



The Beacon

Volume 58 Issue 2

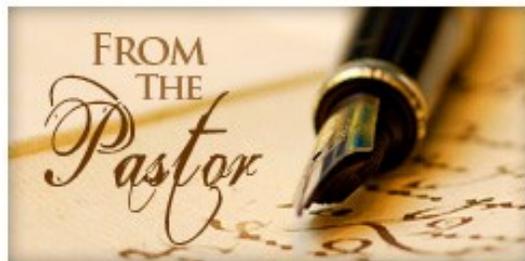
February 2021

University United Methodist Church
Welcoming all to grow as disciples of Christ as we
worship, learn, and serve in community.

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Pastor Jeff's information: Email Address: <a href=) or phone 785-580-5468



Greetings in Christ,

Can you believe we are already one month into 2021? How quickly time moves us along! I miss being able to gather with you all in person as I'm sure so many of you do as well. Hang in there! Remain vigilant in keeping yourself and others healthy and safe and take heart, trusting that there is a light at the end of this tunnel!

As we seek to live in God's light and share God's light and love as the source of peace and healing for our nation and world, let us continue to support and encourage one another in all of the ways that we can. We will spend the first couple of Sundays in February concluding our current worship series *Follow Me!* Our Lenten journey will begin with Ash Wednesday on February 17th. This year's Ash Wednesday service will take place through a pre-recorded online service. Be on the lookout for more information on the service.

During Lent, I will be emailing a short daily devotion Monday through Saturday. If you received the Advent devotions, you will automatically receive the Lent devotions as well. If you did not receive the Advent devotions and would like to receive the Lent devotions, please send an email with the subject line "Lenten devotions" to jpotter@greatplainsumc.org and I will add you to the list. For those without access to email, a limited number of weekly printed copies of the devotions will be available. Please contact me or the office for more details.

I truly believe that in the midst of all that we have experienced together over the last year, this Lenten season has the potential to be one of the most meaningful we have experienced in recent memory. Together, let us empty ourselves of pride, let go of the idols in our lives, repent, and make space for the healing grace of Jesus Christ in our hearts and lives.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Jeff



Concluding *Follow Me!* series

02.07.21 - *She Began to Serve* - Mark 1:29-39

02.14.21 - *But Only Jesus* - Mark 9:2-9

Rend Your Hearts; Claiming the Promise Lenten Worship Series

02.17.21 Ash Wednesday (Pre-recorded online service)

02.21.21 - *This is the Sign* - Genesis 9:8-17

02.28.21 *Walk Before Me* - Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

MISSIONS

Stacey Cooper took care of the Blessing Box during January and Mary Winans will take care of it in February. We have 10 months still available for you to sign up and do. Please call Stacey to add your name for the month you would like to do this. Food is available in the office to use to fill the box. If you want to add food to the "pantry", think HOT stuff: soup, canned spaghetti foods, ramen noodles, crackers, bags of rice, beans, canned meat, oatmeal, cereal, single servings coffee, tea, hot chocolate, box drinks, popcorn, apples/orange or things that you like to eat during the winter. Take them to the office to add to the "pantry". Thanks for remembering those who still need help during this time. We continue to partner with Westminster Presbyterian Church to hand out 4-50 grab-n-go lunch bags for kiddos 1-18. This contain dry and frozen foods for 5-7 days. We are currently doing this on Wednesdays from 11-12 at WPC.



"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."
(Matt. 25:40)

FELLOWSHIP AND FAITH

Fellowship and Faith had a good year in 2020 thanks to a very generous monetary donation. They were able to give Christmas baskets to 23 families and Christmas food baskets to 22 families (one family declined the food basket). In total, 114 persons received gifts, with 330 gifts given. (Contrast this to the United Way instructions of giving each family a \$15.00 gift card per family member only.) From Harvesters donations, they are giving out food boxes three times a week; they continue to get donations from Walmart also.

Volunteers are needed Wednesday mornings from 9:00 to 12:00 noon and Friday afternoons from 1:00-3:00. This would involve helping to fill and hand out food boxes. Mask would be required.

Anyone who feels comfortable working in this capacity and may be interested is asked to prayerfully consider doing this.

Mary Peters

HOPE CIRCLE

HOPE Circle isn't meeting this month and will evaluate for March.

Mary Winans,
HOPE Chair



JUMP

On February 11th at 5:30 p.m. there will be a zoom meeting for all network members to plan for our Nehemiah Assembly. This is one of the five meetings that network members committed to. You will be asked to commit to bringing three or more people to invite to the Nehemiah Assembly. I will send out the zoom information closer to the event. If you are not a network member and would like to become one, it is not too late. Contact Stacey Cooper in the church office by email univumc@sbcglobal.net or by calling 785-235-2331.



Campaign updates:

Mental Health and Addiction is the new issue that was voted to look into. By talking to several agencies, Valeo Behavioral Health, the VA, and Kansas Department for Health and Environment, we have learned that stimulant overdose deaths doubled in Kansas between 2018 and 2019; there are only five beds for youth inpatient substance abuse treatment in the entire state of Kansas; people from Shawnee County are often sent to other cities or other states to receive treatment for addiction. Valeo reports that many of their clients with addictions also have another mental health diagnosis. There are several more upcoming meetings the committee has scheduled to obtain more information on mental health and addiction.

Housing is still one of JUMP's ongoing campaigns that we are closely following. Before the pandemic began in 2020, there were around 7,000 families in Topeka struggling to pay rent or living in horrible conditions. With the current economy stressed to the max we are certain that number is much higher. We continue to press the Topeka City Council to put aside dedicated public revenue for the affordable housing trust fund. At the end of 2020, Topeka City Council agreed to move about \$277,000.00 into the housing trust fund. This is a drop in the bucket. We will continue pressing the council for at least \$2 million annually to combat the housing issues in Topeka.

Payday lenders in Kansas can charge up to 391% interest on a payday loan. Jump is partnering with Kansas for Payday Loan Reform to build a grassroots movement to make payday lending fairer for the borrower. Every Friday during the 2021 legislative session, we are going to "take back payday" by having JUMP members call legislators and urge our representatives to make payday loan reform a priority. You can email the legislators if you prefer. Please contact Stacey if you have any questions about JUMP.

FINANCE

Happy New Year!

The Finance Team continues to meet virtually and take care of the business of the church. Thank you for making your 2021 pledges so University United Methodist can continue to keep the church running even though we must still be apart. We are blessed that we have a wonderful Pastor and church staff who keep our church running and relevant in these uncertain times. We are making plans for 2021 as we have hope that we will be together again soon. To date, we have 29 pledges which include 3 verbal pledges and 5 members who had not previously pledged. We are still missing about 7 pledges of members who have previously pledged. There is still time, if you have not already done so, you may make your pledge by contacting:

Mike Peters,
UUMC Financial Secretary
785-608-5811

New email address:

mikepeters0526@gmail.com
Blessings and Thank you,
We will all be together again soon.
Karen Myers,
Finance Chair



BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

We are still not meeting but things still have to be done. We are still working on the elevator project and working with the group that mows our yard to also take care of our snow removal when needed. We found out the group we wanted to do our snow removal wouldn't do it because they didn't win the mowing contract and wouldn't do just the snow removal. They didn't mention that when the contract proposal was given to us. Bob Bearce has taken over as the Chair for B&G after Gary Weekly stepped down due to health reasons. Thanks to Bob for taking over and thanks for all you did Gary during your time.

Mary Winans
B&G



CapFed Best News: There's a changing culture of community service at Topeka High. This senior is leading it.

KELM LEAR



Kelm Lear still remembers the trips he took to Fellowship and Faith Ministry to volunteer with his grandmother Linda Benton as an elementary school student. Lear, now a senior at Topeka High, said his family has always looked to give back whenever it could, recognizing that it came from a position of privilege and had access to resources that others, including some of Lear's classmates, didn't. But it was in those trips with his grandmother to the soup kitchen in East Topeka that Lear first realized he had a powerful drive to help others, and it is a drive that has changed the course of his life and ambitions. "It baffles me that food, shampoo, conditioner or clothes are things that these families can't afford," Lear said. "It's sad that that's the reality for many people in Topeka and in this country, and it makes me happy and proud that I can help make their lives even just a little easier."

Now in his senior year, Lear has played a pivotal role in changing the culture of community service at Topeka High, both as a leader in various student clubs and organizations but also as a voice for students to district administrators. In addition to playing on the men's soccer team in the fall, Lear has been president of the school's Interact Club, National English Honor Society and National Honor Society organizations, as well as vice president of the senior class and student council. He also serves on the principal's and superintendent's student advisory committees, giving valuable input from a student perspective, especially as the school and district make sweeping changes during the pandemic.

Rebecca Morrissey, principal at Topeka High for the past five years, said the school has undergone a shift in attitudes toward community service as part of a districtwide initiative to focus on restorative practices and addressing students' needs beyond just their education. But she credited Lear with playing a key role in leading and encouraging other students to do more to serve their communities. "He will tell you it's not just him," she said. "Nothing gets done with a single person. But he has really involved others, he has a lot of ideas, and he's inspired a lot of ideas in others."

As inaugural president of Interact Club last school year and this year as well, Lear spearheaded efforts to care for the school's most in-need students, especially during the pandemic. Last semester, he organized a drive to collect and donate thousands of masks through Interact Club, and in October, he led efforts to hold a socially distanced trick-or-treat event for the community around Topeka High.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

With so much uncertainty around school operations, it has been “chaotic” planning community service events, but Lear said it has mostly been a matter of “beating COVID to the punch.”

“For example, the Interact Club, we had our annual holiday feast where we provide meals and gifts to Topeka High families who might not get to celebrate the holiday if it weren’t for the service we provided,” he said. “Our original plan was to have it at the school cafeteria and have families spaced out by table, but with everything picking up as we entered the holiday season, we realized we needed another option. We decided to deliver the food instead, so no one would be in a large gathering.”

Looking back on his time at Topeka High, Lear said he has seen a big change in how students approach community service. “I have a bias, but I think there’s a lot of bad rap around Topeka High and its students,” Lear said. “What I’ve helped show is that Topeka High students have the opportunity to do a lot of good work and to help change that reputation or perspective people have of us. There have been a lot more clubs and organizations stepping up and doing more impactful community service projects.”

Superintendent Tiffany Anderson said Lear is one of the district’s biggest prides. “Kelm is a model student academically and through his actions, countless members of the Trojan school community have been impacted,” Anderson said. “The Lear family has truly developed a strong young man in Kelm who has so many incredible character traits that will ensure he succeeds as a young leader far beyond high school.”

After high school, Lear plans on going to either the University of Washington, Indiana University or the University of Connecticut for a degree in political science, before returning to the state for a law degree from the University of Kansas. Afterwards, he hopes to return to Topeka and become involved in defending the less fortunate, with longer-term plans on serving the public as an elected official — maybe even as a U.S. senator later on down the road.

For now, though, Lear is focused on serving people’s needs, especially through the difficulties of the pandemic. He still makes weekly trips to Fellowship and Faith Ministry, where he said he first cemented his passion for service. “I appreciate all the recognition I’ve received, especially over senior year,” he said. “But I can’t go without saying that I would not have been able to do any of these things without the support of my friends and families and students in the organizations I’m a part of. The impact we’ve had would not be possible without them.”

DOORSTEP

As we finish year-end paperwork, thank yous, grant reports, etc. here at Doorstep, life has not stopped, and the phone calls keep coming for assistance!

While 2020 was a different year in many ways, the Topeka community, our member congregations, and others were very supportive of Doorstep, and the services we offer. Due to COVID, we also received CARES funds from the City of Topeka and Shawnee County which allowed us to provide even more rent and utility assistance. The need never goes away, but the amount of people in need definitely increased in 2020, and not all of it was COVID related. Many people still had 'life happen' to them like non-COVID times, and we did our best to help all of those in need that we could.

In 2020, Doorstep spent \$251,096 on emergency services; this is up over \$89,000 compared to 2019. We gave out 87,166 pounds of food, assisted a total of 4,996 households with 11,770 individuals. Paid rent for 159 households, and paid 453 utility bills. It was a challenging year, and our small staff is incredibly grateful to our volunteers who felt comfortable coming in week after week to help us provide services, sort donations, and help clothing room clients. We also feel very blessed by the support we have received from the Topeka community during this time!

We will still have **SouperBowl Sunday, February 7th** and ask our member congregations to collect soup and crackers to help stock our food pantry! Last year we received 5,382 pounds for the event. Watch for sales and gather your donations! We can use all varieties of soup, and crackers. A successful SouperBowl Sunday can stock our pantry with these items into the Spring months!

Unfortunately, with COVID still an issue, we will not have Operation Soup Line in 2021.

Finally, **Thank You** to everyone who donated money, towels, blankets and hygiene items for **Doorstep's Christmas Project** this past December! We assisted a total of **257 households with 815 individuals!** Hopefully, next year we can be back to 'normal' with the actual Christmas Store.



DOORSTEP

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Isn't it a shame that it takes a "man made" issue to give us a reason and the need to turn ourselves to God and ask him to do for us what only he can do? Why? I know that I have had a lifetime of solving my own problems and it is only in recent years that I have come to fully realize that God has been right there on my shoulder all the time. He alone can make it happen. We may fool ourselves into thinking that we did it, but it just isn't so and if we think back to what really happened, we will know that it was not our doing, but God's.



At this time when we are unable to meet face to face, it is really difficult to keep up with what should be coming up. I am finding it difficult to be mindful of anything but the daily routine of doctor's appointments and radiation treatment. I pray daily that things will settle down and we will be able once again to go to church together, have Sunday school and Circle meetings, and mingle during fellowship time. That will mean once again having UMW meetings, Thrift Sale and all of the other things we all love to do.

I pray every day that we will all come through this time safely. Meantime, I guess the thing we all have to do is wash our hands, practice social distancing, and above all don't touch your face.
Love to you all, Jo Miller

THANK YOU!
thank you!

Bob and I want to thank everyone who helped with the custodial work, sent cards and texts and most of all, you prayed for us, as we were fighting COVID-19. We are feeling better each day but it is a slow process recovering from COVID.

Blessings,
Linda Reece

I want to thank everyone for your prayers, cards and memorial contributions in response to Jim's death. Jim was very loved and he will be greatly missed.

Love to all,
Annabel Fredrickson and Family



TO OUR MEMBERS & FRIENDS WITH SPECIAL CONCERNS:

Jo Miller's son - John, Pam Campbell, Lisa Eiben, Jane Noble, Pam Land, Norma Pike, Michael Springer, Steve & Jan Kendall, Ed Querbach, Dave Schaffer, Gary Weekly, Evie Unkefer's grand-daughter-Ettie, Marlys Aune, Richard Brown, Debra Hayes & Family, the Kisners, the Schmelzles, Our Police Officers: Randy Bailey and Wendi Winans and our devoted caretakers, the essential/ front line people who face COVID-19 daily, our enemies, peace for our world and prayers for our country.

Our congregation members in the Retirement Centers: Gayle Dick, Joanne Armstrong (Plaza West); Peggy Harrison, Jerry Hinton, Sue Holm & Dave Wexler, Marie Culver and Maxine McDaniel (Brewster Place); Ann Fredrickson (Lexington) and Ardith Granger (Aldersgate). And for all nursing homes themselves, all the essential people watching over all the people.

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY GOES OUT TO ANN FREDRICKSON AND FAMILY IN THE DEATH OF JIM FREDRICKSON.

TO THESE DISTRICT CHURCHES:

7 February Oskaloosa	14 February Ozawkie	21 February Perry	28 February Rossville
Jamie Norwich– McLennan Cathy Barnett	Melinda Harwood Delvis Steffy	Jeff Potter Jane Dunnaway	Valeo Aytes Kathy Kovar



Prayer Requests

Please contact the UUMC office if you know of someone who should be included or removed from our prayer list.

If you would like to be notified by e-mail when there are new prayer requests, such as church members in the hospital, surgeries, births, deaths, etc., or if you have a prayer request you would like others to know about, contact Mary Winans at mewinans1950@gmail.com or phone 785-224-4155 and leave a message. If you do not have email and would like to be notified by phone, please call the office at 235-2331.

February Birthdays

- 1 Pam Campbell
- 4 Elaine Wellborn
- 11 Marie Culver
- 18 Shirley Holt
- 18 Jane Noble
- 20 Debra Hayes
- 22 Thaine Hoffman
- 25 Adam Whitney
- 29 Mariah Wambsganss

Milestone Birthdays

4 Elaine Wellborn 70
11 Marie Culver 98



Consider sending Marie Culver a card for her 98th birthday and cheer her up. Her address is:
1205 SW 29th St., Redwood #108,
Topeka, KS 66611

February Anniversaries

None



If you know of a birthday or anniversary that has been omitted or is not correct on this list, please call the office and let us know.

<p>7 February Isa 40:21-31 Ps 147 :1-11 1 Cor 9:16-23 Mark 1:29-39</p> <p>14 February 2 Kgs 2:1-12 Ps 50:1-6 2 Cor 4:3-6 Mark 9:2-9</p>	<p>21 February Gen 9:8-17 Ps 25:1-10 1 Pet 3:18-22 Mark 1:9-15</p> <p>28 February Gen 17:1-7, 15-16 Ps 22:23-31 Rom 4:13-25 Mark 8:31-38</p>
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The Beacon is published
monthly for the members
and friends of University
United Methodist Church.

*** SUNDAY SCHEDULE ***
9:15 a.m. Worship Service
VIA Facebook

You can also view on YouTube
Links found on our website listed on
the front page.

