2. For at least the next two Sundays, March 22 and March 29, we will not gather for worship. However, we will be live-streaming a 10 a.m. service each Sunday which will be archived on our website and re-posted to our Facebook pages so that you can watch anytime you like. Our website is fumcnewalbany.com. Simply click “Watch Live” on the homepage to be directed to our live worship and archives.

3. Additionally, there will be no meetings or gatherings at the church through the end of March. This includes all children, youth, and adult groups and meetings. Know that these decisions were made out of love and in concern for the health and well-being of our church members and community. The Health Advisory Team will be meeting again soon to reevaluate our church schedule going forward. The Team includes all three appointed pastors (Jill, Thomas, and myself), lay leaders (Mike Alef—Council Chair and Ren Nelson—SPRC Chair), nurse practitioners (Sandra Durrett, Brandi Patton, and Heaven Robbins), and physicians (Dr. Bob Barnett, Dr. Sam Creekmore, Dr. Al Prater, and Dr. Steve Shirley).

4. While our church staff will be in the office continuing to serve you and operating the day-to-day duties of the church, we ask that you not stop by unless it’s absolutely necessary. Please call ahead if you are going to stop by as we will be keeping all entrances locked during this time. But remember: don’t hesitate to call if you need us. We are here for you and will come to you if at all possible.

5. It is important for us to utilize the technology we have in order to increase our communication—phone, text, social media, and other electronic means. Please make sure we have your current e-mail address. Send a note to office@fumcnewalbany, and we will add you to our “FUMC Update” list. Also, if you are not on social media, now is the time to consider jumping in with both feet. Send me a friend request on Facebook, and make sure you are part of our “FUMC New Albany” Facebook group. This is the place information is shared most quickly and frequently. If you need help setting up an account or navigating Facebook, please call me. I’ll be glad to walk you through it.

6. I really need your help with this one. The truth is that almost all of our church’s giving is done through physical checks and cash that are placed in offering plates each Sunday morning. Your continued financial giving is essential for our church to remain a strong and vibrant community of faith. Please remain faithful in your giving. We have so many ministries, needs, and people to support. Everything we do as a church depends on the generosity of members like you. Here are three options for giving:

   Mail your offering to 207 E. Bankhead Street or to P. O. Box 156, New Albany, MS 38652.
   Call Martha Rainey at (662) 534-2206 to sign-up for automatic bank draft. Thank you, thank you, thank you to those who have called this week to do just that!
   Drop your check by the church office. Remember to call first and let us know that you are coming.

Thank you for being so understanding of these decisions. These are not easy times, and the decisions made are the best way we feel we can love our neighbor and keep our community of faith safe. As the situation continues to change, our Health Advisory Team will address and respond to new circumstances.

Trust that God is with us. For 2,000 years the church has survived and thrived through more difficult challenges than this current pandemic. For generations, FUMC has responded to crises after crises and come out stronger as a result. We will overcome this virus, too. I have great confidence in this because I have great confidence in the almighty and loving God we serve.

Never hesitate to call me and let me know how we can minister to you and help you during these difficult days. Know that I love you. Know that I am proud to be your pastor.

Blessings and love,
Tim
Don’t throw away your Sunday School books!!!

Wednesday meals and activities will resume when it is safe to do so.

Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it by the handle of anxiety, or by the handle of faith.

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Pastoral Letter from Bro. Tim

Dear Church Family,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

With everyone growing concerned, both globally and here locally, regarding the corona virus pandemic, I wanted to write to you about how our community of faith is responding. First, I wish to remind us all that we are an Easter people full of hope and promise. We believe that God is with us, especially in difficult times such as these.

I’m thankful for the Health Advisory Team that has been formed. The team consisting of lay leaders and medical professionals from our congregation held its first meeting Sunday, March 15. Since the corona virus will not be disappearing from our lives anytime soon, and for the sake and health of our community and loved ones, the Health Advisory Team wishes to communicate the following:

1. First United Methodist Church is a strong and vibrant church with faithful and loyal members, excellent resources, and a fine, dedicated staff. While we will not be gathering in groups for some time to come, your church office will continue to be open and operate, and your church staff will be available to you. If you have a need that we can meet, you need only call or text.

(continued inside)