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White Bluff News

June 2020

EMBRACE TRANSFORM EQUIP IMPACT

“Back to Church” Guidelines Re-opening date: June 21st

Safe Sanctuary

At the 1996 United Methodist General Conference, there was a mandate that requires all United Methodist congregations regardless of size to implement policies and procedures to make sure no harm comes to those under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults while they are in our care and ministry. Every General Conference since 1996 has reaffirmed this commitment.

After Charge Conference last year, the White Bluff UMC Safe Sanctuary Committee had several meetings and proposed to Church Council a new policy to take White Bluff UMC forward. However, before Church Council could vote on the policy, the COVID-19 pandemic was upon us and most activity inside the White Bluff campus was suspended.

All individuals who work with our members who are under 18 or our vulnerable adults will be required to update their background checks and start yearly training.

Our background checks and the first hour of online training is currently being done through Protect My Ministry. The cost of the background check is \$19.95 per person and we are asking that, if it's within your means to help the church with the cost. Please write a check for that amount and mark it “Background Check” in the memo section.

To start the process for your background check and training, email your full legal name and the email address that you want to use to joedrescher@comcast.net. Once in the system you will receive an email asking you to complete an online form and authorization for the background check to be performed. About the same time or shortly after you will receive an invite to take the training. There is a 20-question test at the end that you must pass. It takes about an hour to do everything.

If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call at 912-663-8198 or email me at joedrescher@comcast.net.

Stay Safe!

Joe

I have been meeting weekly with our “Back to Church” team as we prepare to reopen our sanctuary for Sunday morning worship. We’ve been listening to the advice of our state leaders, local leaders, United Methodist leadership, and many of our church members. **Based on the guidance that we’ve received and our conversations, we are planning to be back in the sanctuary June 21st.** Yet, in order to reopen we need to have many temporary precautions in place. When we start back, things will be different. We’d rather be overly cautious to ensure the safety of our congregation, even if it means putting in some restrictions. Please bear with us as we deal with something that we’ve never experienced. Below you’ll find our guidelines.

Masks

In order to protect one another, masks will be required at least through the beginning of August. If you don’t have one, we’ll have one available for you upon entrance. Thanks to Patty Thompson for making some beautiful masks!

Multiple worship services

To practice social distancing, we will have two worship services: 9am and 11am. We encourage our younger families or those who don’t have a preference to consider attending the 11 am service. Both services will be the same and will last approximately 45 minutes.

The sanctuary will be cleaned/wiped down between the services.

We will only have morning worship when we start back. We hope to start back Sunday school and bible studies by August.

The Nursery will be provided.

There will be no children’s church.

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Social Distancing

To encourage social distancing, we'll have marks outside as you come into the sanctuary. Please avoid crowding each other when entering and consider arriving early. We'll only have three entrances into the sanctuary from the front. The back doors will be opened after the service as you exit. We are limiting seating in each section to 15 people. Families can sit together. Ushers will assist you with seating.

Volunteers

All volunteers will wear a red vest so that you will know who to ask questions. We will have greeters and ushers to assist. If you'd like to volunteer, please email Josh at pastor@wbumc.org.

Other worship notes

No bulletins, hymnals, Bibles, or anything else will be made available when we start back. We'll rely on the projector to lead us.
No congregational singing-Sit back and enjoy the special music!
Offering plates will be put in stations around the sanctuary.
Hand Sanitizer stations will be set up at the entrances of the sanctuary.

Sunday worship videos

We will still record our videos for those who still aren't ready to return. Sunday worship videos will hopefully be available by Sunday evenings.

Office opening

Since the shelter in place will be lifted June 12th, the office will be back open full time June 15th.

Cannot wait to see all of you in a few weeks! Be safe!

“Back to Church” Team:

Rev. Josh Duckworth
Bill Brown (Church Council Chairman)
Kay Williamson (Vice-Chair of Church Council)
Mike Lariscy (Lay Leader)
Dee Dee Seagraves (Medical)
Chris Anderson (Medical)
Harriet Cobb (Sunday School Superintendent)
Martha Adams (Worship)
Lisa McGalliard (At-Large)

Rev. Ken Sharpe Appointed to New Church

Rev. Ken Sharpe will be leaving White Bluff UMC to serve at Emanuel UMC in Brunswick, GA. We are saddened to see him leave, but excited for what God has planned for his future at his new church. He has been a gift to our church during the year and a half that he has served with us. He's made many connections and we've been blessed by him. His last day will be June 11th. Please see the note below from SPR about how we'll honor his service. Join me in praying for Ken during this time of transition.

Grace and Peace,

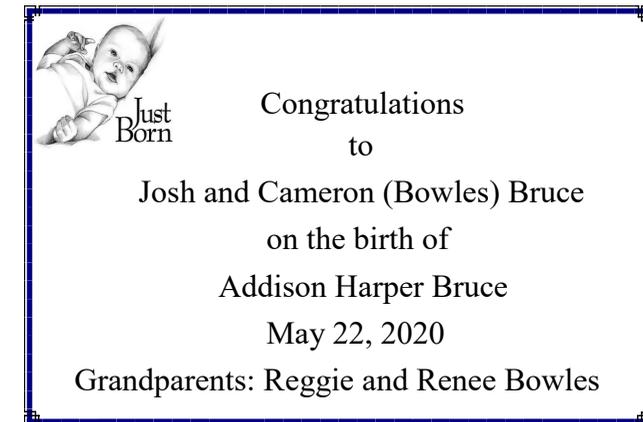
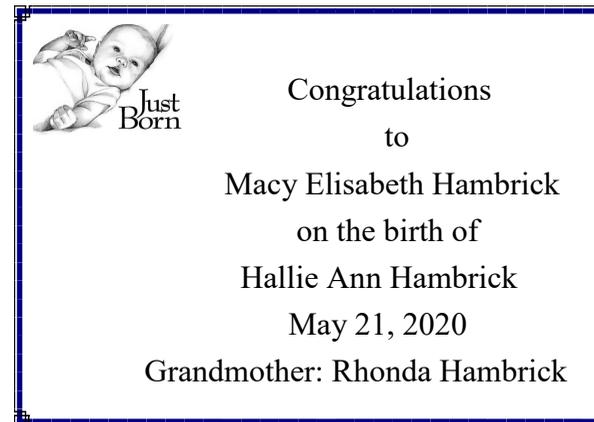
Rev. Josh Duckworth

From the Staff-Parish Relations Committee:

We are all sorry to see our Associate Pastor Ken Sharpe leave White Bluff but what a blessing he has been to us all and what a great opportunity for Ken. During this pandemic it is impossible to have our typical thank you reception so we would like to suggest sending a love offering and/or a card to let Ken know how much we love him. Since this is such a crazy time we will collect the offerings at least through June 21st when we will hopefully be back in church. You can send them to the church office or access the alternative giving methods. Just be sure to note this is for the “Ken Love Offering”.

Thanks,

SPR Committee



Happy Birthday Greetings extended to:

John Knox 6/25 (91)