

Avon Federated Church News

During the Time of Coronavirus

November 25, 2020

WE'RE BACK!

After a few month absence, we have brought back this newsletter. Our last edition was in July 2020. We started out as a weekly online and email newsletter in March 2020. The purpose was to keep people up-to-date on the rapidly changing situation in the Avon Community and at the Avon Federated Church during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only did we have the weekly newsletter, we also had a daily Facebook live broadcast. There was so much news to report that we had trouble keeping up with it.

Then, the Summer and early Fall months came and there was almost no community or church news to report. So, this newsletter went on an unplanned break.

COVID-19 cases are once again on the rise. The holidays are here. We have much news to report. **So, the newsletter is back.**

Our current goal is to put out a newsletter at least once per month—-whether COVID infections stay on the rise—-or not. We believe that there will be enough church and community news that will be worth sharing with you.

If you wish to make a financial donation to the church, the address is as follows:

The Federated Church
P.O. Box 432
Avon, IL 61415

The church thanks you for your donations during this past year of COVID-19 & great uncertainty.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EVENTS

ALL ONLINE EVENTS WILL BE ON OUR CHURCH YOUTUBE CHANNEL AND WILL BE ACCESSIBLE VIA OUR CHURCH WEBSITE:

avonfederatedchurch.com

- **DAILY ONLINE DEVOTION & PRAYER.** From November 29th thru December 24th, we will have a daily devotion and prayer online.
- **SUNDAY WORSHIP.** We continue to meet in-person at the church building. Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays. Social distancing takes place. You must wear a mask whenever closer than 6 feet from people who are not from your own household. We make that worship service available **ONLINE** starting on the next Sunday morning.
- **"BLUE CHRISTMAS" SERVICE.** Many people feel "down" or "blue" —especially during the holidays. The pandemic can intensify those feelings. We will have an **ONLINE** worship service to acknowledge our grief, fears, stress, sadness, and anxiety. We will also lift up the comfort and hope that comes from God. This service will be available online anytime after 7:00 pm. on December 14th. We will leave it available at least through late January.
- **ONLINE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE.** We will have an **ONLINE** service of scripture, carols, and candles. **WE WILL NOT HAVE AN INDOOR SERVICE.** Light a candle at home and watch the online service. It will debut at 1:00 p.m on December 24th and be online until late January. **You won't want to miss this online service!**
- **OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE.** Join us at 5:00 p.m on December 24th on the church lawn (weather permitting) for some scriptures, a couple of carols, a brief message. We will close by singing "Silent Night" (with battery-operated "candles"). The service will be brief. We will be socially distanced. Bring a face covering (in case you chose to be closer than 6 feet from other people). **EVERYONE IS INVITED!**

WE ARE ONLINE!

A few years ago, Peggy Miller created a very nice website for the church. We shared information about it—but it never really took off. The pandemic is changing things. The church is now more “online” than “in-person”. So, the church recently acquired the “domain name” **avonfederatedchurch.com**

You can find us at that web site. We are using most of the website that Peggy designed. Jon Prain changed the “home” page a bit to have very prominent links to our online worship services, our COVID-19 Information, and a big link to Advent and Christmas information. So, credit Peggy for all or her hard work and for what what is good with the site—and blame Jon for any “messes” that he created in editing part of the site for our new COVID-19 reality.

If you want to know just about anything about the Avon Federated Church — if you want to find our online worship services and our other videos, events, and announcements, go to:

avonfederatedchurch.com

SOCIAL MEDIA INFO

The Avon Federated Church has been on **Facebook** and **YouTube** for nearly a year.

Find us on **Facebook** and **YouTube**, simply by going to those sites and typing “Avon Federated Church” into their search engines. We invite you to “follow” us on those two sites.

We have brand new accounts on **Instagram** and **Twitter**. We don’t have much information on those sites (yet). However, our presence on those social media platforms will be growing soon. So, please “follow” us.

INSTAGRAM: avon.federated.church

TWITTER: @ChurchAvon

THANKS-LIVING

When I was an undergraduate student, I would attend worship at a United Methodist Church where Rev. Virgil Nulton was the Senior Pastor. One year, Virgil preached a sermon entitled, “**Thanks-living**”—and the central theme of that sermon “stuck” with me.

We celebrate Thanksgiving **DAY**. On that one **DAY**, some people MIGHT pause for a few **seconds** or a **minute** (or two) to give thanks to God—usually before we eat too much food.

Rev. Nulton suggested that “Thanksgiving” is not something that should be limited to several seconds —or a couple minutes— on just one day of the year. “Thanksgiving” should become an everyday lifestyle for each of us. Hence the phrase, “**Thanks-living**”.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, we find these words: “**...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.**”

So, give thanks in a pandemic. Give thanks when there are numerous COVID-related rules and restrictions. Give thanks for school closures and for online classes and distance learning.

Give thanks—both during and after—a very hotly contested election season (whether we agree with the election outcome—or not).

Give thanks when things are “going our way” and when things are pleasant—and especially give thanks when things are **NOT** “going our way” and when things are unpleasant. Give thanks in **ALL** circumstances.

I would invite you to take some time during this Thanksgiving season for you (and your family members) to truly “give thanks”. I would even challenge each of us to write down a list of all of the things for which we are thankful. Then, let us give thanks to God for each of the items on our lists. Take time to tell others about the many things for which we are thankful.

Let us have an attitude of “**Thanks-living**”.

—Rev. Jon Prain, Pastor

HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

Each November, the ministers of the Avon and Abingdon area lead a Thanksgiving worship service. This year, COVID-19 restrictions do not make that worship service possible. Thus, the ministers have taken on a service project. They are holding a food drive through the end of DECEMBER. The food will be divided between the two Abingdon food pantries which serve residents from both the Abingdon and Avon areas.

If you have **non-perishable** food items to donate to this holiday food drive, please bring the items to the Federated Church on Sunday mornings —or call/text Jon Prain at (309) 255-6702. Thank you!

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Due to COVID-19 concerns, the Abingdon-Avon (“A-Town”) School Board voted to close the district’s schools to any “in-person” classroom instruction through January 18, 2021. In-person classroom instruction will resume on January 19, 2021. Remote instruction and remote learning will occur until that date. Please keep the students, teachers, staff, and administrators in your thoughts and prayers.

WHY OUR CHURCH IS OPEN

Throughout the pandemic, our Church Board of Directors has continually evaluated what is the best response for our church to the COVID-19 situation.

They most recently discussed the matter on Nov, 22nd. The discussion was very thoughtful and explored all perspectives, data, and mandates. In the end, the Board decided to still offer both in-person (and online) worship opportunities.

The Board believes (especially during the holidays) that publicly worshipping God is at least as important as grocery stores and other businesses which are open. They believe that being open provides a much needed social interaction for some people. Our members are doing a VERY good job at social distancing, wearing masks, staying home when prudent, etc. Our doors being open sends an important message of hope to the community that God and the Church are present— even in these very uncertain times.

SOME LOCAL NEWS

— **Fulton County will conduct “Drive Through” COVID-19 testing at the Avon Village Hall on Monday, November 30th from 8 a.m. to 4 pm. This is free and open to all.**

—The Avon Angels in Action Relay for Life Team recently hosted a successful blood drive in the Federated Church fellowship hall. All COVID-19 safeguards were followed.

— The annual Avon Angels in Action “Angel Tree” project is well underway. The project provides clothes and toys to in need Avon children at Christmas. The Federated Church members and friends were very generous givers to this project.

—The Rev. Molly Carlson, Conference Minister of the Illinois Conference United Church of Christ, preached at our church on Nov. 1st.

—Some fairly recent deaths with ties to Avon or the Federated Church: Marna (Allison) Steach; Phyllis (Boyd) Repp; Betty (Meachum) Shaw; Ruth Ann (Sherman, Craver) Bryan; Harold Hickerson (brother of Maurice Hickerson); Bernard Smith; Billy Anderson; Lynda (James) Pratte (mother of Julia Frankhauser and mother-in-law to Christopher Frankhauser). Our sympathies are extended to the family members and friends of these persons. (Our apologies if there are any deaths we omitted).

— There are many people in the community (or with ties to people in the church or community) who have had COVID-19 or who have been quarantined due to possible exposure to COVID-19. They are in our thoughts & prayers. We invite you to pray also.

—The Avondale 4-H Club made bags to deliver to people in the Avon community including things such as soup, crackers, snacks, and a jug of Camp’s Orchard apple cider. They also wrote notes in cards to include with the bags.

—The Avon Lions Club has been doing repairs and upgrades at AVCOM Park as a service project.

—The Avon Girl Scouts sold pumpkins for a fundraiser. They made a donation to the American Red Cross, donated food and supplies to the Warren County Animal Shelter, and made a donation to the Avon Angels in Action Angel Tree.

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