

WELLS SPRING

A Publication of Wells Church

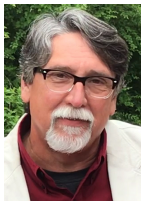
A United Methodist Congregation

September 2020

How Can We Shape the New Normal?

By Chris Cumbest
Pastor

As I sit to write an encouraging word for this coming month, I have just checked the weather forecast to see that there is the potential of having not just one, but two tropical storms that could be in the Gulf of Mexico on the same day.



Cumbest

I have certainly seen systems follow closely behind each other (ie. Katrina and Rita), but I am not sure that I have seen a time that two systems could possibly make landfall in the same geographical area within hours. By the time that you receive this, that time will have passed and I pray that there has been a minimal amount of damage.

Growing up on the Coast (as Coast trash, Ha!) there has always been a keen sense of watching the weather forecast this time of year and having an awareness of what is happening in the tropics. I can remember Camille, Frederic, Elena and Katrina among other storms not deemed as significant. There is a sixth sense that seems to arise for me when August arrives.

I was young when Camille hit the Coast, but can recall very vividly sensing the pain and helplessness that was present. My dad worked for the

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The D'lo Trio (Connie and Hal Jeans and Steve Chester) is a WellsFest favorite every year, but this year brought their music to "Live From Wells" on Aug. 20. WellsFest 2020 has been canceled due to the dangers of COVID 19. Live from Wells has been livestreaming music from some of our favorite musicians who have supported WellsFest.

COVID-19 Puts WellsFest Activities on Hold for 2020

This is the time of year when Wells Church is abuzz with activity preparing for WellsFest. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed all of that, as it has so many other community events this year.

WellsFest has always been designed to bring the community together for a day of music and family activities in support of a good cause. This year bringing people together — physically — is just not safe. Our WellsFest Steering Committee decided to cancel all our WellsFest activities for 2020.

Dr. Ken Simon, WellsFest chair, said that it should be clear to the community that "we have their best interests and their health at heart in making this decision."

"We are an organization of healing," he said.

The 2020 WellsFest events, including the WellsFest Art Auction, the WellsFest Golf Tournament and the music festival and race were set for the last week in September with all proceeds going to benefit Grace House.

Wells Pastor Chris Cumbest said he had spoken with Grace House Executive Director Catherine Sullivan and that Grace House understood.

"Grace House is on board with the fact that we do not need to do anything until next year," he said.

Throughout the 36-year history of WellsFest, the community coming together for these events has raised more than \$1.5 million for non-profits in support of the work they do to make Mississippi a better place.



- Sept. 1 Porter Furniss, Glynn Garrott, Sara Ragsdale
 Sept. 2 Taylor Eide
 Sept. 3 Luran Buchanan, Donald Campbell
 Sept. 4 Haley Dollarhide
 Sept. 6 Bryant Johnson
 Sept. 8 Kim Coalter, Fred Garrott
 Sept. 9 Richard Ayres, Beth Farmer
 Sept. 13 Reginald Nichols, Gayle Spencer, Lindsey Smith
 Sept. 14 Teresa Parker
 Sept. 15 Brenda Donald, Ken Farmer, David Hampton
 Sept. 16 Nancy Halfacre
 Sept. 17 Michael Allen, Tiffany Bobbs, Tracy Furniss, Lynn Taylor
 Sept. 18 Lucy Hansford
 Sept. 19 Anna Everly, Jana McNair
 Sept. 20 Aynda Ponder
 Sept. 21 Raphael Semmes, Brenda Trigg
 Sept. 22 Jamie Ward
 Sept. 23 Sarah Campbell
 Sept. 27 Theresa Pearson, Rex Woodham
 Sept. 28 Mark Dendinger, Leslie LaRue, Patsy McLain, Mike Tynes
 Sept. 29 Ken Simon
 Sept. 30 Shelli Bobinger

If your birthday isn't listed or is listed incorrectly, please let us know.

2020 Wells Church Giving

Jan. \$47,816.03	July \$31,686.47
Feb. \$42,800.66	Aug.
March \$42,686.00	Sept.
April \$42,383.00	Oct.
May \$40,166.80	Nov.
June \$31,236.00	Dec.

Based on the 2020 budget, \$55,825 is needed monthly to support the church's operations and ministries.

New Normal

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health department in those days and was sent to help distribute "commodities" to those who had been highly affected by the storm in the St. Martin area. He told stories of people who would come in search of their family members or who were distraught about their loss. There were also stories of reunions that took place as family members found each other for the first time post Camille. We felt that life would never be the same.

In early September of 1979, I had just begun my senior year at East Central High School in Hurley. Hurricane Frederic gave Mobile, Alabama, its "eye," but damage was extensive across the state line in Hurley and Cumbest Bluff, as well. I can remember being without power for almost three weeks as we chipped in to help cut and remove the downed trees in and around our area to help out the road crews and the utility contractors who were working non-stop to restore life to some sense of normal. (The Pascagoula River and a bar of Ivory soap kept us able to be around each other.) I thought that my life would never be the same and that I would have to attend an extra year of high school to complete courses for graduation. And I learned that periodically in life a new normal develops and it is not always a bad thing.

Fifteen years ago, on Aug. 29, I watched and listened as Katrina shifted back to the east and offered its destruction to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. I was on the Coast on Saturday following landfall on Monday to check on family

and to help Bishop Ward and others help see what damage had been done to United Methodist churches and to help find pastors in the area. I spent the next 10 years serving in different capacities on the Coast seeking to help people heal and find the "new normal," so that they would know hope and life. Here 15 years later there are still deep scars, both in the landscape and in people's lives from the disaster known as Hurricane Katrina. Yet as I visited last week, I witnessed that by God's grace that land and people continue to heal and find new ways to live and serve in the world that is different. Resilience, ingenuity and a little bit of hard headedness have helped folks work together to rebuild, heal and find a new life together.

I know that it seems that COVID-19 has and will change our world forever. We will certainly find that there are some "new normal" things that will come to be. However, I also know that though it seems that there is no real end in sight, that one day we will be past this moment. As followers of Jesus, how are we helping shape the new normal that will develop? How is our resilience, ingenuity and yes, even hard headedness working to help claim and proclaim hope for the future? One day, this too shall pass. How will we have worked to make the world a better place during this opportunity?

I miss you being in the building, but I know that you are continuing to be the church where you are. "Press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14

Write Chris at
chriscumbest@wellschurch.org.

Wells Memorial United Methodist Church Staff

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Children & Youth Stay Connected

By Ashley Rogers
Director, Children's Ministry

Preschool-5th Grade:

Mrs. Erin, Mrs. Joy, and Mrs. Kathryn miss their Sunday school students and can't wait until they can be together again!



Rogers

If your family has been missing Sunday School, please let Ashley know and she'll send you everything you need for the Fall session. Each week will include stories, activities and a teacher guide for parents. We are more than happy to mail these packets to anyone who'd use them! Conversely, we can also email PDFs if that would be an easier option for your family.

Youth 6th-12th Grade:

We hope all of our youth will join us Wednesday, Sept. 9, at 7:30 p.m. for Zoom Youth Group.

It's been a long time since we've seen each other and although virtual isn't as good as the real thing, I know I'm looking forward to it immensely. If your child hasn't joined us before on Youth Group Zoom, please email me at ashleyrogers@wellsunc.org so that I can send you the Zoom link and password. We'll be talking about everyone's back-to-school experiences as well as starting a short-term study on Grace. Students don't need anything special to join — just a willingness to participate and have fun. Of course, we'll play a game or two as well!

We have missed seeing everyone and hope that families take advantage of these ways to keep our young people connected until we're back in person.

Write Ashley Rogers at ashleyrogers@wellschurch.org.

What We're Doing

By Dr. Jeff Parker, Minister of Counseling



Parker

We are learning.

We are worrying.

We are mourning.

We are experiencing grace.

We are missing each other.

We are searching for justice.

We are trying to understand.

We are gathering the courage to hope.

We are learning new ways of connecting.

We are finding new ways to judge others.

We are returning to old ways of connecting.

We are finding encouragement where we can.

We are trying to perceive the log in our own eye.

We are making the best of a wearily bad situation.

We are trying to resist evil in the world and within ourselves.

We are supporting a booming cottage industry in mask making.

We are Zooming until the only words we have left are bad ones.

We are praying with ceasing and working on the unceasing part.

We are wondering what's next and when what's next will emerge.

We are trying to accept that some things are beyond understanding.

We hold out our hands and aren't surprised to get squirted with hand sanitizer.

We are widening our circle; we are moving beyond our walls in ways we didn't plan.

We are learning to accept ourselves as we hear the complicated story of a people of faith.

We are longing to kneel at the altar, to look into the server's eyes, and then to hold hands.

We are thankful for Chris, Jamie, David, Ashley, Greg, Jane, and Nancy, who are centering us.

We are embraced by this prayer:

"Lord, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference."



Write Jeff at drjparker@comcast.net.



How Can We Keep From Singing?

By Nancy Moore
Choir Director

Being told we can't sing together...it's almost unthinkable!



Moore

Throughout church history, singing has been a source of comfort and peace; a means of worship and praise; a powerful balm to heal and comfort.

And in this uncertain time, we must still find ways to offer this gift to the weary world.

One in six Americans sings in some sort of choir, according to a research study by Chorus America, an advocacy and research organization. That's a lot of disenfranchised folks during this pandemic! Members of our own choir have expressed sadness at not being able to gather for our regular

Wednesday rehearsals and Sunday services. If you multiply that by the thousands, you begin to get the effect COVID is having on musicians.

Hopefully, you've seen our "Virtual Voices" announcement on Facebook or on the Wells website. Around 20 of our own members are participating in Virtual Voices. In this age of musical isolation, we're working hard to reach out to others who are searching for a way to continue doing what they love (and need) to do.

We have a former choir member singing from Alaska, and a former staff member singing from Washington. We have a former choir director singing from Pennsylvania, some former choir members singing from right here in the Jackson Metro area, and a few Wells members who are not choir members! Other United Methodists have joined us

from the Coast, Olive Branch and Nebraska. This new technology has brought us together! Now that is an awesome way to say NO to COVID!

There is something powerful about a choir singing in community together. Indeed, we are grieving that we can't do that now. But we CAN still SING! In fact, WE WILL NOT BE SILENT!

And so we sing with even more conviction:

*My life flows on in endless song
above earth's lamentation*

*I hear the real, though far off hymn
that hails a new creation.*

*No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that rock I'm clinging*

*Since Christ is Lord of heaven and
earth, how can I keep from singing?*

Write Nancy Moore at
nancymoore@wellschurch.org