



GRACE NOTES - June 2020
Panama United Methodist Church
Rev. Steven M, Taylor, Lead Pastor

From Pastor Steve's Desk...

Spring Rains

The prophet Hosea writes: "So, let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the spring rain watering the earth." (Hosea 6:3 NASB).

When I graduated from SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry with my undergraduate degree in environmental resources and forest engineering in 1992, I thought I knew it all. I had graduated third in my class and was ready to take on the world. And to prove it, three buddies and I did what anyone who had just graduated from college would do: we climbed a mountain. Now, this wasn't just any mountain, see, this was the tallest peak in New York State - Mount Marcy in the Adirondack Park. For one week, we backpacked in, climbed to the peak, and then hiked out. However, even though we made it out alive, and have pictures to prove it, we also learned a bunch of critical stuff that our education in the classroom failed to adequately teach us.

First, when it rains, stuff floods. And it rained. And it rained. And then, it rained some more. By the time we got to the part in the trail that leads to the base of Mount Marcy, the little stream that crosses over the trail was a river filled with silty, brown white-water three feet deep. No bridge. No way around. So...we lifted our backpacks over our heads and, one-by-one, got really wet from the chest down as we got to the other side. When it rains, stuff floods.

The second thing we learned was that snow is still present above 3000 feet in May. Even though the air temperature was in the 70s, and we were wearing shorts, the snow was still on the trail. The problem was, water was flowing UNDER the snow, creating pockets into which our feet and legs would break, causing some cuts and scrapes on our legs (and cold, too!).

Finally, we learned that even though rain causes stuff to flood and snow makes harder going on the trail, if we press on, we will eventually find the peak. And we did. Seventeen miles in one day, and we found the peak. Needless to say, when we returned to our base camp and dried out everything we owned, cooked a wonderful dinner, and reflected on the day, we knew we had done something really cool.

This journey of faith on which we find ourselves is something really cool. As Easter people, alive and thriving with the Risen Christ at the center of all we do, and with the Holy Spirit moving and challenging us to press on, we must be inspired to know that the Lord is going before us. The Lord's going before us is as certain as rain
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Panama United Methodist Church Mission Statement

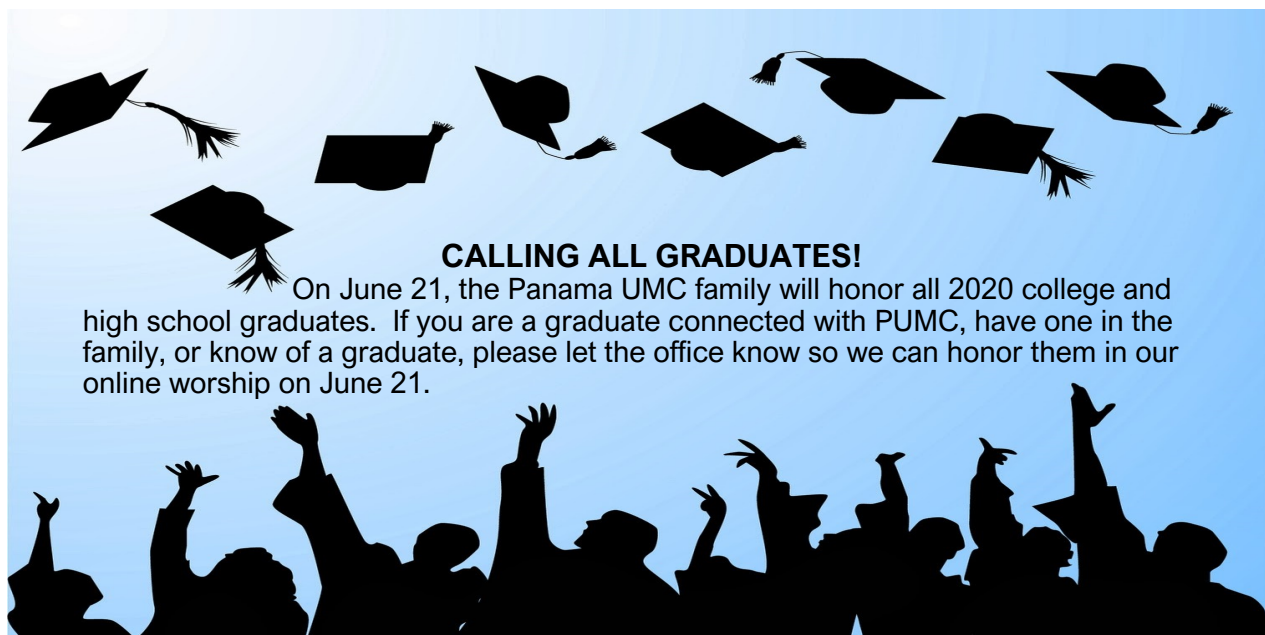
We seek to love the Lord God by introducing people to His Son,
Jesus Christ, and helping these relationships to grow.

From Pastor Steve's Desk...(continued from page 1)

flooding stuff and snow still present above 3,000 feet in May. It's as certain as the spring rains that come to water everything around us. It's as certain as the dawn, which arrives every day. It's certainly as certain as knowing that we don't know everything there is to know, but willing to press on to know more about ourselves and the Lord.

The prophet was encouraging the people to remember that God has been, is, and will be with them. He was encouraging them to spend time striving to know more about this God, intimately. As we press on as Pentecost people during a global pandemic, I encourage you to radically embrace this always-with-us God who takes us through the raging rivers, pulls us out of the pitfalls, and goes before us to lead the way. Along the way, grab someone's hand and help them find Christ and teach them, too, how to press on.

Shalom,
Pastor Steve



...JustOne4Others...

January - Body Soap
February - Shampoo
March - Conditioner
April - Q-tips
May - Cotton Balls
June - Lotion
July - Hand Soap
August - Toothpaste
September - Toothbrushes
October - Mouthwash
November - Deodorant
December - Floss

Each month you are encouraged to purchase and donate "ONE" of the items listed above. [Questions? See Jody, Parish Nurse.](#)

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, as you know, our normal PUMC programming has been greatly curtailed. In trying to keep a sense of normalcy, it was decided to continue with Grace Notes, our monthly newsletter. Most of our meetings are taking place as Zoom online gatherings and notifications are being made to those whose attendance is expected as regular team members.

Our Sunday morning worship is taking place totally online. We are fortunate that we had previously begun having online worship running concurrent with in house worship.

Included in this edition of Grace Notes, you will find a letter to the congregation from Pastor Steve and the PUMC Reopening Team, explaining and updating plans to come back together. Included with the letter, which was also a group mailing via USPS, is a color-coded plan that outlines the three phases for re-entering the church building together.

Dear Panama UMC Family,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I pray and trust this letter finds you well and you are persevering through the difficult and concerning times in which we have found the world and ourselves. Please take some time to read this letter and the attached plan carefully.

I'm writing today to update the congregation on our plans to come back together in the church building for gatherings, meetings, bible studies, mission work, community outreach, evangelism, serving, and worship. We have not stopped doing any of these things during this 'pause'. But we've been doing them in different ways, separated by social-distancing and other safety measures during this COVID-19 crisis. When we grabbed ahold of God's vision for our CenterPoint project, we came to believe that we were to reach out in love to build God's kingdom in Panama, the region, and the world. We've continued to do that, with your help, and we are filled with gratitude and look forward to the future. We have also been financially strong during this time, thanks to the faithful givers at PUMC.

A team of PUMC leaders from many different ministry areas have been prayerfully working for several weeks to develop a plan that will reopen our building safely, efficiently, and with solid procedures in place to begin in-person meetings and day-to-day operations, along with worship in the sanctuary, eventually. This team has reviewed information from multiple sources, including government agencies (Center for Disease Control and others), guidance from Upper New York Conference of the United Methodist Church, and expertise from healthcare professionals. The Team has been in communication with health and safety workers inside and outside the church, consulted with other pastors and faith leaders, and included community members and leaders in the conversations. In this time of transition, we ask for your patience and understanding. Most of all, we ask for your prayers for wisdom as we discern the appropriate plans for the immediate and long-term future.

Over the past 12 weeks, the church has made many changes. Most of all, we've missed **YOU!** We've moved our worship services, Bible studies, meetings, prayer gatherings, and discipleship groups online. We've seen steady growth in the number of people engaging in those online platforms and we are thankful. We also know that not everyone has been able to access our online platforms and we are diligently working on a plan to come back together, while still maintaining a high-quality online ministry, from here on, for those who desire that. We have been praying for and doing our best to serve the whole congregation during this challenging time. That commitment will continue into the weeks and months ahead as we adjust to the reality of post-COVID crisis life and ministry.

Included in this mailing is a color-coded plan that outlines three phases for re-entering the church building together. In the first phase (RED PHASE), all on-site worship, activities, ministries, and meetings are suspended and moved online. Office staff has been working from home and have been in the office on alternate days. A dedicated small team of people has been recording and presenting worship each week so we can continue to worship the Lord. We are currently in the RED PHASE, as outlined in the included plan.

The second phase (YELLOW PHASE) allows for gatherings in the church building of less than 10 people, resumed day-to-day operations on weekdays, allows for some creative worship opportunities at the Worship Team's discretion, and included specific safety measures for social-distancing, masking, hand-sanitizing, and other procedures as outlined, when people are present in the church building. The YELLOW PHASE does not include onsite worship in the sanctuary or in any part of the church building. We hope to move to the YELLOW PHASE the week of June 8, 2020. We will make a decision about moving from RED to YELLOW by the first week in June. If that date is pushed back, we will do our best to communicate that to the congregation.

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Moving to the third and final phase (GREEN PHASE) is dependent on many factors, including guidance from our Conference leaders, information from the CDC and NY State government officials, county and local officials, and consultation with our Reopening Team and others. Churches are included in NY State's Phase 4 group of entities that can reopen with modified procedures. Phase 4 in Western NY is slated to begin early in July. Our target for moving from YELLOW to GREEN PHASE is mid-July, but it is still too early to confirm that target timeframe. In the GREEN PHASE, as outlined in the enclosed plan, we will resume onsite, in-building worship, with modified procedures that will affect every person that wishes to come into the church building. Those modified procedures for worship and gathering include wearing a mask, social distancing by family groups, no food service, reduced or no singing, and restrictions on restroom usage, modified discipleship group gatherings, and other restrictions as outlined. As you can see, life will continue to be cautious and intentional for weeks to come, but I'm confident we can do this well. We will continue to offer our high-quality online worship streams for all who choose to wait longer to come into the church building or who feel the restrictions would not provide them with a satisfactory in-building worship experience. We understand the multi-faceted, wide spectrum of emotions, opinions, and understandings present in our community and congregation around all of these decisions. Again, we ask for your patience and prayers as we navigate these uncharted waters together.

If you have questions or comments for the Reopening Team, please call the church office, send an email to contact@panamaumc.org, or contact Carol Hay or me. We will do our best to field questions and concerns, but know that the Reopening Team is working hard to do this well. We ask that you continue to pray for the Reopening Team daily. It continues to be an honor to serve the congregation of Panama UMC and I ask specifically for your prayers as we transition back to onsite worship this summer.

Blessings,

Rev. Steven M Taylor
Lead Pastor
Panama UMC

Members of the Reopening Team:
Carol Hay (Church Council)
Kyle Hinsdale (Finance Team)
Craig Vollmer (Trustee Team)
Jody Marsh (Parish Nurse)
Carl Davis (A/V Team)
Brenda Ireland (Worship Team)

Amanda Kolstee (Staff Parish Relations Team)
Julie Nagel (Music Director/Healthcare Professional)
Debbie Johnson (Ministry Coordinator)
Pam Ireland and Julia Nelson (Hospitality Team)
Jeff Enlow (Safety and Security Response Team)
Summer Wolcott (Safe Sanctuaries Team)
Sam Catanese (Lay Leader)

PANAMA UMC REOPENING PLAN

Revised: 5/21/20

Reopening of Panama UMC will, first of all, follow all the guidance of the national, state, and local officials, denominational and annual conference leaders, church medical and safety teams, and other input from those in key lay leadership positions.

Reopening will happen in a 3-phase process, color-coded (red, yellow, green) for all to understand and be able to communicate to the community and congregation, as well as church staff and volunteers.

Reopening Team: Pastor Steve, Carol Hay (Church Council), Craig Vollmer (Trustees), Amanda Kolstee (SPRC), Jody Marsh (Parish Nurse), Jeff Enlow (SSRT), Summer Wolcott (Safe Sanctuaries), Brenda Ireland (Worship), Carl Davis (Worship), Pam Ireland/ Julia Nelson (Hospitality), Debbie Johnson (Ministry Coordinator), Kyle Hinsdale (Finance), Julie Nagel (Music Directory)

RED PHASE

- All on-site worship, meetings, and gatherings are suspended.
- Online worship is offered each week.
- Office staff works from home or in the office alone.
- Masks are worn when anyone else is present in the building.
- All meetings and Bible studies are held online (Zoom, Facebook, Livestream, etc.)
- Food Pantry operates with enhanced safety measures as per Food Bank.
- Church doors are locked when no one is in the building.
- Cleaning contractor sanitizes all door handles, light switches and other frequently touched areas twice per week, along with truncated cleaning of other areas.
- Heat set to 58 degrees in all areas except for those occupied

YELLOW PHASE

- All on-site worship inside the sanctuary, meetings and gatherings of more than 10 people are suspended.
- Drive-in Worship may be utilized when possible during the summer.
- Office staff may work in the office with social distancing.
- Masks are worn when people are present in the building, and 6-foot social distancing is maintained at all times.
- No physical contact between people is allowed.
- Hand sanitizing stations and masks are available for the congregation and community.
- All meetings and Bible studies of more than 10 people are held online.
- Food Pantry operates with enhanced safety measures as per Food Bank
- Church doors are open normal hours. Custodian resumes normal hours.
- Cleaning contractor sanitizes all door handles, light switches and other frequently touched areas twice per week, along with normal cleaning.

GREEN PHASE

- On-site worship inside the sanctuary, meetings and gatherings of more than 10 people.
- Online worship continues to be offered.
- Office staff works in the office, normal hours with social distancing.
- During the week, during the day, normal operations will resume.
- No physical contact between people is allowed.
- Hand-sanitizing stations and masks are available for the congregation and community.
- All meetings and Bible studies resume either in person or on electronic platforms.
- Food Pantry operates with enhanced safety measures as per Food Bank.
- Church doors are open normal hours.
- Weddings and community events resume with enhanced sanitation and modified social distancing (limit physical contact, wash hands, sanitation stations, etc.)
- Cleaning contractor sanitizes all door handles, light switches and other frequently touched areas weekly, along with normal cleaning.
- Restrooms will be limited to one person at a time.
- Sunday school will continue to be offered online.

Green Phase Worship Guidelines:

- Remove Bibles, hymnals and other materials from the pew racks to eliminate surfaces where germs can be passed.
- Remove Fellowship Books from pews.
- Encourage people to bring their own Bibles to worship.
- Avoid use of printed bulletins.
- Projection is used exclusively for order of worship (prayers, songs, etc.)
- Microphones should not be shared by participants.
- Offering plates will not be passed, but set up at entrances. Online giving is recommended and encouraged.
- Communion is modified to include individual cups and bread handed to the congregants with gloves.
- Congregational singing is limited or eliminated.
- Nursery service will not be offered,
- Hospitality (coffee and food) will not be offered.
- Praise Team will be socially-distanced and will not share mics. Mics will be disinfected after each use by the Praise Team members.
- Choir will not be leading in worship or rehearsing.

VBS (Vacation Bible School)

We're doing VBS online! The VBS team will be working extra hard this year to ensure that our children hear the stories of Jesus this summer.

The Team will be putting together a virtual VBS, where the children and families can go online and view videos, sing songs, play games and do crafts.

It's going to be new and very special for this year!

JUNE Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1 Kathy Foulk
- 2 Ted and Sharon Passarelli, Eric and Jennifer Seeley
- 3 Charlie and Judy Parkman
- 4 Matt and Amanda Komarek
- 3 Ryan Peck
- 7 Cindy Crouch
- 8 Amanda Kolstee
- 9 Sharon Rea, Chris Enlow
- 10 Elizabeth Comstock
- 11 Mike and Erica Butler
- 12 Lee and Betty Crosby
- 13 Dakota Catanese
- 14 Alyson Edwards, Lillian Odell
- 15 Scott and Wendy Trisket, Kim and Aaron Barton, Abigail and Andrew Skahan
- 16 Jarrett Wiggers
- 17 Carol Hay
- 18 Don Butler, Kelly Range
- 19 Mason Komarek, Larry Ostrander, David Woods
- 21 Jennifer Anderson, Melissa Topolski
- 23 Bryce and Katie Ireland
- 24 Lauren Tordella, Kyle and Brynne Hinsdale, Steve and Melissa Wiggers
- 25 Pat Catanese
- 27 Ed Trisket
- 28 Dave and Yvonne Calcaterra, Dawn and Chris Comstock, Rob and Wendy Peck
- 30 Charlie and Debbie Loveless

A look ahead to July...

- 3 Richard Edwards, Marilyn Storms
- 4 Jamie Ireland

SUMMER CAMP

It was disappointing news to hear that our Summer Christian camps will not be holding summer camps this summer.

There are a few online summer camp opportunities available - so if you're interested in looking into this - please let Stacy know.

Our scholarship fund will be ready and available for our campers when the time is right! Please keep the camps in your prayers - as this will be a very difficult time financially.

SIGN UP FOR ONLINE GIVING

Now is the perfect time to make the shift to online giving to Panama UMC. It's secure and very easy to register and begin tithing online.

This is a difficult time, financially, for our nation and community. As you can, we are encouraging everyone to continue to do what you can to give to the church and other charities.

To sign up, go to the church website (www.panamaumc.org) and click on the Give Online button on the homepage. If you need help, please call the church office (716 - 782 - 4031) for assistance. Thanks!



With Sympathy to the family of...

Richard K. Johnson

November 25, 1946 - May 7, 2020

Brother of Robert (Diane) Johnson
Memorials may be made to First Baptist Church,
59 S. Erie St., Mayville, NY 14757

J. Roger Swart

April 24, 1934 - May 11, 2020

Brother of Eloise Smith
Memorials may be made to Shriner's Hospital for Children
1656 W. 8th St., Erie, PA 16505

Paula N. Parson

February 7, 1951 - May 28, 2020

Mother of Lacy Range
Grandmother of Peyton, Kylie and Kipp
Memorials may be made to the Chautauqua Count Humane Society,
2825 Strunk Rd., Jamestown, NY 14701

*The love and prayers of the church and community
are with you and your loved ones as you continue
through this time of grief and adjustment.*

Help Us, Please...

If you have had an address change in the last couple of years, please update the office so we can correct our information.

If you are fairly new in attending PUMC, please make sure we have your address.

We are also interested in having the dates of your family's birthdays and anniversaries, first and last names, please.

These additions and /or corrections can be made by contacting Debbie in the office or by leaving Pam a message in the Newsletter mailbox in the workroom.

THANKS!

We have White Gift funds available.

Please talk to Pastor Steve if you know of a need.



God's Groceries Food Pantry

can be accessed by using the Church Street entrance.

Look for signs.

If there is a need, please call the church office for additional information.

(782-4031)

DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship continues even through the Covid-19 pandemic. Our mens' and ladies' groups are meeting via Zoom as well as our Sunday school classes.

We are launching a recorded story hour that will be uploaded to the Panama UMC YouTube channel, so keep your eyes open for that!

You are loved and sorely missed!



UPDATE FROM PASTOR STEVE AND THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dear Panama UMC friends,

Join us on Livestream at 10:15am on Sunday mornings (<https://livestream.com/panamaum>). Once you get to the Livestream landing page, simply look for the LONG STORY SHORT graphic that is for the date you are watching. You can watch past worship services on this landing page as well. You DO NOT need to Log In or Go Live. This is a free service and open to all.

As you connect and prepare for worship, check in on the chat to let us know you're watching. Any prayer requests, praises, glory sightings, or greetings can be submitted through that Chat system as well.

Also, Online Giving is always available and now might be a great time to check that out. The link to online giving is on our webpage (www.panamaum.org). Do your best to maintain giving during this time, but know we certainly understand the financial implications of this situation.

Finally, know that we are holding the church, our community, our world, our leaders, and you in our prayers during this time. If you have a need or know of a need, please don't hesitate to call the office at 716/782-4031.

Reverend Steven M. Taylor, Lead Pastor
steven.taylor@panamaum.org
Debbie Johnson, Ministry Coordinator /
Admin. Asst.
debbie.johnson@panamaum.org
Julie Nagel, Music Director/Accompanist
Krista Odell, Accompanist
Jody Marsh, Parish Nurse
Jon Cable, Custodian

Pastor Steve's Office Hours
9:00am - Noon: M, W and Th

Church Phone (716) 782-4031
Church Fax # (716) 782-2326
Church E-mail – contact@panamaum.org
Church website - www.panamaum.org
www.facebook.com/panamaum

JUNE GRACE NOTES

Cornerstone District Office
Christ First UMC
663 Lakeview Ave.
Jamestown, NY 14701
(716) 665-2423



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22 East Main St., PO Box 218
Panama, NY 14767
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Church Fax # (716) 782-2326
Church E-mail – contact@panamaum.org
Church website - www.panamaum.org
www.facebook.com/panamaum