



Newsletter of the
First United Methodist Church
Huntington WV

January 2018

Happy New Year!

It is now the second day of 2018, and if I had made any resolutions, I would have already broken one. (During the Advent days leading to Christmas, I told staff and friends that I needed an attitude adjustment. That seems to be still true as we begin a new year.) I did not make any resolutions this year. Instead, in my devotion time, I was drawn to Wesley's Covenant Prayer. It provides for me a touch stone for my spiritual life. It is a reminder that "it isn't about me." My discipleship is dependent upon Christ—and the walk that we share together.

During last Sunday's worship (as we closed out one year and prepared to begin a new year) we offered the Covenant Prayer. With a holiday weekend, travel, and cold weather, many of you could not be present to share the prayer in worship. It is printed for you.

Wesley's Covenant Prayer

Commit yourselves to Christ as his servants.

Give yourselves to him that you may belong to him.

Christ has many services to be done.

Some are more easy and honorable, others are more difficult and disgraceful.

Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests; others are contrary to both.

In some we may please Christ and please ourselves.

But then there are others where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.

It is necessary, therefore, that we consider what it means to be a servant of Christ.

Let us, therefore, go to Christ, and pray:

Let me be your servant, under your command.

I will no longer be my own.

I will give up myself to your will in all things.

Be satisfied that Christ shall give you your place and work.

Lord, make me what you will.

I put myself fully into your hands:

put me to doing, put me to suffering,

let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,

let me be full, let me be empty,

let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and with a willing heart

give it all to your pleasure and disposal.

Christ will be the Savior of none but his servants.

He is the source of all salvation to those who obey.

Christ will have no servants except by consent;

Christ will not accept anything except full consent to all that he requires.

Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing.

I invite you to offer the prayer as you begin this new year—and to keep it close by offering it whenever life doesn't seem to be going your way. Together with Christ, we find our place, our service, our life, our love.

*Blessings,
Mark*

Scholarship Essay from Evan Gooding

College scholarships were awarded to eight students back in August. As part of the scholarship application, students were asked to write a short essay on "How will your spiritual foundation empower you during your college years?" We have printed several of them in the past, here is another one written by Evan Gooding.

To anyone in the congregation that may be reading this,

Throughout the years leading to adulthood, my church has played a major influence on my life. While recently I have become one of those people that only comes to service on days such as Easter or Christmas, there is no doubt that the FUMC community helped shape my childhood and therefore who I am today. From Children's Minutes to Sunday School to Youth Group, I have met countless people along the way that are always happy to see me, whether inside or outside of church. I have distinct memories of putting a painted handprint up in the old children's worship room, with my name crudely scrawled in with crayon among several others. Furthermore, I will fondly remember all of the off-site activities I did with the church, such as the Morse's Annual Easter Egg Hunt, sledding down hills at Winterplace and the yearly Halloween parties.

Furthermore, I am glad I ended up in the type of denomination that FUMC is – a very forgiving one. I've always been taught that God loves everyone, no matter who they are or what they've done, which is extremely reassuring. This led me to me living a mostly carefree life as a kid, not worrying about unknowingly doing something that'd send me to the bad side of the afterlife. I've always been taught that if you've sinned, but know you've done something wrong and repent doing so, all is forgiven in the eyes of God.

Therefore, the congregation's influence on my childhood will affect my future endeavors. Throughout college, I will know that I am loved by many people, as well as having a well-developed sense of morality, and like the church has taught me, a very forgiving demeanor. I continue to believe that there is a little bit of good in everybody.

*Sincerely,
Evan Gooding*

Winter Gift

"God ... does great things beyond our knowing. He says to the snow, 'Fall to the earth'; likewise to his heavy, drenching rain. He shuts up all humankind indoors, so that all people may know his work" (Job 37:5-7, NABRE).

Snow, ice and cold can make winter a hassle. "Snow days" due to a blizzard may thrill students but usually inconvenience parents. But now and then, winter blankets the earth so heavily that it seems to quiet everything. We're granted permission to hunker down at home, snuggle close with family or pets, enjoy a book or movie, make cocoa or cookies, and rest. It's like a surprise sabbath — the gift of grace-time — when no one's expected to get out the door or the driveway.

Perhaps indeed, as Job declared, God sees fit on such days to put our busyness on hold and shut us all indoors so we pause and remember his work — his place — in our lives. Praise God for snow days!



First Church Dinner Theater Set for February 15, 16 & 17

First Church Dinner Theater will present the comedy, "Inspecting Carol", for our 26th season. They first premiered this hilarious show in 1995. Performance dates are Thursday, February 15, Friday, February 16, and Saturday, February 17. Mark the dates on your calendar, and get ready to see how the Soapbox Playhouse members handle (or rather, mis-handle) the Charles Dickens classic "Christmas Carol".

Cast members include Mike and Jenn Naglee, Sheila Meade, Todd Green, Dylan Clark, Owen Reynolds, Linda LeMaster, Isaiah Shook and Brianna Newcome (both from Huntington High School), Jane Morse, and two others to be announced at a later date.

UMW and Mission Update

Thanks to all you generous elves, we

- provided Christmas to 31 Ebenezer Angels,
- filled the Mitten Tree to overflowing to warm the heads and hands of local children
- baked and ate \$1,400 worth of cookies. The rest went to the police station, Ronald McDonald House, and Harmony House.
- Thanks to all their hard work, United Methodist Women gave \$3,400 to Mission in 2017.



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Eternal God! Grant us gratitude enough to look backward and be thankful; courage enough to look forward and be hopeful; faith enough to look upward and be humble; kindness enough to look outward and be helpful. Together let us pray...

For those who are sick or homebound...

Dawn Aikin, Jason Anderson, Drew Apgar, Anna Archer, Carol Bartram, Pris Beard, Mary Berry, Faye Brangham, Cyndi Bright, Jeanne Burford, Carolyn Cummings, Dorothy Cutright, Mary Jo Danford, Leona Davis, Samantha Davis, Jeanette Dorsey, Betty Duke, Jack Eblin, Charles Brent Edwards, Robert Finley, Sue Furbee, Jill Greathouse, Grace Hammond, Ginny Lee Hastings, Johnny Jackson, Nancy Kincade, James May, Mary Ann Myers, Pam Moritz, Tom & Barbara Pafford, Nancy Palmer, Christine Phipps, Tige Rogers, Kaysen Rose, Harold Sheets, Nancy Slaughter, Mike Smith, Charlotte Tallman, Jana Tigchelaar, Wyatt Weeks, Mike Williams

For those who grieve ...

Mark Richardson on the death of his wife, Sue

Remember those in the military who are in harm's way.

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

On behalf of Marshall University, thanks to FUMC for hosting the Choral Union Concert on December 5th. The sanctuary looked amazing and many compliments were heard from guests seeing it for the first time. Thanks to Susan Nickels and her helpers for hosting a very beautiful and tasty reception and thanks to Pastor Mark and the Wednesday Willing Workers for all their preparations for the concert. It was a beautiful space in which to present our Christmas music. Thank you very much!

Debbie Bradley



- 1/3 GinnyLee Hastings
Hadley Massie
Killian Rowe
- 1/6 Jacob Eddins
- 1/11 Sophia Wylie
- 1/13 Sarah Cummings
- 1/14 Hope Brown
- 1/15 Tina Goings
- 1/17 John Archambault
Eli Crager
- 1/20 Sarah Young
- 1/22 Nancy Slaughter
- 1/23 Jack Patrick
Stephen Fowler
- 1/25 Wes Shanholtzer
Kevin Ray
Holly McKenna
Alex Bradley
- 1/29 Vivian Tschop
- 1/30 Kerry Winkler
Alex Hagan
- 1/31 Emily Tschop
Cassie Bacon
Zendal Tatum

Gavin's Passion Project

Gavin Brandenburg is a senior at Huntington High school and actively involved in many programs. For his honors program, he is required to create a Passion Project. This is where he finds something he is passionate about and creates a project based on that area. Gavin's passion is the church and the church's mission work. He has decided to put together a fundraiser to raise money for mission work. There will be spaghetti dinner, with salad, dessert, and drinks provided on January 27th at the church from 6:00-8:00. During dinner, Gavin will have a presentation about the effects mission work can have on a local and global perspective. Tickets will be \$10 and can be purchased from Gavin.

Wednesday Menus and Helpers for January

- 1/10 Chicken, Mac & Cheese,
Steamed Veggies
Journey Class
- 1/17 Pizza
Sanctuary Choir
- 1/24 Tacos/Beans?
Mission Committee
- 1/31 Lasagna
Men's Group

Dear Members of FUMC.

Thank you for your recent donation of \$605 to the Christian Associates/Cridlin Food & Clothing Pantry. Your generous gift will enable us to better meet the needs of those coming to the Pantry for assistance.

The Pantry serves the needs of approximately 450 individuals each month by providing 5-day emergency food orders, new underwear, used clothing, household and personal basic needs items, as well as infant essentials such as diapers and formula. Thank you again for joining with us to serve God by serving others.

Diana Van Horn
Pantry Director

Cridlin Food and Clothing Pantry food of the month for January is 96 cans of cream of chicken soup or \$11.76/case of 24. The underwear request is for women's size 7.

Advent-Christmas Thank You's

The Advent and Christmas seasons are wonderful and exciting times for the congregation. Throughout the days, the church is filled with activity and beauty. Those activities, special programs, and decorations require the efforts of many people. Always there is the risk of leaving something important out (and we sincerely apologize if we do). Know of our thanks and our love. We offer our thanks to:

- ◆ the Children and Youth of the church for their special holiday presentation of "The King and Me" directed by Debbie Bradley. We were all touched by the story and the wonderful way it was presented.
- ◆ Margaret Reichenbecher once again coordinated the decorating of the church building. Thanks is shared with all those who helped with the tasks of carrying, decorating, and cleanup.
- ◆ We especially thank the Wednesday Willing Workers Crew for all they do around the building.
- ◆ all our musicians. We often take the music of our worship times for granted, but this holy season would seem empty if there were no music. We especially thank Sandee Folsom, our director of music and organist, the Sanctuary Choir, harpists, and oboist for the beautiful cantata, the Handbell Choir, and Judy Taylor, choir director.
- ◆ We also give thanks for the many who help to make the worship services happen---our greeters and ushers.
- ◆ the fellowship times provided with Wednesday Evening Dinners. We all enjoy the meals and know of the hard work it takes in preparation, serving, and clean-up. We thank our church hostess, Susan Nickels.
- ◆ the First Church staff, who work hard year round, but who offer extra energy and service during this busy season.



Winter Weather Policy for Sundays and Wednesdays

With December comes the first day of winter and the potential of stormy weather. If the weather is questionable on Wednesdays, we will make a decision by 2:00 pm concerning whether or not we will meet for the Wednesday evening dinner and programs. We will post the announcement on the First Church Facebook page and call or text those who do not have access to Facebook.

Pastor Mark will be here on Sunday mornings, bad weather or not, so services will be held. Each person needs to make their own decision about braving the elements. Please be safe.

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

We will look at *The Case for Faith*. Does believing in Christ mean refusing to ask hard questions in the midst of doubt? Doubt is familiar territory for Lee Strobel, the former atheist and award-winning author of books for skeptics and Christians. But he believes that faith and reason go hand in hand, and that Christianity is a defensible religion. In this six-session revised small group Bible study, Strobel explores the most common emotional obstacles to faith in Christ. These include the natural inclination to wrestle with faith and doubt, the troubling presence of evil and suffering in the world, and the exclusivity of the Christian gospel. They also include this compelling question: Can I doubt and be a Christian?

Join us each Wednesday beginning on January 17 at 6:00 in Room 208.



Men's Breakfast January 13: By Bob Ganzer

In getting ready to send an article for Tower Topics, I checked the long range forecast and there is a warming trend coming; on the Saturday the 13th, the morning temp should be 27 degrees. So there will no excuse for not coming out. Our speaker that day will be another one of our members, Chris Stefanides. Chris is employed by the US Forest Service and is now working out of the Wayne National Forest. His job is very interesting especially during fire season.

Our December speaker was Rob Slagel from Portable Solutions. He has developed a great company here the tri-state. During December we supported two Ebenezer's Angels. Thanks for all who helped make Christmas a little brighter for the children at Ebenezer.

Year End Financial Report

While all the year-end numbers are not ready to be reported, it is good to report that all of our regular bills were paid by the end of the year 2017. (We will provide a more complete report in the February Tower Topics.) We were able to pay 80% of our Annual Conference Fair Share and all of our District apportionment. While we all would like for our Fair Share to have been paid in full, our 2017 giving provides a slight increase in total amount over the 2016 payout. We thank you for our faithful support of all the ministries that we share. Your contributions to the on-going work we share is greatly appreciated. Please remember that during the cold season our gas bills increase dramatically. We need your support and care for our work in 2018.

Children & Youth



Notes from Debbie

Our church is fortunate to have so many young children in our midst and they certainly put all their energy and talents on display during our recent Christmas musical. Thanks so much to their families for faithfully bringing them to choir rehearsals each week and helping them at home to learn their parts. "The King and Me" was a fun project for us to work together on and I'm pretty sure it was a blessing to those who attended the performance.

Of course, a project like this takes many hands (and brains!) to see it through and we had some of the best helping us: Mary Ganzer and Carolyn Waggoner; Wednesday Willing Workers; the artistry of Charlie Buell; Fran Allred, Susan Nickels and Stacey Morgan who work wonders with costumes and food; Ken Bannon and Jerry Morse on sound and lighting; and Schauna, Pastors Mark and Steve (although I heard Steve was disappointed that he didn't get to be the rear-end of a camel this year). I'm probably missing someone important and if so, I apologize. Having so many people willing to help makes for a fun experience. Thanks to all!

We'll begin rehearsals again on Wednesday, January 10 and we'll be starting on all new music for spring. Parents: watch for a Sunday anthem schedule to be sent home soon, as well as information about our spring musical. Happy 2018!

Children's and Youth Ministry Meetings

As we begin the year of 2018, we will be having a meeting for anyone who wants to know what is going on in our children's and youth ministry. I encourage parents and anyone who have suggestions about what they would like to see happen in these ministries to come ready to share their ideas. These meetings are open to anyone who wants to be involved in the ministry or just wants to know what is going on. The meetings will be held in the panel room.

Children's Ministry meeting is on January 17th at 5:30.

Youth Ministry meeting is on January 24th at 5:30.

THINK *Summer*

Vacation Bible School Options

I know it is a tad bit away, but there is a lot to prepare for when it comes to VBS. I want to offer different ways that we could do VBS and have a vote on what the church thinks would work best. Throughout the month of January, we will have a poll on our Facebook page and on the table in the back of the sanctuary for those who do not have access to Facebook to vote on their preferred choice.

There will be 3 options:

1. the regular 5 day (Sunday through Thursday)
2. a 2 day option (half a day on Friday and 9 to around 4 on Saturday)
3. a 2 day option that is in the evening on Thursday and 9-4 on Friday.

Each option has the Sunday presentation of course. Please be in prayer when you are making your decision on which would be best for our church and our community. We are asking everyone to please just vote once so we can make sure that we have the most accurate way to tally up the votes.

ASBURY WOODS SUMMER CAMP

It's time to mark your calendars and make your plans for Asbury Woods. It's going to be another great summer. Please note, there have been some adjustments to our day camp and elementary camp. Day camp is now younger elementary and the camp will be 2 nights. Elementary camp has been shortened by one day. We hope to see everyone at camp this summer.

Younger Elementary (K-2nd grade) July 2-4

Older Elementary (1st - 3rd grades) July 1-4

Elementary Camps will end with cookout lunch on July 4.

Middle School (6th - 8th Grades) July 8-13

High School (9th - 12th grades) July 15-20

First United Methodist Church
1124 Fifth Avenue
Huntington, West Virginia 25701-2288
Phone:(304) 522-0357
firstumc@firstunitedmethodist.com
www.firstunitedmethodist.com

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Huntington, WV
PERMIT NO. 173



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Senior Pastor,
Mark Conner

Associate Pastor
Stephen Hensley

Director of Christian Education
Schauna Chambers

Sunday Worship Opportunities

First Light	8:45 a.m.
Sunday School	9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship	10:45 a.m.
Korean Church	1:00 p.m.

Next Tower Topics Deadline is January 29