



Sept. 4, 2020

Dear Paragould FUMC,

THIS SUNDAY: “Bound & Loosed” Beginning this Sunday we shift our focus to a new sermon series on lessons from the Gospel of Matthew for the month of September. We’ve taken the title from Matthew 18:18, “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” I have always found this text interesting and perplexing. What does Jesus mean by this cryptic phrase? In this sermon series we’ll grapple with challenging messages of Jesus with an eye toward the interplay between our early experiences and their eternal consequences. Join us this Sunday at 9 & 11am!

DRIVE-UP COMMUNION It’s the first Sunday of the month! That means it’s time for Drive-Up Communion Sunday evening at 7pm. Meet in the parking lot. Stay in your cars as we pray. Then pull through the breezeway to receive the elements in a safe way. This works well! If you haven’t tried it yet, come on down!

CHILDREN’S CURRICULUM & VIDEO This week we shared a letter with FUMC Children and Families explaining our new curriculum and video lessons. Families should have received a “Celebrate Wonder” Activity Book with weekly lessons (Check with the office if you didn’t!). Also, each week FUMC will produce and share a Children’s video lesson with greetings and songs. Videos will be linked to the Friday newsletter email (beginning this week!) and posted at fumcparagould.org/children. We’ll also share them to Facebook each Sunday at 10:15am. Parents & Guardians, this is an opportunity to pour into the life and faith of your children. Make the best of this opportunity!

YOUTH RETURN Beginning *next* Sunday (Sept. 13) we will return to regular, weekly Youth 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. Bring your own snack and drink!

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. The 6pm study will be streamed online similar to Sunday worship for those who feel safer at home. Books will be available at church. A \$20 donation 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. You might consider using it for your own group study. If your Sunday School class has not been meeting or has been meeting with no curriculum, you could reconnect by reading this book in this season. You could meet in-person at church in a safe way, or at someone’s home (perhaps outside?), or online video chat. I’m looking forward to growing with you by reading and praying the Psalms and with the help of Taylor’s *Open and Unafraid*. Please join me in this study!

MEETING SCHEDULE: SAVE THE DATE

Sun., Sept. 6: 7pm Drive-Up Communion

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 FUMC Church Council Meeting (In-person & Streaming Online)

IN-PERSON WORSHIP & ACTIVITIES FUMC & ARUMC remain in “Stage 2” regarding reopening. 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.

+ You must pre-register to attend the 9am & 11am worship services via the church’s website (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.

+ 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 from this newsletter 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.

As I have said elsewhere, 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 including worship 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!

(Reminder, FUMC Offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 7 in recognition of Labor Day.)

Grace & Peace,

Rev. Dane



WEEKLY LINKS:

1. Children’s Lesson, Sept. 6, “God Creates the Earth”
2. Order of Worship, Sept. 6, 9am service
3. Order of Worship, Sept. 6, 11am service

**include newsletter cover sheet, weekly flyer, etc