



Newsletter of the
 First United Methodist Church
 Huntington WV

February 2018

The Story of Who We Are

One of the first “Christmas presents” I receive each year is a packet of materials from the Annual Conference filled with report forms for our annual Statistical Report. This report asks for all kinds of year end information about First Church. Each year I set that packet somewhere (hidden) on my desk until around mid-January when I get a reminder that those forms must be completed and returned by the end of January.

I “anxiously” await the year-end financial reports from Harriett. Mary keeps our membership lists and weekly attendance reports. I then have the task of finding the right place to put all those figures. I confess that I find this a duty and I am always relieved when the last number has been entered and I have confirmation that the completed report has been received.

The numbers tell a part of the story of who we are.

First UMC is an amazing congregation—that may be a biased opinion, but the numbers don’t lie. During 2017 we had a net gain in membership of 9. That was the second year for membership growth. We shared in the baptism of one infant and one youth. With the births of 7 babies during 2017, we will, no doubt, share in more baptisms. There is a large group of regular attenders and supporters of the congregation who have not yet chosen to place their membership with the congregation. Our average attendance in worship services increased slightly during the past year.

Who We Are: Continued on page 2

Our Lenten Disciplines

What If?

A Faithful Conversation about the Substance Use Disorder Crisis.

What if each clergy and layperson in the West Virginia Conference made time to intentionally fast, pray, listen and respond to God’s call on our lives, individually and as the church?

What if we intentionally entered into these spiritual practices to offer God’s love, grace and healing power to those being affected by the opioid epidemic?

What if we did this over the Lenten season in order to seek God’s direction for how we as individuals and congregations can respond to this crisis in a way that offers life?

There is no reason not to do this! Financially, It costs nothing. To enter into this process does not require another night out for meetings.

What does this require of us? It requires that each Christian set aside time to listen for God’s call on each of our lives.

What if— in this upcoming Lenten season – we really listened and responded? We might just be a part of God’s life-giving resurrection to a person, a family, a community, a world!

Each week during Lent a short devotional page will be shared on our First Church web page, on our Facebook page, or with a printed copy that will be found on the tables in the back of the Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary. We invite you to take time to read and reflect on the information provided and then look at ways you might respond through your Lenten time of Fasting, Prayer, Listening, and Responding.



Ash Wednesday Worship

There will be two opportunities to worship on Ash Wednesday, February 14. Both services will include the disposition of ashes.

The Community-wide service sponsored by the downtown churches will be at noon at First Presbyterian Church.

We will have a worship service here from 6:00 to 6:30 in the sanctuary. Regular programs and meetings will follow the service.

Lenten Noon Services

Our Lenten Services in the chapel will be starting once again on February 21. The services start each Wednesday at 12:05 and last thirty minutes. Lunch for a \$2 follows in the Fellowship Hall. The services take place each Wednesday through Holy Week.

- February 21** **Rev. Randy Adkins**
 United Methodist Pastor
- February 28** **Rev. Rick Wilson**
 Highlawn Presbyterian
- March 7** **Rev. Jerry Wood**
 Beverly Hills UMC
- March 14** **Rev. Shea James**
 WVUMC Director of Youth and
 Outdoor Ministry
- March 21** **Rev. Terry Deane**
 Johnson Memorial UMC
- March 29** **Rev. Jacque Parlato**
 Central Christian Church

Observing The Season of Lent

In *A Guide to Prayer for All Who Seek God*, Norman Shawchuck and Rueben Job remind us that the Season of Lent as a rollercoaster ride with emotions that are down and up again and again as the story of our salvation makes plain our sinful ways and the cost of our redemption. We begin with Ash Wednesday where we roughly bump up against our own mortality. Here we know that sin and death are real, and they are real not just for someone else. Sin and death are real for us. This is where we begin the Lenten Season, with our face pressed hard against the reality of our sin and our death. If we did not know how the story ends, this would be a dark and depressing journey. But we do know how the story ends and therefore in the midst of self-denial and fasting we remember our faithful Savior and the Easter declaration that life is always victorious over death, always!

During the forty days of Lent (between

Ash Wednesday and Easter—not counting Sundays) we experience the temptations of Jesus and remember our own. We recognize the rising hopes of the faithful followers as they expect a triumphal entry of their Messiah. They dream of Christ taking political control and restoring the nation of Israel. Like them, we long for the time when the world knows the way of God's Kingdom—the way of peace and love. But Holy Week comes and we see so many of those hopes dashed to their death. It is a somber time, but even in Lent we remember that each Sunday of the year is a little Easter.

Each year the season begins with an invitation to the observance of Lenten Discipline. The pastor offers: I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word. We pray and then the ashes (burnt

palm branches from the previous year's palm branches) are pressed upon our foreheads.

Sometimes we focus on the self-denial of Lent. We choose to give up something that we like or something that we don't necessarily need in our lives. That is good, and it can be a very holy sacrifice. But this year, I hope you will take up something new or revive a spiritual activity. Read the Bible more faithfully. Make a conscious effort to speak or post on social media positive words, building up people rather than tearing others down. Make gifts to mission work (time or money) which support the way of sharing Christ with others. Use your God-given talents and abilities in service to others. Prayerfully be aware of opportunities to share the love of Christ especially with those who have never experienced the power of love, grace, and forgiveness that Christ brings to our world.

Who We Are

Continued from page 1

First Church has children and youth who actively participate in the ministries and programs your giving provides. You have become so accustomed to seeing children and youth around our church that you may not realize that isn't the story for many congregations. We are blessed with children and youth of all ages. We have children in the nurseries each week. We have children learning and singing and listening. Their energy is wonderful! The youth are involved in activities of learning, mission, and recreation. They went on a mission trip to Savannah in June! I hope you are very proud of who we are and what we are doing in ministry with our children and youth.

The story goes on to tell of work that is important to us all. Our weekly worship services are filled with the Spirit of Christ. There is a sense of Christian fellowship and care for one another. It makes my heart sing to watch our congregations move out in care and support of each other. We are blessed by music which lifts our hearts with melodies and words of praise, thanksgiving, and awe. Week by week we join in times of Bible study, fellowship shared around tables with wonderful food that has been prepared for us.

First Church supports a budget of just under \$500,000. Those gifts are used to provide the utilities that keep us comfortable

within our magnificent building; they pay for the programs and ministries that bring us together in worship, study, and fellowship; they provide for our staff who work hard to serve the church well; and they extend our presence and mission in places nearby, around the conference, and throughout the world. We work very hard to be good stewards of your gifts. While we did not pay our Fair Share in full during the past year, we were able to once again pay 80% of that \$101,604 asking. We will need to work even harder this year as we strive to reach 100% of that Fair Share.

Our story tells that we spent some for improvements to our church building and parsonage. First Church is so very blessed to have had men and women of faith who shared of their resources with endowment gifts to the church. We continue to make improvements to our church properties without having to ask you for any additional giving.

I've saved a major chapter in the story of our work until last. First Church is a congregation known for its service through missions. I am so very proud in knowing that many lives are touched by the contributions and service shared. We lead the district in support of the Celebration of Mission Event (with most of those funds coming from our Dinner Theater). We feed children through the distribution of more than 2,000 backpacks at the Central City Elementary School.

Our support of Cridlin is amazing with financial support, food and clothing donations, and volunteers. (Cridlin is a food, clothing, and life essentials program for those in need shared by our downtown congregations.) We move out into the community through programs like Helpington. Christmas gifts and other financial support are shared with our local UM mission at Ebenezer Community Outreach Center. Each year members of the congregation and other friends help to support the Christmas Mission to Nicaragua. Last year two members of the congregation (and other family members) went as missionaries to Sandino and more than \$13,000 was raised to support that work. Additionally, we offered continuing area flood relief work, made 20 cleaning buckets and shared more than 50 health kits. Hundreds (thousands) of lives have been touched with the presence of Christ's love because we choose to be faithful in our work.

You have shared in an amazing and wonderful story of faith and service. Great things were done by our congregation in 2017! Thank you!! I can't wait to hear the stories we will tell in 2018.

May God continue to lead and guide us in our ministries.

*Blessings,
Mark*

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, 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, Grace Hammond, Ginny Lee Hastings, Johnny Jackson, Nancy Kincaide, James May, Mary Ann Myers, Pam Moritz, Tom & Barbara Pafford, Jocelyn Page, Nancy Palmer, Christine Phipps, Tige Rogers, Kaysen Rose, Nancy Slaughter, Mike Smith, Charlotte Tallman, Jana Tigchelaar, Wyatt Weeks, Mike Williams

For those celebrating new life...

Levi Alan Krantz, son of Cindy and Matthew Krantz born on January 3

For those who grieve...

Jennie Yoost and family on the death of her grandmother, Margaret Richeson
The family of Carol Bartram who died on January 27
Scott Sheets and family on the death of his father, Harold Sheets

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



2/1	Yeon Choi
2/2	Jean Frederick Leslie Cummings
2/4	Jim McVey
2/7	Jim Cummings Jax O'Roark
2/9	Karen Shanholtzer Matt Duncan
2/10	Portia Warner Abby Naegele
2/12	Zara Harold
2/13	Ashley Davis Brienne Holbrook
2/14	Alex Nelson
2/17	Emily Phipps Justin Legg
2/18	Willa May Weekley Harriett Evans
2/20	Claire McClure Bill Archer Rick Brown Drew Cummings
2/21	Betsy Hager Mathew Allen
2/22	Becky McCoy
2/23	Fenton Cummings Jeanette Bailey
2/24	Jordan Fulford
2/27	Gil Lester Troy Jones Drew Adkins

A Personal Note From Mark

For many years, my sisters and I have talked about sharing a house during our retirement years. We were not actively looking yet, but a house that fits our needs came on the market. We debated long and hard about purchasing a house now and decided to make an offer and see what might happen. We are now the owners (along with the mortgage company) of a house in Huntington. My sister, Chyrl, will move in to the house this spring. Amy and I will continue to live in the parsonage until it is time for me to retire. I'm not sure when that retirement time will come, but it will not be this appointment year.

Men's Breakfast

Scheduled for February 10

Inclement weather got in the way of our January breakfast, however, the food did not go to waste. The youth had a good breakfast after their lock-in. I never saw a bunch of youth sleep while eating eggs and bacon. I have heard of sleep walking, not sleep eating.

Our next breakfast is February 10. I will have more about a program the week before. Remember that we will be having our renowned Potato Bar on March 18th.

Bob Ganzer

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Throughout February and into March we will be continuing our study based on Lee Strobel's book, "The Case For Faith." Can I doubt and still be a Christian? Join us each Wednesday at 6:00 in Room 208 as we wrestle with this and other questions about our faith.

Thank You!

We want to thank our First Light family for the Texas Roadhouse gift card we received at Christmas. We are so grateful for the friendship, fellowship, and support we find at FUMC and we're happy to share our humble talents in the early service.

Love,

Andrew and Marcia Canterbury



Children's Ministry Volunteers

Our children's ministry is expanding and oh what a blessing that is. We would love to have you involved in our children's ministry. Whether it is in the nursery, children's church, Sunday School, Wednesday nights, VBS, or events that we will be having in the future. You will see changes happening in our rooms and our goal is to eventually use three separate rooms during second service. One for ages newborn to 2, one for ages 3-5, and one for ages 5-7 and we cannot do that without you. If you are interested in being a part of this beautiful growth in our church please contact Schauna Chambers at schambers@firstunitedmethodist.com or during of-fice hours at 304-522-0357.



Family Fellowship Night

*Sunday, February 25, 4-7 pm
Food and fun for the whole family*

Come to a covered dish fun and game night to shake off the winter blahs. Bring your favorite board games to play plus a dish to share (your choice: soups, snacks, chili, appetizers, etc.). This event is for all ages. We will meet at 4 :00 in the Fellowship Hall.

Choir Notes from Debbie

The children will be singing for the 10:45 service on February 11, March 11, April 1 (EASTER) and May 6 (the day they'll present their spring musical).

We also have an opportunity for the younger children (ages 3, 4 and 5) in our congregation to have a small part in the spring musical. They would be in one scene (no speaking parts), sing one song with the bigger kids, and would need to attend two rehearsals: Wednesday, April 25 and the following Wednesday, May 2 for about 30 minutes. We will supply their costume. Parents who would like their children to participate need to let Debbie Bradley know by March 1 (text 304-654-5445). It should be fun to add these little ones to our show and we look forward to hearing from lots of parents.

Youth Mission Trip 2018 June 18-20

The date has been set! The youth will be helping with the UMCOR New Vision Disaster Relief Depot this summer. We will be departing bright and early on Monday morning of June 18th and come back late on the 20th. If you have a youth that is interested or you are interested in coming along please come to the **mandatory** meeting on February 21st at 5:30 in the Panel Room.

Family and Youth Ice Skating Outing

We will be going Ice Skating on February the 24th from 12:15 - 2:15pm. Bring your little ones and come skate with the youth. We will depart from the church at 11:30 sharp. Price will be \$6 and includes skate rentals.

Wednesday Menus and Helpers for February

2/7 Fellowship Class
Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Fries

2/21 Staff Parish Relations
Meat Loaf, Potatoes, Veggies

2/14 Finance Committee
(Ash Wednesday) Pizza

2/28 Women of the church
Chicken, Mac & Cheese, Veggies

ASBURY WOODS CAMP NEWS

Asbury Woods Elementary Retreat

The retreat which had to be postponed in January due to weather has been rescheduled for March 9-11. This retreat is for any child Kindergarten through 5th Grade. More details coming soon or see Schauna, Katrina, or Steve for more information.

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

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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 February 26



**First Church Dinner Theater
2018 Production**

February 15, 16 & 17

First United Methodist Church
Dinner served at 6:00 PM Show at 7:30 PM
Choice of entrees: Prime Rib au Jus
or Glazed Cornish hen
Tossed Salad, Baked Potato
Green Peas and Pearl Onions, Dilly Rolls
Assorted Valentine Desserts

**By Daniel Sullivan and The Seattle
Repertory Company**
Produced by special arrangement with
Samuel French, Inc.

Dinner plus Show: Adult--\$27.00 Child under 12--\$8.00
Show only (as space permits) - \$5.00
Babysitting available on request for all shows (advance notice required)

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED FOR ALL DINNERS
Call: (304)522-0357 or (740)867-8576) Firstchurchdinnertheater@gmail.com