



while the crisis continues.

Parents can help college students deal with the impact of COVID-19, too, especially those who were forced to clear out of their campuses on short notice.

“My daughter (Eloise) had a very sudden change in plans for her academic year,” said the Rev. Christine Hides, a United Methodist deacon and director of Christian education at Kenilworth Union Church in Kenilworth, Illinois. “Letting her be sad and disappointed and upset about the unexpected change in plans, I think, has been most important.”

Eloise had less than 12 hours to pack and find storage for her belongings before flying home to Illinois from California, where she is a student at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. Since she’s been home, Christine Hides has tried

to “focus on the positive, that we are safe and we’re together. There are unexpected gifts in this new reality that we’re living in.”

At the church, Hides is thinking ahead to things she had never considered before, such as a drive-in Easter service or facilitating children seeing their friends through video conferencing.

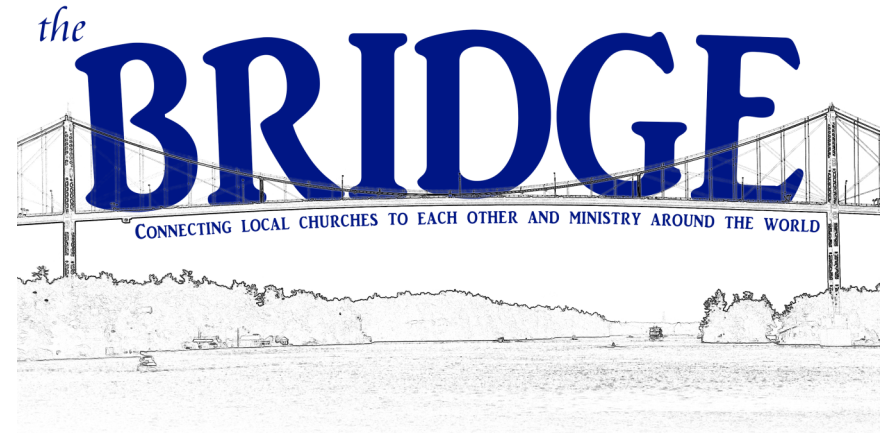
“Even if we could drive (children) to a parking lot and be with each other with the windows up, maybe that’s the kind of thing that we’ll need,” she said.

“I think that this is a marathon, not a sprint. As the weeks drag on, I think the financial implications for families will be greater, and I think that the social isolation will be even harder to take,” Hides said.

The Bridge is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world. For more news and stories visit:

www.unyumc.org

Find Information and resources about how to improve your church’s digital discipleship at <https://www.unyumc.org/about/digital-discipleship>



The Upper New York Conference’s vision is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God’s love with our neighbors in all places.

A look inside!

Celebrate United Methodist Student Day	2
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Helping children during the COVID-19 crisis	2
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Celebrate United Methodist Student Day

UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY
Your generous gift today enriches ministry and connects students to their faith

UNITED METHODIST SPECIAL SUNDAY PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

"It was so meaningful to know that someone out there, a brother or sister in Christ, supported me, regardless of never meeting me face-to-face. That is a godly act to me."
— Emma Storer, Gift of Hope Scholar, Washington University, St. Louis

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church

Please make check payable to your local church or give online at UMCgiving.org/giveUMSD.

What is Student's Day?

One of six churchwide Special Sundays with offerings of The United Methodist Church, United Methodist Student Day takes place the first Sunday after Thanksgiving. This Special Sunday calls the church to support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith with knowledge. The special offering provides scholarships for qualified United Methodist applicants.

When you give generously on United Methodist Student Day, you support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith with knowledge.

What students have to say

The United Methodist Church believes

that every person has the right to education and that the responsibility of educating young people rests with the family, faith communities, and the government. On United Methodist Student Day, we have the opportunity to support scholarships and low-interest loans that help young leaders achieve their dreams.

Morgan Murdock, a 2018 graduate of North Carolina State University, was a Gift of Hope scholar. According to her, when we give on United Methodist Student Day, "You are reminding and encouraging students of all majors and walks of lives to remain constant in their faith and to continue to uphold the great qualities that The United Methodist

Church has instilled in us. The church has shown me so much unconditional love over the years in many forms, and this was a very meaningful form of that love. I was encouraged to pursue more in my community and remember the church that helped make me who I am."

As a child who experienced being bullied, Benjamin Carlson found refuge in his church. As a college student, the Gift of Hope scholarship offset some of his college expenses and he says it "reinforced my understanding that The United Methodist Church supports [its] students."

Visit <https://bit.ly/SpecialSundaygift> to make a direct donation to Student Day.

Helping children during the COVID-19 crisis

By Jim Patterson, UMCCom

Editor's Note: This article was written toward the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, but many of the suggestions remain important and relevant as we are still dealing with the pandemic.

It's important to address the anxiety of children over the coronavirus, church leaders agree. Small children miss personal contact with their friends, while some teenagers wonder about more existential issues.

Younger children also have a lot of anxiety around COVID-19, said the Rev. Kathy Pittenger, children's initiative coordinator for the Michigan Conference.

"For elementary-age school kids (it's important to) explain what's happening

and why social distancing is important, because that's a hard thing for kids to understand," Pittenger said.

She said it's also essential for kids to have some kind of a schedule.

"It can be a flexible schedule, but something that kids know is coming every day. Exercise is also important, whether that be outside if they are able to, or inside their house."

Parents should also limit the news that children hear or watch on television and avoid making promises about when the crisis will end, Pittenger said.

"As adults, we can get stuck on having the news on 24-7," she said. "Not only can that be anxiety producing for us as adults, but it can be very stressful for

children."

One way churches are keeping in touch with children is by posting videos of pastors or youth leaders reading books on Facebook and YouTube.

St. Paul & St. Andrew United Methodist Church in New York City posted a video of the Rev. Lea Matthews, associate pastor, reading "Wemberly Worried" by Kevin Henkes. Saint Matthew United Methodist Church in Belleville, Illinois, posted Lindsay Vollmar, director of children's ministries and the wife of Matt Vollmar, reading "Hooray! It's a Duck Day!" by Jennifer Maze Brown. Lindsay Vollmar is joined by "Little Mattie," a "Sesame Street"-like puppet voiced by Matt Vollmar.

"Wemberly Worried" is about keeping worrying in check, while "Hooray! It's a Duck Day!" speaks to the boredom of not being able to leave the house.

"I had a little girl from our children's ministry that called, and she just wanted to check to make sure I was OK because they didn't get to come to church," Lindsay Vollmar said. "And so we just started thinking about how we can connect with the kids and the youth in the ministry."

Normally, Lindsay Vollmar reads a story to preschoolers before their Sunday school class starts. "So I thought (reading a story) would be normal to them," she said. "They could see my face."

They plan to post two stories a week

Continued on Page 4