WHILE YOU WERE AWAY

The Board of Trustees has been hard at work these last months! We finished painting the senior high room for a new tenant and got additional outlets and internet installed. We spread five yards of mulch around our flower beds and kept up with weeding. Thanks especially to Darrell Hurns, who has been keeping our lawn looking great, and Pat Rust, for many hours on grounds care! Thanks to all who have aided our church with these updates!

PINK ENVELOPE

July’s special pink envelope offering is Providence House. This organization provides safe havens for infants and young children while their parents are dealing with crises in their own lives. The program offers parenting classes so parents and children can be reunited.

In My Head: thoughts from Pastor Jason

When I moved to Cleveland, I thought the East-Side-West-Side divide was silly. I thought it was mostly about people thinking that thirty minutes was too far to drive. But since then, I have come to understand that the divide between Eastern and Western city residents has a long and complicated history, much of which is tied to red-lining and racial segregation. There is so much wealth on the East side, but there is also debilitating poverty. The West side seems a little more middle of the road, not great wealth, but not too many poor folks either. The West side has the reputation from decades ago of being upper middle class and mostly White. And that is how many still view it today.

But that is simply not what the neighborhood around our church actually looks like. There are more than 23,000 homeless people living in Cuyahoga County – almost 1300 students in our public school system who have no place to live. In Kamm’s Corners, 21.6% of households live below the poverty line. This is almost twice the national average, right here on the West side of Cleveland. West side, best side? I’m not so sure.

To bring attention to this reality and shine a light on the dark underbelly of hidden poverty right in our own community, our church is hosting HOMELESS JESUS (pictured above). This provocative sculpture by Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz was installed in the front of the church on Monday, June 29 and will remain with us until August 18. The sculpture depicts Jesus as a homeless person, sleeping on a park bench. His face and hands are obscured, hidden under a blanket, but crucifixion wounds on his feet reveal his identity. The statue has been described as a "visual translation" of Matthew 25:40 in which Jesus tells his disciples, "just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Like all art, seeing this temporary addition to our home may evoke an emotional response. I hope it does for us all. I would invite you, as you are able, to spend some time sitting on the bench with the representation of Jesus in the coming weeks, spend some time praying for our homeless friends, spend some time considering how we might be better neighbors to everyone in our community.

Pastor Jason
THANK YOU!
To all the organizations who helped launch our expanded food pantry ministry: Gene’s Place to Dine, Ward 17 Councilman Charles Slife, West Park Kamm’s Neighborhood Development, Christ UMC, Bountiful Basement and THANK YOU to our dozens of volunteers who have worked so very hard to feed our community neighbors.

AND THANK YOU!
To our Board of Stewardship and Finance, especially Church Administrator Linda Ferro and Treasurers Mark Rust and Eric Jessen! They put in many hours of hard work to aid our church finances. Their efforts yielded a forgivable PPP loan under the CARES Act for $19,180. Good job!

NEW STAFF MEMBER!: Beginning July 1, Sara Jovanovic will join the staff of WPUCC. Sara will serve as our new Food Pantry Coordinator, overseeing the operations of our expanding ministries. If you are interested in volunteering time to help this vital ministry, please contact Sara @ WestParkUCCPantry@gmail.com

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS! Please plan to join us for worship on Sunday, July 19 when we welcome this year’s winners of the annual Alber Scholarship! Olivia Armstrong and Shannon Thayer are both students at The Ohio State University. Olivia will enter her sophomore year in the Fall; Shannon hopes to complete her undergraduate degree in December and begin graduate school next year.

LOCKED DOORS: When our church reopens, you might notice that some doors that used to be opened are now locked. Well, there is great news to share: We have a new tenant! Future Church, a non-profit organization working for church reform, is moving to take over a space in the Education building. The room that used to be the Senior High Room will now be their office space. Also, the unused Chapel has been repurposed to serve as our Food Pantry!

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT OF OUR FOOD PANTRY
We received many grants and donations from organizations and individuals from the community and the congregation. Some of the funds received are:

Franciscan Village Community Fund: $250
West Park Kiwanis: $500
Community donations via WPKND: $1546
Serve Ohio: $2000
Living Water Association: $2500
Deaconess Foundation: $5000
Cleveland Foundation: $25,000

We have also received many donations from individuals and families in our congregation and community.

Thank you to all!

Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God
SUNDAY WORSHIP: During July, we are hosting regular worship at 10am on YouTube @ YouTube.com/WestParkUCC. We also are hosting “virtual coffee hour” each week so we can see each other and chat to catch up.

So what do I do to join in worship and other church activities? Visit westparkucc.org and click on the COVID-19 UPDATE tab on the home page.

NO INTERNET ACCESS?
You may use the following phone numbers to listen in to worship:
SUNDAY 10am Worship  
1 929 205 6099  
Meeting ID: 503 841 134  
Meeting ID: 198 946 112  
Passcode: 493586

NEWSLETTER: THE GOOD NEWS will return to bi-monthly publication next month with our August-September edition.

BIBLE STUDY is on Wednesdays, 6pm via Zoom, an online platform where we can meet virtually or by dialing in from a phone. If you would like to participate, you may join the Bible study each week through a link posted on the website under COVID-19 UPDATE. If you don't have the capability to join online, you may dial in to 1 929 205 6099. When prompted for the meeting ID, enter 870 3722 4655. The Passcode is: 478657

ONLINE SECURITY: The service we use for many of our online meetings is updating its security protocols and will now require passwords for all meetings. As a community who answers God's call to welcome all, these passwords are displayed on our website under the COVID-19 update tab. The passwords are also printed in our weekly bulletins. For Sunday, July 5, nothing will change. The new passwords will go into effect beginning Sunday, July 12. For those who dial in to listen to worship each week, please make sure you look at the bulletin when it arrives at your home for updated login information. If you have questions, please call the church office for more information.

BIRTHDAYS

2  Darrell Hurns  6  Graham Armstrong  
8  Dan Stryffeler  12  Ellen Ellsworth  
16  Bryan Hrehocik  17  Maxwell Miller  
18  Mary Zimmerman  19  Rebecca McFadden  
21  Eric Jessen  29  Joan Banak

ANNIVERSARIES

Catherine & Clarence Chavers  
07-03-1982
Dave & Ruth Finley  
07-03-1999
Paul & Robin Arcuri  
07-09-2011
Dale & Sherrill Horn  
07-17-2010
Herb & Pauline Lamb  
07-25-1964
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July 2020

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Rachel Miller
Social Media Adminstrator

Bob Arcuri
Director of Maintenance

Darrell Hurns
Custodian