

Newsletter of the
 First United Methodist Church
 Huntington WV

March 2018



HOLY WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

Sunday, March 25

8:45 First Light

10:45 Sanctuary Worship

Palm-Passion Sunday Worship

We remember the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem as on-lookers spread their cloaks and palm branches. The service moves on to include the story of the Passion of our Christ.

†††

Wednesday, March 28

12:05 pm **Lenten Worship** in the Chapel with Rev. Jacque Parlato, pastor of Central Christian Church as our speaker. Lunch will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

Easter Egg Hunt 6:00 pm The Egg Hunt will be held following the Wednesday evening dinner.

†††

Thursday, March 29

7:00 pm **Holy Thursday Worship** in the sanctuary. This will be a worship of Holy Communion as we remember and celebrate the Last Supper. We will then share in Tenebrae. As the scripture readings of Christ's

Passion are read, the lights of the sanctuary are dimmed until we experience darkness at the death of Christ.

†††

Friday, March 30

12:05 pm **Good Friday Worship** at First Baptist Church (corner of 6th Avenue at 8th Street) The churches of the downtown community will join together to remember the time of Christ's crucifixion. Rev. Donte Jackson, pastor of First Baptist will be the preacher for the service.

†††

Sunday, April 1

8:45 First Light

10:45 Sanctuary Worship

Easter Sunday Worship Join in the Easter Celebration of the Resurrection as we worship together. Special music will be presented at both worship services. (We will join in singing the *Hallelujah Chorus* at the end of the 10:45 service.)

Monday, April 2

The church office will be closed.

Your Lenten Journey Companion

We continue on in our Lenten journey toward the Jerusalem Cross. In preparation for Ash Wednesday, I shared in last month's issue of Tower Topics an invitation to Lenten Discipleship that asks of us: "In the name of the Church, I invite you 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." In last Sunday's Gospel lesson from Mark, Jesus challenged us to take up our cross and follow him. That is hard Lenten work.

In my Lenten devotion time, I read in a book called, "the Wesleyan Way", words from Jessica Seay, a pastor in Oklahoma. She writes:

When Jesus talks about losing your life, it can take on a lot of different forms. For some of us, it just means letting go of the past. For some people, it means forgiving themselves. For some people, it means letting go of an addiction. For others, it means letting go of patterns that are destructive. What it really means is going toward something as much as letting go of something. Denying myself, yes, but not with the focus on what I'm losing but what I'm gaining in Jesus.

When invited, God comes. When invited, the Holy Spirit comes. Jesus is clear about this when he says I will pray and the Father will send you a comforter. The Father will send you a helper, and that is the Holy Spirit.

Continued on page 2.

Lenten Journey continued from pg 1

When we look at baptism, when we look at Holy Communion, being a part of a church, being in worship, being in a small group, it's not a small group that changes your life. It's not the servant. It's not the preacher. It is actually Christ himself.

Once you've said yes to Christ as your constant companion, it is such a joy to have Christ with you in great times but also in difficult times. I've seen hundreds of church members come from places of fear, places of addiction, places of lostness, and when they accept Christ they are different. They have changed, and their lives are never the same.

It doesn't mean life will be easy. It doesn't mean you'll escape the bad things. But the joy we have as Christians is that Christ is our companion. You are not alone. Christ will go through it with you.

Walk on this Lenten journey with your faithful companion and you will discover the joy of new life and love and hope that is the celebration of Easter. Journey faithfully.

Lenten Blessings,

Mark

Around the Building

You may have noticed a dining tent in the Fellowship Hall. Unfortunately, we have a leak in the ceiling above the serving area of the Fellowship Hall—and it showed up just before Dinner Theater. The roofers have been here repeatedly trying to find the source of our leaking during this raining season. A number of small areas have been discovered. So far, places have been corrected but the leaks continue. After the leaking areas are fixed and the ceiling dries, we will work to repair the ceiling. We apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate your patience as we try to solve this problem.

Stewardship and Finances

During February we received enough income to pay all of our regular bills (including a \$2,363 gas bill). In January we paid \$5,000 toward our 2018 Fair Share goal of \$101,731 for 2018. We appreciate your ongoing faithful support toward our General Fund budget. Your gifts help to keep our ministries and service going day by day. Thank you.

Our faithful stewardship is more than our monetary contributions. Faithful stewardship is our life response to the amazing and wonderful gifts that God has given us. We are challenged to live our lives as a response to God's generosity to us. Living as stewards bring tough questions to our lives. For example, do our time-planners, credit cards and check books, reveal that we are good caregivers in our families and congregations? How do we prioritize our time, our assets, and the multiple demands on our lives? And what does all this have to do with our life as faithful disciples? Those are hard questions, but important ones, especially during our Lenten journey.

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

We will continue with our study of Lee Strobel's book, "The Case For Faith". This study has led to some very good discussion and thought the first couple of weeks. Even if you have missed some, you can still come and join in the study. We meet each Wednesday at 6:00 in Room 208.

Empty Bowls Date Set

The 15th Annual Empty Bowls Benefit for the Facing Hunger Foodbank will take place April 13 from 10:30-2:30 at First Presbyterian Church. At this event you will have a lunch of soup, bread, and a drink and get a bowl made by students at Marshall University and area high schools. All proceeds will go to the Facing Hunger Foodbank. For more information, please visit marshall.edu/emptybowls.

Potato Bar Set for March 18

The Men's Group will put on their famous Potato Bar after church on March 18. This year's proceeds will benefit Ebenezer Outreach Center. The men have helped the Ebenezer food program in the past and now Ebenezer is currently providing meals for 60 or more children each day; they are in desperate need of a new stove on which to cook these meals. The oven on their current stove does not work and they would like a stove with more burners and a larger griddle. Some funds for this project have been promised but they are still short of the entire amount.

Tickets are available for \$5, and with that you get a delicious baked potato and all the fixin's, (cheese, broccoli, chili, bacon bits, sour cream, butter) a salad, dessert and a drink. What a great inexpensive way to feed family and friends and help out a necessary program. Tickets are available from Bob Ganzer or at the door on March 18.

Backpacks for Central City

March is once again our month to deliver backpacks. We are scheduled to deliver March 1, 8, 15 & 22. If school is in session on those days, we will meet at the church at 2:30 to deliver. If there is still no school, we are working to find alternate places to deliver so the students who need the backpacks can still receive them. Help and trucks are needed for the delivery days.



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...

Randy Adkins, 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, Sue Furbee, Grace Hammond, Ginny Lee Hastings, Dick Hensley, Johnny Jackson, Nancy Kincade, 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 who grieve...

Jack Welch and family on the death of his brother, Ted Welch

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 3/2 Edna Brooks
Zoe Harold
- 3/4 Charles Neighborgall III
- 3/5 Carter Bacon
- 3/6 Jan Naegele
Carole Bacon
- 3/7 Linda Hay
Wayne Warner
- 3/9 Mary Lamb
Pris Beard
Brian Massie
Parks Ward III
Hunter Massie
Belle Thomas
- 3/10 Bert Fulks
- 3/11 Logan Bush
- 3/13 Scout Arthur
Will Cummings V
- 3/14 Sophie Bright
- 3/15 Daniel Maue
- 3/16 Shelby Nelson
Winifred Chiles
- 3/17 Ken Wolfe
- 3/20 Sally Lester
Joy Brown
Katie Fulks
- 3/22 Pat Daugherty
Michelle Adkins
- 3/23 Shaylynn Kutcher
Logan Denning
- 3/24 Lynn Cummings
Susan Nickels
- 3/26 Diana Archer
Jonathan Perry
Ian Bowman-Vidal
- 3/27 Alec Cyrus
- 3/28 Norah Gerlach
- 3/29 Bonnie Hamilton
Vern Reichenbecher
Nancy Crum

Thanks To One And All

Many thanks to the cast and crew of "Inspecting Carol" for their delightful performances with First Church Dinner Theater 2018. Special recognition to Linda LeMaster, for her dedication during rehearsals; unfortunately, Linda was taken out by the flu just four days before the opening show. Equally special recognition to Tyler Bradley, who stepped into Linda's role as Kay on that same short notice, and provided a miraculous performance, as Kay/Kevin.

Many, many thanks to all those who volunteered their time for reservations, programs, seating, registration, food preparation, dining room setup, cooking,

and kitchen and dining room clean-up. Without all of you, especially our dedicated Mission Committee, First Church would not be able to support the church mission work as strongly and as traditionally as we have, over the 26 years the Dinner Theater has survived and thrived.

While this was not our biggest year financially, thanks to weather and flu, we did clear nearly \$2,800.00 profit toward the Church missions, bringing our total 26-year mission support to more than \$64,000.00.

Jane and Jerry Morse

Men's Group Breakfast

By Bob Ganzer

The next Men's Breakfast will be March 17th. This is a change from our usual 2nd Saturday. With our now Famous Potato Bar being held the following day (the 18th) it will allow us to get ready and prep for the big event. Since the 17th is St. Patrick's Day and all, what better way to celebrate than with potatoes! I am working on a program for that day as well as menu. Someone suggested green eggs and ham or maybe not.

On Potato Bar Sunday, the 18th, we will need help starting at 9 AM. The event runs until 1:30 at which time cleanup will be needed as well.

I have tickets for the event, banded in packs of 10. If you need tickets, I will be at church on Wednesdays and Sundays. Or email me (bob.ganzer@gmail.com) I will see that you get tickets. And remember this is for Ebenezer Outreach and a new stove for them.



SET YOUR CLOCKS
Ahead!

Daylight Savings
Time begins
March 11. Don't
forget to set your
clocks ahead!

Youth Ministry News

The youth are preparing to go on their 2nd mission trip. Be on the look out for different ways you can help them raise money for the trip. We just finished up our series on doubt on Wednesday night where they learned how it is okay to go through seasons of doubt in our faith. We also finished up our friendship series on Sunday which was about what kind of friends they are as a person and what qualities they look for in a friend. I am looking forward to bringing in guest speakers and also creating more opportunities for our youth to bond together outside of church.



Home Made Rolls for Your Easter Dinner

The Youth are selling Easter Rolls. These will be \$8.00 a dozen and 100% of the proceeds will go towards the mission trip to the UMCOR Vision Depot in June. They will be taking orders from now until March 25. You will be able to pick your rolls up on Easter morning and it is one thing you do not have to worry about for Easter dinner.

Mission Trip Paperwork Due Date Reminder

Attention Youth and Parents: The Mission Trip Paper Work is due Sunday March 25th along with the \$50 deposit. This is so we can arrange proper transportation and have everything set up for our New River Gorge day on Wednesday, June 20. If you are an adult that is interested, please see Schauna Chambers ASAP. The trip is from June 18th – the 20^h.

Our Church in Mission

Each year, our Work Area on Mission helps provide funds for local mission and service groups. The funds used are received from a special endowment fund given to First Church for mission and service projects. This year the fund will distribute \$10,000 to these projects:

PORT-A-POT. \$1,200. This provides bathroom access to those living on the street with little or no access to bathroom facilities. Since our port-a-pot has been on the premises, it has been in constant use.

CRIDLIN. \$1,200. In addition to the donated supplies from the church, we offer a special gift to provide meat for distribution. The bulk purchases of frozen chickens and other foods were greatly appreciated.

BRANCHES. \$400 Provides shelter and services for families in abusive situations.

CITY MISSION. \$800 to further the work of the City Mission lunch program.

EBENEZER OUTREACH. \$2,000 is given toward the purchase of a desperately needed new kitchen stove.

FLOOD RELIEF AND WORK TEAM. \$3,000. The world is still reeling from devastating flooding, earthquakes, storms, etc. The youth are planning a work team trip to a West Virginia Mission.

FAIRFIELD EAST. \$1,000 A new United Methodist mission program is being developed through the old Ebenezer Church community with work at A. D. Lewis Center.

HARMONY HOUSE. \$400 Provides greatly needed services for the homeless in the community.

STUDENT FOOD PROGRAM (Backpacks) Has funds remaining from last year's grant.

CELEBRATION OF MISSION EVENT 2018

Sunday, May 6
First UMC, Huntington

Our eight West Virginia Mission projects, VIM and two Church and Community Workers remember the poor 365 days a year. They provide food, clothing, job training, child care, layettes, car seats, utility vouchers, and spiritual support.

This devoted help is only possible through your generous donations through the Celebration of Mission Event (COME). In 2017, the conference COME cash donations totaled \$127,692.32 with \$11,274.00 of that total coming from our Western District! In addition, the Western District donated some \$3,600 worth of items!

It is time to start planning our 2018 COME activities (our Dinner Theater is one of those activities.) The 3 mission projects being emphasized in the Western District in 2018 are Heart and Hand House-Philippi, Scott's Run Settlement House, Osage and Volunteers in Mission. One of our COME projects is a new kitchen

stove for Ebenezer. To that end, we presently have \$4,000 pledged.

Heart and Hand House is located in north central West Virginia, where they provide emergency services to low-income families in Barbour County. Their ministry programs include a food pantry; a backpack feeding program; home repair and construction program; assistance with utilities, rent, clothing and certain medical expenses; providing layettes for newborn babies; and a community garden market. They also operate two thrift stores, one in Belington and one in Philippi.

Scott's Run Settlement House, located outside Morgantown in Osage, has been providing for the needs of Monongalia County's low income residents since 1922.

Volunteers in Mission The West Virginia Annual Conference has been organizing work teams since the mid-1970s. The world has been the parish as VIM Work Teams have traveled to Africa, Europe, Central and South America, and the Caribbean, as well as sending work teams to various locations in the USA.

More details about the needs of these agencies can be found on bulletin boards throughout the church.

Debbie's Notes



The Wesley Kids will be singing for 10:45 service again on March 11 and Easter Sunday, which is April 1st. We will wear robes on March 11 but not on Easter. It seems such a shame to cover up those lovely Easter clothes!

We are diligently working on our May Musical each Wednesday and the main speaking characters will be staying a half hour after choir for the next month in order to prepare. This begins in March and means they'll be finished at 7:45 instead of 7:15. This is ONLY for the main characters. Thanks so much for making this happen! For everyone else, please listen to the CD often - it really helps!!

We're still inviting younger children (ages 3-5) to be part of the musical. Let me know ASAP if your young one wants to take part so we can arrange a costume. The musical will be presented on Sunday morning, May 6th at the 10:45 service. These younger children will wear a costume and be involved in one short scene and song. It should be very cute and fun, so please help us "recruit" baby chicks for this experience! You can either let Debbie know by texting 304-654-5445 or let Mary Ganzer know in the church office.

Children's Ministry

There is so much I can say about the Children's Ministry at the moment. We are growing at a fast pace and it delights me to say that we will be needing to expand on classes because of the numbers that are continuing to grow. In the fall, I am expecting to open a 3-5 year old class on Wednesdays along with an older elementary class. As well as a class for older elementary on Sundays. With our growing ministry we need more volunteers. Even if it is just one Sunday or one Wednesday every month. We want the kids to have familiar faces and be excited to grow in their faith. If you are interested or know someone that is please email me at schambers@firstunitedmethodist.com. Thank you and Blessings,

Easter Egg Hunt March 28



We will be having our egg hunt the Wednesday before Easter at the church from 6:00 to 6:30 on the 28th of March. The younger ones will be outside (weather permitting) and the older ones will be doing a scavenger hunt type of egg hunt. If you would like to donate candy please do so by Wednesday March 21st. Thank you.

Elementary Retreat Asbury Woods, March 9-11

Katrina and Abby will be teaching kids about the superheroes of the Bible March 9th-11th. Of course it is at our beautiful Asbury Woods. The cost is \$10-\$25. The retreat costs roughly \$25 a person but if you cannot pay that, there are different options. Registration starts at 6 on Friday and pick up is Sunday at 3. Come out and have a great time learning about the Heroes of the Bible! For more information please contact Katrina Burgess at 304-416-0303 or Abby Chaffins at 304-710-9344.

Now Hiring Children's Ministry Helper



Do you know someone who is good with children and is looking for a couple of hours of work each week? We are looking for someone to work with our children's ministry. They will have responsibilities to show up every Sunday and Wednesday, help with KFC, children's church, and the nursery. Experience working with children is a plus! Must pass a background check. If you know someone who would be a perfect fit please email Schauna at schambers@firstunitedmethodist.com and she will get an application for you.

Let the Little Children Come

By Jane Morse

When our son, Nathan, turned four, Barbara Pafford asked Jerry and me to take over the K4-5 class from her. Reluctantly, we said yes, because we had never taught Sunday School. But, it was only temporary. Well, Nathan is 46 and we are still caring for your 3-5 year olds. Why? Why indeed!

- Because we are still needed in our understaffed nursery department.
- Because children need consistency, a familiar face when they come into the room.
- Because parents need to know that our church cares enough to provide care and Christian education for their little ones.
- Because everyone needs the joy of a preschooler for at least one hour a week.

Through the years there have been many changes in our nurseries-new rooms, new teachers, new ideas, staff who care deeply and staff who never even visit the rooms. But one thing doesn't change. Our children need us, their church family. Pretty rooms are useless if they are not staffed. Through all our years of nursery work, there has always been a crying need for volunteers and dependable paid workers. Today, the need is even greater. Our blessing of babies requires a blessing of caregivers. Our young families need to know that we (all ages) care for them with more than smiles.

Volunteer! It's great fun!

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Senior Pastor,
Mark Conner

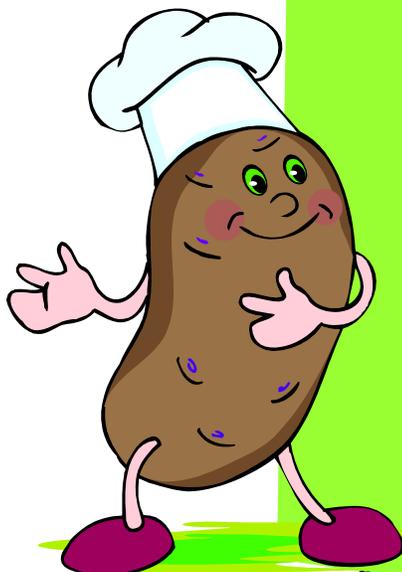
Associate Pastor
Stephen Hensley

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 April 3

**Baked Potato Bar Lunch To Benefit Ebenezer
Community Outreach Center**



**Cost: \$5.00
per person**

**First United Methodist Church
Fellowship Hall**

**March 18
Noon—1:30**

**Enjoy delicious
baked potatoes
with all the top-
pings and help
Ebenezer
Outreach Center.**

Sponsored by the FUMC Men's Group