



# First Connection

September 2020

## Worship Options for September

Sundays, beginning Sept 6<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am  
Outdoor worship, Church Parking Lot

Bring chairs & mask

It will be good to gather together . . . at a distance . . . to worship.

If weather threatens to cancel the service, watch emails/fb/website for updates.

On-line Worship continues

Saturdays, 5:00pm & Sundays, 9:30am  
[www.normalfirst.org](http://www.normalfirst.org) followed by zoom fellowship group

Choose either or both for your weekly worship service. The themes will be the same for both outdoor and on-line worship.



We are “on the bridge” and the end is in sight. The “Bridge” campaign introduced to you in July is to raise \$150,000 for four special projects identified by the church trustees and approved by the Finance committee and Church Council.

In just one month, you have raised \$131,000 or 87% of our goal – only \$19,000 to go! Thank you to those who have been able to give a special gift which will allow us to....

- ◇ Replace the broken-down Church bus
- ◇ Replace five critical HVAC units
- ◇ Upgrade the audio-visual technology in the sanctuary and beyond
- ◇ Install covering on the north to help preserve our stained-glass windows

This is a challenging time, but we need to keep moving --- forward, not backward. Please consider making a gift to “get over the bridge” and reach our \$150,000 goal. You may contact Leta Buhrmann, our Finance Manager, if you have any questions about making a donation.

## Drive-In Noisy Offering

August 29 10:00-11:00am

Sept 25 10:00-11:00am

Church Parking Lot

To spread out the cars, we invite you to come during these times:

Last Name begins with A-J 10:00-10:30

Last Name begins with K-Z 10:30-11:00

Our donations will support education scholarships for local children

# Thoughts from the Pastor

"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity."

"To be ignorant of many things and to be mistaken in some is the necessary condition of humanity."

These quotes are from the founder of our Methodist movement, John Wesley. He encouraged us to work boldly to carry on the work of Jesus Christ and to transform the communities where we live. He expected our faith to make a difference and he expected us to respond to events going on in society around us. He challenged us to always put first our steadfast love for God and neighbor. He also encouraged humility. He instructed us to be tolerant of different ideas of how to carry out God's will, but not to tolerate selfishness or spiritual laziness. He also encouraged all Methodists to work against racism, which he labeled a sin and an affront to our Creator.

How can we capture this boldness of action paired with Liberty and Charity toward those who do not agree with our understanding of the best strategy for serving God?

As a wave of protests swept the nation after the killing of Mr. George Floyd, many of our members have felt a need to do more to work for justice and equality. Personally, I believe that we have an opening in our nation to make some real progress when it comes to racial inequality. I believe that God expects us to take advantage of this opportunity to make our communities more Christ-like.

In the conversations I have had with church members, everyone has said that racism is something that needs to be confronted, that we need to be open to difficult conversations, that we need to be willing to look at ourselves individually and at the systems in our society, and that everyone should be treated equally as children of God. The conversation gets interesting, however, when we talk about exactly how to go about this. We have a diverse

group of people in our church community, as we should. How are we to respond? What should we do, as a church?

As we struggle with this question, I recommend we keep these biblical guidelines in mind.

1. God expects us to work and even sacrifice for the well-being of others.

2. We have a special responsibility to seek justice and to empower the vulnerable and disadvantaged in society.

3. Our job as Christians is to make the societies around us look more like the loving communities that Jesus worked to build. We should always follow that example.

4. We should not be surprised when we disagree with other Christians when it comes to strategies and techniques, or specific actions to take.

5. When we disagree, we are called to listen for the truth in the other, and to speak the truth we find, in love.

6. The "ends justify the means" is not a Christian concept. The means are part of the ends. Our responses should always be honest and loving, even when they need to be strong and confrontational.

7. We should not let uncertainty or lack of complete agreement keep us from taking action forever.

As we move forward, then, let us take bold actions, for Christ's sake. Let us also seek humility, knowing that none of us has a lock on understanding God or God's will for the community. When we disagree, let's go back to the words of the Apostle Paul.

"Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven you." Ephesians 4:31-32.

## September News

We're programmed to expect certain things in the month of September. The start of school. Football games. Settling back into our schedules. Leaves changing colors and cooler weather.

We're guaranteed very little in life, but I believe that we'll be enjoying cooler weather and beautiful leaves here soon. But many of the other "September experiences" we've come to expect will not be resuming right now.

As we continue to be the *Church*, you can read about the ways we will continue to grow in faith this fall. Much of it will look different, but we hope it will be meaningful and helpful just the same.

Worship will be offered in 2 formats this fall – the on-line format continues as we launch the Sunday morning *outdoor* service.

Many small groups will be offered (on zoom or in-person) to help us connect with one another and go deeper in our faith. We'll be offering several small groups that are on-going. In addition, the new small groups we are offering will focus on issues of race to help us grow deeper in our understanding. Books studies, Bible studies, movie groups, and other discussion groups will be offered.

More information is available in this newsletter. To sign-up, you can use the link that will be sent to you or call/email the church office. **(309) 452-2096/secretary@normalfirst.org**

Dear Normal 1<sup>st</sup> Family,

Thank you for the prayers, support, and expressions of sympathy that you gave to our family following the death of our nephew/cousin Austin. Along with my brother and his family, we appreciated your love and care during this very sad time.

Austin was 24-years-old and had struggled with addiction for the past several years. As my brother & sister-in-law wrote very honestly in his obituary, that caused him to do things that weren't the *Austin* that we knew and loved. But we also know that Austin was much more than his addiction. In his good times, he was creative, fun-loving, musically-talented, and patient with his younger cousins. He brought great joy to our family and his friends.

We know that his addiction is a story that so many others struggle with as well. As our family continues in this time of remembrance, our hope is that our family's story can help others in the valley of addiction find the strength and courage to deal with their addictions. And that our story can help other families who are walking beside a loved one who is struggling.

We grieve, but we don't give up hope. Thank you for being the Body of Christ.

*Pastors Kathy & Kent, Haven, Josh & Emily*

# Children's and Families Ministries

## Centered Sundays in September

Join a small group for some time for visual prayer, yoga for all ages, and a time to set a weekly intention for you and your family. September 6,13,20,27 from 4-5pm McNiff's Backyard Social Distancing measures and masks will be required. Bring your own water bottle and yoga mat if you have one. RSVP /Space is limited/First come first serve.

Jill McNiff (jmcniff@normalfirst.org)

PRAY  
LOVE  
YOGA  
FAITH

## Music Connections



**What song inspires your heart or “pumps you up” right now?** Or maybe there's a song you lean into for comfort these days. Currently on my feel good list is David Crowder's *Prodigal* album, specifically “All My Hope” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tElvdnld4Q> and “Run, Devil, Run” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US1-R-R9IYQ> in addition to various songs from *Hamilton*! Send me a link to your song at [jpeter-son@normalfirst.org](mailto:jpeter-son@normalfirst.org).

**Many thanks** to all who participated in our first virtual, congregational Rhythmic Call to Worship! Watch for more congregational opportunities – we can do this!

**There is a place for you in Music Ministries!**

Contact Janna Peterson ([jpeter-son@normalfirst.org](mailto:jpeter-son@normalfirst.org)) for further Music Ministries information!



### CONGRATULATIONS TO CAROL MORGAN

Many people have seen Ralph Morgan volunteering at the Welcome Desk at Carle BroMenn Hospital. Carol Morgan is not as visible, working in an office setting, but she also volunteers a ton of hours at the hospital. In fact, Carol was recently treated to a BroMenn Appreciation Parade that passed by her house. This was to celebrate the 10,000 hours that Carol has given as a volunteer. Ralph has also passed that mark. We celebrate their giving spirit and the difference our church members make in the community. Well done.



The September Daily Prayer booklets are available by email or call the church office to have one mailed to you. Prayer booklets are available in a box outside the church on the west side.

If you are not receiving the daily prayers, please send an email to [secretary@normalfirst.org](mailto:secretary@normalfirst.org) to be put on the daily email mailings.



### **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!**

Congratulations to **Theresa Garrett** on her retirement, effective September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Theresa and her family joined Normal 1<sup>st</sup> in 2002 and she became the Administrative Assistant in 2014. Since then, she has been a welcoming face and voice for members and visitors to Normal 1<sup>st</sup>, prepared volumes of bulletins, newsletters, and calendars, maintained church records, and assisted church staff, volunteers and members with a variety of tasks.

Theresa and Don, who is also retired, plan to stay in Bloomington-Normal and will enjoy traveling and spending time with their children and grandson.

We thank Theresa for her numerous contributions and wish her the best!

### **OFFICE MANAGER**

Normal First United Methodist Church is seeking a highly organized Office Manager to provide a wide range of communications for the church and administrative assistance to the pastors and staff. Essential responsibilities include creating, coordinating and disseminating communications via multiple channels (e.g., social media, website, emails/newsletter), as well as assisting with technology, maintaining the church calendar, answering calls, responding to inquiries to the church office and providing administrative assistance to the pastoral staff.

This is a full-time, 35 hrs/wk position, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. In our current environment, most work may be done from home. Once the church building reopens, the Office Manager will work in the office, greeting and assisting members and guests.

The ideal candidate will have previous administrative and/or communications experience; excellent communication skills; exceptional technical skills, including proficiency in Microsoft Office and Publisher, updating websites and social media, and managing records and databases; excellent organizational skills; and a keen attention to detail.

For consideration, please submit a resume to: Pastor Kent King-Nobles at [pastorkent@normalfirst.org](mailto:pastorkent@normalfirst.org).

### **CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP**

August 31st, 10:30-11:30am, On Zoom

Contact Theresa Garrett for the Zoom link for the meeting: [secretary@normalfirst.org](mailto:secretary@normalfirst.org).

Contact Judy Poultney (452-7665) to learn more about the group.

### **GET YOUR FLU SHOT**

We have been hearing that flu shots will be even more important this year. Getting a vaccine for common influenza strains will make it easier for our community to combat the Covid-19. Some are saying you should get this as early as September this year. Please check with your doctor.



During the month of September the **Missions Committee** will be collecting donation items for the Neville House Shelter. Residents staying at Neville House work closely with a trained domestic violence advocate that will assist in finding resources for housing, childcare, employment, legal representation, transportation and enhancement of life skills. Twenty-four hour emotional and educational support is available to assist individuals and families respond to crisis and increase self-sufficiency. Below is a needs list for the shelter.

**Household Products:** Toilet paper, Paper towels, Hand sanitizer, Hand soap (Bar and Liquid), Shampoo, Conditioner, Deodorant, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Hair brush and comb, Lotion, Batteries (AA, AAA, and 9v)

**Cleaning supplies:** *(these items are needed most)* Lysol spray, Lysol soap, Lysol Wipes, Clorox Wipes, Laundry detergent, Dish Washer detergent, Garbage bags, Dish soap, Bleach

**Miscellaneous:** Gift cards (Wal-Mart, Target, Kroger's, Jewels, Hy-Vee, Etc.) Gas cards, Bus passes

**Non-perishable food items:** Mac & Cheese, Canned ravioli, Spaghetti, Tuna

**New, unused clothing (men, women & children):** Sweatpants, Sweatshirts, T-shirts, New, packaged socks and underwear all sizes, Gym shoes

Donations can be dropped off at the collection boxes outside the west side church doors Monday - Friday.

## Finance Corner

I want to say a sincere thank you to everyone as we have moved beyond the half-way point of our \$150,000 goal Special Projects "bridge" campaign. Thank you also to those who have stepped in front of the video camera to explain to all of us why this campaign is so important. Please prayerfully consider giving if you have not already so we can reach the second half of the goal as quickly as we reached the first half!

Thank you also to everyone for continuing your regular giving through one of our many convenient methods.

- Online giving - Go to the church website, [www.normalfirst.org](http://www.normalfirst.org), click on Give and follow the links to make a one-time donation or set up on-going donations.
  - ACH - Request a form from the church office and have your contribution debited from your bank account.
  - Direct Mail - Your banking institution can mail the church a check directly.
  - Check - Mail your offering directly to the church.
- If you have questions about any of these options, please contact Leta Buhrmann, Finance Manager, at 452-2096 or [business@normalfirst.org](mailto:business@normalfirst.org).

Craig Thompson, Finance Committee Chair

### YOUTH MENTAL HEAL FIRST AID

Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach caring citizens how to help an adolescent who is challenged with a mental health or addiction crisis.

Date: Friday, Sept 18, 2020 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Location: Carle BroMenn Medical Center

Fee: FREE

To register, please click on the following link:

<https://carle.org/Events> or call

217-383-3311



General Fund		
July	Monthly	YTD
Income	\$60,886.76	\$496,532.16
Expenses	\$70,185.92	\$500,430.37



### A COMMUNITY OF WOMEN WHOSE PURPOSE IS:

- to know God
- to experience freedom as whole persons through **Jesus Christ**
- to develop a creative, supportive fellowship
- to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church

### Maternal and Child Health

Tuesday, September 15, our local unit will have a FUMW Zoom Gathering at 7 pm. There will be a Business meeting to elect officers. Laura Beavers, Manager of Prevention and Intervention with the Healthy Start & Community School Programs and Lori Bultimeier, Christian Life Coordinator at The Baby Fold will present the program on Maternal and Child Health, with emphasis on what is happening in our community.

Ginny Riggins [ginnyriggins@comcast.net](mailto:ginnyriggins@comcast.net), 825-7942 will set up the Zoom meeting so be in touch with her. One may access Zoom through the computer, cell phone or landline phone.

### District and Conference Annual Gatherings

Vermillion River District UMW, **Saturday, September 19** and Illinois Great Rivers Conference UMW, **Saturday, October 3**, will hold Annual Gatherings as virtual meetings. They will have a business meeting, an election of officers for 2021, and receive an update from our children's agencies. Registration for these meetings is to be done through **Carolyn Yockey** [CLPY508@aol.com](mailto:CLPY508@aol.com), 452-3936. Traditionally offerings are taken at these events to support Cunningham Children's Home and Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House and the outreach of United Methodist Women globally. Support for these causes may be sent through Carolyn Yockey at 508 Normal Ave., Normal, IL. 61761. This is an opportunity to grow in ones understanding of what is happening beyond the local church in the comfort of your favorite chair and a cup of coffee.

### Update on the Campaign to replace Attic Sale income.

To date, we have received over \$9,700. Thank you! Thank you!

It is not to late to contribute. Your donation will support local, national, and international missions.

Send a check to Carolyn Yockey or the church office.

### Greetings from your FUMC Green Team!

We want a lot from our yards. We want them to bring beauty to our home and neighborhood; to be an inviting space for play, laughter, and gatherings; and to provide a sanctuary from hectic daily life. Sometimes our attempts to beautify our yards can cause unintended harm. The simple choices we make for yard care can have a big impact on the health of the whole community, from the water we drink to the air we breathe.

#### Smart Yards-

- ◆ Are safe for children, adults, pets, wildlife and all living things
- ◆ Conserve natural resources like water and fossil fuels
- ◆ Support native diversity in plants and wildlife
- ◆ Do not pollute air, soil, or water
- ◆ Work with nature
- ◆ Avoid or minimize synthetic pesticides and high-nitrogen fertilizers.



*From the Ecology Action Center, Normal, Illinois*

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1-4 pm  
Monday-Friday

Website: <http://normalfumc.org/>



Instagram@normalfirst



**We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.**

(Social Principles of The United Methodist Church)

**First United Methodist Church in Normal has committed itself to provide a Christian community and ministry without reference to any boundaries including age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, economic condition, physical or mental ability. We strive to be an open and accepting community in line with our understanding of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ expects of us.**