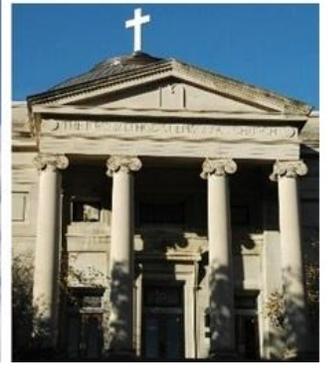




first CHURCH



the
LIGHT
newsletter



April 2021

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Worship Sundays at 10:30 AM Mabaan at 12:30 PM



FROM THE PASTOR

*Rejoice in hope,
be patient in suffering,
persevere in prayer.*

Romans 12:12

What a time in which we are living! The global pandemic has brought anxiety, stress, and social turmoil to the world; we are witnessing significant technological advances, virtual connectivity, and at the same time, complicated human interactions. Religious and political division in the world and our country has made sharing the gospel more challenging. Our church denomination is now navigating the uncharted waters of a potential split due to different interpretations of human sexuality.

Everything seems to be really hard for a world that needs hope in the future. The first Christian communities faced something similar. The epistle of Romans was written amid social, political, and religious turmoil. Tensions between the Jewish community and the followers of Jesus led to the expulsion of the Jews from Rome. One Bible commentary states: *In the words of the Roman historian Suetonius "The Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus". (A potential misspelling of "Christus", Christ)* Disturbances erupted in Rome, not unlike those related to the preaching of the gospel. After Claudius the emperor died and the edict lapsed, Jews began returning to Rome, but the churches grew in attendance with other non-Jewish groups causing considerable tension between them.

This is the context in which the apostle Paul addressed the church in Rome. What should be done in the midst of all of this constant tension and potential divisions in society? In Chapter 12 of Romans, the apostle describes the characteristics of a New Life in Christ. According to Paul, believers are different; God's people live a life driven by God's love. Paul also identifies specific Christian virtues that we must put into action. Our Christian character must emerge when we face controversies and tensions in our lives.

There are three crucial principles found in Romans.

1. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.
Let's keep in our hearts and minds that God is still sovereign over human history; the church will succeed in this challenging time of trial. We must be focused on God's love and purpose so that we can see a brighter future for our communities. Let's cast away all negativity and see the good things that God has in store for us!

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2. We need patience to experience God's hope that will give us the emotional and spiritual strength to move forward and never lose heart as we understand God's perfect will in our lives.
3. The practice of prayer is the spiritual energy we all need to stay connected to the spirit of God.

I invite you to join us and persevere on this twelve-week of prayer journey. We are starting to see the fruits of our spiritual search for God's presence. I send to all of you my daily prayers, God's love, and blessings for our church family and our community!

Pastor Edgar

First Church Returns to In-Person Worship

Join us on Easter Sunday, April 4th as we resume in-person worship. The Polk County infection rates are down and the number of people vaccinated has risen so the re-entry team has decided we are able to return to in-person worship.

Covid protocols will still be in place. You must wear a mask, have your temperature taken, use hand sanitizer and sit socially distanced. We will not be having after church coffee so following the service, please move out of the building.

If you are not comfortable attending worship in person, you may still join us online.

We can't wait to see you!

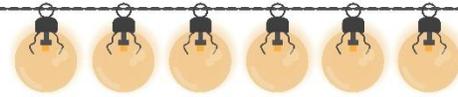


Maundy Thursday Service to be Held Online



Please join us on Facebook or YouTube for our Maundy Thursday service. It will begin at 7:00 PM on Thursday, April 1st. Since the service will be livestreamed, you may join us in Holy Communion as we celebrate the Last Supper. Please have your elements ready (juice, bread and a towel to cover the elements).

Did you know the word Maundy comes from the Latin word for command? This is taken from Jesus' commandment to his disciples as he told them to love one another as he has loved them.



"For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we are brave enough to be it."
- Amanda Gorman



FUMC
Anti-racism
Task Force

20 Key Words in Learning to be Anti-Racist

As followers of Jesus we are called to love our neighbor no matter their nationality, their religion, gender, sexual orientation or their race. Learning about racism in whatever form it presents itself is an educational process. As our Anti-Racism Task Force is discovering, there is a lot to learn. We discovered that we needed to begin with the basics including terms that are often used. We have found these terms to be helpful in our study and conversation and we hope you will too.

Ally

An ally is someone who makes the commitment and effort to acknowledge their privilege (whether based on gender, class, race, sex, etc.) to work in solidarity with minority groups towards reducing their oppression and raising awareness of the struggle of the group.

Anti-black

To be anti-black means to be resistant or antagonistic to black people, their culture, values, or objectives. There exists two forms, a subtle systemic version that predetermines the socioeconomic status and standards of everyday life against the favor of black people, which is held in place by institutions and ideologies. It's essentially not having interest in the culture usually based on no logical grounds, or with the grounds of an inaccurate preconceived notion formed.

The second kind is a more aggressive, unethical version which actively campaigns against anything black, it is racism but specifically regarding black people.

Covert Racism

A form of racial discrimination that is disguised, hidden and subtle. It is the use of passive or seemingly passive methods that concur racial biases and preferences.

Colorism

The prejudice or discrimination against individuals based on the darkness of their skin. It's the preference of individuals with lighter skin tones, which was born from the idea that one's value is to be determined based on how close they are to being white.

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Colorblind Racism

"I don't see color", a very famous phrase used in the approach of color-blind racism. It's essentially the idea that the only way to end racial discrimination is by ignoring the reality of their race. This is an issue because by saying you don't see color, is saying that you don't see people of color. The need for color blindness implies that there is something shameful about the way people of color and their culture are made. We shouldn't dismiss the issues which people of color face. It was an ideology created by white people who are uncomfortable talking about race which does much more harm than it does good.

Cultural Appropriation

It's the theft or use of cultural elements of a minority culture for one's own use, commodification, or profit, including symbols, art, traditions, customs especially without understanding, acknowledgement or tribute to the value of the original culture. Examples are using a Native American headdress or Japanese Kimono as costumes.

Cultural Racism

Refers to the ideology of behaviors and values that see white people and whiteness as better or more normal. It's an issue that exists in everyday life as it shows up in movies, advertisements, books, fashion, laws, and history. It is the influencing of collective cultural beliefs like the beauty standards, in thinking things like blonde hair and blue eyes are valued more over a big afro and full lips on the scale of beauty.

Diversity

A term which refers to a wide range of national, ethnic, gender, racial or other backgrounds of people. It includes all the ways in which people may differ and recognizes everyone and every group as a part of the grand collective which should be valued.

Inclusion

It's the effective implementation of diversity. It's authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals or groups into activities, processes, activities, and decision making in a way that shares power.

Institutional Racism

The systematic distribution and implementation of resources and institutional policies that create different outcomes for different racial groups, which often is to the benefit of white people and the exclusion of people of color. Examples of this are the implementation of certain laws that make it more difficult for people of color to gain access to loans or buy houses based on unrealistic requirements or collateral they don't have.

Karen

Karen is a modern slang term created to describe an entitled, obnoxious, middle-aged, racist white woman. Usually seen in memes, millennials and Gen Z have created the term because of noticing a trend of white women on social media who have targeted and/or complained about black people for the sole reason of their race.

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Micro-aggressions

These are everyday verbal or non-verbal, intentional, or unintentional insults, behaviors, jokes, or habits that connote negative or derogatory messages to targeted persons based only by their race, gender, etc.

Examples are: holding your bag closer when a person of color is near, crossing the street when you see a person of color or automatically assuming that a black person in a store is a security guard and not a store clerk or customer.

Overt Racism

It's this opposite of covert racism. It's an unapologetic, unconcealed form of racial discrimination. It is the product of white supremacy, and is identified using harmful attitudes, ideas, or symbols with the objective of oppressing minority groups and cultures.

Persons of Color

This is the term to be used only when referring to a collective group of non-white people. For example, it should be used when referring to a group of three people that includes black, Asian & American Indian persons. However, when referring to each person of this group individually, their respective racial groups are to be used.

Racial Justice

The systemic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. This goes beyond antiracism, it requires not only the absence of discrimination and inequities but also the effort to implement systems that support causes to achieve racial equity through the reinforcement of policies, practices, and attitudes.

Reverse Racism

Reverse racism is a myth used by fragile white people created with the notion that racism against white people can exist. The conflict with this is that it is in no way possible to say that racism against white people exists, there can exist racial prejudice (for ex. White people can't dance etc.) but it cannot ever be considered racism because of the systemic relationship of power.

White people are the only racial group that hold the cultural power due to Eurocentric modes of thinking born from colonialism. Reverse racism assumes that racism occurs on a level playing field, where a white person is just as vulnerable as a person of color, but history says otherwise.

Tokenism

The practice of hiring or including a person from a marginalized group only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are being treated fairly. It is the inauthentic version of inclusion with the objective of gaining praise.

White Fragility

Author Robin DeAngelo refers to white fragility as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable to white people, triggering a range of defensive moves and emotions such as anger, fear, guilt and major stress." A classic example of this is Jane Elliot's 2013, [Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes experiment](#).

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White Privilege

Refers to the unearned set of advantages, benefits, and entitlements that people have in society, solely because they're white. In most cases, those who experience this privilege are either unaware or in denial of it. It is not necessarily based on the idea that people who are white get special privileges, but rather that people who are not white don't have access to the basic privileges and courtesies that those who are white have.

White Supremacy

It's the idea that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are better and superior to those of people of color. It's associated mostly with extremist groups like the KKK or neo-Nazis, but it includes experiences of everyday life that systems and standards to devalue the worth of people of color with things like beauty standards or religion.

Easter Offering

This year our Easter Offering will be divided between DMARC food pantry and salary support for our missionary, Chin Cho.



The pandemic has caused many people a great deal of hardship and the need for food has greatly increased. Between March and June of last year due to high unemployment, 4,687 people used the food pantry for the first time and the need continues.

Each year First Church has committed to pay \$1,700 toward the salary support of a United Methodist missionary. As you know, we support Chin Cho. His work with the people of Mongolia is important and we are blessed to be able to be a part of it.

Your Easter offering can be made online at the church website or you may send a check to the church with Easter Offering in the memo line.

Thanks for your generosity.



Meet Malcom

You may remember hearing about Malcom, a two year old who was shot in the head during a drive by shooting earlier this spring. Malcom and his family are members of Capitol Heights Lutheran Church. As you can imagine, in addition to the trauma faced by the family, they are facing large medical bills, bills to repair the home, get a security system, etc.



Our last report from his pastor is that he is finally awake and talking again. He recently had surgery to replace the bone missing from his cranium. He is still paralyzed on the entire right side. We have been praying for Malcom every day during our online prayer times. We ask you to pray for him and his family. In addition, a fund has been established at his church. During this month, we are going to be collecting funds that can be forwarded to their church to help with medical bills.

Malcom's life will be forever changed because of this senseless violence. If you would like to help this family, you may (1) send a church First Church with Malcom in the memo line, (2) donate at the church website, or (3) if you attend worship there will be a special offering plate in the narthex and you can place your donation there.

Thanks for helping this family during what is for them a very traumatic time.

Carolyn and Kelly Celebrate 50 years of Marriage

On March 12, 1971, Carolyn and Kelly Gay said "I do." The wedding took place in our church's sanctuary. Fifty years later they recreated their wedding photos with the same candelabra in place and Carolyn wearing her wedding dress! Carolyn spent three years growing out her hair in preparation! They even kept their receipts from their wedding. The cost of which was broken down as follows:



Dress: \$46.35

Alterations: \$8.24

Catering: \$63.82 to feed 193 people

Flowers: \$131.84

Honeymoon in New Orleans: \$91.20 for 4 nights

Gas: \$0.36/gallon

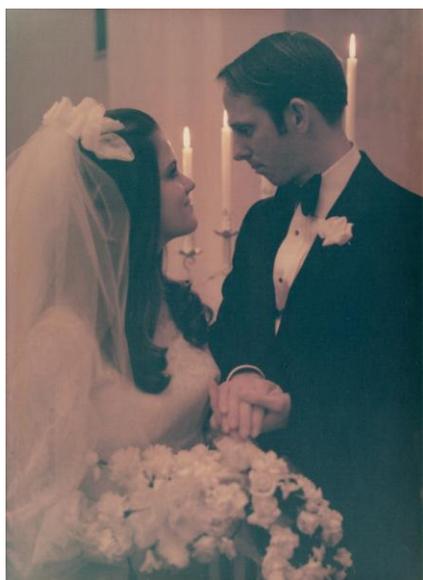
Original photographer: \$100 for 3 albums

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Here is Their Story in Carolyn's Words

Kelly and I were invited to an Oxford League get together at the end of May, Memorial Day weekend in 1970. I was a member of First Methodist Church and received an invitation from someone in the group to attend a "Hootenanny". Kelly was invited to attend by Isabelle Abar. Kelly and I sat in a corner and talked, "just the two of us".

We were engaged on September 1, 1970, and married March 12, 1971. Ten weeks later we had known each other for one year.



Dr. Paul Hann officiated our wedding. He advised us **not** to have a flower girl and ring bearer because, he said, they take away from the bride and groom. (I think of this every time I go to a wedding and children are included.) Dr. Hann wouldn't allow us to have the song "We've Only Just Begun" by The Carpenters. He said it was not religious enough. I must have shown my disappointment so he said it could be sung before the wedding started. "The Lord's Prayer" was sung by my brother-in-law. It was his big debut because he was asked by every family member to sing at funerals and weddings from that point on.



Our reception was hosted by the "Women's Society of Christian Service" (the women of the M&M Class). The total cost was \$63.82 plus the cake and mints. The cake was in the shape of a cross and the reception was held in Fellowship Hall with 193 guests. We even stayed and helped clean up the church after the reception.

After the wedding and honeymoon my mother told me it was bad luck to "start anything on a Friday"!



**Congratulations Carolyn and Kelly!
First Church wishes you many more
years of happiness.**





"Spring adds new life and new beauty to all that is." - Jessica Harrelson

In the spirit of Spring and the upcoming Easter holiday, I thought this quote was a nice reminder of the upcoming beauty. The grass is turning greener by the day and the flowers in our yard have started to grow. With the vaccine and lower case rates, life is starting to look a little more normal as well!

Speaking of normal, we will be able to be in the sanctuary to celebrate Easter all together!! The choirs hope you will be able to join us in our beautiful sanctuary, enjoying the Easter flowers, inspirational words, and wonderful music!

Submitted by Katie Bonus, Music Ministry Member



Scholarships

Dorothy Strayer Memorial Scholarship

Again this year First United Methodist Church is offering college scholarships for the 2021-22 school year. Please contact Ned Johnson at 515-771-8875 for information and application forms. The application deadline is September 15.



Want to serve but wondering how to do it in the middle of a pandemic? Do you have a lot on your plate, and want a super simple way to make a difference?

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And for extra credit, if you have any content you would like us to share, please let us know!





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DEADLINE FOR FUTURE LIGHT ISSUES IS THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH

We are happy to announce that we will resume in-person worship on
Easter Sunday, April 4th at 10:30 AM!



All covid protocols will still be in place
so be sure to wear your mask and
social distance.

We can't wait to see you!

If you are not yet comfortable joining
us in-person, you may still watch
online.