



The Connection

Osceola United Methodist Church

"A vital church connecting people with God and each other"



Pastor: 712-350-0994
Church: 641-342-2830
Fax: 641-342-4100
130 West Grant Street — Osceola, Iowa 50213-1623

Amy Johnson, Pastor
Anna Frohling, Secretary/Financial Secretary
Melanie Eddy, Education Coordinator
Facebook: Osceola United Methodist Church, Osceola Iowa

Pastor: osceolapastor@gmail.com
Church: oumc@iowatelecom.net
Website: www.osceolaumc.net

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Osceola UMC Reopens for In-Person Worship on June 14, 2020 at 8 & 11 a.m.

Please review this page for important information that you MUST know beforehand!

Thank you for bearing with us all in this season of COVID-19. Our thoughts and prayers continue for our friends, relatives, and congregation members struggling with this illness. We especially want to lift our prayers to the husband of one of our volunteers who is hospitalized at this time. She has been an amazing friend and volunteer for the school clothes giveaway, and our heart breaks for her. We also lift our afternoon sisters in Christ who are healing from COVID-19. You are in our prayers! COVID-19 has touched our congregation in many ways, and we enter into this phase of our worship both confident in God's grace and concerned about each person in our midst who could become ill or who could bear the burden of spreading this illness to someone they love. With that in mind, it is important for us to use a reasonable amount of caution and care when returning to worship. Our leadership feels that now is the time, but we also feel that proceeding slowly, following the guidelines of the state, CDC, and Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church is important for safety. Therefore, we present to you our plan for reentry into worship together. For details, see the chart on the back of this page. May our transition be smooth and blessed, that our ministry can rise above the restraints of COVID-19 and our mission in Osceola be blessed and fruitful, even in this time.

Q & A:

What are the basic guidelines we will follow?

We will have 30 minute worship not to exceed 50 persons per service as the risk increases significantly at 50 persons in an enclosed space for over 45 minutes, even with social distancing. Participants will be required to wear masks and use social distancing. Other details are on the chart on the next page.

Why are we following all of these rules?

When Jesus was asked which commandment is the greatest, he replied, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind...and a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40) Loving our neighbors means not intentionally spreading sickness. It is the reason we take greeting precautions during flu season and why the pastor does not shake hands when she or a family member has been ill. It also allows us to show care to our own members and friends who are ill right now. We support their struggle to be healthy and do not want others to be sick with them. According to Jesus, this is the second greatest commandment. As the church, we should probably follow that.

What if I don't want to wear a mask or follow one of the other rules?

We invite you to pray about your response and to continue watching the online worship offered. Those who come expecting to not follow guidelines will be escorted out of the building. These are the approved rules set by the Administrative Council of the OUMC, and to enter the building and remain in it, rules will be followed for the safety of others. The leadership of the church did not select these guidelines lightly, but prayerfully and with the support of the pastor and staff. Though we all have differing opinions, we agree to take these precautions to keep those we care about safe. To assist, a limited number of handkerchiefs for covering faces will be available.

Can I just show up without reserving online or calling ahead to the church?

Those who sign up will have a reserved spot in the sanctuary. The next priority will be to visitors who did not have access to signing up for worship. Finally, if there is space, those who had the opportunity to sign up but did not will be given a chance to be seated on a first come, first served basis. Only those who sign up are guaranteed seating as we MUST cap our attendance at 50 to maintain the lowest risk to attenders.

For answers to other questions, please contact the office at 641-342-2830.

Preparing for Worship:

Worship at 8 & 11 a.m.

- ☐ Register online: https://docs.google.com/document/d/14ixWCDRUKK60F2a1_PqDiCqaaXpRzvEahp_oUNyslr0/edit?usp=sharing
OR by calling the church office by Thursday at 641-342-2830
- ☐ Enter via the East Door. Exit via the South Door.
- ☐ You must have your temperature taken and it must be below 99.5 degrees to enter the building.
- ☐ If you do not have a mask, you will be given a bandana to wear as a mask at the East Door. A mask correctly covering the nose and mouth is required within the building while others are present.
- ☐ Receive a copy of your seat assignment to give the ushers.
- ☐ Wait in the next available green waiting area in the office hallway.
- ☐ Follow the direction of the ushers to your seat.
- ☐ Remain seated in your spot until dismissed by an usher at the end of the service.

Participate in Worship:

- ☐ Singing is prohibited except for special music that is prearranged in advance.
- ☐ Do not move around in the sanctuary once you have been seated. For health reasons, you may stand or exit. No reentry will be granted once you have exited worship.
- ☐ Restrooms are closed except in the case of medical emergency. Please use restrooms before and after coming to avoid issues.
- ☐ You may wave, talk at a reasonable volume while at least six feet apart, and otherwise kindly gesture toward one another. Do not shout or sing to avoid spreading possible infections.
- ☐ Do not rise to exit at the end of the service, but rather wait until ushers direct you out.
- ☐ When you depart following worship, move toward your car without fellowship.
- ☐ Social distancing must be maintained in all areas, including parking areas. You may, however, speak a bit more loudly outside.

Other Important Rules and Information:

- ☐ While schedules are important, please try to reserve the 8am service for those who have risk factors such as age; serious illness such as cancer, immunodeficiency, heart issues, and diabetes; breathing disorders such as asthma and COPD; infants under 6 months; premature infant under age 2; and others who are at increased risk.
- ☐ Online messages will continue to be provided for those who choose to stay home. If you are at very high risk, though we miss and love you, please stay home for your own safety until such time as it is recommended to come to worship.
- ☐ Do not come to worship if you or anyone you have been exposed to has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Do not come if you or anyone you have been exposed to have any symptoms of COVID-19 or other contagious diseases.
- ☐ While it is tempting to disregard rules, anyone refusing to follow rules will not be permitted to enter the church building. These guidelines have been set and approved by the OUMC Administrative Council, and they will be enforced for the safety of our parishioners and staff.
- ☐ Thank you all for your patience and cooperation. We know that this is a challenging phase of this pandemic, but as in all things, we will face this challenge with the love of God and neighbor as our primary goal.

Thoughts from Pastor Amy

"All things are lawful, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other... Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." – *1 Corinthians 10:23-24, 32-11:1*

It seems like we are in a season of wanting to lash out because we are weary. We are weary of COVID-19, so we want to rebel against everything COVID: masks, social distancing, rules about safety that we know deep down are meant to keep us safe. We are weary about 400 years of racism on one side, or a few decades of thinking we might lose our own footing because someone who has not had our opportunities might soon get them, so we lash out protesting, counter protesting, rioting, judging those who riot, or raging against either police or those who have been killed. But it never seems to satisfy our ache. We are not just angry, we are weary. Where can we go to feel the balm our souls need? To feel the assurance that we are indeed loved and cared for both in and out of crisis? So much of the world right now feels hollow, like we are going through the motions while the fires rage around us, rearranging furniture on the deck of the Titanic.

Paul felt this struggle. The world around him was volatile. There were Jews who refused to do things differently. The culture around them was changing, and they were angry. There were Greeks who refused to do things differently. The culture around them (Roman) was changing, and they were angry. There were Romans who refused to do things differently. They were becoming the dominant culture, and they were angry that people didn't just accept a new way. There were Christians, a new breed of religious people, who came from all different cultures and wanted everyone to be the same even though they were all different. The culture they knew was being threatened by Christians who did things differently but still claimed the same faith, and they were angry. Paul could have cut the tension with a knife. Yet Paul responds in an unexpected way, in the way of Pentecost.

In our Pentecost worship, we talked about how the Christian church was established by the apostles recognizing the unique cultures around them and sharing with one another differences, not just similarities. Here, Paul echoes this experience by telling the Christians in Corinth a few chapters earlier, "Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called." In other words, you don't have to throw away who you are to follow Christ; rather you ought to follow Christ regardless of who you are. To be a Christian, you do not have to be Greek, a Jew, a Roman, a slave, free, a speaker of a certain language, or a member of a certain family. Your membership in Christianity relies only on your faith in God: Holy Spirit, Son, and Father. For a Christian, there is no cultural prerequisite but that of love. Love, then, must be what compels us to act, to choose, to be, within the culture we embrace.

Does love condemn those who choose differently? No! But it compels us to choose accordingly. Does love scream violence and hatred? No! But it understands the pain of those whose circumstances are lessened by our own need for control and wealth. Does love snub the foreigner, the unpopular, the melanin-rich skin of a neighbor, or the hollow eyes of an overlooked child? No! Love sees. Love hears. Love listens. Does love put others at risk because it does not hurt us and we might benefit? No! Love puts others first and seeks first the kingdom of God. Does love make others less because they seem weak? No! Love lifts up the weak and the broken. Does love hate others who love in a culture that is not our own? No! Love recognizes itself in others. For us to have the culture of Christ, we must have the culture of love that acknowledges holiness in difference and joy in every unique expression of love. May we embody the love of Christ in our Facebook posts, our conversations, our glances at one another, and our sharing of opportunities. May love be our culture as Christians, and may we accept ourselves and one another in love.

— Pastor Amy



Prayers Needed

Please keep our church family in your prayers including Pastor Amy & her family, our staff & their families, Patricia Evensen, Dorothy Jeffreys, Darlene Lundquist, Mary Anne Rumley, Ray Russell, Sharon Webb. Also pray also for our conference denomination and world leaders. Call the office to start the prayer chain.

We ask for special prayers for all those who have been impacted by COVID-19.

Sympathy & Prayers

We extend our sympathy & prayers to Jan Short on the death of her sister-in-law, Coralee Woody, of Phoenix, AZ; to Virginia Ogan on the death of her husband, Ron; and to Doris Garner on the death of her sister, Betty Kinne.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Jan Short on the birth of her new great granddaughter, Vanessa Marie, born to Darian & Sean Healy, May 8. Jan says she is perfect!

130 W Grant St | Osceola, Iowa 50213-1623



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The Congregation	Ministers
Amy Johnson	Pastor
Anna Frohling	Secretary/Financial Secretary
Martha White	Treasurer
Melanie Eddy	Education Coordinator
Mary Gibson	Music Leader
Martha White	Bell Director
George Norris	Sound Technician
Jeri Lytton	Pianist
Lisa Wallace	Pianist/Organist
Kate Gaumer	Nursery Attendant

(ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED)

SUNDAY: Worship
Worship to begin June 14
8:00 & 11:00 a.m.
Call 641-342-2830 to preregister
www. (Day Worship) 6:30 p.m.

UMW News

by Sue Godfrey

In person gatherings for UMW
are on hold until further notice

"What do we do when the way we've always done things doesn't quite cut it anymore?" (Yvette Moore in May/June 2020 [Response](#)) I love this article. Although it was written in reference to the changes ahead of United Methodist Women as we move forward it sure fits the current changes in the way we conduct everyday life.

United Methodist Women might not be meeting in person but we are still here, active, and still needed as we move into the future. There are so many ways we as a group and individually can support the rights of women, youth, and children. Reading books and articles, keeping up with news, watching movies or informational programs, Bible studies, book studies (some are online even) all help us understand what those rights are, where they are being challenged, and how we can support each other. Prayers, notes, phone calls, e-mails, texts, and so on are always important along with contributions and gifts where appropriate to offer support.

The Book of Discipline officially recognizes the

organization of United Methodist Women. But being a member of a United Methodist Church does not automatically mean membership in United Methodist Women. Neither is membership in a United Methodist Church required for membership in United Methodist Women. There are no age requirements. There is no initiation ceremony. Meeting attendance is not mandatory. A monetary pledge is helpful as it keeps mission going, but there is no set amount and it is not required for membership. *Any women who commits herself to engage in mission, study, personal growth, and social action can join.* There are so many ways to be involved.

Times have changed in the past 150 years and continue to do so. Our task is to change enough to continue to work for the kingdom of God. What is that going to look like? Another quote from Yvette Moore's article: "Yes, in this time of change, God is up to something."

If you haven't joined yet, please give it some thought. If you are a member but have not sent a pledge in please give that some thought. Without fund raisers things will be tight this year (as everywhere). I can't tell you what next year will look like, but I can tell you it's going to be really GREAT because God is in charge!