

Arbor Newsletter

JUNE 2020

In John 20, right after imparting the gift of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, Jesus tells the Church that it has the capacity to forgive sins (John 20:23). With that Jesus invites us to be a part of God's liberating work in the world — to share the good news of God's love and to dismantle all the things that prevent us and the rest of creation from experiencing it. It is meant to be the Church's primary vocation, it's holy calling — to participate in forgiveness and reconciliation. Jesus also tells us that we have the capacity to retain sin, but why given the beauty of forgiveness would we ever do that?

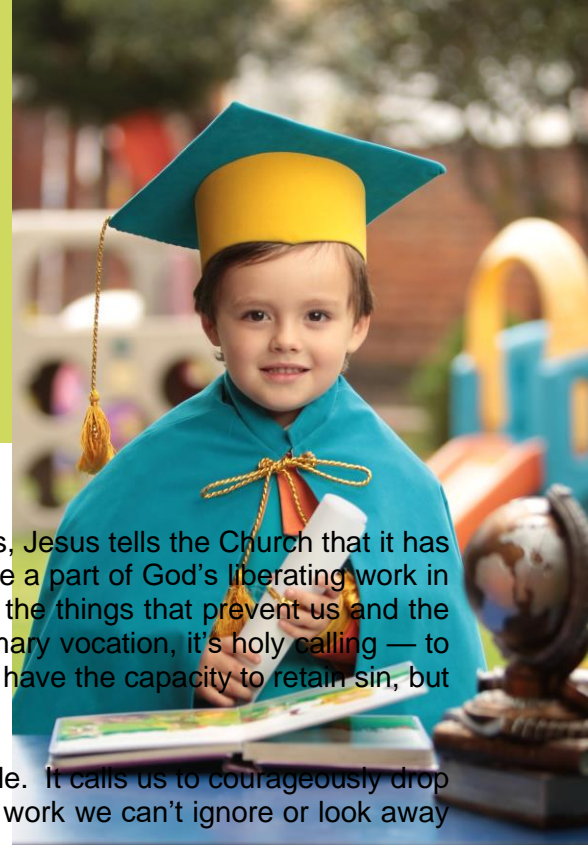
It's clear why — because it's hard. It requires us to be honest and humble. It calls us to courageously drop our defenses to address difficult truths. To be a part of God's forgiving work we can't ignore or look away from things we typically like to keep hidden.

When we refuse to deal with the reality of a sin, we retain it. When we fail to acknowledge the pain it causes, we retain it. When we don't confess it or recognize our need for fundamental change and don't seek real repentance, we retain a sin. If we don't address its presence in our lives and our community, sin will continue to fester and cause pain. It will continue to ensnare us and cause our brothers and sisters to suffer. This is the truth of racism. It is a sin white America has retained, that holds us captive with suffocating effects on the African American community and other people of color. And it must end.

Surely, God is at work in the world to free us, but it's hard to be set free when we refuse to accept that we are being held captive. The events of the last week are alarming; George Floyd died when a police officer's knee deprived him of breath. The response to his killing has been intense, uncomfortable, and frightening. We've seen buildings burn, tear gas billow, fraudulent instigators incite, and military vehicles patrol our streets. But we've also seen thousands and thousands of people urgently and peacefully voicing truth that we need to acknowledge — that our nation is permeated with deep strains of white supremacy, that police brutality is killing our neighbors, that systematic oppression has created disgraceful gaps in equity/opportunity, and that nothing will change until we actually come to terms with the reality of the problem.

We have retained this sin for too long. Our faith demands that we root it out, that we do the hard work of listening well, that we take the journey of honest reflection, that we commit to truthful confession about things that we will discover but not want to admit. The gospel demands that we excise this malignancy by taking it upon ourselves to be antiracist — that we learn and then do what it will take to weed out imbedded roots of white supremacy so we can step into a future that is freer, more peaceful, and more just, a future that looks more like what God intends.

The promise of God is that freedom is our ultimate destiny, that God's ongoing work is for our salvation and liberation. Jesus tells us that we have a part to play in establishing this freedom. In John 20 he breathes the Holy Spirit on the church to enliven and embolden it for this liberating work. May that Spirit empower and comfort us so that we retain this sin no more. Pastor Peter



ARBOR COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Children's Garden

The Children's Gardens, Small Farmer's Market, and other Garden Updates

The Arbor Community Garden is filled. Three of the plots are for children's gardens. One plot provides opportunities for Arbor Covenant children. A second plot is for the Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC). The third plot is for Creek Pre-School Children. If you get a chance to stop by, there is a map of the garden plots on the sign board in front of the garden.

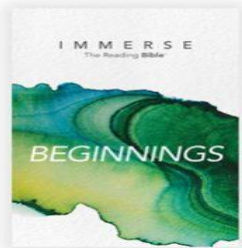
The three gardens are mostly planted this spring despite the challenges of COVID-19 and social distancing. Joyce and Mark are coordinators of this effort with much of the labor being provided by Jordan and Aubrey for the Arbor and ECLC plots. Joyce has applied for and received a much-appreciated grant from Park Bank for \$2,000 for the gardening effort (to provide some pay for the youth workers). Many of the seedlings were provided by inmates at the Oakhill Correctional Institute in Fitchburg. Work sessions usually happen on Saturdays from 1 to 2:30. A big shout out to Ron Heinrich for rototilling and setting up the boundaries.

One of the visions for the gardens this year is to provide some limited produce for a very small, once a week Farmer's Market on Sundays (Time TBD) beginning after July 4. The plan is to allow any gardeners on-site to sell any food they are not eating themselves. A few, local outside gardeners growing food for a farmer's market sale will be invited so we have sufficient healthy food to support a market for neighbors, Creek families, and Arbor families. We will have to see how this can work pending rules on social distancing.

Other children that have helped so far are Kamari, Jada, Theo, and a teenager, Amari. If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help, please contact Joyce Boggess or Mark Hanson.



SUNDAY SMALL GROUP



Book One-Beginnings

A Bible Made for Reading

Genesis-Deuteronomy

Beginnings take the reader on a new and unique journey through the first five books of the Bible: the Pentateuch. In Beginnings readers follow the ancient nation of Israel from its earliest ancestors to the moment it is poised to enter the land God promised them.

The text is laid out in a beautiful single-column setting with chapters, verses, section headings, and footnotes removed, and with the content of each book displayed according to its literary genre.

Each Sunday morning at 9:30 via Zoom, beginning June 7th the groups will engage in “round robin reading” following simple “book club” style conversations using 4 questions

1. What stood out to you this week?
2. Was there anything confusing or troubling?
3. Did anything make you think differently about God?
4. How might this change the way we live?

Book 1- can be picked up at the church (on the piano in the fellowship room)

GET YOUR E-BOOK COPIES Don't forget to use promo code **COVENANT10**

<https://www.christianbook.com> For hard copy

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, June 28 after Worship

Join us to hear from the Leadership Team about the progress that has been made in moving toward Arbor's future.

Come, ready to express your thoughts as we prayerfully consider what comes next in the life of Arbor Covenant.

Looking forward to your participation!

JUNE 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31 Worship 10:30am Zoom	1	2	3	4 Thurs. Night Small Group 7:00pm	5 GNPEP Pantry 10am- 12pm	6 Work at Garden 1- 2:30pm
7 Small Group 9:30am Worship 10:30am Zoom	8	9 LT Meeting 6:45 pm	10	11 Thurs. Night Small Group 7:00pm	12 GNPEP Pantry 10am- 12pm	13 Work at Garden 1- 2:30pm
14 Small Group 9:30am Worship 10:30am Zoom	15	16	17	18 GNPEP Pantry 5:30- 7:00 pm	19 GNPEP Pantry 10am- 12pm	20 Work at Garden 1- 2:30pm
21 Small Group 9:30am Worship 10:30am Zoom	22	23	24	25	26 Men's Shelter GNPEP Pantry 10am- 12pm	27 Work at Garden 1- 2:30pm
28 Small Group 9:30am Worship 10:30am Annual Meeting Zoom	29	30				

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Gloria Stehley	June	2
Tamsin Ford		4
Sue Springman		5
Emma Bensch		8
Dick Lindgren		12
Amanda Pecotte		15
Lynda Collins		16
Mary Keehn		17
Chuck Gietzel		25



JUNE GNPEP PRODUCTS OF THE MONTH

are
Feminine Hygiene Products
(pantiliners/tampons/pads)

Michelle Stachowiak, daughter of John and Sue Pecotte graduated recently from Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine in Chicago with a doctorate in Physical Therapy. Way to go, Michelle!

We are all so proud of you!



WEDDING CELEBRATION

Ann-Britt Keillor's grandson, Lukas Collins and Kiley Mulcahy were united in marriage on Saturday, May 30 joined by a small group of family and friends who had a wonderful celebration. An interesting fact is that they met when they were nine years old.



Arbor Financial Report

January 1, 2020 - April 30, 2020

	Offerings & Creek Reimbursements Received	Actual Expenses	Net Income (Loss)
	Year-to-Date	Year-to-Date	Year-to-Date
General Offerings	\$ 17,449.20		
Creek Day School Reimbursement	\$ 8,579.00		
TOTAL	\$ 26,028.20	\$ 32,292.77	\$ (6,264.57)
Special Funds (Non-Budgeted) Received YTD			
	TOTAL		
Deacon	\$ 207.00		
Good Neighbors Pantry	\$ 4,241.49		
Levin Camp	\$ 725.00		
Memorial			
Women's Ministries			
World Relief			
Youth Mission			
Other	\$ 0.69		

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Stay tuned for ways for kids and families to connect this summer! While Friday night programming probably won't be back to "normal" for a bit, we hope to connect in other ways, either virtually or outdoors, this summer.

PRAYER CORNER -Pray for our camps, Covenant Point and Covenant Harbor. Overnight camps were cancelled at both for the summer, so staff and campers will miss out on that time of spiritual growth and refreshment at camp.

-Pray for parents home with kids—those who are balancing working and childcare, those who are losing creativity and energy, those who are without their village of support, and those who are exhausted.

-Pray for parents and community leaders who will have conversations with kids about race and current events. Pray that parents of white children would be bold in talking about America's history and the needed response today.



Porchlight Shelter

As many of you know, due to the pandemic Porchlight's overnight shelter has been temporarily relocated to Warner Park Community Recreation Center. It will remain there for the foreseeable future as the downtown churches that have hosted it are working with Porchlight and the city to establish a long-term/permanent location. These changes have affected volunteer opportunities. Catering from local restaurants has made meal prep less of a priority while the need for volunteers to help with evening intake has increased. Currently Porchlight is looking for help between 5pm-8pm to conduct health assessments for guests. Volunteers will be provided with gloves and n95 masks. If you're interested in helping, please let Pastor Peter or Ann-Britt Keillor know.

Dan Meyer and Doug Keillor are scheduled as Arbor's regular volunteers for June. Things could change, and if they do, we will inform you, but as of now it does not appear that you will be needed on Friday the 26th.