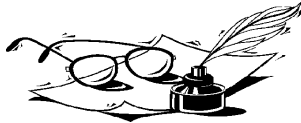




Corner of Beaver & Burrowes



*From Pastor Paul's Desk.....*

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ. A common statement I continue to hear is: "Church is not the same anymore. We are missing church and church fellowship!" Church has never been the same. Church has always been action and not space.

In the midst of the COVID-19 that has ravaged the nation and the world as a whole, we remain to be the church. As a church, we still have our challenges that reflect who we are. Being a church is to be with and for people. The church is not a building, the church is the people. As people, we are created to be in fellowship with one another.

How are we caring for each other in these trying times? We have been slowed down in so many aspects of our ministries, but we cannot allow this disease to cut us off from one another. In light of this, we have been meeting virtually and we will continue to connect via social media which has become the new norm.

Physical distancing may be the order of the day, but we continue to benefit from our social connections through many media outlets. It is believed that out of any tough and difficult situation, good is realized. For so many of us that have been challenged by social networking, we are beginning to learn new things and beginning to know that the gift of God is active and alive.

As we navigate this new thing, know that God's love and protection for us will never change. God promised to always be with us especially in trying times. The Psalmist reminds us that: "*Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Psalm 8:38-39.)

With these current uncertainties, it is hard to believe that physical gathering for worship which has been our core value and practice is seriously interrupted. It is of essence to know though that as the COVID-19 situation escalates, we all must follow the best preventive measures that are being put out there by national and state authorities.

It is important to know that Jesus will always be present with us regardless of our location. In fact, the First Easter evening, Jesus appeared to his disciples when they were sheltering behind closed doors, fearing for their lives from the repercussions after his crucifixion.

Nothing can hold back the love that Jesus has for us. Though we are practicing physical distancing, we know that we still are socially connected and that it's all for the good of God's children.

# A-B NEWSLETTER

• ALBRIGHT-BETHUNE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH •

**Rev., Dr. Paul C. Amara, Pastor**

Email: [pamara@susumc.org](mailto:pamara@susumc.org); Cell Phone: (585) 797-4466

Church Phone: 237-4404; Email: [albrightbethuneumc206@gmail.com](mailto:albrightbethuneumc206@gmail.com)

Church Website: [www.albrightbethuneumc.org](http://www.albrightbethuneumc.org)

Blannie Bowen, Editor; Volume 27, Number 4, April 2020

Let us all continue to pray for one another, care about one another, reach out to one another and most of all, love one another the same love that Jesus shares with us. Jesus even implores us to love our enemies and to pray for them. This is a hard thing to do, but with Jesus leading us, all will be well and everything is possible.

Stay well! Stay focused! Stay blessed! Stay connected!

- **CHURCH ACTIVITIES CANCELED** - On March 27, Bishop Jeremiah Park sent a letter to all churches in our Susquehanna Conference about how to function given the current situation. "As your bishop, I implore the Susquehanna Conference churches to continue to suspend all gatherings for worship and other non-essential activities" until further notice. As the COVID-19 situation escalates, we must follow the best preventive practices and use utmost caution. We are closely monitoring the directives of Governor Wolf, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If any of the current limitations change, we will offer you guidance accordingly on how to comply." In response to Bishop Park's request, all activities at Albright-Bethune have been suspended. Our Sunday worship and some committee meetings are being held electronically. Here is the link to the PA Department of Health website where you can learn about the status of COVID-19 and other information: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>.
- **WORSHIP SERVICE ONLINE** - Worship at Albright-Bethune is still being held on Sunday mornings at 11. You can join the service from our church's Facebook site at: [https://www.facebook.com/pg/albrightbethuneumc/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/albrightbethuneumc/videos/?ref=page_internal). From the video link on this page, you can join the live streaming and also watch the videos from earlier services.
- **MEN WHO COOK** – Our congregation's Men's Day and Men Who Cook program that was scheduled for April 5 has been cancelled because of the pandemic. If you purchased a ticket, your funds should be returned. Thanks to everyone who had agreed to participate in the worship service and prepare a dish. We will now start planning for 2021.
- **EASTER EGG HUNT** – Our April 11 Easter egg hunt has been cancelled. Thanks to everyone who had agreed to donate food and various materials, and to organize and conduct the egg hunt. Our goal is to have another hunt in 2021.
- **ANNUAL CONFERENCE** - Registration has been suspended for the Susquehanna UMC Annual Conference that is scheduled for May 28-30. Conference leaders are continuing to discuss what is best for safety and how they can care for the important business they must address at Annual Conference. The leaders are monitoring local, state, and federal government decisions to ensure that they comply with them. They will continue to weigh what is known about the virus, evolving government directives for public health, and contract obligations to determine the best ways to accomplish the requirements for the Annual Conference. As the situation unfolds, the leaders will decide whether the conference will meet at the end of May or another time.
- **BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES** - - Congratulations to these individuals who celebrate special days this month: April 1 - **Marcus Bowen's** Birthday; April 4 - **Courtlyn Roser-Jones'** Birthday; April 13 – **Pastor Paul Amara's** Birthday; April 14 – **Deborah Atwater's** Birthday; April 16 – **Albert Shilling's** Birthday; April 17 - **Donald & Josephine Ferrell's** Wedding Anniversary; April 25 – **Tobin Wilson's** Birthday; April 26 - **Blannie Bowen's** Birthday; and April 29 – **Andrew Amara's** Birthday. Give Blannie your special dates so we can honor you (call 237-5131 or email [blanniebowen@gmail.com](mailto:blanniebowen@gmail.com) ).

- **S**TAFF ASSISTANT VACANCY - Kat Boynton, our church's staff assistant, provides excellent service to our church but she must leave the part-time position. For information about the position or to apply, please contact Jackie Peagler, the chair of our Administrative Council. You can reach Jackie by email at [jypeagler@gmail.com](mailto:jypeagler@gmail.com) or by phone at [814-237-8225](tel:814-237-8225).
- **G**ENERAL CONFERENCE - With the coronavirus disrupting lives worldwide, General Conference organizers have postponed The UMC's top legislative assembly. The Minneapolis Convention Center - scheduled to host the 2020 General Conference - announced it was canceling gatherings of 50 or more people through May 10. The shutdown covers the first five days of the denomination's 10-day meeting, which was set to draw 862 delegates, 66 bishops, and others from four continents. The commission's executive committee, which met by teleconference March 18, decided the venue's announcement meant that General Conference could no longer go forward May 5-15 as planned. However, commission members do not yet know how quickly they can announce new dates. General Conference organizers and the bishops acknowledge this legislative assembly comes at a particularly sensitive time for the church. United Methodists have submitted [multiple proposals](#) to resolve the denomination's longtime debate over homosexuality by splitting the denomination. No new dates have been announced when the General Conference will be held (From UM News Service).
- **F**INANCE CORNER - Each month the amount our church collects via offerings is posted in this section of the newsletter. Our March collections totaled **\$8,444**. See Cathy Bowen if you have questions about our church's finances.
- **A**LTERNATIVE WAYS TO DONATE TO CHURCH - As a child, I heard adults say, "There is more than one way to skin a cat." Interpretation -- there is usually more than one way to accomplish a task. In 2020, this phrase applies to the way we give to charities. In April 2019, we made online giving easier for all by putting a feature on the Albright Bethune website. You can set an amount to give automatically for a period of time you determine or you can go in weekly to donate as you wish. This method works well for those who are temporarily homebound, out of town a lot or who wish to minimize weekly decision-making about giving to the church.

Donor advised funds are another option. If you like to set a yearly amount for donations to all charities, use a donor advised fund with a major financial firm. You give the firm X dollars for the year. During the year, the firm will send donations to charities you direct them to do so. This option works if the charities are recognized by the IRS as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit. The advantage of this method is you predetermine what you can give for the year and you have one receipt to keep track of for tax purposes IF you are able to itemize your deductions.

The final way you can give is to have your required minimum distribution (RMD) from an IRA retirement account sent directly from your IRA custodian to the charity or charities of choice. This is called a QCD - qualified charitable contribution. Without getting too deep, this method can be used if you turned 72 after January 1, 2020. If you were 70½ prior to January 1, 2020, your RMDs should have already started and you can also use QCDs to donate to charities. In December 2019, a last-minute tax law, The SECURE ACT, changed the RMD age from 70½ to 72. The advantage of using QCDs is you donate WITHOUT increasing your taxable income. If you accept the RMD into a personal account and then send the money to a charity, the RMD may cause you to pay more income taxes and depending on your income, the RMD could push you into a tax bracket that causes your Medicare premiums to increase.

Check with your financial advisor about using a donor advised fund or a QCD to give to your favorite charity. - **Submitted by Cathy Bowen**

- **SPRING GRADUATES** - If you are graduating from high school or college in May or June, we want to honor you and celebrate your accomplishment. Please contact **Blannie Bowen** at 237-5131 or by email at [blanniebowen@gmail.com](mailto:blanniebowen@gmail.com) with your information. Remember your congregation if you are moving away. Be sure to worship with us when you return for a visit. If you are staying in the area, continue to worship regularly with us.
- **HOMECOMING 2020** – The uncertainty and disruptions that COVID-19 is causing require that our June 13-14 Homecoming 2020 celebration be cancelled. Travel restrictions, social distancing requirements, and various health and safety concerns are too numerous to ask our former members and worshippers to return to State College this summer. Our goal is to have a homecoming again in 2021. See **Blannie Bowen** if you need more information.
- **LITURGISTS & TEACHERS NEEDED** - Please consider playing a more active role in our congregation when our live services resume. Volunteers are sought to be Sunday School teachers and our liturgist during worship. Contact **Carla Roser-Jones** if you are interested. You can reach Carla at (814) 880-9302 to discuss both opportunities.
- **ONLINE GIVING** - Consider setting up a monthly or weekly online contribution. It is easy and helps you meet your yearly giving goal without taking action each week or month. The amount you designate will be deducted from your checking account according to your preference. For example, if you decide to give \$400 each month, you can deduct \$400 once a month or \$100 each week. When the amount is consistent throughout the year, you can easily check the accuracy of your yearly statement acknowledging your giving! Adopt “the set and forget it” technique for your annual giving. Once a year, set your budget for giving to the church, and you are done. Now you have more time to spend on other matters instead of writing checks each week or month. The button to set up your online giving is on the church website, upper right corner (<https://www.albrightbethuneumc.org/>). If you need help setting up online, see Cathy Bowen at (814) 574-8346 or by email at [cbowen2015@gmail.com](mailto:cbowen2015@gmail.com).
- **YOUR ITEMS** – Send, email to [blanniebowen@gmail.com](mailto:blanniebowen@gmail.com) or give your items to **Blannie** by the **20th** of the month. Send your birthday, awards, church presentations, writings, etc.

### Calendar

April 5	Palm Sunday (Online Worship Service) Men Who Cook & Men’s Day (Cancelled)
April 7	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
April 10	Good Friday
April 11	Church Easter Egg Hunt (Cancelled)
April 12	Easter Sunday (Online Worship Service)
May 1	Penn State Classes End
May 5	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
May 8-10	Penn State Commencement Exercises (Postponed)
June 2	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
June 7	Peace With Justice Sunday
June 13-14	Homecoming 2020 (Cancelled)