

THE ADVANCE

Second Congregational UCC 2020

FACEBOOK: Second Congregational UCC, Grand Rapids

OCTOBER, 2020

“Otherness or Oneness” OR “Covid Crazyiness”

Do you remember one of the stories that came back to earth from the first astronauts who went into space? They were awed by their “view” of outer space, but even more so, they were struck by looking down on planet earth. What struck them most from their never-before-view of our planet was something they did not see. They were unable to see boundaries...no matter how hard they looked, they couldn't see national, ethnic, racial, socio-economic, or religious boundaries. All they could see was a single, beautiful orb called earth.

I think that my major lesson from Covid-19, this virus that knows no boundaries in its spread across our globe, is that we are inseparably linked together as human beings. This virus --- you can't wall it out, or check its growth, you can't drop a bomb on it, or crush it like human-kind is inclined to do when it is afraid of something. It is unstoppable and monolithic. It links us together, whoever we are and wherever we live. But to limit its death-dealing impact (the death count reached a million on our planet this week), we need to isolate, not touch, and wear masks and various kinds of armor.

We live connected lives, so the virus spreads across the world, but we disconnect in order to protect ourselves. The “connection” part of that formula means that we are vulnerable. And it also means that whatever the color of our skin, whatever team we root for, or who we will vote for, or what we like to eat or drink, we share something in common. We can be infected by Covid-19.

As a human race, we are fundamentally one. That has always been the case and will always be. As soon as we start excluding, building walls, viewing others as contaminated, we give rise to wars and destruction. The off-spring of isolation is discrimination, suppression, and violence.

Author Ken Wilber talks about the great optical illusion of separateness. Our sense of being not just unique but separate from everyone else is so deep and compelling that the very suggestion that we are fundamentally one with everyone and everything seems absurd. But the Bible teaches that in Christ we are one and that it is in Christ that all things hold together. Our sense of being separate is a profound misperception that has telling consequences.

It is such a strange time. We need each other, yet we must isolate from one another. The frightening thing in this crazy time is that our sense of separateness, nurtured and fed by Covid-19, is the lie that forms the core of our dysfunction as individuals and communities. God help us!

Continued on next page

continued from page 1

As God breathed life into Adam and he became a “living soul,” we now take measures NOT to breathe on others. Crazy! Frustrating!!

David Benner has written we are like leaves on a tree that is connected to all other trees in the forest by a shared root system, and to everything else in the cosmos by a deep web of interdependence. Each leaf, each branch and each tree is unique. But none is separate. The deepest truth of our existence is that we are one.

Steve Armfield
Interim Pastor



What Covid Has Taught Me

Bill Bode

The Staff has been asked to write about “how Covid has changed me,” so I will take a few minutes to offer what I have learned from the last six months from a personal and church perspective.

Personal

There are different ways to shop for everything. Almost all businesses have adapted to survive, some had options already in place, some still struggle.

Masks are a good thing. Never thought I would ever wear one except for preventing allergies from mowing. Now I better understand the importance of wearing one. Australia has taught us that it severely lowered illness during their just ended cold and flu season. Some of our world travelers reminded us that masks are the norm in several countries.

Some people think safety guidelines are not for them. This is both comical and sad at the same time. This is not about you; do it for others.

I appreciate the little things. Solitude, notes, packages, phone calls, FaceTime, and small gatherings.

From the Church’s Perspective

The Church is not the building. It took this to remind us that the people are the church, and it continues, almost without any issues other than the building.

The staff works more efficiently from home. This is my opinion, but just being in the building does not mean you are working efficiently. Those who need access to copiers and other office needs might not feel the same way. Certainly, I believe we are all working more hours because we get texts, phone calls and emails at all hours. I do not miss those long meetings at church. Having them online at home saves an hour in travel each time, not to mention one’s availability increases with the Zoom meeting option.

The Pastoral Care and Connectional Ministry Team is the most important ministry we are doing. I do not need to say anything else; you all get it.

Learning to attend Zoom meetings and FaceTime calls are easy to do and learn.

The top two things I have learned... Things change daily, and we miss seeing our friends face to face.

From your Governance Board

Happy October everyone! With a new season, comes some changes along with the traditional yearly events. October brings the start of stewardship month! We have a lot going on. When the information comes to your house, prayerfully consider what more you can do for your church! Regarding the Covid-19 situation in GR., we are looking to have our annual congregational meeting sometime in late November. We have voted to work at having services in the building. Since the Sanctuary will be done soon, we are putting together a safe service protocol. More to follow soon. Those are some of the big things on our list. We ask that you keep the church in your prayers as we look at ways to bring us all back together in these Covid-19 times!!

~ Laura Haas



The GivePlus+ App

During the month of September, using the GivePlus+ app as a easy way to give to 2nd Church has been noted in the Announcements on Sunday. If you are interested in trying the GivePlus+ app, please read on.

The app "GivePlus+" from your play store or apple store is available for free for download on your mobile phone and tablet. Once you download and the app opens, search for Second Church by putting in the zip "49505", and a list of participating churches will show. Choose Second Church and set up an account with email and password. (This is the typical set up on the front end that is only a one time thing.) After this, you should be able to see all the choices that a person can give to! Everything choice from the offering envelope to the funds that people typically give to.

Choose a fund

Choose a frequency (one time or weekly)

Choose an amount

Submit

After this you can pick another fund going thru the above process, as many "givings" as you want. When you are done choosing all the causes to give to, check them over. You can delete a specific "give" if you change your mind. Then move to the next screen to set up your bank account for payment. (This is a one-time set up also, as it is saved in this app.) After you are happy with your choices, submit it and you are done!

We hope you will check this out, ask questions, and give comments! Bill Bode and Laura Haas both have this app on their phone, and claim it is very easy. Please email Shelley at the church office (Shelley@2ndchurch.com) if you would like help with this app set up or to get questions answered.

A Wedding and Two Baptisms

The front steps of the church was a busy place in September.

On Saturday, September 5, 2020, Kathy Bird and Ray Chappell were married by Pastor Steve. Kathy is the daughter of Ken and Roxanne Bird. It was a beautiful day for a so-special wedding!



More Celebrations!



Eloise Beverly Curtis, daughter of Amanda Curtis, was baptized on Sunday, September 13, 2020. Grandparents are Don and Nancy Curtis and Great-grandmother is Bev Becker.

Beckham Michael Lewis, son of Andrew and Ashley Lewis, was baptized on Sunday, September 13, 2020. Grandparents are Steve and Yolanda Lewis.



So wonderful to celebrate baptism of two beautiful children of Second Church. Both children received a beautiful quilt made by the Second Stitchers of Second Church.

FROM THE MISSIONS TEAM

Thank you to everyone who has been collecting pop cans! The cans that have been collected so far have raised \$210.00. That money is going toward Supper Houses and Food Trucks for next year and other projects. Even if some events have been cancelled this year because of Covid-19, we have still been sending them money for future support.

Please continue saving your empty cans for us so we can still help. Call Pat Wolcott for drop-off instructions (616 822-3104).

Join us in wishing the following people a very happy October Birthday!

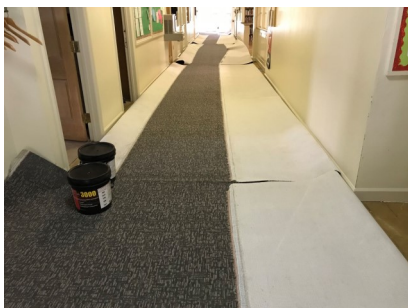
- 1 Henry Wieten
- 3 Marjorie Paquette; Ellen Wicks; Jim Yates
- 5 Kari Tubbs
- 12 Fred Eyer
- 13 Steven Haas
- 16 Betsy Flory McCoy
- 18 Donna Atkinson
- 19 Dorothea Endres
- 22 Lewis Boersma
- 23 Tim Leonard
- 25 Gloria Patz
- 28 Katie Cripps; Sue Eyer; Janet Van Geison
- 30 Kimberly Larsen
- 31 Barbara Dulmage



Sanctuary Update



We are almost there!! The LVT (vinyl) has been installed! The Chancel is done! The carpet in the Sanctuary is going in as this is being written!! All so very exciting! Next week, the pews, the screens, the organ, and the piano will be moved back in place. Also, we will start cleaning, so I'll be asking for volunteers. We have the whole building to do! Very exciting times for 2nd Church!!



SECOND CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
525 Cheshire Dr. N.E.
Grand Rapids MI 49505
616-361-2629
www.2ndchurch.com



Your Advance May Look a Little Different

You'll notice some changes to this month's Advance. Because of the uncertainty of when the church will re-open, we've left out the calendar and the Second Coffee schedule. On the other hand, we hope this Advance is full of useful information that keeps you informed and connected with Second Church.