

THE TOWERS

201 S. Main St., West Milton, Ohio 45383

May 2020

A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

Light Wins (Especially in Retrospect)

Genesis 50:20-21 ²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹ So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

You might recall this from the worship series, JOSEPH and the School of Hard Knocks. Joseph (of technicolor dreamcoat fame) was hated by his brothers, was sold into slavery, imprisoned...twice, and ended up being only second in command to Pharaoh in Egypt during a time of a terrible drought, and his brothers had to come to him and plead for resources even with awareness of how terribly they had treated him in the past. His grace in recognizing God's work in the midst of a rough life is worth learning from.

I sometimes have had the blessing of being able to see difficulties as a way to not just survive, but to thrive. That sounds WAY more positive than what goes through my mind in the midst of those times, but once I get through my internal whining of "but I was going to do this," or "I was planning to do that," I usually will have a reality check of "look around and see what can be done." Whether one calls it making lemonade out of lemons, or what have you, I have found that while the past has had impact on my present, it does not determine my future.

I have been keenly aware of the challenge our particular culture is facing right now, as we rightly want to save lives from being lost due to infection by the COVID-19 virus, and we rightly want to save livelihoods in businesses small and large, and the unprecedented number who are now unemployed. I also think of various congregations for which this may be the last straw for their survival, and reminds me once again how thankful I am for the steadfast support this congregation has displayed during this time when no offering plates move at all. If I were asked two months ago if a congregation such as ours could survive

financially if no one was coming to public worship, my response would have been framed around "how long" we could function.

I suppose one could look at what a virus does, and could say that it as a non-thinking entity is striving for its own survival, but for it to survive is to intend us harm, and while drastic measures

have been taken to weaken its attack, those measures have separated us from family members and friends, and from economic livelihoods...all for the sake of saving lives. While I know it isn't true for all, there has been in this time rediscovered opportunities for families to grow closer together. It has been an opportunity for "church" to look different, as well. In my wildest dreams it never occurred to me that an Easter sermon could be delivered from a church bell tower, and yet, this became an opportunity for that as well, and to discover the opportunity to learn how to use a computer for web streaming (and new anger coping mechanisms :-D), which has led to new names connecting to the congregation from places far and near.

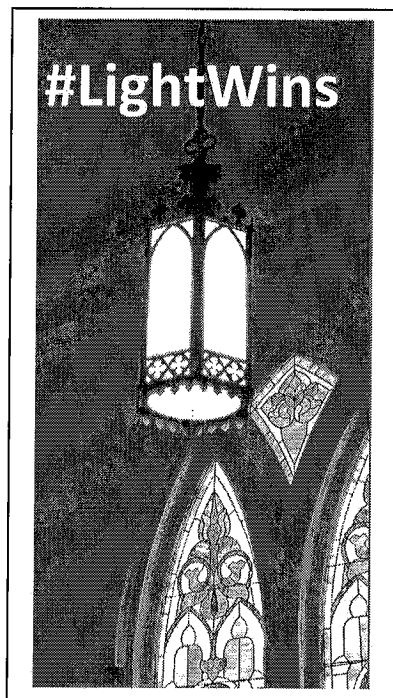
We are reminded yet again how distant and isolated the disciples felt those first hours after Resurrection...they didn't know everything had changed; didn't know that Christ had risen; didn't

know that Hope had come. What had been intended to stop the movement, God used to save the world. In the midst of all the things that are disrupted in our lives, may it be that we can look in the rear view mirror someday and say that the virus intended harm, but God used it for good, saved lives, and gave opportunity for the hope of Resurrection to have fertile soil to grow anew.

I know as we look ahead to a day when we are together physically in worship, there may be rear view moments of what could have or would have been best, but despite all of that, I pray we can see how God has been at work in our lives.

While (still) shining church lights at night for hope, I am,

In His Service and Yours,



Stay At Home Statistics

Date	3/15/22	3/22/2020	3/29/2020	4/5/2020	4/12/2020	4/19/2020	4/26/2020
General Offering	3782.00	2738.00	4007.00	6830.00	5290.00	4161.00	2494.00
Weekly Budget Need	4824.00	4824.00	4824.00	4824.00	4824.00	4824.00	4824.00
Mission Offering	140.00	115.00	145.00	155.00	170.00	80.00	55.00
Maintenance Fund	30.00	275.00	1010.00	335.00	305.00	85.00	55.00
Building Fund	88.00	65.00	270.00	210.00	185.00	100.00	35.00
Online Attendance	In church also						
9 a.m. Service	51	92	71	88	86	77	85
11:15 a.m. Service	64	90	67	53	69	62	71
Total Attendance	115	182	138	141	155	139	156

When we are normally gathered together for worship, information is available to you that help with discerning needs for prayer, and needs for the church. This chart is to help "fill in" part of that information gap from the past month. The financial numbers align with what you would normally see on the sanctuary attendance board.

The "attendance" we have been using is based upon our comment "sign ins" during the live stream. We are aware there are those who have watched that we don't have recorded, just as there are likely those who had to leave the live stream partway through the service. There is no way to know any number for certain. The West Ohio Conference will be excluding these weeks from annual attendance reports. I for one am VERY impressed how many have engaged our online services from the congregation. I know I have made some efforts in learning this new technology, but it inspires me to know there are folks who have made great efforts of their own to stay connected. Thank you all for your inspiration from afar.

While on the subject of appreciation, I hope you, like I, are pleasantly surprised at the financial support that the Hoffman family has shared during this unprecedented time. We did operate a little in the red in March, as I think anyone would reasonably expect, as we always run very financially tight the first few months of the year as some of our larger bills come due. If I am honest, if I were asked 2 months ago if our operations could continue if we were relying on mailed-in support, my response would have circled around "how long" we could operate. I admit there were a couple side conversations about "what if" we needed to use some savings to survive. It is a true blessing to have funds set aside, but we are pretty hardcore committed to using savings to move missions forward, not to "just" pay bills. Thank you for your faithfulness and care to one another and to the needs of Hoffman UMC. -RS

People to remember in prayer:



Hoffman Sympathies:

to the family of Marilyn Rucker, Erin Studebaker's grandmother, as she passed away March 23, 2020
to the family of Anna Kinsey as she passed away on March 24, 2020
to the family of Charlotte Hepfer as she passed away on March 29, 2020
to the family of Bobby Sue Turner as she passed away on March 31, 2020
to the family of Robert McCuiston as he passed away on April 10, 2020
to the family of John Jackson as he passed away on April 20, 2020

At Home: Phil Blue, Nan Guthrie, Valaria Harshbarger, Cindy Johnston, Helen Keller, Kathy Kinsey, Terry & Wendy Long, Mary Maess, Dick & Eugenie Markley, Miriam Miller, Shirley Richhart, and Monica Winemiller

At Centers: Joetta Perry, Storypoint Troy, 1840 Towne Park Drive Rm 17, Troy, OH 45373

Please remember all of our shut-ins with cards and prayers.

THANK YOU AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for all the prayers, cards, and visits to mom over the last few months. She very much enjoyed the cards. Also, thank you for all the kind ways you've reached out to us since she passed. We find comfort in your kindness. Love & Prayers, Anna Kinsey's Family

Mother/Daughter/Granddaughter Luncheon

On May 3rd has been cancelled

A big thank you to Nancy Studebaker for folding and labeling the newsletter for the last several issues; we appreciate you!

To My Church Family,

Thank you for remembering me on my birthday; all the cards that I received were very much appreciated.

Bless you all, Sherynne King



We remember and thank all our service men and women who gave their lives for our freedom. We also honor and thank their families for their sacrifices.



Happy Mother's Day
to all our mothers!

Thank you to everyone who has been able to continue to financially support the church during this season of staying at home. We greatly appreciate your generosity and support.

Church Garage Sale

scheduled in June has been postponed

Theda's Thoughts

Submitted by Theda Klepinger

Jesus calms the storms of life

In this world we encounter a variety of storms:

There are storms in nature such as tornadoes and hurricanes. See Matt.8:23-27

There are storms of illnesses such as the pandemic we are currently experiencing. See Luke 7:1-10

There are storms in some relationships. See John 13: 34-35.

Jesus calms them all...Praise the Lord!

At the time of publication, we were still awaiting forthcoming specific instructions on resuming public worship, best practices when that day comes, etc. Below is a "basic" schedule in case public worship resumes by the 17th. It is VERY likely that all these roles will look different, even if public worship happens. The florist may still be closed, offering plates won't likely be passed, I'm uncertain if hospitality can happen quite yet, and so on. This is a "soft" schedule just in case we are given an "all clear," even if that seems somewhat unlikely at this particular moment. -RS

Serving Schedule

May 03rd services will be live on our "Hoffman United Methodist Church" Facebook Page

May 10th services will be live on our "Hoffman United Methodist Church" Facebook Page

May 17th – Altar flowers are available

9:00 Liturgist: Wendy Heisey **Greeters:** Elaine Iddings and Cathy Brown
Ushers: Jim Scammahorn & Dave Thompson **Hospitality:** Phil & Karen M.
Nursery: 10:15 Jill C. & Patti W. /11:15 Emily K. & Megan T.
11:15 Greeters: Kathy W. and Amanda B. **Scripture Reader:** Norman H. **Sound:** Norman H.
Usher: Dejon D. **Media:**

May 24th – Altar flowers are available

9:00 Liturgist: Les Trittschuh **Greeters:** Carol Storer and Peggy Nihizer
Ushers: Cliff Poling & Joe Blackburn **Hospitality:** John & Carol C.
Nursery: 10:15 Eric & Johanna M. /11:15 Jennifer K. & Ben G.
11:15 Greeters: Sally & Paul M. and Marijo Schlecht **Scripture Reader:** Matt B. **Sound:** Norman H.
Usher: Lisa W. **Media:** Valerie M.

May 31st – Altar flowers are celebration of Cliff Poling's birthday

9:00 Liturgist: Tim Benkert **Greeters:** Sophia & Stella Blackburn
Ushers: Steve Kraus & Kay Wagner **Hospitality:** Nancy S. & Kathy K.
Nursery: 10:15 Julia C. & Lesli R. /11:15 Courtney W. & Johanna M.
11:15 Greeters: Patti & Courtney W. **Scripture Reader:** Ben G. **Sound:** Norman H.
Usher: Patti W. **Media:** Norman H.

Happy Birthday & Happy Anniversary May 2020

1st – Teesha Beard
 4th – Kim Adams
 9th – Corinne McKay
 Mike Sanderson
 11th – Terry Beetley
 Eugenie Markley
 13th – Becky Garrett
 15th – David & Linda Thompson (20 yrs)
 16th – Joyce Herron
 17th – Johanna Morrow
 23rd – Chris & Linda Long (22 yrs)
 24th – Owen Morrow



25th – Helen Keller
 Kathy Kinsey
 Dick Markley
 29th – Bonnie Brown
 Jill Circle
 Julia Circle
 Levi Scott
 Linda Thompson
 30th – Carol Bailey
 31st – Anna Knostman
 Cliff Poling
 Bradley & Bonnie Brown (51 yrs)

The Voice of the Martyrs

Despite all that is going on around us, I am still hearing the birds sing so loudly. They are like little instruments. They seem to be beautiful representatives of our Lord even during times of suffering. This month's story is of a man named Khin who was raised in Myanmar Burma. He was raised by very strict parents who were Buddhist. At age 11 he became a novice monk himself. He was taught that Jesus died because he did not obey Buddha, and rose again as a demon. As Khin grew, so did his hatred of Christians. He joined the Myanmar military where he was very successful. Khin would mock and beat up Christian soldiers in his battalion. If anyone he knew left Buddhism to become a Christian he and a couple of friends would beat them and take their bibles. One night while sleeping Khin's gun was stolen. His peers accused him of selling it and he was imprisoned and tortured for three days. As he lay wanting to die, he looked up and saw a vision of Jesus hanging on the cross. As he looked in any direction he saw the same vision of Jesus's body hanging on the cross, bloody and broken just as he was from his tormentors. "This cannot be" Khin thought and he began to shake. Minutes later another high ranking officer demanded his release and Khin was free. Still having to face charges on selling his gun, his old friend and neighbor had come forward and admitted he borrowed the gun to go hunting and became afraid when he saw Khin being taken away. Khin knew now that Jesus was alive and had freed him from the charges facing him. Khin was offered even a higher ranking in the Military. He declined and left to go to a bible school where he gave his life to Christ and vowed to serve him until the day he died even if it meant to suffer every day. My friends, how do you and I respond to suffering? During this time many are suffering, many are without Christ. Even if it takes some suffering or being uncomfortable it is an unprecedented time to share the Gospel. May we be bold and see how God can use this for a spiritual awaking in our Nation.

Until he comes, Marijo Schlecht

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hoffman
united methodist church
201 S Main Street
West Milton OH 45383

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the **open door**
come as you are

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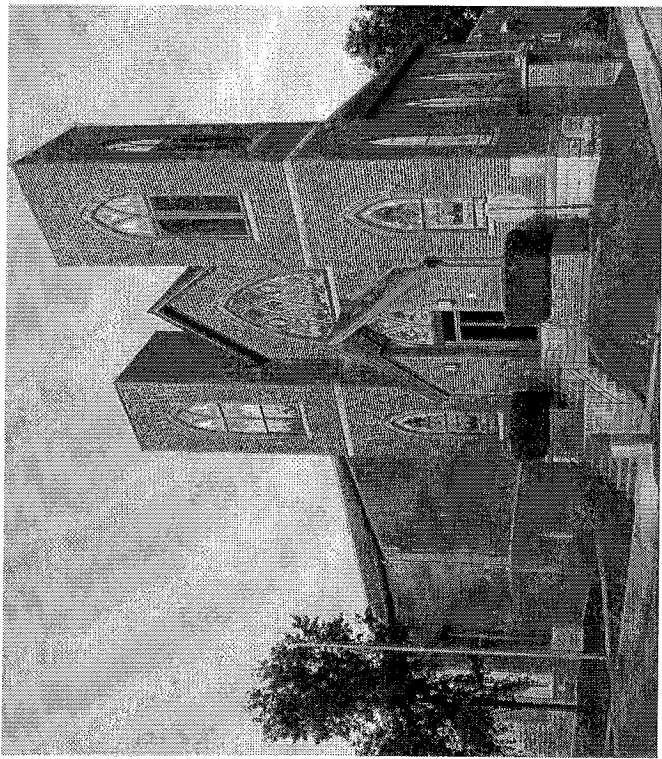
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T O W E R S
T H E R E

May
2020



HOFFMAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Worship Time: 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.
(937) 698-4401 Website: HoffmanUMC.org
Pastor Robbie Scott