



BLUFF PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Worship In May

As we enter the month of May, we continue to worship online as a church. Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett has requested the suspension of in-person worship services and gatherings until at least May 18th and we will be honoring that request. Stay connected through Facebook, email, Realm, and the church website for updates to our worship plans.

If you need help connecting to our worship Livestream, there are instructions on page 5 of the newsletter.



Find Help

We know that many people are struggling during this difficult time. Our church family has prepared to assist members of our church and community through their generosity and their sharing of supplies and resources.

1. If you are in need of a cloth mask, please contact the church's main office and we can make sure that one is provided for you.
2. If you are in need of food, please contact a pastor or the church's financial office staff. Your name and information will be held confidential within that circle of staff members.
3. If you are in need of financial assistance, please either contact or visit our church's financial office. They will ask you for the appropriate bills and information so that our pastors can then assist you. Your name and information will be held confidential within that circle of staff members as well as with our church treasurer.
4. If you are in need of prayer or pastoral care, please contact the pastors through the Pastoral Care Line at 205-533-9902 or by sending an email to care@bpumc.org.
5. BPUMC is connected to United Counseling which offers mental health telehealth services. You can obtain up to 3 free sessions by contacting a BPUMC pastor first.

Help Others

There are two significant ways that you can help others right now. The first is providing cloth Face Masks to members of our community who need them. You can donate materials or make a financial contribution to this project. Visit BluffParkUMC.org/face-masks for details.

We are also continuing to accept donations of Kid-Friendly food pantry items for distribution through Urban Ministries. See page 3 for more details.

Seek God, Lose Yourself, Find Life

www.BluffParkUMC.org

Sunday Morning

WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 10:30 am

Watch on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/bluffparkumc

Watch on our website:
bluffparkumc.org/livestream

Care Contact Information
205.533.9902 | care@bpumc.org

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Our faith, our lives, and our ministries take on a new life when the stories are shared with others. Help us tell God's story of love as it unfolds in our church and community. Send news, photos, videos, and stories to newsletter@bpumc.org

Message from the Pastor

One of the success stories of the past month has been the ways that Sunday school classes and Common Tables have bound together and supported one another even as they were scattered to their homes! We have a strong Sunday school program in our church and we are thankful for the many ways in which they have made a difference during these unprecedented times. Sunday school shepherds have been reporting prayer concerns and updating the needs of their members to the pastoral staff. Some Sunday school classes have moved to hold their classes online using video conferencing software like Zoom. And some classes are even filming the teaching portion and sharing it with the class or even posting it online! If you are not currently in a Sunday school class or Common Table, I hope you will consider making that commitment as soon as we are given the all clear to return to church!



I have sent out a series of anonymous surveys in order to see how our church family was faring during this pandemic. They have given me a helpful window into the effect of the coronavirus and the "shelter in place" order upon the lives of our church family. While I do not know the names of the people affected, I do see a rise in responses related to worry and stress, loss of work, and income insecurity. Not everyone is in the same boat, of course, and I know this church is ready to help! As a united people, we have prepared for such a time as this through the donation of food and supplies as well as through generosity to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. In this newsletter, you will find ways to find help as well as ways to help others. We know that some people may be uncomfortable asking for assistance and so we have a confidential way for you to seek assistance.

Now, about worship! Our current plan is to offer the best service we can in both our Chapel and Sanctuary services. Over the past year, we have heard some concerns that our church family seemed to be forming into two groups ~ one in the Sanctuary and one in the Chapel. We tried several ways of creating fellowship between both groups. During this time of widespread digital worship, we put together a strategic plan to ensure that members of our church and community would be able to be united even as we were scattered to our homes. Each Sunday, our three pastors would preach together so that folks from the Sanctuary would connect again to John Carl while folks from the Chapel could connect to Angela and me. We hope that this shared form of worship online will help unite our church family and help build bonds with our whole staff!

Finally, the Bishop of the North Alabama Conference and her cabinet announced the upcoming moves of pastors in our annual conference on Sunday, April 19. You may have noticed that none of the names of our pastoral staff were mentioned! Angela, John Carl, Stanley, and I are thankful that the Staff Parish Relations Committee asked us to return for another year and are all thrilled to be returning to such a wonderful church!

May God be with you until we meet again!

Urban Ministries Needs Food Pantry Items to Feed Children!

Since the beginning of the quarantine and social distancing, our food ministries have been partnering with Urban Ministries to serve people in our community. They have asked us for specific help providing food for children.

Members of our church family and the Bluff Park community have already made donations that have been delivered to Urban Ministries. The need continues. We encourage you to drop off food donations to the Seekers Classroom just past the church's main office during our temporary business hours of 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Monday through Thursday each week.

Urban Ministries is currently in need of KID-FRIENDLY options for these items:

- Canned meat
- Canned soup
- Canned fruit
- Bags of White Rice

Staying Connected

One of our biggest challenges throughout this period of social distancing and quarantine has been to stay connected with each other. Technology has been very helpful. A number of Sunday School classes and Common Tables (young and old alike) have been holding meetings on Zoom. Our children's and student ministries have been holding online meetings as well. And the comment section of our weekly worship Livestream has been a great place to connect with each other on Sunday mornings.

Staying connected also includes simple phone calls. Pastors, staff members, Sunday School and Common Table leaders and others have been making regular phone calls to check in with people too. If you want to get better connected or help check in on others, call the office.

BPUMC's Easter Love Offering

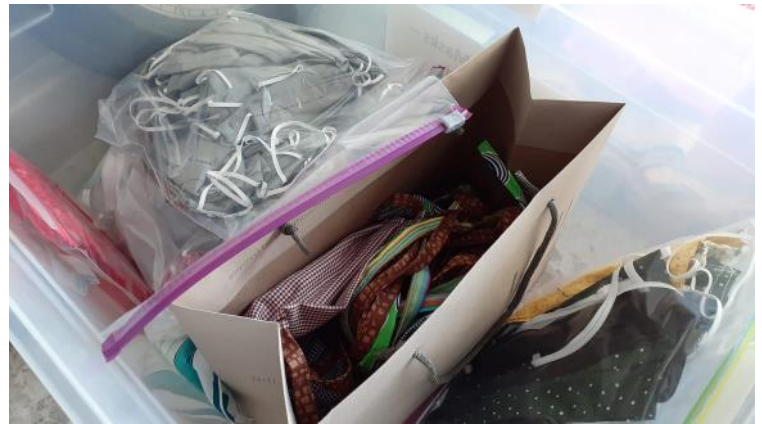
During the season of Lent and Easter, we ask for a special Easter Love Offering to support several of the mission agencies that we work with throughout the year. Each of these ministries (listed) provides vital services to the communities they serve. We rely on your generosity to enable each of them to continue to serving those in need. This year's Easter's Love Offering was interrupted by the Corona Virus quarantine which caused us to shift to worshipping online. In spite of that, we still collected \$7,290. But, that is about \$5,000 short of last year and these missions need help now more than ever. If you are in a position to help, please make a donation to the Easter Love Offering. You can drop off a check at the office or make a donation online through Realm or EasyTithe.



Kid-Friendly Food Donations for Urban Ministries

"Thanks so much for the food donation today. It was a real blessing. We are currently providing food for about 80 school children and a good number of senior citizens as well so we can put the food to good use during this trying time. In addition to this we continue our food pantry as usual. Your gift will bless many people. Thank you so much."

God Bless,
Rev. Tom Duley
Urban Ministry



Facemasks Ready to be Packaged and Delivered

OUR 2020 MISSION MINISTRIES

- BPUMC's Chile Mission Team
- Fountain of Love - Fairhaven
- Rise Against Hunger
- United Community Center (Riley Center)
- Urban Ministry

The Easter Love Offering is sponsored by the BPUMC United Appeal Fund.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

We hope that everyone had a wonderful Easter and that your families are doing well in the midst of social distancing! As we continue to be unable to meet in person, we also continue to offer Children's Ministries. Each week, we have been filming Children's Church and posting it to both the "BPUMC Kids!" and "Bluff Park United Methodist Church" Facebook pages on Sunday mornings. Further, we have started offering Wednesday afternoon Zoom meetings for the children of our church with Mr. Stanley and our Midweek Teachers. If you would like more information about Children's Church and these Zoom meetings, please email Melissa Hendon at mhendon@bpumc.org.

As the summer approaches, we know that many people are wondering about the status of Camp on the Bluff and/or Vacation Bible School. Our primary concern is the health and safety of the children of our church and community, as well as the volunteers who attend these ministries/events. We continue to monitor the CDC, local and state, and North Alabama annual conference of the UMC's guidelines, and we have been reaching out to healthcare professionals for advice as well. During the first full week of May, we will be making our final decisions on whether or not to offer Camp on the Bluff and Vacation Bible School this summer, and will then send updated information about these ministries/events through email and the "BPUMC Kids!" and "Bluff Park United Methodist Church" Facebook pages.

Again, we hope that everyone is doing well during this season of quarantine. Know that we are praying for each and every one of the children and families of our church, and if you need anything from the Children's Ministry or BPUMC as a whole, please do not hesitate to ask. I have been reading and thinking about Philippians 4:4-7 a lot over the last month, and I want to close with these words from Paul: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."



STUDENT MINISTRY

STUDENT MINISTRY UPDATE

So things continue to seem like they change everyday and we as your Student Ministry Team continue to watch and talk about how our situation continues to change and how our summer schedule is being affected. To stay up to date make sure you have accessed your Realm Account! We send out a weekly update to all of our Students and Students' Parents through the groups on realm so if you have not activated your Realm Account now is the time to do it!

If you have not received an email about activating your Realm account, make sure to check your spam folder first, then email mhendon@bpumc.org or youthdirector@bpumc.org and we will make sure you get another email to activate your account!

New Virtual Weekly Schedule!

Sunday:	7:00 Virtual Game Night
Tuesday:	4:00 Jr. High Zoom 5:00 Sr. High Zoom
Wednesday:	6:30 Instagram Live Holy Ground Worship (follow our Instagram @bpumc_students)



EVERYTHING IS NOT CANCELLED

So many things are cancelled or closed these days that it is easy to lose sight of our blessings. Let's take time every day to remember that...

Love is Not Cancelled
Friendship is Not Cancelled
Kindness is Not Cancelled
Hope is Not Cancelled

Reach out to someone today and share a little love, friendship, kindness, and hope.

The Open Door Café

All Open Door Café weekly programming is cancelled until further notice.

How To Worship Online

Over the past few weeks the pastors at Bluff Park UMC have put in a lot of work creating a Livestream Worship Service each Sunday morning. As the quarantine guidelines have evolved, we continue to adapt our approach so you can stay connected to your church family.

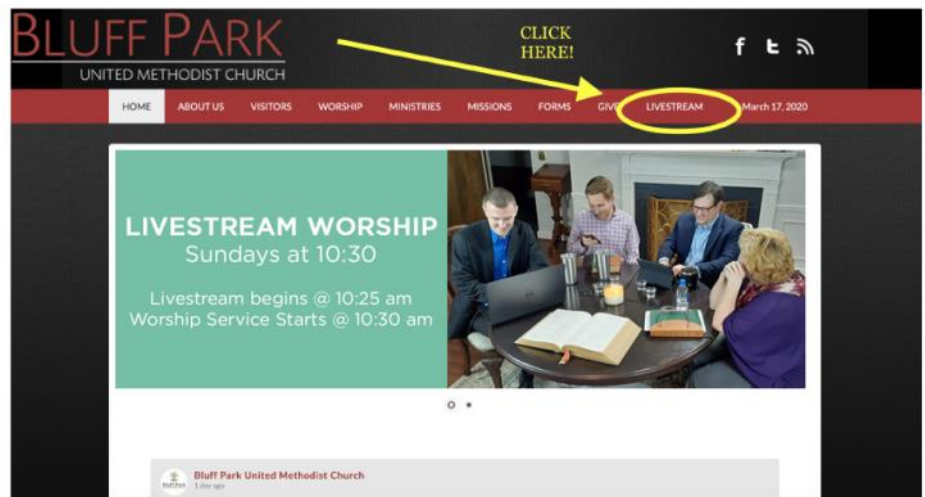
On Sunday mornings the weekly Livestream can be found on our Facebook Pages. If you aren't a Facebook user, there is also a dedicated page on our website where you can tune in live each week. The link to the livestream page is on the upper right of the website homepage and will take you to the Livestream page.

If you are not able to tune in to the live broadcast, the full service recording is available immediately after the service on the Livestream page and on Facebook.

No matter what happens in the coming weeks, you can stay connected and worship with your church family here at Bluff Park.

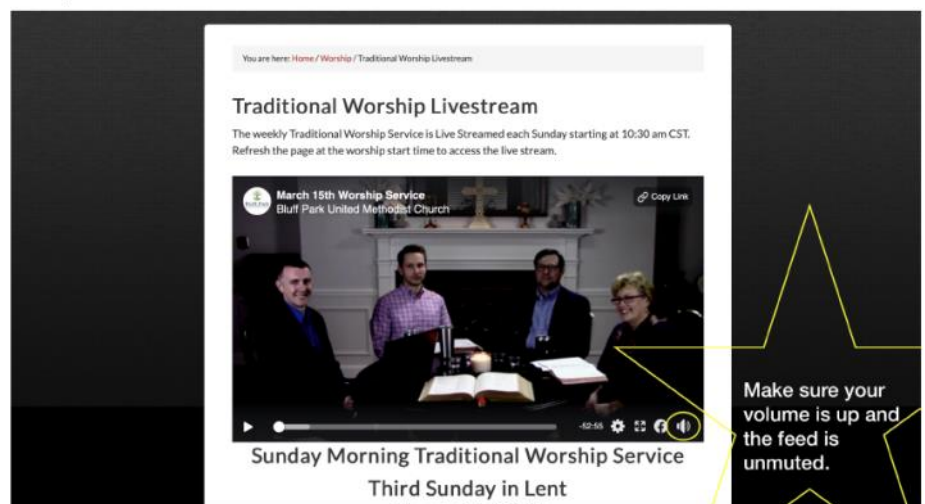
Step 1: Visit www.bluffparkumc.org

Step 2: Click "Livestream" in the top ribbon



Step 3: Click Play in the media player on the Livestream page

**Be sure and make sure the volume is on on the player and your computer or device.*





Realm is an online ministry tool designed for real-time connection. It helps members of our church family connect with each other and with our staff. Realm allows you to manage your personal information and who is allowed to see it, control your giving, and keep in touch with the ministry groups that matter to you.

Realm is not like a social network that's open to everyone. It's only made up of the people in your church. Realm gives you control over what information you share and who can see it.

You can access Realm on the web or through a free app on your phone.

If you have not setup your Realm account yet, contact Jason McCrory in the church office and request an invitation to join.

Let's get connected.

Giving Update

In the midst of quarantine and social distancing, the work of ministry and mission at Bluff Park United Methodist Church continues. Your giving is needed now more than ever. By financially supporting the church you are witnessing to your faith that God is at work even in difficult times. Your generosity funds our church's mission even as we have cut back on non-essential expenses and invest more heavily in staying connected to our church family and in serving the needs of our community.

Remember, God calls us to be generous with what we have. Maybe what you have now is a little different from what you had a month ago. But what you have can still be used to make a difference in our community!

You can give by: 1) mailing in a check, 2) setting up a recurring gift with your bank, 3) using an online application such as Realm or EasyTithe, or 4) coming to the church office during our revised business hours (Monday-Thursday, 10am-2pm) and dropping off your donation!

Member Updates

SYMPATHY OF THE CONGREGATION...

The sympathy of the congregation goes out to Carolyn Arthur and her family on the passing of her husband, Charles Arthur, on March 26th. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family in their time of loss.

The sympathy of the congregation goes out to the family of Wendell Andrews who passed away on March 31st. Our thoughts and prayers are with them in their time of loss.

LIFETRACK

May 1

1 Peter 2:13-17
Psalm 119:137-160

May 2

Ezekiel 34:1-16 | Psalm 30

May 3

Acts 2:42-47 | Psalm 63

May 4

1 Peter 5:1-5 | Psalm 52

May 5

Ezekiel 34:23-31 | Psalm 47

May 6

Matthew 20:20-28 | Psalm 53

May 7

Acts 6:8-15 | Psalm 50

May 8

Acts 7:1-16 | Psalm 54

May 9

John 8:48-59 | Psalm 55

May 10

John 14:1-14 | Psalm 24

May 11

Exodus 13:17-22 | Psalm 57

May 12

Proverbs 3:5-12 | Psalm 62

May 13

John 8:31-38 | Psalm 72

May 14

Genesis 6:5-22 | Psalm 74

May 15

Genesis 7 | Psalm 106:1-18

May 16

Genesis 9:8-17 | Psalm 76

May 17

John 14:15-21 | Psalm 96

May 18

John 14:27-29 | Psalm 77

May 19

1 Peter 3:8-12 | Psalm 78:1-39

May 20

John 16:16-24 | Psalm 68:1-20

May 21

Luke 24:44-53 | Psalm 8

May 22

Ephesians 2:1-7 | Psalm 85

May 23

2 Kings 2:13-15 | Psalm 87

May 24

Acts 1:6-14 | Psalm 90

May 25

1 Peter 4:1-6 | Psalm 89:1-18

May 26

1 Peter 4:7-11 | Psalm 99

May 27

1 Kings 8:54-65 | Psalm 109

May 28

Exodus 19:1-9 | Psalm 105:1-22

May 29

Romans 8:14-17 | Psalm 102

May 30

Exodus 20:1-21 | Psalm 33

May 31

Acts 2:1-21 | Psalm 118

Dear Friends,

I am so grateful for the amazing ways in which clergy and laity of the North Alabama Conference are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our United Methodist Churches have adjusted to the “sheltering-at-home” situation by offering on-line worship services, Bible studies, Sunday School classes and small group meetings. Others are enjoying conference calls or drive-in worship services. Meetings are happening by conference calls, Google Meet, Zoom, and other platforms. Children and youth ministries are occurring through creative and innovative approaches. Pastoral care is being offered in safe and intentional ways by clergy and laity alike. Churches continue to reach out to their communities through food banks and collaboration with community agencies while simultaneously practicing social distancing and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) health guidelines. And there is so much more.

That brings me to an important update that has been prayerfully discerned by the Cabinet, other Conference leadership and me.

The Cabinet and I request that all North Alabama Conference churches continue the suspension of in-person worship services and gatherings until at least May 18. As the coronavirus situation in our state and country continues to unfold, it is possible that we will extend this to a later date.

We are assessing the situation week-by-week to determine when it is safe to resume worship services, using as guidance the wisdom of our local, state, and national health authorities. Thank you for understanding that this request to continue suspending in-person worship services and gatherings is made out of concern for the health of our community and church members.

I am thankful for how our clergy and churches are “pivoting” together to continue to provide quality ministry and share Jesus Christ during this challenging pandemic. Our resiliency says much about our faith in Christ and commitment to the transformation of the world. Though for now, we are unable to safely gather in person on-site, we continue to be the church in meaningful and powerful ways.

As always it is a privilege to serve as your bishop.

Blessings,
Debra Wallace-Padgett
Resident Bishop
North Alabama Conference

NOTE:

We continue living with a great deal of uncertainty about when we will be able to resume some of our normal gatherings and activities. The calendar will continue to be revised throughout the coming month as the Corona Virus pandemic continues to play out in our community. Continue to watch our Facebook page, website, and Realm messages for updates.



MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

In Memory of...

GENERAL OPERATING FUND

Charles Arthur, by Terry and Ann Bice

John Whitcomb, by Mike and Sandy Miller

FOOD PANTRY

Charles Arthur, by Lynn Carlisle, David and Jeannie Jenkins, John and Sylvia Sumners

CHRISTIN CROCKETT SCHOLARSHIP

Peggy Hill, by Friendship Class, Genex Services

PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY

Charles Arthur, by Roy and Charlotte Shanlever

John Whitcomb, by Curtis and Paula Thompson

PERMANENT ENDOWMENT

John Whitcomb, by Nathan and Alice Chase, Jim and Sandy Dollar, Gordon A. Hallmark, Jim and Olivia Howard, Rick and Jennifer McEuen, Samford University Em-

ployees and Students

MUSIC MINISTRY

Dan Hughes, by Debra McCallum

John Whitcomb, by Fred and Jackie Battle, Don and Pam Bray, Classmates from Berry High School Class of 1974, John and Rosemary Dallam, Ellen Finley, Sula Hicks, Ron Jones, Ray and Nancy Miller, Sue Pearson, Sue Reeder, Samford University Employees and Students, Eric and Melissa Smith, Sam and Susan Vogt, Becky Walker, Dan White, Chuck and Sandra Wingate

WHITE CHRISTMAS

Loy Jones, by Ellen Finely

In Honor of...

EASTER LOVE OFFERING

Leonette Slay, by Elizabeth Davis

Note: Some Memorials and Honorariums are not listed by the request of the donors.

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Bluff Park
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
—Rooted in Faith, Growing in Grace—

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LIVESTREAM WORSHIP
Sundays at 10:30

Livestream begins @ 10:25 am
Worship Service Starts @ 10:30 am



Revised Church Business Hours

Monday through Thursday 10:00 am—2:00 pm

Because several staff members are working from home and because the hours of operation have changed at the church, the Pastoral Care Emergency Line is now a great way to get in touch with Rev. Mike Holly or any of our pastors. You may also use the email address: CARE@BPUMC.ORG which sends an email to all of our pastors at BPUMC. You will have to leave a voicemail, but a pastor will contact you right back. That number is (205) 533-9902