



**PARAGOULD FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
404 West Main Street, Paragould, AR 72450 | [fumcparagould.org](http://fumcparagould.org)

Sept. 11, 2020

Dear Paragould FUMC,

**THIS SUNDAY: “Bound & Loosed”** Last week we began a new 4-week sermon series from Gospel Lessons in the Revised Common Lectionary. Each of these texts will come from the Gospel of Matthew. We are calling this series “Bound & Loosed” which is taken from Matthew 18:18. Last Sunday, Rev. Chased shared a wonderful sermon from Matthew 18:15-20 encouraging us to practice healthy, grace-filled conflict according to the steps laid out by Jesus. If you did not see last week’s sermon, go back and watch it online! ... This week we turn our attention to Matthew 18:21-35 for a sermon titled “The Math of Forgiveness”. In these verses we hear Jesus say we ought to forgive “not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.” The principle here is simple, we ought to practice forgiveness at least as much as we have been forgiven. Another way of saying that is, we are only willing to extend grace to the degree we have received the grace offered us. God has offered each of us “grace upon grace” and therefore we ought to do the same with others. The challenge Jesus identifies is that few of us understand or rightly celebrate the grace we have received. We do not think of ourselves as needing forgiveness or having been forgiven. As we prepare for worship this Sunday consider your life including its failings. In what ways have you been forgiven? By others? By God? Do you share that grace with others?

**CHILDREN’S CURRICULUM & VIDEO** Reminder that we are now sharing a weekly Children’s video lesson with greetings and songs. Videos will be linked to the Friday newsletter email and posted at [fumcparagould.org/children](http://fumcparagould.org/children). We’ll also share them to Facebook each Sunday at 10:15am. Families should study the “Celebrate Wonder” Activity Book weekly lessons. Contact the church office if you need a booklet! Parents & Guardians, this is an opportunity to pour into the life and faith of your children. Make the best of this opportunity!

**YOUTH** Beginning this Sunday, YOUTH will return to regular, weekly gatherings on Sunday evenings. In good weather we’ll meet outside (bring your lawn chairs!) but will go inside when necessary. Jr. High (7th-9th) will meet at 6pm & Sr. High (10th-12th) will gather at 7pm. We will share games, devotionals, and prayer. Wear your mask!

**PSALMS STUDY** *Open and Unafraid: The Psalms as a Guide to Life* by W. David O. Taylor; Sept. 9 - Oct. 28; 12noon @ Worship Center; 6pm @ Worship Center & Streaming Online. We will use this book for an 8 week study of the Psalms. You’ll find it informative and a great compliment to our “A Psalm A Day” prayers. We will meet in the Worship Center, wearing masks, and spread out for safety. You’ll need to register your attendance each week the same as Sunday worship ([fumcparagould.org/register](http://fumcparagould.org/register)). The 6pm study will be streamed online similar to Sunday worship for those who feel safer at home. Books are available at church. \$20 in support of books is encouraged but not required. I invite you to read and use this book, even if you don’t attend one of these studies. Please join me in this study!

**MEETING SCHEDULE: SAVE THE DATE**

Sun., Sept. 13: 5pm Finance Committee Meeting

Sun., Sept. 20: 3pm Hospitality Team Meeting; 4pm Mission Committee Meeting; 5pm Trustees Meeting;  
6pm SPRC Meeting

Sun., Sept. 27: **5pm Church Council Meeting: In-person & Online at**  
[fumcparagould.org/worship--streaming.html](http://fumcparagould.org/worship--streaming.html)

**IN-PERSON WORSHIP & ACTIVITIES** I thank those who are attending and supporting in-person worship. FUMC's safety measures mirror similar guidelines in all other public spaces. If you are wondering about coming to church, I want you to feel welcome and comfortable. We are creating a safe environment. If you have questions or feedback about our ministries and COVID-19, please contact me.

As a reminder, below is a summary of what to expect when you return to in-person worship.

- + **Pre-register to attend the 9am & 11am worship services via the church's website ([fumcparagould.org/register](http://fumcparagould.org/register)) or by calling the church office each week.**
- + Live-streaming, radio, and television access continue
- + Everyone in the facility will wear a facemask except those speaking or singing.
- + You can download the order of worship from [fumcparagould.org/homeboundrelaunch](http://fumcparagould.org/homeboundrelaunch).
- + As services end, we will make our way outside as quickly as possible.
- + Children are welcome, but no childcare will be available.

I hope you get the sense that September represents our church's efforts to return to more, regular in-person activities including studies, meetings, and youth gatherings. We will seek to be creative in finding ways to gather while being safe and careful. For example, our scheduled Church Council meeting on September 27 (In-person & Online) is our first since the COVID shutdown. This will give us a chance to share updates and plans with respect to our church as we press toward fall and even the end of the year.

I by no means want to pressure folks to participate in a way they are uncomfortable. But I believe we have learned we can do a good deal of typical church ministry if we are willing to practice basic safety measures like wearing facemasks. As you know, safety protocols are the expectations and practices of nearly every public gathering including our schools. I sense this will continue to be the case for a while. That's okay! I am happy to support these measures alongside you if it allows us to be together! Thank you for your patience and support!

Grace & Peace,  
Rev. Dane



**WEEKLY LINKS:**

1. Children's Lesson, Sept. 13, "God Creates Living Things"
2. Order of Worship, Sept. 13, 9am service
3. Order of Worship, Sept. 13, 11am service

**\*\*include newsletter cover sheet, weekly flyer, etc**