



PRINCETON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

JULY 2020

AROUND PRINCETON UNITED METHODIST THIS MONTH

July around Princeton UMC is relatively quiet. While we search for a replacement for Pastor Ginny, seminarian Rebekah Anderson will serve as interim Pastoral Care Pastor (see Pastor's Weekly Update on the website for Rebekah's story). Outreach invites members to consider new ways to help the community and Communications welcomes feedback on or submissions to the church's end racism resources.

IN THIS ISSUE

Around PUMC this Month.....	1
Preparing for Worship	2
Notes from the Pastor	3
Outreach Initiatives- An Opportunity to Make a Difference	4
Confirmation Mentors Share Experience and Wisdom With Confirmands.....	5-6
PUMC Curating End Racism Resources	7
Children's Ministry Corner.....	8
July Birthdays	9

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Date	Sermon	Scripture	Preacher
July 5	Longing to Belong: Open Hearted	John 21:15-19	Jenny Smith Walz
July 12	A Sower Went Out to Sow	Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23	Jenny Smith Walz
July 19	Where, Then, Did These Weeks Come From?	Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 and Romans 8:12-25	Jenny Smith Walz
July 26	The Kingdom of Heaven is Like	Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 and Romans 8:12-25	Jenny Smith Walz

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday Chapel Prayer Service & Zoom Fellowship Lunch - every Tuesday, at noon.

Join us on our [PUMC Facebook page](#) for a live (or archived) prayer service. This will be a more contemplative time with some space for silence and breath as well as intercessions. Leadership will rotate and format may vary. We'll follow this with a fellowship lunch via Zoom - see the website for the link.

Please Note: Due to the Covid-19 Outbreak, and social distancing guidelines, all in person meetings and events at the church have been modified to online gatherings. Please contact the leader of your group, committee or event for more details on how to connect.

Do you have something you'd like to see in the newsletter? Committee news, or an upcoming event?
Email both office@princetonumc.org and commasst@princetonumc.org.
The deadline for August's issue is July 15th.

NOTES FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Beloved Princeton United Methodist Church Community,

There are so many things I could share with you right now. There is so much going on in our world, in our church. But of all the things I could say or share with you now, the thing I want you most to know is that I miss you. I love you.

At some point each week, I spend a few minutes scrolling through the comments in our live-streamed worship posts. Every time I do this, I tear up, and I'm struck by the powerful feelings of love, care, and longing that well up as I see your names, your photos, your words. I miss seeing your smiles, hearing your voices, sharing your hugs and handshakes. I picture you, as best I can, where you are, in your homes, doing what you're doing, wondering how you really are, what it's like to be you today.



Through the week, I'm in a number of meetings, and sometimes I get to see some of your faces and hear some of your voices through Zoom or on the phone. And again, my heart leaps, and my throat catches, and I'm struck by the powerful feelings of love and care I have for you.

And each day, I find myself scrolling through names in my mind and heart, picturing the sanctuary and where you sit, looking at lists with your names on them, wondering how it is with your souls. And I know that I'm not alone in doing the missing. I know you miss one another. I know this is painful and hard, and we want it to be over.

I've written about this. I've preached about this. I've taught and counseled about this. But I find that I have to keep reminding myself about this important truth through this challenging time, letting it continue to sink from my mind into my heart and soul:

The Holy Spirit fills the spaces between us and binds us together in ways that are beyond our understanding or perception. When I pray for you (or you pray for me), by God's mysterious power and love, we are bound together. Somehow, the Holy Spirit carries my love to you and you are different because of it. This happens most often beneath our consciousness in imperceptible ways. But nonetheless it happens.

Isn't that beautiful? Isn't that powerful? Isn't that comforting? It is to me, particularly on those days when I wish I could reach out and have a good long conversation with each of you, and I know there are limits in my world that prevent that from happening as I'd like. I can pray. I do pray. For you. With you. And I know that our bond continues to grow, you are strengthened, you are held, you are not alone, even when we are distant.

I miss you. I love you. I pray for you.

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you. . . ." ~Philippians 1:3-4

Peace and love,

Pastor Jenny

OUTREACH INITIATIVES—AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Since March, our nation has been impacted by a series of stunning events and traumas. In less than four months our world has been turned upside down. Who would have expected that over 110,000 Americans would have died from the coronavirus, a pandemic which has swept the world, with New Jersey and New York the worst-hit areas? Who would have expected 40,000,000 Americans would be out of work? On top of this, the death of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis police proved to be the fuel to ignite an explosion of protests, demonstrations, and calls for the end of racial discrimination sweeping our nation.

So many lives have been shattered, broken almost beyond recognition. The need for healing and reconciliation is everywhere.

The Outreach Committee welcomes ideas on a program you could begin!

As we hope to move toward recovery in the months ahead, Princeton UMC has funds earmarked as seed money to start new programs to serve the community. From seeds a mighty forest grows. *We - you actually - are invited to help shape events, find a new normal and build toward a better future. John Wesley's rule rings truer than ever: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, as long as you can."*

Countless issues face us on the way to healing and recovery.

For instance, how do we:

- help our church, community and nation heal the brokenness revealed by racial inequalities?
- assist people whose jobs are no longer there?
- assist students with new remote learning challenges?
- strengthen our outreach to a shell-shocked community forced to hide and shelter?
- address and cure deep-seated prejudices and racial and other inequalities?
- help the healing process for a community that has gone through these savage crises?

Do you have ideas for sustainable solutions that will help?

We welcome your specific proposals in writing on how you might use funds to begin new initiatives for recovery. Please submit your ideas or refer any questions to Karen Longo-Baldwin (klongobaldwin@gmail.com) or Jeff Sayre (Jeffcsayre@verizon.net).

We invite your ideas and your personal involvement!

Your Outreach Committee

CONFIRMATION MENTORS SHARE EXPERIENCE AND WISDOM WITH CONFIRMANDS

For five weeks running, Princeton UMC's confirmands have been leading worship services. Their journey towards becoming professing members of the church began in January, went virtual in March and, once it is safe to do so, will end with a ceremony in the sanctuary. The Princeton UMC family knows the confirmands' parents, their Confirmation teachers, and their pastors. Less well known but vital in preparing Ana, Camille, Alli, Ben, and Rosalind (Rosy) for their Confirmation are their mentors, a group of volunteers who answer questions, dispense wisdom, and share their faith journeys.

Helen and Larry Curtis, Kelly Mills, Christine Shungu, and Tayler Necochea, this group's mentors, answered questions about their experiences. Their responses have been woven together in the following article.

1. *How long have you been a member of Princeton UMC? Have you mentored before?*

Two mentors - Tayler and Kelly - joined the church family about a year ago; Helen and Larry Curtis, three and a half years ago, and Christine Shungu 30 years ago. While Kelly is a first-time mentor, everyone else has worked with confirmands before. **Larry**, a retired pastor, spent "34 years of my ministry as a local church pastor in the New England Annual Conference. For most of those years, I led Confirmation classes for [our] young people," he shared.

2. *How do you understand the role of mentor?*

Every mentor fills several roles for the confirmands. "I see myself as a guide, encourager, cheerleader, and coach throughout their faith journey," said **Kelly**. Each of the mentors has made the same faith journey as their mentees, so "sharing my faith journey with the hope of guiding a youth into a better relationship with Christ" is a vital part of my role, explained

Christine. What is clearest to **Helen** is that a mentor is "someone who cares about others and wants to know their confirmand and to give that young individual the space to talk about, ask questions, express doubts, and explore church membership."

3. *What changes have you witnessed in your confirmand over the months of preparation?*

All the mentors noted that because of quarantine, this has not been a typical Confirmation season. Despite the uncertainty of these past few months, the mentors spoke proudly about their confirmands' positive attitudes and work ethic. **Tayler** observed that "Rosy seems a lot more confident talking about her faith. This has been a particularly difficult time for everyone, but Rosy always had a good attitude and was very thoughtful," she added.

What captured **Kelly** about her confirmand was her growth. "Camille has really broken out of her shell during the Confirmation process. It's been lovely to watch her blossom [and] lead the congregation through the service. I'm so proud of her!" While remote mentoring presented a less than ideal situation to "witness personal change," said **Christine**, it has been on display for five Sundays. "The greatest testament to Ana's growth through Confirmation [preparation] was attested to by her rendition of the Lord's prayer on Confirmation Sunday," she added. Having watched her mentee Alli serve as acolyte during worship and having worked with her during Confirmation classes, **Helen** noted Alli's maturity. At this writing, Alli had yet to lead service, so "[Helen] is very much looking forward to hearing Alli

share her story and offer her wording of the Lord's Prayer.”

During their preparation, the confirmands grapple with some complex topics. For **Larry**, growth in his mentee Ben became clear in their discussions. “Two areas of Ben's interest and growth came about in our exchanges,” he began. The founding of African Methodist Episcopal Church was rooted in dissent. “At Old St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia [1787] Blacks were required to sit in the balcony...and when they were refused communion, many left,” explained Larry. One of those who left founded the

African Methodist Episcopal Church. Ben was also interested in the use of ancient expressions of Christian faith in the contemporary world.

4. *What one piece of advice do you have for this class?*

Considering the wealth of experiences these mentors have shared with their charges, their advice is worth following. **Taylor**: “Know that [your] faith matters, but also that [your] doubt and hard questions about God matters too. And in all seasons, give yourself grace.” **Kelly**: “Always act as role models...Be proud of all you've accomplished and pass it along to others!” **Christine**: “Hold on and continue to grow in your faith and let it be your guide through the rest of your life.” **Helen**: “I'd encourage each one not to give up when the going gets tough (and there are bound to be times when that will happen), but to let others help them through those times.” **Larry**: “Ask all the questions you can think of. Christianity has been around for a long time and your questions will probably be familiar, but you need to wrestle with the answers and your commitment.”



Clockwise: Christine Shungu, Kelly Mills, Larry Curtis, Taylor Necoechea, Helen Curtis

PUMC CURATING END RACISM RESOURCES

In its response to white supremacy, racism – and police brutality that has resulted in nationwide protests – the United Methodist Church has this to say:

“The denomination’s Council of Bishops called for every United Methodist “to name the egregious sin of racism and white supremacy and join together to take a stand against the oppression and injustice that is killing persons of color.” It added: “The United Methodist Church has created an advertising campaign, #EndRacism, in an effort to actively engage in the ministry of dismantling racism and promoting racial justice. Logo courtesy of resourceumc.org.”



It also issued a statement saying, “The United Methodist Church has mounted a denomination-wide campaign, “United Against Racism,” that urges its members not only to pray, but to educate themselves and have conversations about the subject, and to work actively for civil and human rights.”

We at Princeton UMC are compiling “End Racism” resources to help us better understand the Black Lives Matter Movement, systemic racism in the criminal justice system, social repercussions of slavery, and inequality in America.

At this moment in history, white people have become allies of black people fighting for racial justice. This resource addressing racism and anti-racism includes lists for all ages as well as for both white and black families. Isabella Dougan curates the list, and here is the link.

This extensive collection of books, articles, podcasts, films, videos, songs, poems is curated to include resources sourced from other lists. It will hopefully help us learn and have conversations about racism as it affects every aspect of our society. We invite you to navigate through the resources you like and select what to read or watch and be informed. Have something to add? A comment about what you’ve read? Please email it to communications@PrincetonUMC.org and tag it with #praywithusPUMC on your social media page.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CORNER

Summer Sunday School is here! We are meeting at 11:30 most Sundays throughout the summer. Heads up that I will be off the grid for the month of July and our amazing Nursery Leader Miki Langdon will be stepping in to manage Sunday School! Please reach out to her at mikimouse395@gmail.com if you have any questions or concerns.

Here is our upcoming schedule:

7/5 Coffee Hour - no Sunday School

7/12 Virtual Sunday School

7/19 Virtual Sunday School

7/26 Virtual Sunday School

8/2 Coffee Hour - no Sunday School

8/9 Story & Stretch Sunday School

8/16 Story & Stretch Sunday School

8/23 Story & Stretch Sunday School

8/30 Story & Stretch Sunday School

Are you feeling a call to serve in our Children's Ministry this Fall? Please reach out to me at evangeline@princetonumc.org if you are interested!

Suggested Family Reads:

The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson

"My mamma says I shouldn't go on the other side".... My mama says the same thing. But she never said nothing about sitting on it."

The Beatitudes From Slavery to Civil Rights by Carole Boston Weatherford:

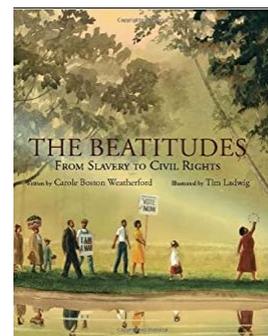
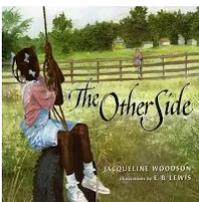
"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. I was with your ancestors and I will be with your offspring, standing on the side of justice. Even now, I am with the downtrodden and with those who seek uplift. I am holy water in the stream of humanity. Drink, bathe, and be free."

Earlier this Spring, some of us parents at PUMC studied Cindy Wang Brandt's book Parenting Forward. She is now offering some free downloads of videos from her conference to anyone who is interested. Here's more information:

Black Lives Matter 100% Discount

In an effort to center black voices, please use the discount code `blacklivesmatter` for every black/non white speaker as well as Dr. Jen Harvey's session on Raising White Kids, and access the sessions with a 100% off discount.

<https://www.parentingforwardconference.com/2019-sessions>





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Rev. Jenny Smith Walz, Lead Pastor
Rev. Skitch Matson, Discipleship Pastor

**FOR THE LATEST NEWS AND
UPDATES**



Princeton UMC is a Stephen
Ministry Congregation

Deadline for the **August** Newsletter

JULY 15

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commasst@princetonumc.org