

Newburgh United Methodist Church

February 2021 Newsletter

LENT

A Season of Renewal

Our worship series for Lent is titled: **"Holy Vessels; A Lenten Season of Recovery"**

Each of us is created as a precious and holy vessel of embodied love. We have been through a harrowing time since last Lent that has shattered our sense of wholeness-body, mind, and spirit-like a glass vessel fractured into pieces. In this Lenten "season of recovery" for our physical, communal, mental, intellectual, and environmental health, we will explore the healing narratives of Jesus that tell of divine solidarity with human suffering and remind us that we can begin a journey toward making something beautiful from that which is seemingly broken. Beach glass offers us a multifaceted symbol of this transformative process.

As we look to recover together during this season, we will begin with our Ash Wednesday Service.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP ONLINE

7:00PM FEBRUARY 17

On February 17th you are invited to join us online for an Ash Wednesday worship. You will be sent an item or two ahead of time to allow you to participate more fully. This first service of the Lenten Season is so important as we start our journey. "SHATTERED" is the theme and will guide us toward healing with Jesus.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21: "Treasure". Matthew 8:1-4, 16-17

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 28: "Safe Keeping". Matthew 8:5-13

All Church Valentine's Day Bingo Event! Share the love 2021!

Who: Everyone! Big, little, short, tall, old, young and in between!

When: Sunday February 14, 2021 4:00 – 5:00 pm

Where: Online - Zoom

Why: *Come together and have a fun hour with church friends and family.

- * Compete for awesome Valentine's day prizes,
- * Share the love – win a bonus prize for getting the most people to sign up to play
- * Name that Tune bonus fun in between rounds.
- * Plus a special Kids Only round and a special round for grandparents only!
- * And a special bonus Zoom bingo round where your home items determine if you will Win!
- *Spend time with all generations.
- *We are Newburgh UMC and this is a chance for us to join together in fun!

Registration will be on Facebook and the church website - Please register ahead of time so we can send you printable bingo cards and the link to join the Zoom time.

Registration ends on February 13th.



“CAUGHT IN THE UNDER TOW”

35 years ago, on the Island of Oahu I was enjoying a great day at the beach with my new bride.

We had already been out in the big waves; but when I desired to go back one more time, Linda declined. She has always been smarter. I went back out into the surging waves and surf and was enjoying some body surfing and then began my way back towards the beach. My timing was certainly off as a big wave smacked me down, slammed me onto the sand and then sucked me along for a bit. She has pictures of me crawling out of the waves looking anything but triumphant. With a mild concussion and damaged pride, I discovered that I had been a victim of the dreaded under tow.

The under tow is a powerful current below the surface of the waves that has the strength to pull a person out to sea against one's will. Frantically swimming to fight only exhausts the victim and usually leads to drowning. I was lucky that day.

Below the surface of our everyday lives is a powerful current that seeks to pull us out to a sea of uncertainty, fear, anxiety, frustration, anger and despair. It is a current powered by multiple sources; a killer virus, a plague of systemic racism, a violent surge of ignorant conservatism and a fueled misconception that God is on one particular side and not another. The strength of this under tow is formidable and makes us flail and flounder helplessly in unknown waters or waters that we are experiencing differently now that our faith has given us the ability to swim.

Entering 2021 with not only the same pandemic and rising death toll but also additional violence caused by an ideology of white supremacy and entitlement has been overwhelming for all of us. So, what do we do now and what do we do next?

DON'T GET CAUGHT IN THE UNDER TOW: In other words, have faith and keep believing. As followers of Jesus we must never fall into the trap of hopelessness. Even as Jesus was on the cross, he saw a bright future because of his sacrifice and the disciples who would carry out the mission of the church and share God's love.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH GOOD SWIMMERS: We all feel safer in dangerous waters when we are wearing a life preserver and in the company of life guards. We must be willing to separate ourselves from negativity and from negative persons. A negative person does not have to be someone who disagrees with us, it is simply a person who attaches to the words, actions, and behaviors that drives a wedge between ourselves and God.

KEEP MOVING TOWARD THE BEACH: Gravitate toward God, the church and others of faith. You may be familiar with the old hymn, “Keep Your Eyes Upon Jesus.” This is exactly what we need to do. We must focus on the reality of His presence even when we are pulled under water. Hope breeds eternal when we keep our sights on the one who can save us.

We do not have the luxury to wait until the pandemic is over, until the violence ends, the injustice stops, until we can gather in larger groups. We must navigate the challenging waters with faith, hope and love. “And the greatest of these is love.” 1 Corinthians 13:13

-Pastor Craig



EMBRACING OUR UNITED METHODIST ROOTS
EMBRACING OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF COLOR
THIS IS WHO WE ARE AS UNITED METHODISTS

In 1968, General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) was formed to hold the newly formed United Methodist Church accountable in its commitment to reject the sin of racism in every aspect of the life of the church.

GCORR will not rest in its work of challenging and equipping the church to complete its unfinished agenda of dismantling racial discrimination. We continue to do this by championing diversity, equity and inclusion; developing interculturally competent leaders; and catalyzing authentic community.

While racism remains our primary focus, our perspective and partnerships reflect a broader context, which includes poverty, nationalism, tribal conflicts, gender discrimination, homophobia, disability and generational bias—because we know all forms of oppression are connected, and they cannot be dismantled in isolation.

Black History Month is an opportune time to discover or rediscover aspects of U.S. history often ignored or obscured by “official” educational systems, legalized policies and practices, and even ecclesial narratives. By focusing on the testimonies, accounts, and realities of Black Americans, we open ourselves to a more accurate account of how the United States was formed, survived, and thrived despite our sinful reliance upon legally and culturally enforced slave labor of those born in and of Africa.

Black History Month gives all of us the chance to interrogate the narratives taught by our schools, our legal systems, and, yes, even our churches. By doing so, we get a better sense of who we are, who we desire to be, and what we’re willing to lay down and pick up for our desire to become reality.

“My friends, we have weathered a renewed storm of racial oppression in the last months. I am confident, that as people of faith called United Methodists, that we will courageously move forward with the hard conversations that reveal both our vulnerability, ignorance and limitations to understanding until we listen to one another.”

Pastor Craig

Celebrating Black History Month with Kids and Families

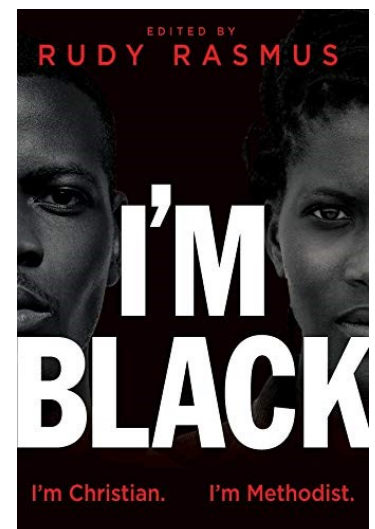
February is Black History Month and we will be celebrating men and women who have made a difference in our world! Each Monday evening Pastor Suzanne will post a video sharing about one of these amazing humans to our NUMC Kids Facebook page. Please share with your kids these videos throughout the month!

Black History Month Book Discussion:

Join in a discussion using the book: “I’m Black, I’m Christian, I’m Methodist”. This book is 10 personal religious narrative stories by those who fit the description of the title. You will get a glimpse into their lives and the systems in place that bring challenges.

This discussion will take place through Zoom. You can choose Monday evenings at 6:30 pm or Thursday mornings at 10:00 am. Discussion will start the week of February 8th and end the week of February 22nd. This book study is open to all ages. If you would like to join this discussion simply send Linda an email, linda@newburghumc.org.

The book can be ordered through Amazon or Cokesbury.com. If you need help obtaining a copy please let us know.





The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 17th and ends on Easter April 4th. During this time you are encouraged to deepen your faith through multiple avenues, but we want to highlight two: prayer and scripture reading. We want to partner with families to do just this through our Lent in a Box. Your Lent in a box will contain scripture readings, interactive prayer suggestions, and a hands on activity. Your box will include supplies for the activities as well. *Lent in a box is appropriate for families who have kids from K-12th grade.* Each family should sign-up for their Lent in a Box by contacting Pastor Suzanne (suzanne@newburghumc.org or 812-572-7516).

Your Lent in a Box will be available for pick up at church door 1 the following dates and times:

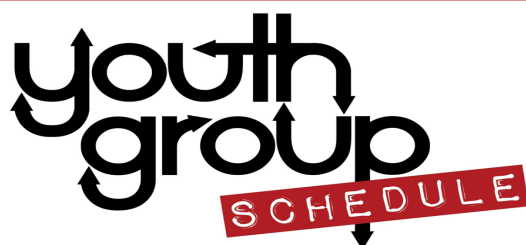
February 13th 9-11am

February 14th 11am-1pm

February 15th 9am-2pm

February 17th 3-7pm

Deadline to sign-up for a box is Sunday February 7th.



Youth Group will be meeting in person in February. We will be using the gym and youth room area to provide social distancing and masks will be required. This gives us the opportunity to connect relationally. Please do not send your student if they are not feeling well or are under school quarantine.

Youth can use the gym door to enter and we will meet from 4:00 – 5:30pm.

February 7: Actin' Sus - A real life, social distanced, Among Us game. (Super Bowl Sunday)

February 14: All Church Event - Valentine's Day Bingo Extravaganza for Everyone! 4:00 pm Online event

February 17: Ash Wednesday - participate with your family. Families will also be encouraged to use the Lenten Box activities each week.

February 21: Passover & Game (To be chosen by the youth)

February 28: The Crossing of the Red Sea & Escape Room Challenges

March 7: Jericho & Game (TBD)

March 14: Deborah & Game (TBD)

March 21: No Youth Meeting - Spring Break Week

Summer News!!

In anticipating and hoping and praying that we can have some special events this summer here are some save the dates for youth:

- Open Table Theology Institute (High School Students): June 20-26 at the University of Evansville.
- Summer Camp dates for Middle School and High School are still pending but will most likely take place in July.



MISSION TEAM

Happy 2021 everyone. I recently read that Deaconess has provided 21,000 Covid vaccines, and that is just the tip of the iceberg for this community. I can tell you that I have had 2 rounds of the vaccine, and did fine. The second injection is a little rougher on the body, but effects were short lived. I would rather have short lived side effects vs. Covid.

Want to know what does have a long shelf life? Our Missions team! This group coordinates monies and makes those funds be available for our church to do great things in the community. Want to know who the real rock stars are in the church? Our food pantry and clothes closet volunteers! They have been an essential force from day one of this yearlong pandemic. They have met the needs of 2-23 families a week who come seeking assistance. They work as a team; packing items, delivering to the cars, going to Ruler Foods for more food, storing it properly for families and the list goes on and on. Your donations of money and food and clothing have kept us up and running. Without you, our church members, neither of these two programs would exist. Thank you.

Want to know what happens in February? **Faith Promise!** Yes, it's that annual time where you get to make pledges to keep all our wonderful programs going. Be watching your mail for the annual brochure that outlines everything we sponsor and who benefits in the church community, locally and nationally. Faith Promise Sunday will be February 21, 2021. Although we won't be in church at that time, Pastor Craig will be sharing our goals and a video highlighting the Food Pantry and our volunteers. Be certain to be present online that day for service. We also thank you in advance for your thoughtfulness and thinking of others in need.

"Always be full of joy in the Lord" Philippians 4:4. This is my calendar verse for the Faith Promise month. 2021 will be a year of joy as we locally and nationally combine to stop Covid and make a path towards better health. 2021 will be the year we can get back in the church and praise God for all he has to give us and all that he does provide for us. Continue to pray for families and each other. Be full of Joy.

The United Methodist Mountain Mission Truck will be in our area on February 22. Some urgent needs requested are men's and children's clothes (all seasons), socks and underwear, and children's shoes/coats. Bring all donations to the church office or during the clothes closet on Monday mornings. If you would like more information, please visit their website.



NUMC Prayer Shawl Ministry provides prayer shawls, lap blankets and baby blankets to anyone in need of special prayer and God's healing & loving touch. Thanks to some very crafty ladies - our inventory is overflowing! Please let us know if you would like a shawl or blanket for someone in need!

Please contact Angie Barr at angie@newburghumc.org or 812-202-1728.

Our Recreation Ministry activities are still suspended, but don't forget to get up and move!

**Fitness is more than a physical challenge,
it's a mental one.**

As most everyone knows, February is Black history month. The question I asked myself, is what does that mean to me? History in general, was never "MY thing," however; my deceased husband Rick always reminded me that history was extremely important because if people didn't learn from history, we would continue to make the same mistakes. This past year we watched over and over how people of color were mistreated and killed as they have been for many years based on the color of their skin. History was repeating itself in the most awful way.

I will continue to pray as I have been that we learn from Black History. Many great Americans and Humanitarians have been black, and we must remember that people of color are God's children. God commands us to love his children as he does, without exception!

1 John 4:7-8, "7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."

I am aware of the difficulties of having honest conversations about tough issues. But, as people of faith, this should not prevent us from trying.

The basis of Christian Counseling is learning to love yourself and others. In doing so you discover to love as God does. During this time of being isolated more and more, I pray that we take time to reach out to those who are alone and are having a hard time dealing with stress, worry, loneliness, and sickness. Contact those friends you haven't heard from in a while. Call them or send them a card to let them know you are thinking of them. It means a lot. Let me or Pastor Craig know when someone needs extra prayers or contact.

Please don't hesitate to call me or text me for an appointment in my office or a phone appointment.

You are not forgotten, God Loves you and my heart goes out to each and every one of you.

Joyce Cundiff
NUMC Parish Counselor

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 11:30 AM – 3:30 PM and Thursday 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

After hours by appointment only.

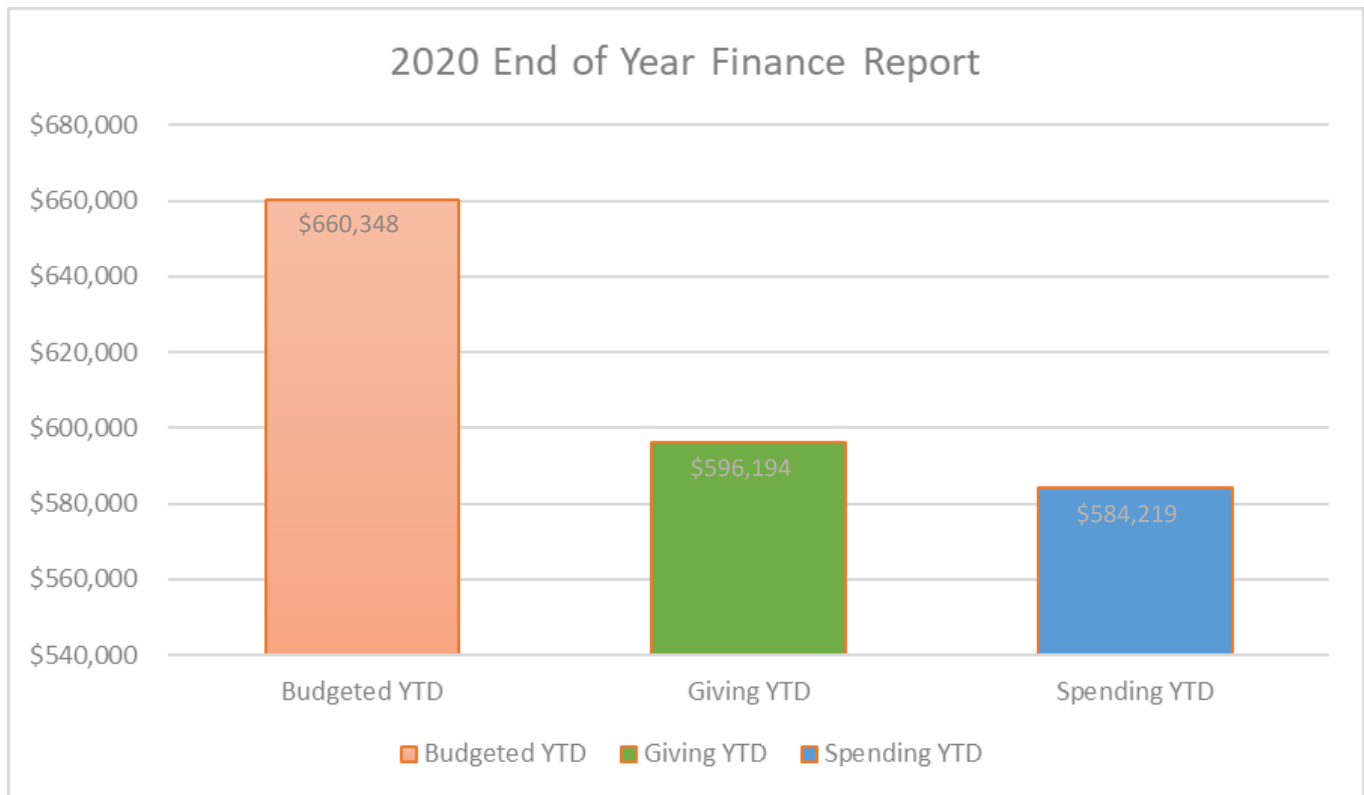
Cell Phone # 812-305-0445

Office Phone 812-853-2946 ext. 124

Email: joyce@newburghumc.org



As we continue on in the Covid-19 pandemic, we are aware that there are individuals within our church that have been extremely isolated throughout these past ten months. Our pastoral staff has remained in communication with these individuals and the resounding need that all have expressed desire for is continued communication (phone calls, emails, letters, pictures, etc.). We would love to put together a pen pal program in which individuals and families could be matched with a more isolated individual to provide this need. The pen pal would receive all the necessary items (envelopes, stamps, address labels) to correspond with their pal. Correspondence could be as simple as a picture that your child has drawn recently. We are looking to begin this program in March and continue through the end of May. If you would be interested in adopting a pandemic pal or have further questions, please email erin@newburghumc.org.



The Holy Spirit's presence within the life of our congregation has been wonderfully apparent this past year throughout the pandemic. The finance team is thankful for the faithful stewardship of everyone who continued to give to the church online, in person at times, and even dropping off contributions to the church office. Year-to-date operating giving was 90% of the operating budget goal. Year-to-date operating spending was held in line with giving. We are not spending more than we receive. In addition, we were able to pay down the mortgage principal to approximately \$162,000. While completely extinguishing the debt is in sight, it will take us nearly 3 years to pay it off at the current rate of giving to the mortgage fund. Special contributions to help extinguish the remaining debt can be made online or marked mortgage paydown. Because of your generosity, we can continue to grow as a community of faith where Christ is fully known, wholly loved, and genuinely served. Thank you!



Thank you to the NUMC church family for your generosity in supporting the Christmas Gift Mission. We were able to help provide toys and clothing items to 78 children. We would also like to give a huge thank you to the Kiwanis of Historic Newburgh. They have become very generous supporters of this program and we appreciate their contribution to our mission. Your concern for these children is truly a blessing.

"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Philippians 2:4



NEWBURGH
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

February 2021 Newsletter



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Newburgh United Methodist Church
4178 S.R. 261
Newburgh, IN 47630
(812) 853-2946
www.newburghumc.org



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