

News From The Rock

December 2020

Solid Rock United Methodist Church • Warren, Indiana

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In-person worship and meetings suspended

Due to the rapid increase in positive Covid cases across the state, Indiana Bishop Julius Trimble has recommended the suspension of in-person worship. The Solid Rock Administrative Council has made the difficult decision to suspend all in-person meetings, including in-person worship, through at least Sunday, December 27. A prerecorded service will continue to be posted online each Sunday morning. This prerecorded service will also be broadcast to the parking lot each Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. on FM 87.9.

Zoom Adult Sunday School

We are pleased to announce a new online adult Sunday school class to be held on Zoom. Beginning on December 6 at 9:00 a.m. and continuing for four weeks, we will study "Who Needs Christmas" by Andy Stanley. Video sessions will be streamed through the Zoom app, and discussion will be led by Rosalie Walter.



The Study

"The narrative of Jesus' birth is miraculous. But as pastor Andy Stanley explores in this four-session video study, when you look at all the events in the Old Testament leading up to this point in time, the unbelievable story of Christmas becomes quite

(Continued on page 3)

Thank you!

I would like to thank everyone who has had a part in keeping our ministry viable here at Solid Rock during these challenging times. In the best of times it is often difficult to get volunteers to step up and perform even the most basic functions of the church. During these past 8 months a number of you have gone above and beyond to assure that we are able to move forward and be the church in our community. I know things look dire at the moment, however with the promising news of an upcoming vaccine I am somewhat encouraged that we can somewhat see a light at the end of the tunnel. I look forward to 2021 and working with the leadership of our church as we move forward towards a new season of ministry in post-Covid times.

Pastor Paul

Bible Study

"Feasting on the Word" has been listed as a small group Bible study for the Solid Rock people, and it is also a source of unity within the body of Jesus. Since the Solid Rock Administrative Board has canceled all small groups and in-person worship through the end of December, the following Scripture selections are being sent to you for your reading, study, prayerful consideration, and enablement. Use them in anticipation of Pastor Paul's Sunday message, which can be followed online at solidrockumc.com.

In these times of greater restrictions in our activities, I encourage you to keep the faith and love of Jesus as you continue to reach out in mercy to others. In the words

(Continued on page 3)



I thought I'd share with you this Christmas story I came across this week. It's one that I received a number of years ago in an e-mail. I believe we can all learn, and grow, from it as we enter into the Christmas season.

THE BEGINNING OF LEE

Lee, a reporter for the Chicago Tribune and a self-professed atheist was sitting at his desk on Christmas Eve. A slow news day he found himself reminiscing about the Delgado family that he had featured while writing a series of



articles about Chicago's neediest people a few days earlier. The Delgados were comprised of a grandmother named Perfecta and her two granddaughters, Jenny age 13 and her sister Lydia 11 years old.

He remembered how unprepared he was when he walked into their two-room apartment on the west side of Chicago for the interview; bare halls and bare walls, no furniture, no rugs, nothing but a kitchen table and a handful of rice in the cupboards. He learned during the interview that Jenny and Lydia only had one short-sleeved dress apiece, plus a thin gray sweater that they shared. On cold days when the girls walked the half-mile to school, one of the girls would start with the sweater and then give it to the other at the

(Continued on page 3)

Our Vision: Sharing and experiencing the life-giving message of Jesus, to restore wholeness and build an intentional community of hope, relationship, and purpose for everyone.

A letter from Bishop Trimble

“Carry each other’s burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

- Galatians 6:2 (CEB)

Friends,

We are at an unprecedented time in history. In just the past few weeks, we have witnessed a rapid increase of positive COVID-19 cases across the state, nation and world setting new daily and weekly records nearly every day. This news is alarming and requires all of us to make difficult but necessary decisions for the Indiana Conference of The United Method-

ist Church.

- *“There is a tremendous risk with this virus. It spreads really, really easily. The next 8-12 weeks are critical. Anything the Church can do to reduce gatherings will be helpful to slow the spread. We must take this very seriously,”* said Kristen Kelley, Director of Infection Prevention, IU Health

Since it is a fact that church worship gatherings are key sources of the spread of COVID-19, it is the recommendation of your Bishop that all churches should suspend in-person worship and in-person meetings of groups for the foreseeable future until the number of COVID cases improve. This will likely include making alternative plans for the holidays. This is particularly true for churches in counties and communities where hospitals are reporting excessive demands due to the rising number of COVID admissions.

We do not make this recommendation lightly, but offer it through an abundance of caution, a continued commitment to our 3 General Rules: Do no harm, Do good, and Stay in love with God; and because “loving our neighbor” is at the top of our priority list. Remember, a life saved this winter is a life saved to journey with us into the next year.

Please note that we are not closing the Church! We are not out of business! But I am calling on all pastors to use their authority to make wise and bold decisions for their community, and I am calling for all Indiana United Methodists to continue ministry in creative and innovative ways like you have been for the past 7 months.

- *“We need to be willing to do the hard things and to make sacrifices in the short term for the benefit of all in the long term,”* said Rev. Kevin Armstrong, Chief of Staff, IU Health

We encourage you to watch the COVID Town Hall video on the INUMC website as well as resources discussed in that webinar (Nov. 16). Over the past several months I have shared some suggested actions you can take in your local church. Additionally, here are some of those suggestions (with a few new ones):

- Follow the 3 Ws: Wash your hands; watch your distance; wear your mask.
- Isolate yourself if you believe you have been exposed to the Coronavirus. Call one of the many free screening hotlines or online sites for guidance and/or talk

with your doctor to determine next steps.

- Quarantine yourself at the first signs of symptoms for 14 days since your last contact with someone who was ill (even family in your household). Continue with socially-distanced outdoor and drive-in worship (as weather permits).
- Continue to care for the vulnerable persons in your community with appropriate precautions (food banks, meal programs, etc).
- Go online with worship, studies and small groups. Use Zoom, Facebook, and/or any of the variety of other platforms available.
- Pray.
- Focus on what you CAN do, rather than what you cannot.

Here’s some good news: I believe a great revival is coming in 2021. We may be making sacrifices now, but you have never seen a reunion like the one we are going to have at the end of this pandemic. Our God is good, and God is not done with us yet. Hold on a little while longer. Stay strong. Remain faithful. And as always...

Be encouraged,

Bishop Julius C. Trimble
Resident Bishop
Indiana Conference of
The United Methodist Church

October Financial Update

General Fund Receipts	\$21,622
General Fund Expenses	\$12,033

A fresh look

Just when everything is bearing down on us to such an extent that we can scarcely withstand it, the Christmas message comes to tell us that all our ideas are wrong, and that what we take to be evil and dark is really good and light because it comes from God. Our eyes are at fault, that is all.

God is in the manger, wealth in poverty, light in darkness, succor in abandonment. No evil can befall us; whatever men may do to us, they cannot but serve the God who is secretly revealed as love and rules the world and our lives.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer,
God Is in the Manger



News From The Rock is published each month by

Solid Rock United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 322
Warren, Indiana 46792

www.solidrockumc.com

Worship Schedule

Sunday School at 9:00 (temporarily suspended)
Worship at 10:00
at 485 Bennett Drive, Warren
Church Phone: 375-3871

Church Office

Office Phone: 375-3873

Monday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Closed Friday

Pastor: Rev. Paul Burris
pburris@hotmail.com
(260) 609-9260

Interim Youth Director: Emily Okes
youthministry@solidrockumc.com

Editor: Gary Walter
gary@solidrockumc.com

Office Manager/Treasurer: Jane Hitzfield
jane@solidrockumc.com

Financial Secretary: Wanda Spahr
wanda@solidrockumc.com

News deadline for the January newsletter: December 20

(Continued from *Pastor Paul*, page 1)

halfway mark. It was all they had. Perfecta wanted more for her granddaughters and would gladly have worked, but her severe arthritis and age made work too difficult and painful.

Since it was a slow news day, Lee decided to check out a car and drive to Chicago's west side to check up on the Delgados. When Jenny opened the door he couldn't believe what he saw! His article on the Delgados had touched the hearts of many subscribers who responded with furniture and appliances, rugs, dozens of coats, scarves and gloves. The girls wouldn't have to share a sweater any longer. There were cartons and cartons and boxes of food everywhere. They had so much food that the cupboards and closets couldn't contain it. Someone had even donated a Christmas tree, and under it were mounds of presents and thousands of dollars in cash!

Lee was astonished! But what astonished him the most was what he found Perfecta and her granddaughters doing. They were preparing to give most of it away. "Why would you give so much of this away?" Lee asked. Perfecta responded, "Our neighbors are still in need. We cannot have plenty while they have nothing. This is what Jesus would want us to do." Lee was dumbfounded.

After regaining his composure he asked Perfecta another question. He wanted to know what she and the girls thought about the generosity that was shown to them. Again, Lee was not prepared for the answer. She said, "This is wonderful, this is very good. We did nothing to deserve this; it's all a gift from God. But," she added, "It is not his greatest gift, Lee. No, we celebrate that tomorrow. Jesus."

Lee was speechless as he drove back to the office. In the quiet of his car he noted a couple of observations. He had plenty and along with it plenty of anxiety, while the Delgados, despite their poverty, had peace. Lee had everything and yet wanted more, but the Delgados had nothing and yet knew generosity. Lee had everything and yet his life was as bare as the Delgados' apartment prior to the article running. And yet the Delgados, who had nothing, were filled with hope, contentment and had a spiritual certainty. Even though Lee had so much more than the Delgados, he longed for what they had in their poverty.

Indeed, during the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, let us not forget that everything that we have is a gift from God.

And let us never forget the greatest gift of all, Jesus who we celebrate on Christmas Day (and hopefully every other day of the year)!

See You Sunday,
Pastor Paul

(Continued from *Zoom Sunday School*, page 1)
remarkable.

"It was only 'when the set time had fully come' that God sent Jesus into the world 'that we might receive adoption to sonship' (Galatians 4:4-5). God sent Jesus to do what laws and regulations, judges and prophets, and exile and punishment could not accomplish. He sent Jesus not merely to deliver us from the penalty and consequences of our sin, but to actually break the power of the enemy and free us from our slavery to sin.

"Through Christmas, we are reminded that even when it seems God is silent, he is always working. God sent Jesus not simply to be the Savior of the world but to be the Savior in our world. Through Christmas, we are reminded that God always keeps his promises to us."

Sessions include:

The Story Behind the Story (Genesis 12:3)
The Author of Life (Acts 3:15)
The Message of Christmas (Matthew 1:21)
Ready or Not... He Is Coming (Luke 1:37)

How to join

Participants will need either a computer with internet access, speakers, camera, and microphone, or a smart phone. There is no charge for the app or participation. (A phone-only option is also available, but long-distance fees will apply.) If you wish to join or have questions, please contact Gary Walter at gary@solidrockumc.com, or text or phone him at (260) 228-1007. Detailed information will be sent by email.

(Continued from *Bible Study*, page 1)

of the early 70's song, "We shall overcome!"

- December 7: Luke 3:1-6 (3rd Sunday of Advent – "Hope")
- December 14: Luke 2:8-20 (4th Sunday of Advent – "Joy")
- December 21: Matthew 2:1-12 (1st Sunday after Christmas)
- December 28: John 1:10-18 (2nd Sunday after Christmas)

—Joe Haney, Coordinator

Donation Options

Your continued financial support of Solid Rock is appreciated. Here are some giving options for those not attending in-person worship.

1. Mail a check to: Solid Rock UMC, P.O. Box 322, Warren, IN 46792.
2. Most banks have online banking options, which are usually free of charge. These can be set up as one-time payments or scheduled ongoing payments. Contact your bank for details.
3. Donate online or by using a mobile app. Solid Rock has enabled giving via Vanco GivePlus. Donations can be made using checking or savings accounts or credit/debit cards. To get started, simply go to solidrockumc.com and click on "Donate."



O Come
Let Us
Adore Him

- "Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus."
—Neal A Maxwell
- "Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle Age is when you're forced to."
—Bill Vaughan



solidrockumc.com



The surprising history behind 'Joy to the World'

"There is one Christmas carol that is unlike all others," says Claire Pfann, Academic Dean at the University of the Holy Land in Jerusalem. "That song, 'Joy to the World,' is not about the First Coming of Jesus. That hymn is about the Second Coming of Jesus."

English hymn-writer Isaac Watts was the author of "Joy to the World," a poem based on Psalm 98 that was included in a poetry collection he wrote in 1719. The poem was never intended to be a Christmas song. It was over a century later, in 1836, that a man named Lowell Mason set the hymn to music. Mason was a Boston music teacher and the leading Presbyterian hymn composer in the United States. He published "Joy to the World" during the Christmas season, and that is how the song became associated with the holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus. At one point it was reportedly the most published Christmas carol in the United States.

"It's about when he comes again, finally," says Pfann, "and rules in power and justice and mercy." —churchleaders.com

Your name is still called "Wonderful," "Counselor," "The Mighty God," "The Everlasting Father," and "The Prince of Peace." As Your children, we cry out for a fresh filling, and a new awareness of Who You are. We choose by faith to make the "good news of great joy" a reality in our own lives, so others can see us as lighted trees of life, pointing to You this Christmas. We know one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that You are Lord. And we also know that peace on earth can only come when hearts find peace with You. You are still our Joy.

You are still our Peace. You are no longer a babe in the manger. You are Lord of lords and King of kings. And we still celebrate You as Lord—this Christmas and always.

—Rebecca Barlow Jordan

