

## Council Report 2020

What a year it has been. The leadership council started the year with a clearer vision of our collective purpose at Kennewick First UMC. In our 2019 fall retreat we came to a consensus on the “Why” that will help guide our vision and ministries:

We believe that everyone is a beloved child of God and can experience God’s spirit. Jesus invites us to be a part of a spirit filled community and calls us to use our time, treasure, and talents to bring about a world that reflects the reign, justice, and grace of God.

The Council spent the January 2020 quarterly meeting discussing four aspects of a church: worship, service, spiritual growth and friendship. We evaluated our ministries within these areas on how they reflect our new “why” statement. Our next quarterly meeting was set for April.

As you are all well aware, life changed in March. The leadership team quickly adapted to the world in a pandemic, as much of our state was closed to gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID. Our quarterly meetings moved to weekly zoom meetings as we quickly moved to address staffing and worship needs and changes. By the end of March Pastor Mark formed an emergency planning team. This team, made of council leaders, staff and key ministry leads, met weekly over the next months, reviewing the current status of our state/county and ultimately created our KFUMC Reopening Plan that could be put into action as our county advances through the phases of reopening laid out by the UMC Bishop and the WA state Governor. We are fortunate to have so many talented servants on the team to help guide this process. That plan is guiding our next steps, ready for a time when our community is not engulfed in high case counts of COVID.

I am amazed at the resiliency of our church in this most difficult time, without the opportunity to meet in person. Though we are not meeting to worship in person together, our focus on loving God and loving our neighbor has not diminished. In late March Council determined that Soul Soup was an essential service to our community and Bob Kelly and his team quickly adapted to the new sanitation and distancing guidelines. We have continued to serve meals to the most needy of our community throughout this pandemic. Through out the summer our youth director and Sunday school assistant were creative on how to connect with the kids of our church and community with a successful VBS backpack program. In light of our continued limitations on gatherings our UMW ladies got creative to provide a safe alternative to our annual Holly Daze with a drive through event. All the while our worship team and Pastor Mark have been putting out weekly worship services that are gathering views from around our state and beyond. We have texted and emailed our hellos on Sunday mornings. Our life together is NOT on hold. Yes, things are very different and we need to be creative in thinking of ways to worship, grow in our faith and connect with each other and community. BUT we are doing just that. We are not limited to the walls of our church building. We ARE the church and we will carry on, loving God and loving our neighbors.

To God be the Glory

Jill Berg  
Lay Leader/Council Chair