodist Church
4600 Dover Center Road
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070

Agape Newsletter



July Free Community Meal Carry-Out Only



Thursday, July 30,

4:30 pm - 6 pm

Carry-Out Menu:

barbecued chicken thighs, potato salad,
baked beans, and dessert

Held at North Olmsted United Methodist Church
4600 Dover Center Road, North Olmsted, Ohio 44070
440-779-6634 + www.noumc.org

The Free Community Meal is a mission of North Olmsted United Methodist Church with assistance from our friends at St. Richard and St. Clarence Catholic Churches and others in the community. All meals are funded by donations, and the dinners are prepared and served by volunteers. Menus may change because of donated food or food pricing. Additional volunteers are always welcome! If you would like more information, please contact us at 440-779-6634. *We are an accessible facility.*