

The Messenger

Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church

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www.fiskumc.org

May 2020

Pastor's Note

Greetings my dear sisters and brothers in the world!

As we start another month of physical distancing, there are many who have been broken and still others who have not recognized or acknowledged the brokenness of others.

I say this with great pain, but also the humor that God shares; for some of us have said that this is a great opportunity to turn hearts to God when they are the same people who have lived without hearts or just hearts of stone. So, the simple but sometimes difficult question to answer is, "How can hearts be turned to God, who we do not see, but turned away from God's children on earth that we see every day in pains, with sufferings and tears in their eyes?"

Though difficult for some and while others wish to ignore, we can reflect on a simple message of the heart. As we continue to hide out and/or practice this time of physical distancing, I wonder if we might need to ask for a new heart and a new spirit within. For too long we have made commitments and promises and we fail to keep them. And yet, we want to go back to our lives and claim normality. But have we recognized the real Christ in the brokenness?

When we come out of our virtual tombs that we have been placed in because of the Coronavirus, and we will. Remember that Jesus Christ came out of the tomb, is no longer in a tomb, but lives! Yes, we will all live. Some in the physical and others in the spiritual. But no matter how we live, we will need a new heart and spirit. Jeremiah 17:9 says that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it"? And Mark 7:21-22 also affirms that "For from within, out of the heart of man comes evil thoughts..."

For now, and as we stay home, what is the condition of our heart? Do we truly love God and our neighbors? As each of us answers these questions, and I pray that we do. God will pull us up with healing and health and remove all obstacles to the joy of HIS people. Especially, those with "A heart of stone" that has no spiritual life in it, because it does not have love, empathy, compassion and no desire for the 'Real & True God'. But, most of all,

those with hearts that are unmoved by the pains, suffering and tears of all God's children on earth.

Blessings of Good Health, Healing & Comfort with thanks for those who save lives!
-Pastor Alecia

Pastor's Announcements

We WELCOME All

Fisk United Methodist Church is a loving community of believers and servants with open hearts. We extend our welcome to all people, celebrating differences in age, economic reality, nationality, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, abilities, and limitations.

- We invite all to find a spiritual home with us and to share in the fellowship, worship, sacraments, ministry, responsibilities, and blessings of participation in our congregation.
- We affirm the gifts and graces of all persons.
- We are committed to be a fellowship in which all persons feel a part of our family.
- And, we invite you to work for justice with us.

Statement of the Administrative Board,
April 2019, Fisk UMC



For Personal Reflection & Spiritual growth

For continuous spiritual growth and reflection, read the following Scriptures that have been selected for our worship this month.

May 3	Psalm 23	John 10:1-10
May 10	1 Peter 2:2-10	John 14:1-14
May 17	1 Peter 3:13-22	John 14:15-21
	Psalm 66:8-20	
May 24	1 Peter 4:12-14 & 5:6-11	John 17: 1-11

The Fisk Prayer Box

Prayer is the master key that can open and close all doors. When you find the need to pray with the assurance that others are praying for and with you, leave a prayer in the prayer box on the front lawn of the church, on-line on our website, or just call and speak with Pastor Alecia. Remember that no one walks alone. We at Fisk UMC are willing and ready to travel the journey with you.

Therefore, if you are looking for a church home, we invite, welcome, and accept all persons. We are a phone call away (508-653-1674). Thanks, and be blessed!

Worship

Please join us for Fisk UMC Worship & Fellowship every Sunday using the following link and phone numbers. Worship begins at 10:30 AM. You may dial in or log in starting at 10:20 AM.

To experience Worship on the website:

**[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84030720537?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84030720537?pwd=Ymh4OTRPalFalJkQ3hmdW1Sb1JDdz09)
[pwd=Ymh4OTRPalFalJkQ3hmdW1Sb1JDdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84030720537?pwd=Ymh4OTRPalFalJkQ3hmdW1Sb1JDdz09)**

To experience Worship by telephone:

+1 253 215 8782 US or +1 301 715 8592 US

You will be asked to enter the following password:

Password: 858614 Meeting ID: 840 3072 0537

Worship Courtesies:

- Sign-in a little early to greet others (open at 10:20 a.m.).
- Please mute yourself when not speaking.
- To set a worshipful tone and to minimize distraction, you may wish to have your camera off for Worship and on for Fellowship Time.
- Worship will begin with a prelude and quiet reflection time.

Evangelism

We Are Staying *Connected*

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

—Matthew 25:40

The Fisk Congregation is worshiping together, praying as one, and singing praise to the Lord...all while taking care of each other by physically distancing.

What else are we called to do?

We are called to maintain and support our community by staying connected with one another. Can you help?

Members of our congregation are stepping up, through our *Connected Congregation Project*, to make regular connections to others in our community. We are reaching out through phone calls, emails, and sending snail mail cards. Through these connections we pray that we can support the needs that people might have.

What can you do?

- When God puts another person's name on your heart...*respond!* Make a call, send a card, reach out with an email.
- Let us know if you have a need. What support would you like? We have volunteers!
- Let us know if you'd like to help in these ways: making calls and reaching out, picking up and delivering groceries, etc.
- Sign up through Amy Bruns to be a *Fisk Connector*, one who reaches out.
- Call or email the Fisk Office: 508.653.1674 or fiskoffice@fiskumc.org. Or connect with Pastor Alecia at fiskpastor@fiskumc.org or Amy Bruns at amybruns35@gmail.com.

*** Whether you make it "official" or not, PLEASE let Amy Bruns, Evangelism Chairperson, know what you're doing to stay in touch. We want to reach ALL of our members. -Fisk Evangelism Committee

Education

Noah and His Ark

Hello awesome parents. I challenge you to open up a Biblical Story Book or the Bible itself on a daily basis for yourself and your family.

So, let's start with Noah. I studied this story a few years back with my Bible Study and, behold, I learned many things that I never knew. So, one story means one thing to one age and another to a different age.

Read Genesis 6:5-22.

www.MinistrytoChildren.com online has a free lesson if you want to get fancy. Please let me know if you like this site. My email is susanjarney@gmail.com.

What did people think about Noah? They thought he was very silly! Did God think he was silly? Why did God pick him?

What do we have that Noah did not have? The love and knowledge of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of the trinity.

Enjoy being in the word of God with your family. Watch for an email from me. Love you church folk -- all of you.

Susan Carney for Education



These sweet prayers are meant for all of us.
We are all God's children. Share with families
and know the education folk are with you.



Family Promise Update

On March 16th, Sue Crossley, Director, notified us that: "In light of all that is happening with COVID-19, we have been faced with the challenge of what is best to do for our families, volunteers, congregations, and staff. After much consideration, we have moved our families into a local hotel. We were generously offered a steep discount for suites that include bedrooms, a living area, and a kitchenette so that families can be completely self-contained. As a result, we will also be closing the Day Center and all staff will be working remotely."

Since then, staff have been busier than ever. They are working to get families currently in the program out of the hotel and into apartments and have asked anyone knowing of a two-bedroom apartment renting for under \$1,800 a month to contact them. And, staff are working with other agencies to keep families on the brink of losing their housing in their homes. Their focus for the next several months will be on keeping people out of shelters rather than providing it!

Because of this, we WILL NOT be housing guests at the end of May as it appears that it will not yet be advisable to share space. Host congregations have been asked to donate \$25 gift cards for local grocery stores in lieu of preparing meals as that is a safe way to provide food for

guests in the program. If you are interested in helping in this way, contact Debbie Friscino or send gift cards directly to the Day Center at Family Promise Metrowest, 6 Mulligan Street, Natick, MA 01760.

Ministry of Caring

Psalm 13

Throughout the past two months, have you ever felt that God was distant – or self-distancing from you? Have you distanced yourself from God? Using Psalm 13 as a prayer, it can be broken down into three focused prayer points: *The Problem* – Verses 1 & 2

- ¹*How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?*
²*How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and every day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?*

At the start of Psalm 13, you can feel and hear the turmoil – kind of like smashing waves or choppy waters during a storm – and then they become calm. Do you ever feel like life is a storm at times? God has not turned away from you. God is not giving you the "silent treatment." When God seems distant, trust. Trust his unfailing love. *The Petition* – Verses 3 & 4

- ³*Look on me and answer, O Lord my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death;*
⁴*my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.*

Do something! Call in to worship on Sunday morning. Call in for prayer on Wednesday morning or evening. Knit or crochet a prayer shawl. Cook a meal for someone. Call someone. Create something that is your talent and share it. Share your heart in a way that makes your heart soar! Doing something helps – especially when you want God to "hurry up and do something!"

The Praise – Verses 5 & 6.

- ⁵*But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.*
⁶*I will sing to the Lord
for he has been good to me.*

When family, friends, and other loved ones, including God, seem distant, it is our emotions that take the hit. Reach out to others and they, with God's help, will help you get through. God has not forgotten you, me, and Fisk UMC. Deliberately choose God's love.



Fisk Prayer Shawls



Prayer shawls have been in use for centuries. Shawls are given to celebrate the joys in life and special occasions, as well as bringing comfort and care to those in need.

Pastor Tiffany Spigarolo, Chaplain at Leonard Morse Hospital and Framingham Union Hospital, and Pastor Alecia both understand the importance of meeting the spiritual needs of a patient and their families, and this is a key part of caring for the whole person.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry at Fisk has brought comfort and healing to many recipients over the years. The hands that have worked on knitting and crocheting each Wednesday morning at Fisk, and temporarily now each at home, have added comfort, healing, and God's love into the shawl. The recipients are always grateful and comforted when presented with a shawl. In one instance, a shawl was delivered to a woman who was going to a chemotherapy treatment that afternoon. As she hugged her shawl, they prayed with her and she said she would take it to the hospital with her during her treatment. Another young woman, who received a prayer shawl while in high school, kept it with her every night thereafter and took it with her as she went off to college. Many shawl stories fill our praying hearts and hands.

"In the midst of our changing world, people's lives are being changed, and people are feeling isolated or separated," said Pastor Tiffany. During this very difficult time during the Coronavirus, Pastor Tiffany contacted Pastor Alecia, and with the help of Sherry Culver, Joanne Billo, and all of our knitters and crocheters, prayer shawls made their way to both the Natick and Framingham campuses of the Metro-West Medical Center with the prayers that these shawls and lap robes would reach patients who are in need of God's love, healing and comfort.

In the hospital, many are separated from their loved ones. In churches, the congregation is separated from those they love and worship with each week. It is the "separation" that brought the hospital, and the church to a connection that was knitted and crocheted, together.

Missions & Outreach

LEARN ~ PRAY ~ SERVE ~ GIVE

What CAN we do? What ARE we doing?

We are a MISSION church. We see needs and respond to the best of our abilities at that time. There are so many things we can do.

Hygiene Kits The New England Conference Response Team Coordinator, Barbara Burnside, asked for **Hygiene Kits** (aka Health Kits) for immediate use in Lawrence and surrounding town shelters.

I gathered **94 Hygiene Kits** and delivered them to her on Monday morning. We will continue to supply Hygiene

**Hygiene
Kits
Needed**

Kits where needed. Keep them coming! These are used in the states in situations of floods, hurricanes, shelters, or any disaster. If you have items/kits they can be left at Fisk or call me and I can pick

them up.

Marcia marciahyt@aol.com 508-655-0077.

*Visit FiskUMC.org and select the "more..." tab to see the list of Hygiene Kits supplies.



United Methodist Economic Ministry is in need of funds. The UMEM Thrift Shops, which are one of their main sources of income are temporarily closed, but the needs continue. Food Pantry families are increasing. Needs for fuel assistance (yes, they still have snow) and housing needs are in demand. Do you have heat? A roof over your head? Any food in the cupboard? You are better off than many in our greater community.

The most efficient way to help is to give funds.

1. Write a check to Fisk and mark it for UMEM
2. Add an amount to your Pledge check and mail to Fisk UMC
3. Go to the web site and give online at: umeconomicministry.com or mail to: UMEM 1458 Salem Rd. Salem, Maine 04983

Natick and Framingham Hospitals

As you will read elsewhere in this Messenger, the Chaplain of the two Metro West Hospitals had a need for Prayer Shawls and Lap Blankets. Pastor Alecia put out the call and BAM...Sherry C. has made two deliveries of 19 shawls & blankets from Fisk. We are now collecting another 10 gifts of HOPE. Thanks, Sherry for being the deliverer of this LOVE.

News from Nicaragua ...Listen to an interview with Dr. Belinda Forbes and Thomas Kemper, the CEO of UMCOR.

You can see this 6-minute video and the others on
<https://www.facebook.com/thomas.kemper.50>
<https://www.facebook.com/GlobalMinistries/>

or here on Belinda's YouTube page
<https://youtu.be/TeKCjvPb7ZE>

You can support her ministry in Nicaragua and those of many missionaries around the globe doing mission work for US. Give through the ADVANCE #12109Z

If you have Internet access, I encourage you to look at some of these sites and LEARN more about what the church is doing to respond to the crisis we are facing. www.UMCmissions.org



Also, you will find ways to GIVE! How you can SERVE. We all can PRAY for those affected by COVID-19 and the many needs around the globe facing people in all types of situations.

Messages of HOPE and MOTIVATION **Nurses and Staff of our Local Hospitals**

Currently, the nursing staff and supporting staff are working in stressful situations, long hours, and in addition to being a nurse—they are substituting for family and friends to the patients. No visitors are allowed and the staff is trying to do what they can to make patients feel comfortable and cared for—as their families would have done in a non-COVID time.

What can you do? Write a letter, send a drawing or artwork, and messages of good cheer, positivity and motivation to thank a nurse or staff person. Chaplain Tiffany is asking for letters (not cards) on a sheet of paper (preferably 8 ½ by 11). It is suggested that you mention that you are a member of Fisk UMC, but not necessary.

Mail them to: Department of Spiritual Care
Framingham Union Hospital
114 Lincoln Street
Framingham, MA 01702

or

Department of Spiritual Care
Leonard Morse Hospital
67 Union Street
Natick, MA 01760



Missions Committee: Janis Cail, Susan Carney, Mary Greenwood, Janis Townsend and Marcia Hoyt, Chairperson.

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

BLANKETS, BLANKETS and more BLANKETS

Each year Fisk has supported the Church World Service Blanket Sunday for Mother's Day cards. Available during the month of May.

We have locally-made Mother's Day cards for you to purchase and give as a gift. It can be for anyone you think is a great Mother, your own Mother, your Grandmother, a new Mother, a favorite Aunt...you decide. What a great opportunity to honor or remember your mother. Cards are \$10.00 each and your shopping is done!!



Blankets serve as a tent/home, a hammock, a satchel, a bed, a wrap to someone in need of love and care. These blankets are given to those around the globe.

Social Distancing—I can drop the cards at your house/porch and you can leave a check (payable to Fisk Church) or send me the money for as many cards as you might want and I can send you the cards in the return mail. We can work out what is best for you.

A STORY--The world has been turned upside down due to the COVID-19 pandemic—churches/organizations are having to change their programs and ways to connect, pray together and worship. We still need to do the outreach into our communities to help the marginalized people. One example is The Bowery Mission in New York City.

The Bowery Mission has been around for 140 years, staying open during the Spanish Flu, the Great Depression, and Hurricane Sandy. They knew what the challenges could look like when COVID-19 became prevalent.

The Bowery Mission is “called to minister in the New York metro area to men, women, and children caught in the cycles of poverty, hopelessness, and dependencies of many kinds, and to see their lives transformed to hope, joy, lasting productivity and eternal life through the power of Jesus Christ.” They are serving those victims of domestic violence, people struggling with PTSD, domestic violence, substance abuse, or any trauma.

The staff want people to feel safe, trusted, and cared for. We offer meal programs, shower programs, shelters, and day centers. Day centers are safe spaces where everybody and anybody is welcome. People can relax a bit, they can rest, and be part of a community.

Church World Service sent The Bowery Mission NYC **500 CWS Blankets** in response to COVID-19. The blankets are very helpful in rotating out blankets at the shelter to ensure that everything is clean and sanitized. Old sheets and blankets are also being replaced with the new blankets.

We will continue to be a place of refuge and hope so others may come to know about the love of Christ as we help to meet their immediate needs.

Church World Service is only able to provide CWS Blankets because of the dedicated congregations and donors that support this Blanket Month. Every person who buys a blanket is helping someone. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these donations can be life-saving. Thank you for serving others.

Contact Marcia Hoyt for cards or more information.

Climate Change Calendar

How did you do with the challenges of the calendar included in April's Messenger?

Try again. These are things that could/should become routine in our lives.

Do you have a story about one or more of the suggestions? Share it with a member of the Missions Committee and we'll include it in the June Messenger.

United Methodist Women

United Methodist Women are resilient, bold, energetic, committed, growing in faith, action, and LOVE. As a suggestion of Fisk Evangelism Committee, we need to find ways to stay in communication and in connection with each other.

ZOOMING with UMW Our women will hold a Zoom meeting on Tuesday, May 5. This is a “new adventure” for our “new normal life.” Let’s give it a try. If you have read a book from the Reading List, you may share or not. If you just want to listen and chat...do that too.

Topic: What are You Reading?

Time: May 5, 2020 at 4:00 PM Join Zoom Meeting

<https://umcom.zoom.us/j/97132977599>

Meeting ID: **971 3297 7599**

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 971 3297 7599

Find your local number:

<https://umcom.zoom.us/j/adK2T5Lh5p>

The Hannah Circle will meet on Tuesday, May 12, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. by phone for their “regular” monthly meeting. All women are invited to prepare their lunch. We will feature a “Show and Tell (without the Show).” Over lunch, which will start at 12 noon, we will catch up on our lives and hear how we are doing. Hear you soon!

The **Susanna Circle** decided to have a “call chain” each week. On Saturday Janis Cail, our chairperson, scrambles the list of our 14 members and emails it to each of us. In a day or two, all have been contacted. I have had interesting conversations with circle sisters that would not be happening otherwise. We can share needs, prayer requests and celebrations with each other, as well as just “catch up.” We’re being “supportive” UM Women.

YARD SALE Our Annual May Yard Sale—for MISSIONS has been moved to **August 29**. We have re-scheduled this fun and important event. Please save your treasures...until August. More information to come.

Connecting with the National organization.

If you have internet capability, I encourage you to look at the web site

www.unitedmethodistwomen.org

It could keep you busy for a day. Just poke around and see what our branch of the United Methodist Church is doing in the Mission World.

Stewardship

A reminder in this challenging time for us all, as we marshal our efforts to serve our brothers and sisters in need: we still depend on our pledged and unpledged support to continue our ministries and pay our bills. We can all continue our financial stewardship commitments in two ways:

- Use your pledge envelopes as US mail envelopes- add your check, a stamp, and send, or put them into the mail slot in the red double doors at Fisk Church
- Go on our website and click on the “Donate to Fisk UMC Ministry” button in the blue bar midpoint on the home page. This link takes you a quick, easy and secure contribution form, where you can designate “Pledge Giving” or any of several other categories, and use your bank information or debit card just as you do on Amazon or any e-com site.

A Talent Blessing

In the midst of not being together physically at this time, God still touches our hearts and hands. Rose C., one of our youth members, designed and created this piece of art. A couple of years ago, she saw this jar in the Education closet and thought that it would make a cute little decoration. Like a lot of us and “doing things,” she finally got to it now because of social distancing. She did know that she was going to put a cross on it. After that was done, she added the doves, and we are blessed by her sharing her gifts of creativity and love.



faithfulness, compassion, caring, and spiritual support. I've been blessed to have been a part of such a dedicated community of believers. I wish you well as you continue to be a light to all.

Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. - Psalm 62:8

Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. - Proverbs 19:21

Much love always,
Mark Owen

June Messenger deadline:

Friday, May 22

Mailing Date: Wednesday, May 27

We're all in this together ...

Stay healthy—Stay safe—Wear a mask!

May Celebrations!

Greetings from Nashville

As many of you know, I've moved to Nashville to be closer to family. Although I've been actively planning this move for the last eight months, it all came together relatively quickly with the sale of my house on April 6. Although the process of selling a house during the height of a pandemic was fraught with uncertainty, God's providential hand was evident throughout. It's been an exercise in trust and surrender for me.

Even though I look forward to this transition with hopeful anticipation, I'm sad that I'm leaving my Fisk family, especially during this time of social distancing and isolation. Nothing can replace in-person goodbyes and hugs. Over the last 26 years, you have truly been my extended family, supporting me and my family during good and bad times. I can't thank you enough for your