



The Church Bell for Sept.-Oct. 2020

Susanville United Methodist Church
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530-257-5893 susanville_umc@frontier.com



Pastor's Ponderings

Our extraordinary year continues and each week our church adjusts and responds in extraordinary ways.

Spiritual Formation – pg 2 This issue has a new spiritual exercise to help you connect with God in a way that will be uniquely meaningful to you and your faith journey. If you get excited or frustrated and want to discuss it, feel free to contact me.

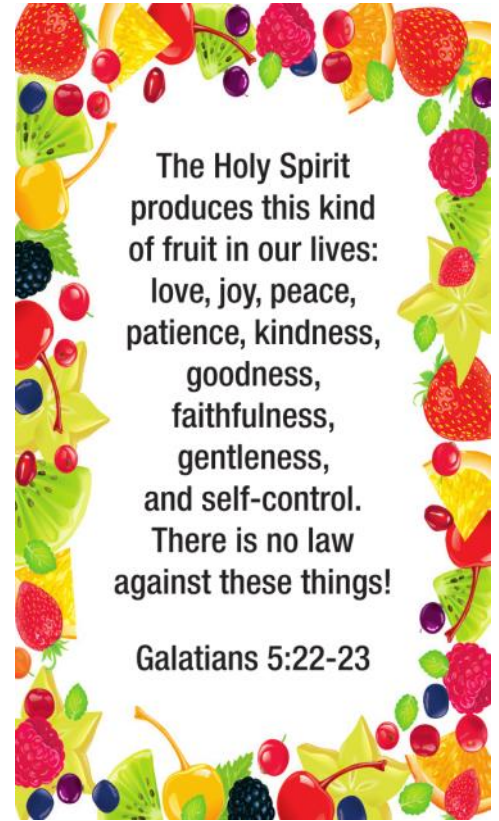
HOPE Food Pantry – pg 3 This ministry is growing faster than anyone anticipated. We printed *another* 2,500 business cards, many of which are being distributed through the county's social services agencies to their clients.

Returning to In-person Worship – pg 4 Though our return to the sanctuary was delayed, we're excited for our future together. Please read how we've updated our procedures and services.

Leadership – pg 5 Did you know every Christian is part of the "Priesthood of All Believers?" You are, and our world needs your leadership. Learn how you can live up to such an illustrious title!

Consolidated Governance – pg 6 Our Church Council has made tremendous progress on this front. Note the meetings on Oct. 4.

Social Media Update – pg 7 Our social media efforts are having a terrific impact in Susanville and beyond. Learn how you can be a part of our ever-expanding "digital ministry."



My big excitement last month was officiating the wedding of Janiska's daughter Carlotta and her now-husband Carter! It was a beautiful day at Lake Almanor, but most importantly, I stuck to the script, everything went fine, and everyone was happy.
~ Pastor Charles

This week I will pray for

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

**Lord, thank you for...
Please bless...
Help me/them with...**

Special Meeting, Sunday Oct. 4

We'll have a special, informal meeting immediately following each worship service on Sunday, Oct. 4. Pastor Charles and Margie M. will present the new **Consolidated Governance** structure our Church Council has developed. We'll then have time for Q&A. We're excited about making this long-time dream a reality. We hope you can attend!

Spiritual Formation – Presence

This month's exercise focuses on perceiving God's Presence in our daily lives. You can use the "Fruit of the Spirit" verse (on the front cover) to nudge your thoughts. Each day write down at least one way you saw some aspect of God's presence in or around you. Any sincere answer is a good one!

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HOPE Food Pantry

Our Food Pantry Is Growing Faster Than Ever!

Yes, that's the same headline that was in the previous issue, and it's more true now than ever before! The graph on this page shows the **number of weekly clients in red**, the number of hungry mouths fed in blue, and our faithful volunteers in green. As you see, there is more demand than ever for our ministry.

During the month of June, we averaged **58 clients representing 178 hungry mouths at home each week**. We fed over 700 people last month! Several recent developments have enabled us to keep up with demand.

First and foremost, we are now an approved partner agency of the **Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN)**. Now we can order a LOT more food for FAR less money than we've been spending. For example, our first two orders from the FBNN each weighed nearly 4,000 pounds, and best of all, it was all free! Praise God for such a blessing!

But where do we put all of that food? Great question. We've completed a major reorganization of the former preschool rooms. That space is now dedicated to the Food Pantry. Additionally, someone donated two commercial refrigerators to us. This dramatically increases our ability to store dairy and produce items week to week.

Once again, we assisted Lassen County's Evacuation Center with water and food during the recent Sheep Fire.



This is proving to be a powerful collaboration we hope to continue in the future.

We're able to keep up with demand thanks to the many businesses and individuals who have given generously of their time, prayers, and financial donations. **Thank you for your continued support!**

We want to continue focusing on what we do best (food distribution) while we support other agencies in Susanville who offer complementing services. So this October, we hope to host a "Trunk or Treat + Diaper Drive" on Saturday, Oct. 31. Check our website and your emails for details as they become available.

You can always see the latest updates on our website.



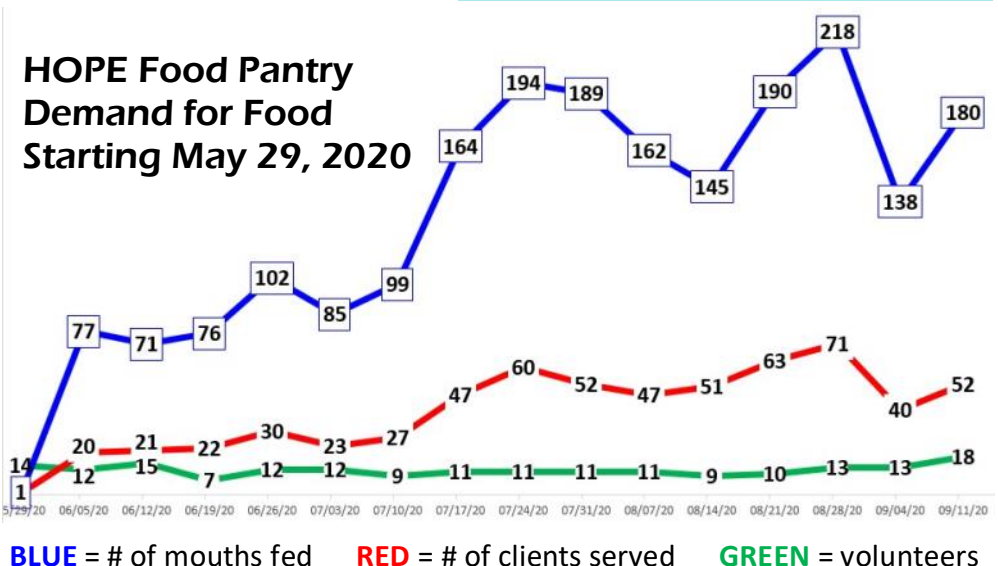
FOOD BANK
OF NORTHERN NEVADA

Donations Needed

We spend our budget to purchase food, but people need additional items to be healthy. We always need...

- Body soap (bar or gel)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Socks (new)
- Toilet paper
- Toothbrushes and Toothpaste
- Shampoo

You can drop off your donations each Friday from 3-6:00 pm at the HOPE Food Pantry.



Update on In-Person and Online Worship

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



- ✓ PLAN
- ✓ PREPARE
- ✓ PREVENT

Our Annual Conference regularly updates how they are addressing the Covid-19 situation. Read more about their comprehensive policies and guidance at... www.cnumc.org/covid19



In-Person Worship Resumes Sept. 13 at 8:30 and 10:45 am

Our Worship Team has spent months working closely with our Annual Conference office to ensure that, as we resume in-person worship services, our processes and procedures will be in full compliance with all federal, state, local, and denominational requirements & recommendations.

Please note: Many of you have told me that you prefer to **continue worshipping with us online**. That's fine! You can still do that via Zoom each Sunday at 10:45 am PST – just like you have for the past 5 months.

We are taking every precaution to ensure we are following John Wesley's "3 General Rules" which are 1) do no harm, 2) do good, and 3) stay in a loving relationship with God. To that end, the following procedures will be in place for in-person worship.

For both services, you can **enter the church through the SIDE door** (near the office building) **OR through the BACK door** (near the wheelchair lift). As you enter the building, our greeters will check your temperature, spray your hands with isopropyl alcohol, and offer you a disposable mask if you don't have one.

Proper use of masks (i.e. covering both mouth and nose) **is required at all times**. This is non-negotiable.

Our ushers will escort you to designated seats to ensure we are maintaining at least 6-foot

distancing. People currently living together can sit together in pairs. Seating will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. We have reserved the front rows for anyone with special mobility needs.

Thanks to Martin B., we have new *generosity boxes* at the entrance/exit doors if you would like to bring a cash or check donation. We will also have our Square credit card reader available in case you'd like to use that option. And you can also continue donating through our website.

At the end of worship, our ushers will direct people to leave, one at a time. There will be no social hour at the end of either worship service. Please exit directly to your car.

Please note: To accommodate the needs of several of our members **please do NOT wear any perfumes, colognes, or scented hair sprays or lotions to either** of our in-person services. This is an extremely serious concern, and we want to make sure everyone feels welcome *and* comfortable throughout the service.

Also, to reduce the risk of contamination and infection, we will *not* sing hymns together nor have unison speaking (e.g. the Lord's Prayer). Feel free to hum quietly during songs and whisper words normally said in unison.

Unique to the first service, from your perspective, everyone will sit on the far **RIGHT** hand side, the side closest to the piano.

Once again, if for any reason, you do not wish to worship with us in person, you can continue to worship with us online via Zoom at 10:45 am.

Take this warning seriously:

An unavoidable risk of exposure to and contracting COVID-19 (aka the corona virus) exists anywhere people are or have been present. COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness, disability, and death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), senior citizens and guests with underlying medical conditions are especially vulnerable. Although our church has instituted reasonable practices in an attempt to reduce the spread of COVID-19, we cannot guarantee that you will not catch nor succumb to the virus. By attending events on our property, you voluntarily assume all risks related to COVID-19.

Know that we love you all and want everyone to be as safe as possible!

Leadership: Priesthood?!?

The following article – *The Priesthood of All in a Time of Pandemic* – offers us words of both comfort and encouragement. I hope it inspires you to reflect on your role in “the priesthood of all believers” at home, at church, and in our community. The author, Dr. Deanna A. Thompson is the Director of the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN. ~ Pastor Charles



Before I was diagnosed with incurable cancer eleven years ago, I prided myself on being a digital skeptic who didn't own a cell phone and stayed away from social media. Then stage IV cancer came along and broke my back, sidelining me from my full and wonderful life. And in the midst of my cancer quarantine, I was introduced to the loving and healing presence of the body of Christ mediated to me via digital technology. Since then, I've been **on a mission to help shine a light on the power of the virtual body of Christ** and its capacity to surround people with love, care, and support during the worst times of their lives.

As the daughter and granddaughter of pastors, I've always been a big fan of the local church. But getting sick exposed me to the virtual body of Christ that extends far beyond the local church. While physical, incarnational presence of the body of Christ is at the heart of what it means to be Christian, **the body of Christ has always been a virtual body** (<https://faithandleadership.com/jason-byassee-virtual-theological-education>).

The apostle Paul was almost never physically with those he considered fellow members of the body. To stay connected, he used the mode of virtual communication most popular in his day: the letter. And even though Paul's virtual presence with the church was in some ways inferior to being there in person, being virtually present through letters opened up additional ways of being meaningfully connected in the body of Christ.

In these days of COVID-19, many of us are grieving the many losses we're experiencing due to the church's forced exile into virtual spaces. Honoring those losses is important. At the same time, might it be possible to allow the power of the virtual body of Christ to provide care and support during this pandemic to enlarge our understanding

of the scope and reach of Christian ministry?

Just as Paul had to rely on co-workers like Timothy and Phoebe to bring his message to fledgling church communities and offer on-the-ground guidance in his absence (cf. I Cor. 4.17; Rom. 16.1-2), so too are many pastors and church staff relying on tech-savvy congregational members to move worship and youth group and other programs online. Many churches are experiencing increases in the numbers of people tuning in to online services compared to typical in-person attendance. And people living half a country away are finding new church homes as they participate in virtual worship experiences. **The same digital tools often faulted for distracting us from what really matters are making more visible the power and reach of the virtual body of Christ that includes and extends beyond the local church community.**

One of the most powerful dimensions of Paul's vision of the body of Christ is its call to pay special attention to the members who are suffering and in pain (cf. I Cor. 12.22, 26). Pastors and church staff are embodying a powerful capacity to minister through digital technology as we gather together from our homes to be nourished by the Word through worship. Even as enforced physical distancing is making it extraordinarily difficult to be physically present with those who are ill or in the hospital, those in nursing homes or in prison, church staff are relying on members of the body to be the hands and feet of Christ and provide care of the congregation through phone calls and in-person visits that keep a safe physical distance. Using the language of my Protestant heritage, **I'm seeing the priesthood of all believers at work in new and transformative ways during these days of pandemic.**

All of us in the church eagerly await the end of physical distancing and the ability for the body of Christ to gather again in person. The toll of separation is great. But during this time of being physically apart, it is also the case that **the virtual body of Christ is present to those who suffer in compassionate, healing ways.** In addition to attending to our grief and lamenting what we've lost, let's also notice and maybe even celebrate the empowering presence of the virtual body of Christ that's been with us all along.

www.umcdiscipleship.org/blog/the-priesthood-of-all-in-a-time-of-pandemic

Consolidated Governance – Our Path Forward

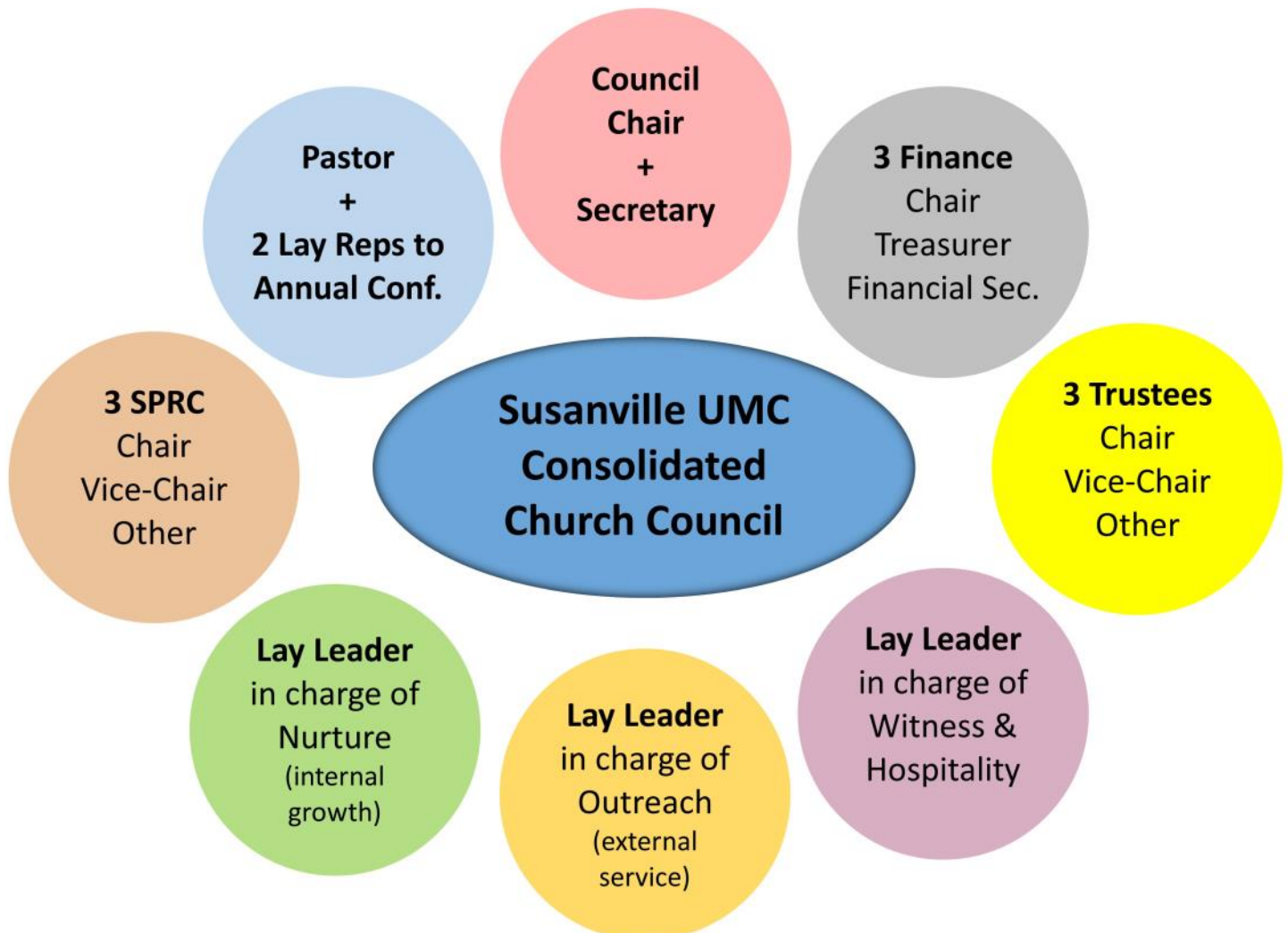
Since I first arrived at Susanville UMC, nearly everyone has told me that our church has wanted to move to a Consolidated Governance structure for years. That was music to my ears! Methodist churches across America have found this helps them effectively streamline communication and decision making while also reducing the number of reoccurring meetings. During the past several months, I have worked with our Church Council, our District Superintendents, and several pastors I know to help us all determine the best way of putting this conceptual goal into a practical reality.

The UMC's *Book of Discipline* gives us tremendous latitude in *how* we create a Consolidated Governance structure. Basically, if we cover all of the legal and functional bases, we're good. We can readdress and modify our Consolidated Governance structure at each fall's annual Charge Conference meeting should we determine additional *or fewer* people are needed.

After several long and productive discussions, our entire Church Council believes that making this change will improve our communications between Church Council and our church's various teams and task forces as well as with our membership as a whole.

Moving to this new structure is a pivotal moment in our collective efforts to grow our church. Our words, actions, and decisions were guided by Jesus' Great Commandments (Matt. 22:35-40: Love God, self, and others) as well as John Wesley's 3 General Rules (do no harm, do good, and stay in loving relationship with God).

The diagram below represents the culmination of our conversations. Each of these roles is described in UMC's *Book of Discipline*, and regular leadership training will be key for the **17 members** of our future Church Council. Margie and I look forward to discussing this with all of you after worship on Oct. 4, on the phone, or in a Zoom meeting.



Connecting Through Social Media

<https://www.facebook.com/umcofsusanville/>

Getting the Word Out to the World!

Each week our social media posts reach dozens to hundreds of people. For free! **963 people** saw the post shown here! Since the Susanville community is highly active on Facebook, this is a great way of engaging people.

For those of you on Facebook and/or Instagram, you are a HUGE help to our social media presence when you “like” our posts and **especially** when you “share” our posts along with some personal comments so that people understand 1) the context of what you’re sharing and 2) why they should be interested.

If you’d like more specific tips to make your sharing most effective, contact Pastor Charles to schedule a Zoom meeting.

Follow Us On Instagram!

We’ve expanded our social media presence! If you’re an Instagram user, this is a great way to stay in touch. The easiest way to view our Instagram page is to click the squareish icon in the top right corner of our website. That will take you to... [instagram.com/susanville_methodist/](https://www.instagram.com/susanville_methodist/)



Staying Connected

Office is CLOSED until further notice for safety.

Phone messages and emails are checked daily.

530-257-5893 susanville_umc@frontier.com

Visit our website at SusanvilleMethodist.org

- Bishop Rev. Minerva G. Carcaño
- District Superintendent Rev. Blake Busick
- Pastor Rev. Charles White
- Choir Director Dennis Roberts
- Pianist Karen Sherve
- Custodian Janiska Nordstrom

Sunday Worship Services @ 8:30 & 10:45 am

10:45 am via Zoom – See you online!



Follow us on Social Media
and share us with your friends!

[facebook.com/umcofsusanville](https://www.facebook.com/umcofsusanville)

[instagram.com/susanville_methodist](https://www.instagram.com/susanville_methodist)



Join Us Online!

Our worship services, programs, and events continue happening online throughout the week via Zoom.



- Worship – Sunday morning at 10:45 am
- Bible Study – Tuesdays at 6:00 pm
- Coffee with the Pastor – Thursdays at 6 pm

For all the login info you need to join us, visit our website at...

SusanvilleMethodist.org/online

Church Bell articles are due by the 20th each month.

Submissions CharlesWhite@protonmail.com

Printer Church Office

Reporters All of You!



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SusanvilleMethodist.org



WE'RE BACK IN CHURCH!

**Mark Your Calendars!
 Invite Your Friends!**

In-person worship resumes
 Sept. 13 at our regular times
 of 8:30 am & 10:45 am.
 See details inside.

THIS MAIL IS LIKE YOU: FIRST CLASS!



Our church *continues* thriving and growing because of your steadfast generosity. Our pledged tithes remain close to 100% which is a blessing in numerous ways! Consider taking advantage of our online giving option.

SusanvilleMethodist.org/donate

Thank you so much for your amazing support as we continue to serve Susanville!

Thrift Store Volunteers Needed

CR Stuff Thrift Shop needs volunteers Monday - Friday from 10am - 4pm. If you feel comfortable working with the public, please contact Crossroads at 530-251-0701 for more info and to volunteer.

Serving Our Members

If you need help getting to a doctor's appointment, the grocery store, etc., several of our members will help get you there and back home. **While self-isolation is being practiced**, please contact our office if you need prescriptions picked up or other household necessities.

Keep Those Prayers Coming!

Our prayer warriors continue meeting faithfully online every Monday at 11:00 am via Zoom and offer to God prayer requests that have been received. **The best way to submit your prayer concerns** is through our website.



SusanvilleMethodist.org/prayers

We continue to see God's hand working in the lives of people who need prayer, and there continue to be praises for answered prayers.

**Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.
 "For God so loved the world..."**