

# August

Dear Friends,

What a strange summer this has been. I am reminded of C.S. Lewis' description of Narnia at the beginning of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. When the White Witch is in control Lewis writes, "it is always winter but never Christmas".

It might be said about this season, "always summer but never vacation". So many of the things we looked forward to, family reunions, festivals, fairs and ball games have been cancelled. We enjoy these days but with a sense of uncertainty about what's next.

While we live with the dis-ease, we can't forget that as in Narnia, Christ (represented in the book by the great lion Aslan) "is still on the move". We claim again the words of the Apostle Paul to the believers in Rome...

*"I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, not 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."*

In the Peace, Presence and Power of the Risen Christ...Pastor Sarah

## Worship Calendar

**Throughout August we will continue to worship in person at 9:00 am and on Armstrong cable 23/100 and Facebook.**  
***Our August worship theme..."Who Is My Neighbor?"***

## Do You??

Our United Methodist baptismal vows ask this question, “Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?”. What an incredible question! Do I accept the freedom and power God gives me? Will I use this power to resist evil, injustice and oppression? I want to but...How would I do it? Who would I do it with?

**One answer is to sign up with our Conference initiative “Now, Action”.** Please read the following information and go to the Conference website [WPAUMC.org](http://WPAUMC.org) to sign up. **After signing up, please let Pastor Sarah know so that we can support one another in the work to become an antiracist community.**

## ***PLEDGE TO ACT: SIGN TODAY!***

*"So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." -James 2:17 (NRSV)*

*As followers of Jesus and as leaders in the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference, we lament that systemic racism, white privilege and prejudice continue to harm Black people in our country. We grieve the recent deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd - and many others, named and unnamed, who have been victims of violence fed by racial injustice.*

*Leaders have called in recent days for movement beyond words, including Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi in her [Statement on Racism and the Cycle of Violence](#) and the WPA Conference Anti-Racism Team in an article to be published in the Summer 2020 edition of the *In Focus*. The time is now to **answer** this call, **move** past words, and **ACT**.*

*Our faith compels us to act **TOGETHER** as faithful people of **ALL RACES**. Yet, many of us do not know where to start or how to learn new anti-racism skills on our own. Thus, we are pledging to learn and to act side by side to practice skills that disrupt white privilege, racial injustice, and systemic racism in our hearts, our churches, and our communities.*

***We invite you to take action by signing our anti-racism pledge and committing yourself for a full year to monthly education and action tasks focused on dismantling racism. [Learn more about this initiative and sign the pledge by going to the conference website WPAUMC.org](#)***

**THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!** A heartfelt thanks to...All who have safely transitioned back to in person worship and those who continue to join us from home via Armstrong Cable and Facebook...Tyson Johnston for leading one last Safe Sanctuaries Training before transitioning out of that position...Jim and Carolyn Turnbull, Joyce Minnis, Barb Baker, Millie Ray and Diane Craven for providing a delicious lunch following Lois Rockwell's funeral...John Karns, Brian Johnston, Jeff Loutzenhiser, Jason Ashbaugh and Larry Sippy for responding quickly and competently to a ceiling issue on the second floor...Joyce Minnis for the gift of money to the Lord's Locker ... All who have ventured in to our new media site "Amplify"...Our Soup Kitchen, Lord's Locker and Senior Food box volunteers for stepping up to ensure these vital ministries carry on... All who continue to support the ministries of Stone through their prayers and financial giving... Thanks to all who give, serve, lead and love. **THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!**

**Capital campaign update...**Our profound thanks to all who continue to financially support the general fund and the work of the Capital campaign during this difficult time. **Since launching in 2018, \$105,637 has been given to the Campaign, \$18,478 of this in 2020.** Thank you for expressing faith in our future by your giving now...The Capital Campaign Committee.



Our condolences go out to Tom, and family and friends of Lois Rockwell, who passed away on July 6<sup>th</sup>.

## On your mark, get set, GO!

After several months of hard work and dedication by our Communications and Technology Committee, **we are delighted to officially announce the launch of our newly designed website on Sunday, August 2, 2020. We encourage you to take a moment to visit the site at [www.stoneumc.org](http://www.stoneumc.org).** Our goal was to make the new website faster, and more user-friendly as we navigate the challenges of this new season of ministry. The committee determined how important it was for Stone UMC to make information regarding services, discipleship, outreach, and events easily accessible for our current members as well as those individuals we are reaching through online communications. In order to achieve this, we have partnered with Tithe.ly, a powerful online giving and complete church management system. The new website is the first in many communication "improvements" to come.

Our heartfelt thanks to Carolyn Turnbull for creatively maintaining our current website for the past ten years. Her work prepared the way for this new site.

Our goal with this new website is to provide you and all "visitors" to Stone UMC an easier way to learn about our church and how we are living into our calling in the community. The new features of the site include a dedicated online giving platform, integrated social media to foster improved online communication, a new digital newsletter feature, up-to-date event/calendar listings, online prayer request form, a dedicated livestream platform, our own personalized church app, and so much more! Take a moment to visit the site and download the app today! If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, please contact us...we look forward to hearing your thoughts and sharing your feedback.

Jen Ashbaugh

## Sip & See cancelled

As new parents, Cody and Elizabeth have been social distancing themselves since early May. Ever since Oliver's birth they have been diligent about protecting him. I, as an essential worker, have only been able to see him outside, from six feet, with a mask on. I am ok with this as I would not want to put any additional stress on our new family. Elizabeth really wanted to have this time to show off little Oliver, but after much contemplation, we have decided to cancel the sip and see. She is grateful for all of the well wishes she has received and thanks each of you for your role in her life. She can't wait until things calm down and she can celebrate Oliver's arrival with all.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Clayton



Congratulations to Elizabeth Clayton and Cody Willey on the birth of their first child, Oliver Dagny, born July 8, 2020. Grandma is Lisa Clayton. Aunts are Emilee and Erica Clayton.

Congratulations to Erin and Henry Means on the birth of their second child, Heinrich "Heinz" William, born July 9, 2020. Great grandparents are Garald and Phyllis Stockton, Grandma is Debbie Knapp, and Big Sis is Cambria.