



December 2020

# The First Epistle

Newsletter of First United Methodist Church

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Dear First Church Family,

We can all agree that this year has been strange and challenging, and most of us just wish things would get back to normal. But what if we cannot get back to the way things were? What if the landscape of life has been so altered that the path forward looks different?

During the season of Advent, we read the words of the prophet Isaiah calling us to prepare the way of the Lord. God says through Isaiah: "Fill the valleys and bring down the hills, straighten the crooked paths, and smooth out the rough parts." Undo what is done and make a way for our God. Isaiah's words are words of hope spoken to an exiled people looking for a way home, a way to get back to the way things were, a way to be with God again. But no road exists, there is no pathway, so God says that they will forge a new path, reconstructing the landscape and making a new way.

This year, during the Coronavirus Pandemic, we have learned to forge a new path. We had to learn how to worship online, gather for Sunday School online, and meet with committees online. We have experienced funerals and weddings through videos and recordings. We have taught school from home and learned from home and worked from home. We have reimagined how to distribute food to those in need in our community. We have connected with children and youth through Zoom meetings and doorstep deliveries. We have practiced *being the church* without being *at the church* (building.)

God has made a way for us during what sometimes feels like exile, but the way is new and different. The landscape has been altered, and we cannot go back the same way we came. We cannot go back to the way things were or back to normal. Things are different now— work, school, family, community, church, life— and some of it will never be the same again. But we can keep moving ahead on the path that God is forging. I believe that this path will include many things that we have missed like gathering for worship and sharing meals together, and it will include new opportunities for ministry that were not possible before.

As we move through this season of waiting and preparation, let us look forward to the coming of Christ at Christmas and every day.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Jodie and Pastor Gary

## First Church By The Numbers: November

### Food Pantry

Distributed 66 boxes, serving 153 family members.

The Little Free Pantry needs to be restocked with non-perishable food items such as canned goods (with pull-tab top), crackers, individually wrapped snacks, and easy to heat food.

### We extend our sympathy to:

- Martha Squibb in the passing of her son, Joe Squibb, on November 23
- The family of Lloyd Brownlow, who passed away on November 18
- The family of Rebecca Edwards
- The family of Cindy Torbett, who passed away on November 27
- The family of John Villanueva
- Eric, Susan, & Claudia Davidson in the passing of Eric's father, Ron Davidson, on November 30

## Prayer List for December 2020

Elizabeth Bailey  
Nate Berning  
Jim & Sheila Briggs  
Bill Carter  
John Cradic  
Ernie Cross  
Vivian Eckerson  
Phyllis Eorgan  
Jim Furches  
Bob Gore  
Betty Gouge  
Dalton Gough  
Austin Green  
Steve Harris  
David McElveen  
Jason Mills  
Tom Palmer  
JoAnne Paty  
Judy Roberts  
Samantha Sams  
Joe & Jessica Story  
Phil Torbett  
Steve Wilkinson  
Family Promise  
Brother's Keeper  
Treatment & vaccine for COVID19