



Heart Beat Newsletter

Zion United Methodist Church

In the heart of Whitehouse



April, 2021

Pastor Carol's Comments

There is something very strange about my April calendar. It's rather empty, at least in terms of Zion activities. Other than Food Pantry and Bible Study, we have a pretty light month ahead, as far as the calendar is concerned.

That brought two thoughts to mind. First, empty spaces on the calendar don't necessarily translate into lack of activity. So much of what Zion does never shows up on a calendar, like impromptu sessions of unloading Food Pantry donations, a quickly scheduled meet-up with a person who needs food, tending to the upkeep and maintenance of the church building, and knitting/crocheting prayer squares. The calendar doesn't reflect all the ways Zion serves.

The second thought is that having some "down time" is not a bad thing, especially for a church as busy as this one. Having some unscheduled time to pray and reflect, or simply to rest in a quiet place, is a good way to care for our bodies and our spirits. Jesus often withdrew from his busy life to do just that. We would do well to follow his example. If you look at your calendar and are disturbed by too many blank spaces, go ahead and make a date with yourself to do as Jesus did. (You might want to do that even if there aren't enough blank spaces!) May you be blessed by some times of peace and quiet this month.

Acts of the Apostles in April and May

The Book of Acts is unique—full of stories about what God had done and continued to do in Jesus after his resurrection and ascension. These stories will be our focus in worship and in our Thursday evening Bible Study in April and May.

On Sundays we'll meet some of the ordinary people who shaped the early church, such as Barnabas, Stephen, and Philip. On Thursdays, we'll use the video series "Acts: Catching Up with the Spirit" by Matt Skinner. A book is available but not required for our study. This 6-week study will begin on 4/15 from 6-6:40 p.m. While we are looking forward to being able to meet in person someday soon, we will continue on Zoom for now.

News Around Zion

Behind the Scenes

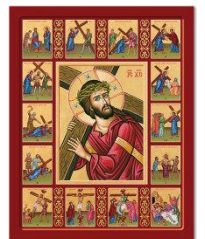
Lots quietly happens behind the scenes at Zion. Pudge Thomas has taken on two jobs like that: first, packaging the Health Care Prayer Squares into plastic bags, each with a note of explanation. When we accumulate a basketful, Pudge goes to work, so that they can be attractively and safely delivered.

The second job she took on was to inventory a supply of pre-printed bulletin covers that were given to the church. She recorded the verse from each style, counted them, and then arranged them in order so that Pastor Carol can use them for worship when one is appropriate. You may have received one on Holy Thursday or Easter.

These bulletins are ones that other churches no longer needed, so they would have ended up in the recycle or trash bins. But, by using them, we reduce waste and save ourselves some paper and printer ink. The number we have of each one varies, so it's first-come, first served—a good reason to arrive for worship early!

Windows to Heaven

Icons, an ancient aid to prayer, date back to at least the 4th c. Called "windows to heaven," they are intended to make us aware that we are in the presence of God. Zion was given a collection of icons which were stored in a box in the basement. Some of them formed the center of our Good Friday observance, but there are many more. If you would like to see them all for yourself, they will be displayed in the sanctuary through April, beginning 4/7. The Good Friday Prayer Guide will be available with explanations of some of the icons.



Reflecting on an icon is like looking through a two-way window, where we look into the heavenly world of mystery as we are also being seen with God's eyes of love. Icon colors, images, and even the figures' postures all have meaning. For example, the gold background represents the presence of God. But you don't need to know this for the icons to help focus your prayer. As you look at each icon, notice what draws your attention. Let each icon call to mind some aspect of your faith, and offer a prayer in response.



News Around Zion (continued)

Health Care Prayer Square Update

We've delivered 334 prayer squares to St Luke's so far, well beyond our initial goal of 300. If St. Luke's tells us that they have enough and our knitters/crocheters want to continue, we'll find other places to take them, such as the nursing home, National Guard base, and Village first responders. So, keep making your squares and dropping them off. (Find instructions on our website's "Worship-Grow-Serve" tab.)

Travel and Spiritual Growth

Renowned travel expert and author Rick Steves recently presented a program about "Travel as a Spiritual Act," sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM). If you didn't get a chance to participate in the live program, you can watch it here: <https://fb.watch/4qhmNB-Zmc/>. (You'll want to fast-forward to about 14:30.)



Steves also has a library of short, free videos at his web site for use by teachers or anyone who would like to learn more about the world. Although the web page is called "Classroom Europe," there are also videos about the Middle East and South America. The videos combine the travel, history, and culture Steves has experienced in his 40 years of exploring off-the-beaten-path destinations. You can take one of these virtual vacations by visiting <https://classroom.ricksteves.com>.

General Conference Update

Facing the same challenges that resulted in moving the regular General Conference dates a second time, the UMC Council of Bishops has canceled its call for a special virtual General Conference on May 8.

The bishops had planned for the May 8 General Conference only to be long enough for a quorum of delegates to suspend the rules so delegates could vote by mail on 12 legislative items. The items mostly dealt with administrative functioning amid the General Conference delay, and the bishops planned to announce the results of the votes on 7/13.

The full General Conference is now set for Aug. 29-Sept. 6, 2022. The meeting venue is still Minneapolis.

West Ohio Annual Conference Again Goes Virtual

Our own Annual Conference will be held online from 2-6 p.m. on Sunday, 6/6, and from 8:30-4:30 p.m. on Mon., 6/7.



A portion of the truck-load of paper products and cleaning supplies delivered by United Health Care for the Food Pantry.

Church Information

Pastor Carol Williams-Young
10926 Maumee St. P.O. Box 2457
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Worship at 10:25 a.m.
Sunday School at 9:00 a.m.

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Find us on Facebook: whitehousezionumc

Website:
http://www.zionumcwhitehouse.org

Upcoming Events

- Sundays, 10:25 a.m. - Parking Lot Service, 106.1 FM
Tues., 4/6, 4-6 p.m. - Food Pantry
Thurs., 4/15, 6-6:40 p.m. - Zoom Bible Study
Tues., 4/20, 4-6 p.m. - Food Pantry
Thurs., 4/22, 6-6:40 p.m. - Zoom Bible Study