



November 2020 First Connection

Dear First Family,

The month of November is here and this is the time of giving thanks. Giving thanks for family. Giving thanks for community. Giving thanks for the ministry that we have done and will do in the future by God's grace.

As you know, Sunday, October 18 was our first Sunday where we added a hybrid option to our worship opportunities and offered an in person worship opportunity. All went well and we were extremely comfortable with the safety precautions we had in place that included but is not limited to the following:

- Singer masks made lovingly by Judy Lane
- Standing shields that provided extra protection in the chancel area
- The Worship team were masked and in the worship area the entire time
- Masks were mandated and worshippers all complied willingly
- Temps were taken from everyone who participated in worship including the pastoral team/staff and worship team.
- Social distancing was enforced with pews roped off and worshippers being escorted in and out of sanctuary.
- Remote check in options
- Offering plates were at the door and not passed around
- Hands free sanitizing station and hand sanitizer available
- Sanitation of pews and equipment
- Pastor wore face shield and mask when interacting with parishioners
- Face shields offered to people in addition to the masks for added protection.

Roughly 39 people were in attendance and so far no cases of exposure reported.

However with the rising amount of cases and the risk-dial inching towards red even as I type this email; going forward immediately we will only offer **ONLINE WORSHIP FOR BOTH SERVICES** at 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. until further notice. We appreciate all of the

efforts made and are confident that once the virus numbers become more manageable and sustainable, that we will be able to move back into a Hybrid worship model of both online worship opportunities and in person worship for those who feel ready and comfortable in doing so.

This is not the outcome we have hoped for, but we will demonstrate patience and a spirit of optimism that if we all comply with the health initiatives and efforts, we will get through this together.

Our special charge conference that consisted of church council met last night. We had this in lieu of the yearly charge conference that we typically have with our District Superintendent Rev. Nancy Tomlinson. It was a great conversation and we are all still excited about the future. We were all in agreement that for now online will be our option for worship...for now. This also means that our building at this time will not be open to other organizations such as AA and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. We will be closely watching the numbers so that we can proceed forward in the way that we hope.

This year one major addition and transition is celebrating Larry Williams who has expressed a call to step down as lay leader although he is still very much an active part of our membership and leadership. I have asked Terri Storer to serve as our new lay leader effective immediately. She has accepted my invitation and I am excited that she will be serving in this capacity.

During this time also, I need to lift up that your giving in all of your membership vows of prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness is crucial. Our new sermon series that will begin in November entitled "Why Give" that will examine our membership vows closer, will hopefully motivate and encourage us through these rough patches. We will still virtually have our All Saints Service on November 1 for both services; honoring our loved ones who have passed on. We are still committed to bringing vital worship, small groups and pastoral care to you week to week. The bottom line friends, we are an adaptive, faith filled congregation! I look forward to the days where we will all look back and testify on how the Lord brought us through! If you have any questions, concerns or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me. We will get through this...we will!

Peace and Love,
Kirstie J. Engel
Spiritual Leader



Hunger and Poverty Response Ministry

For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. Matthew 25:35

Through the Hunger and Poverty Response Ministry, First UMC is provided with current information and relevant projects regarding hunger related issues.

This ministry extends a warm invitation of opportunity for all to grow in knowledge of advocacy at the local, state, national and international levels, while also providing opportunity for growth in generosity through participation in projects that intentionally alleviate hunger world wide.

2020 Focus

Huntington Restock: In January, we received a list of student needs compiled by staff at Huntington Elementary where 85% of the students are currently receiving free or reduced breakfast and lunch. Dozens of sweatpants, socks and underwear were collected by our church family and taken to our neighborhood school. In September, to provide safety during the pandemic, monetary gifts rather than clothing were given to impact student learning at Huntington Elementary.

GIVING REPORT

All of us believe in stewardship, which means we take good care of ourselves and others. As Christians, stewardship is defined by giving a portion of our resources to support our local church and the worldwide programs of our denomination. Through September we have received \$334, 975 to demonstrate our love for the family of Christ. We have so far invested \$30,000 to many worthy caused administered by the Great Plains Conference. Thank you for all you've done and please help us finish our obligation to them by making a special gift to "Mission Shares!"

Chuck Leypoldt, Treasurer



The Stewardship and Finance Committee has continued to be active during this Pandemic to monitor the financial status and to plan for the future. Updating the

Matt Talbot: A varying team of three First UMC members served lunch the second Saturday of each month. The Food Bank of Lincoln and First UMC members provided the food for these lunches which have been boxed for easy pick-up, so that Matt Talbot's guests, staff and volunteers may practice social distancing.

Souper Bowl Sunday: People worshipping in both services had the opportunity to share their monetary gifts for use at our local Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach. Matt Talbot serves the working poor and homeless people in Lincoln. Besides relieving hunger, Matt Talbot works to eliminate homelessness, helps those with addiction, and provides important outreach to this community of people.

Advocacy Training: First UMC members attended the Ecumenical Legislative Day in February. We also attended training via Zoom offered by Zach Schmidt, Bread for the World Senior Regional Organizer. Bread for the World has shared that "seven unique letters, postcards, or emails is enough for an office to notice an issue, assign a legislative aide to research it and form an opinion."

Advocacy: We prepared an Offering of Letters to Congress in March with approximately 100 postcards written and mailed to NE Congress members. In September, we generated letters encouraging our governor to apply for temporary emergency SNAP funds available to Nebraska's families living with food shortage. A Bread for the World advocacy training session was offered to our church family via Zoom in October.

technology in the sanctuary for live streaming the worship services was an early project. The church also applied for and received a federal PPP grant to support the continuity of staffing; this has helped during the church shutdown and the summer giving downturn. With a partial return to in-church worship, we will be working to encourage a boost in giving to finish the year in a positive position. We have been able to pay the Mission Shares for the first eight months of the year.

The Committee has completed a draft Budget for 2021 to present to the Church Council for adoption. The General Fund Budget totals \$478,054, a slight increase from 2020 which was \$471,034. The Committee also adopted a schedule and plan for the Stewardship Campaign for 2021 with the theme "Why Give." The Campaign will kick off November 1 and run through November 29. Every member will be receiving Campaign materials, including the budget and a pledge card early in the month and we urge you to give it your prayerful attention.



Huntington Elementary Food

Market: A team of twelve First UMC members were enlisted to prepare tables of food for distribution to students on the second Tuesday of each month. Due to the pandemic, this team has been on stand-by since March. However, the needs of students and their families living with food scarcity are still being served. Wishing to keep volunteers safe, the Food Bank of Lincoln has taken the full responsibility for accomplishing the Food Market set-up and distribution.

Lydia Patterson Institute: The Media Specialist at LPI continues to acknowledge the need for new books to update the library. As a result, we received fifty books that the LPI staff wishes to make available to their students. Currently, twenty-nine books have been purchased by First UMC members and sent to Lydia Patterson's eager and hard working students. The book sale will remain open in Munden Parlor until all the books have been purchased.

HEIFER Project International: Preparations are being made to open HEIFER Market Tables both remotely and in the sanctuary during the coming Advent Season. HEIFER offers an alternative way of Christmas shopping. Your monetary gifts, given in the name of a loved one, are used to purchase animals for families living with food scarcity and who are in desperate need of sustainable food and an income. We look forward to a successful season with HEIFER.

In summary, First UMC remains a decades long, committed, covenant church with Bread for the



Dear First Church Families, I miss each of you dearly and hope that your summer was a good one. As fall approaches, it is with a saddened heart that I do not get to see each of you in person. Please make sure to reach out, should your children or you like any special zoom visits, or virtual calls, even a drive by to say "Hi" or to celebrate any special occasions. Sometimes a socially distant hello can help and remind them that they are missed and loved by our church family. You can contact me at 402-560-4251 or email charity@firstumclincoln.org and I am happy to support your family in any way! Blessings, *Charity*

Just Us is still meeting on ZOOM!

If you have a middle school or high school girl and would like to join our women's bible study we would love to have

World. Annually, we pay a membership fee, observe Bread for the World Sunday, integrate hunger concerns in worship, projects and activities, stewardship and prayer. We participate in Bread For the World's offering of letters and advocate for social justice on other legislation in Congress and the Nebraska Unicameral. Bread for the World is a guiding light for the Hunger and Poverty Response Ministry, as we strive to bring forth opportunities for our church family to become the hands and feet of Jesus Christ.

Hunger and Poverty Response Ministry Team: Shirley Baum, Alan Eighme, Martha Gadberry, Peggy Hall, Mike Sterns, Liz Zeff



Dear Church Family and Friends,

Welcome into this Season of Thanksgiving!!! A holiday that I've extended beyond a simple day into a "season." A time of thanksgiving, reflection, and hope. I have long used "Be Thankful" for my work computer screen saver because in the face of adversity and anxiety, I need to be reminded to be thankful. We may be finding it harder to be thankful in the midst of a pandemic, civil unrest, injustice, political upheaval, and social/economic uncertainty of our times. Yes, this season looks and feels different. Physical distancing is affecting our well-being and our connections. Family gatherings may be different, if gathering even happens. United Methodist Women

you join us on **Thursdays from 7:00pm-8:00pm via Zoom.**

Meeting ID is 826 257 3350 passcode of 9qsFW6.

We are studying the women of the bible currently. What a great opportunity for you and your daughter or important teen to have bible reading, fun conversation and real talk about questions they have. Want to attend once or every time you are welcome anytime! Zoom meetings will continue until we are able to have in person Sunday School or classes.

Nursery and Children's Ministry update

We are still hard at work re-organizing and cleaning the nursery and Sunday school rooms. As of now, we will not be offering Sunday school or Nursery services at this time when we resume in person worship. Families will remain together in their area during the service. In addition, our church quiet books with colors and coloring pages will not be accessible. Please email Charity at charity@firstumclincoln.org should your family have any questions. Thank you!

2020 Confirmation

With the pandemic still in the forefront of our lives and limiting our ability to gather, I am reaching out to find a solution for our 2020 confirmation group. Please email charity@firstumclincoln.org if

here at First Church aren't sorting through cookie recipes and planning their grocery list for Mission Christmas.

Yet, here we are in these changing times. Is this God's invitation to slow down in this season? To embrace the words of Paul to the Philippians 4:4-7 (NIV):

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God. 7 And **the peace of God**, which transcends all understanding, **will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

For me, Paul's invitation to include thanksgiving in prayer and petition with the assurance of the peace of God guarding our hearts and minds offers hope and comfort. In this Season of Thanksgiving, we do have much to be thankful for and I am encouraged by the resiliency of the human spirit, really the divine spirit within, to strengthen each of us in our call to be the Christ-like light.

Will you join me in embracing gratefulness as a spiritual practice during this Season of Thanksgiving? To pause . . . To reflect . . . (Check out <https://gratefulness.org/practice/practices-grateful-living/> for ideas.)

You are always welcome to join us for **Compassionate Conversations: Pause and Prayer**. Our time together has become a safe space for sharing; learning and engaging in dialogue - deep listening for understanding; and practicing being present to God, to ourselves, and to others. We are finding comfort, connection, acceptance, belonging, honesty, and gratitude in our conversations.

We gather on Tuesday evenings, 6:30 - 7:45. All are welcome to join anytime. If you want to join in the ZOOM conversation or have questions, please contact Terri Storer at tstorer@neb.rr.com

you have a youth that is grades 6 or up that would be interested in confirmation. At this time, it would need to be an online course 6-week class, one night a week. Classes would be 30-45 minutes long and we are learning from the Affirm series. Each student would have their student guide with weekly assignments to read and prepare to discuss. Once allowed we would move to in person meetings and trips that were planned originally.

Toys available!

If you are interested in gently used toys that have supported our nursery, please contact Charity Helter at charity@firstumclincoln.org or call the church office and leave a message. We will be cleaning the nursery and eliminating some of the toys. Most are for ages 0-5. These items will be arranged to be picked up from the church by the end of September. Thank you!

Sermon Series(Con't)

November 1: Why Give: Presence

8:30: 1 John 3:1-3

10:45: Psalm 34:1-10, 22

Matthew 5:1-12

Preacher: Dr. Redding

November 8: Why Give: Witness

8:30-Joshua 24: 1-3a, 14-25

10:45- Psalm 78:1-7

Matthew 25: 1-13

Dear God, open our hearts and minds to readily and eagerly receive your infinite peace allowing it to mold us into pillars of light and warmth to radiate out into your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen.

Terri Storer

Certified Spiritual Director

November 15: Why Give: Gifts

8:30- Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

10:45- Psalm 90: 1-12

Matthew 25: 14-30

November 22: Why Give: Service

8:30- Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24

10:45- Psalm 100

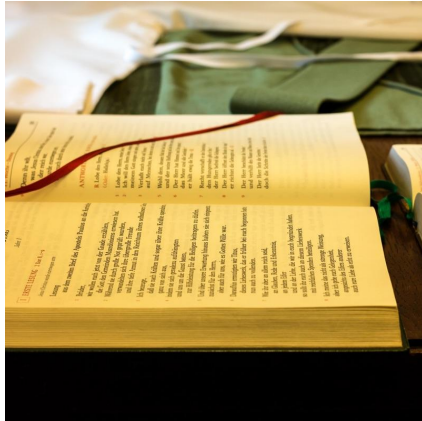
Matthew 25:31-46

November 29: Why Give: Prayer

8:30- Deuteronomy 8: 7-18

10:45- Psalm 65

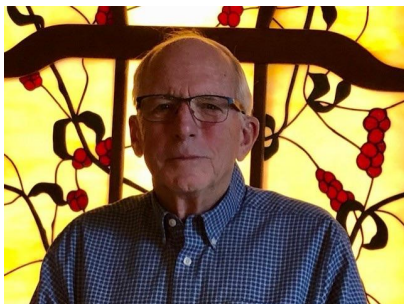
Luke 17: 11-19



NOVEMBER SERMON SERIES: "WHY GIVE?"

A Series examining why we should give in the areas of our membership vows: Prayers, Presence, Gifts, Service and Witness.

*******MEET THE STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE MINISTRY TEAM*******



Hello, I am **Gordon Bair** and am currently a member of the Stewardship and Finance Committee. A little background, I grew up in Northeast Lincoln. I attended Huntington elementary, Dawes Jr. high, and graduated from Lincoln Northeast High School. After taking a year off I enrolled at Nebraska Wesleyan. I graduated with a B.S. Business Administration with minors in Economics and Sociology.

I joined First United Methodist Church on the 19th of December



Meet **Glenn Johnson**, a 36-year member of First UMC. He grew up on a northeast Nebraska farm, active in an ELCA church, and came to Lincoln to attend UNL. Glenn and Elaine married 50 years ago and raised two children, Michaela and Ryan. A choir and Crosstalk member since joining, he has also been a Trustee, served several terms on the Stewardship and Finance Committee, leading multiple campaigns, and as Lay Leader at the time the church roof collapsed. He believes membership involves attendance, service in the church life, and spiritual and financial support. Glenn retired after 44 years with the local Natural Resources District, plays golf on the First UMC league, and can often be found on his bicycle.



Shirley Baum

I grew up on a farm near Ord and was active in the Mira Valley EUB/UM church, graduated high school from OHS and earned a

1965. On the 26th of December 1965 Jo Anne Wiegers and I were Married by Rev. Carl Davidson.

We have two daughters and a Son-in-law. Our oldest is Amanda (Mandy). She teaches elementary music at Conestoga Public Schools. Our youngest daughter is Cynthia (Cindy) and her Husband live in Washington D.C. She teaches Writing and is Chair of the Core Curriculum committee at American University.

My parents started a Machine Shop when I was 12 years old. Thus, I had a job where I work until I graduated from College. It gave me a great second education that carried over my entire working career. I retired after 28 years with Molex Inc.

I have served three Ministers as SPRC Chair and several other committees. I was the Church Treasure for three years. I have been a member of the Crosstalk class for over 30 years.



We are **Aaron and Alli Raymond**. We live in northeast Lincoln with our two children, Clara (3) and Hugh (1). Aaron and Alli both grew up on farms outside of Brainard and Wisner, respectively. We both came to Lincoln for college, and for the most part never left. We have

BS and MS in Home Economics Education from UNL. Career-wise I taught in Clarkson & Fremont high schools, set up a day care system for Lincoln/Lancaster county, coordinated an adult education program at SCC, was an instructor at UNL, and retired from the NE Department of Education as a curriculum consultant. I was blessed to work with and develop friendships with professional educators across the state and nation.

Our family has lived in Lincoln since 1970. Ernie and I had two children. We took summer vacations, sometimes camping; frequently in Colorado. Ernie passed from ALS in 1966 at 55 years of age. Our children grew up to be contributing adults. Julie was employed in financial positions in Omaha, Milwaukee and Lincoln. In 2015 she unexpectedly passed from severe bronchopneumonia at 38 years of age. She loved to bake and greeted persons entering the First UMC east doors with a smile and plate of homemade cookies nearly every Sunday. Brent, a Navy veteran and avid bicyclist, is a graphic artist who takes beautiful nature photos many of which are displayed in our home which we share. Together we enjoy travelling, attending concerts & plays in Lincoln and Omaha, and an annual trip to a Royals game.

I have sung in the Chancel Choir for many years and, since retiring, have become active in Deborah Circle. After volunteering on a "counting team" for a couple years I accepted the Financial Secretary position for our church. I am grateful to have

been married for 11 years. Aaron works as a loan officer for Farm Credit Services of America and offices out of Lincoln and Beatrice. Alli works as a recruiter and academic advisor for the Animal Science Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. We like traveling (not much of it lately, unfortunately), spending time with family, working on our farm, and going to the zoo, parks, museums, etc. We joined First Church in 2016 and have enjoyed getting to know all the families and becoming part of the community.



Jack Chapin, Chair of the First United Church Trustees

I am a lifelong Lincoln resident. My parents were Hubert and Florence Chapin, and I was their only child. I graduated from Southeast High School. I started framing houses for my cousin when I was 15 years old, and have been in construction work all my life. I retired from Hampton Construction eight years ago. Since then, I have stayed busy volunteering at the Children's Zoo, doing special

memories of an Alaskan land/cruise trip in 2006, and in 2016 enjoyed touring London and attending three theater productions in London. We visited the Canterbury Cathedral on the way to the Euro Tunnel. In France we experienced the Normandy Beach area and Le Mont Saint-Michel. God has blessed me with a fulfilling life for which I am most thankful!



Paula Hartig

I am in my ninth year of retirement and still enjoying it. Nineteen years ago our parents moved in with Jan and me so that we could help Dad take care of Mom. Mom died about a year later and we asked Dad to continue to live with us. So, he sold their house in Hastings and lived with us for 15 more years during which we did a lot of traveling. (He always told us that there are two things that are never a waste of time or money: our education and traveling.) He was looking forward to us retiring so that we would have more free time. Unfortunately, a few weeks after I retired Dad had a severe stroke which left him unable to travel. We took as many road trips as we could, and spent two winters in Galveston, Texas. Three years ago Dad had another stroke which left him unable to

projects for our church, and remodeling our home.

I have been bowling in the same Thursday night league at Parkway Lanes since I was 18. I golfed on the First UMC golf league for several years with another cousin, Jim Bartolome. After Jim died, I gave up golfing.

I and my late first wife Sandra had one son David, who is also in construction. David and his wife Lauri have a son Zachary, a student at NWU. My late second wife Linda and I joined First UMC in 1994. After her death, I met Donna Lutes at church, and we have been married 12 years.

It is a great joy to be part of the First UMC family. We deeply appreciate all the dear friends who have shared their lives with us!



Chuck Leypoldt

Church Treasurer

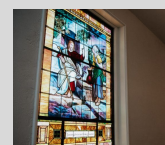
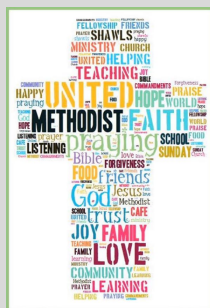
walk.

He went to the hospital and then into hospice where he died three days later. It was challenging to be full-time caregivers, but we wouldn't trade that time with Mom and Dad for anything. What a blessing.

I now spend time pursuing my interests which include reading, genealogy research, traveling, volunteering and spending time with family and friends. We have been to all 50 states, most of them multiple times, and to 17 countries. We are very much looking forward to getting back to traveling after the pandemic is over and other countries begin to open up to Americans again. Until then, we will continue to stay home, wear masks and practice social distancing!



Kirstie J. Engel
Spiritual Leader



DR. JOHN SPILKER-

MINISTER OF MUSIC & LITURGY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, LEADERSHIP

Thank you to everyone who helped us celebrate **UMW Sunday** on October 18 and congratulations to our 2020 award winners:

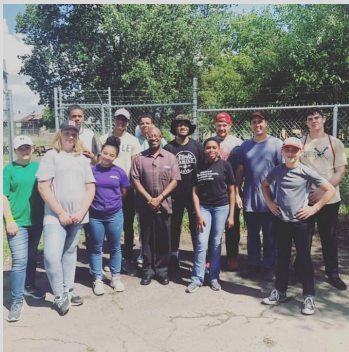
Dedicated Light: Peggy Loos and Bev Vogel

Special Mission Recognition: Sharon Johnson and Mike Sterns

We will be holding a virtual unit meeting on

Brené Brown said, “gratitude is knowing that we are enough and honoring what is ordinary about our lives.” Amen! As a church family, we reach out and practice

November 4 to elect our 2021 leadership, approve next year's budget, and participate in a brief World Thank Offering service. Details on how to participate will be sent out soon.



First Church Youth Ministry Dear First Church,

I would like to affirm First Church congregation and community with the continued support of the Youth Ministry and making the ministry a top priority for our congregation. I am grateful to say that the Youth Ministry has been successful throughout my time here at First Church and I look forward to continuing to be the Youth Minister. As we continue through Covid-19 and this pandemic, First Church Youth and adult sponsors will be raising funds for a 2021 Summer Learn and Serve Trip to Oakland/San Francisco, California. We are hoping this planned trip that was supposed to happen this summer, will be possible next summer in 2021. Our youth and adult sponsors have been able to

gratitude together in small ways. As we experience how COVID-19 can complicate daily life, we honor that everyone continues to cope with uncertainty, worries, and lots of other emotions right now. I lift up prayers for strength, healing, and care for all of us. I strive to remember: "Breathe. Slow down. We are in a global health pandemic. Everyone is doing their best." God is with us, strengthening and blessing us, as we live together in community. You are seen, heard, and valued.

ANTIRACIST EQUITY AND EDUCATION

As part of our reconciling ministry, I share with you my commitment to antiracist equity, which I continue to update with online learning resources: <https://bit.ly/2YsN3UQ>

On Facebook Live, I represent First UMC Lincoln every Thursday at 6pm for "Courageous Antiracism Clergy Conversations" created and hosted by Rev. Annettra Jones. Currently we are reading and

raise funds for this opportunity for the past year and we have exceeded \$10,000 and look to continue to raise funds. Our group will be brainstorming ideas on how to creatively plan fundraisers during this pandemic. Thank you for your continued support to the Youth Ministry.

As we have been living through this pandemic, I have struggled to figure out what youth group would like this school year or even during a bible study. What would that look like outside with 6 feet distance spread out with our masks on. I have been reflecting and getting insight from other colleagues who are leading ministry in the city of Lincoln. I believe I have come to the realization that we can do ministry in person with the safety precautions being practiced as we do with bible studies, service projects, fellowship activities, devotional time, etc.

Blessings,

Matt Borland—Youth Minister—First United Methodist Church



Prayer Requests:

For the Family of Donna Barnell in the passing of her husband Dean.
For the Family of Sarah Howell in the passing of her son Tommy.
Jeremy Hickenbottom, home

discussing *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence* by Derald Wing Sue. Feel free to watch through the First UMC page or join in the chats on Pastor Annetra's Daily Becoming Facebook page.

SMALL GROUPS

“Compassionate Conversations: Pause & Prayer” is a life-enriching soul-filled spiritual experience every Tuesday evening via Zoom. Would you like to try it out? We would love to have you join us. Email Terri Storer. Terri Storer, Lea Ann Johnson-Kappes, and I continue to collaborate to reimagine possibilities for small groups during COVID-19 and beyond. What ideas do you have? Zoom? Small patio visits at home? Let us know what you need, what ideas you have, what's on your heart and mind right now. Email me: john@firstumclincoln.org. I'm here to support your needs for community!

PHONE TREE MINISTRY continues their work during social distancing. Many thanks to those

For the Family of Taven Thompson, First Church Youth
For the Family of Mark McClanahan, Judy Clark's son-in-law
For the Family of Dorothyann Haar
For the Family of Sharon Johnson
Sandy Conrad, home
Jim Neumann, home
Ron Gaddis, home
Dixie Gannon, home
Cindy Newsham, home
Maxine Case, home
For the Family of Joyce Ryan
Elaine Brown, Bryan East
Lauree Turner, home
Richard Voeltz, Gateway Vista
Lester Shaw, Kiley Taylor's dad.
Sondra Atkins, home
Roscoe Shields, Van Dorn Legacy
Emajane Crossley, Lancaster Manor Rehab
Jim Leypoldt, home

of you who call to minister to our members who don't have email access. We are so blessed to have such a strong church community. I owe a debt of gratitude to Peggy Hall for co-coordinating this important ministry with me.

Sending a BIG THANK YOU for your Prayers, Presence, Gifts, Service and Witness during these uncertain times. We will get through this TOGETHER!



JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ONLINE SUNDAYS @ 830AM, 1045 AM