

Newsletter of the
First United Methodist Church
Huntington WV

December 2018

The Thanksgiving celebrations are over for another year. This year, Advent does not begin on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Even though we have an “extra” week, I am feeling like I am already behind—and Advent hasn’t even started. The commercial world of a secular holiday time wants us to be busy with shopping, cooking, entertaining, and spending, while the church is asking us to watch and wait, to find an inner grace and peace that prepares us to receive the gift God shares with us. We feel torn between the hectic hurry around us and the call to reflect on the holy ways of light and love.

Ann Weems is a favorite poet of mine. Like the psalmist of old, she has a spiritual ability to put into words what my heart wants to say. In writing this article, I read again some of her poems in *Kneeling in Bethlehem*. Her poem, “In Search of Our Kneeling Places,” reminds me of the faithful work in the midst of my busyness.

In each heart lies a Bethlehem,
an inn where we must ultimately answer
whether there is room or not.
When we are Bethlehem-bound
we experience our own advent in his.
When we are Bethlehem-bound
we can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars
nor hearing angel voices.
This Advent let’s go to Bethlehem
and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.
In the midst of shopping sprees
let’s ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts
In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,
let’s listen for the brush of angels’ wings.
This Advent, let’s go to Bethlehem
and find our kneeling places.



Advent comes each year as a time of active waiting. Waiting can be hard work. Advent is a time of preparation not just for Christmas Eve worship or opening gifts on Christmas Day. It is a time of looking for Christ to come to us and among us. We are Bethlehem-bound. That isn’t just about “Christ will come again.” It is also about recognizing how Christ comes among us all the time.

I don’t know what Christ has in store for us this Advent. But I do trust that it is something very special and holy. We move through these four weeks, watching, waiting, hoping. We seek the loving and amazing presence of Christ to help us grow as disciples, to help us discover in ever-deeper ways what it means to be and live as a Child of God. The light of the Advent Wreath grows brighter as the presence, power, and love of Christ are revealed to us. We journey to Bethlehem and find our kneeling places. May your Advent waiting be a time of growth in hope, peace, joy, and love.

Blessed Journey,
Mark

Celebrate Christmas

Choral Union Concert December 2

Choral Union (a musical group composed of Marshall University students and community members) and Musical Arts Guild will present their winter concert here in the sanctuary of First UMC on Sunday, December 2 at 3:00 pm. The concert will feature choral selections; Lincoln Brass; and Dr. Johan Botes, organ. Debbie Bradley is the director of the Choral Union/MAG. A reception will follow the concert in our Fellowship Hall.

Your help is needed as we share our First Church hospitality with our community. Greeters are needed inside and at outside at church entrances. Help will be needed in set-up and care for the reception. Please help us show the community our wonderful congregation and building.



Worship Opportunities on Christmas Eve

4:00 pm

Christmas Eve worship in the Sanctuary. This service will be children and family friendly. Carols and scripture readings will be offered as we share the story of the Nativity. Candles will be lit as we sing *Silent Night*, *Holy Night* and show the Light of Christ which has come into the world.

11:00 pm

Traditional Christmas Eve worship in the Sanctuary. This service will include scripture readings that tell the Nativity story, a short sermon, Holy Communion, and the sharing of our Christmas candle lights as we sing *Silent Night*, *Holy Night*. The service will end as Christmas Day begins.



Sanctuary Choir Presents A Service of Lessons and Carols

A Service of Lessons and Carols will be presented during the 10:45 morning worship service on Sunday, December 23. The service features scripture readings of the season along with anthems and carols. Sandee Folsom will prepare the choir and serve as organist. Lincoln Brass will again be with us to accompany the choir and lead us in carol singing. Please be sure you are present for that worship service as the choir shares their musical gifts with us.

Children's Musical Set for December 12

You'll be ready to rock in the Christmas season with the children of the church as they present "Carol and the Belles" on Wednesday evening, December 12th at 6pm in the fellowship hall. If you're there, you'll see 25 of the cutest 50's-era kids you've ever seen! No one can tell the Christmas story quite like children, so make sure you're there to get "all the feels" for this one-time performance that's sure to put your Christmas season on the right track. For more information see Debbie's Notes on the Children and Youth page.



Cards For Former Pastors

You may want to send Christmas greetings to our former pastors. Their addresses are:

Edna Brooks
112 Bradley Foster Dr.
Huntington WV 25701

Frank Bourner
PO Box 1025
Creedmoor, NC 27522

Dorcas and Tim Conrad
164 Edgewood Dr.
Weston, WV 26452

David and Janice Erenrich
21601 O'Toole Dr.
Hagerstown, MD 21742

Jane Ellen Nickell
246 Grandview Avenue
Meadville, PA 16335

Paul and Verna Russell
PO Box 185
254 Summers St.
Elizabeth, WV 26143

Christmas in Nicaragua

This year's mission trip to Nicaragua is December 27 to January 2. A group of West Virginia United Methodists will travel to Sandino, Nicaragua to distribute food, school uniforms and other necessities to approximately 350 families surrounding the Moravian church in Sandino. Other necessities are medicines and supplies for the health clinic and the sewing mission of the church.

If you can help with this mission, please donate to First United Methodist Church with Nicaragua on the memo line.

Around the Church

As we prepare for the Advent and Christmas seasons, we give thanks for our beautiful church facility. We are so very blessed.

In early January, Bovard Stained Glass Studio will return to the church to continue their work of restoration and care of our stained glass windows. The stained glass of the dome has been taken apart, cleaned, and put back into a new structure. The glass panels will be reinstalled in the dome. Work will be done on the three major windows to repair cracks, clean, and re-glue the individual stained glass pieces. Once that work is complete, new protective safety glass and frames will be installed on the exterior of the windows. The oval stained glass "sky light" in the back of the sanctuary will be lowered so the stained glass can be cleaned and repaired.

Work on painting, carpet, window blinds and lights in our nurseries and toddler areas is progressing and should be completed soon.

We give thanks that our endowments have allowed all this work to be completed. We celebrate those who have gone before us who remembered the future work of the church through their wills and estates. Please remember that you, too, may leave a legacy for the future of First Church by remembering the congregation as you prepare your will or plan your estate.

Church Finances

We appreciate your support of our Consecration Sunday. Since that day, we have received giving estimates of \$355,553 from 75 giving units toward the 2019 General Budget of the Church (which is an increase over 2018 estimates). If you have not yet made your commitment, then please fill out a card (they are located on the table in the back of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall) and turn them in through the offering or mail them to the church office. We still have a way to go in order to underwrite our budget needs for 2019. The Finance Committee is working to finalize a church budget for 2019.

The end of our fiscal year is rapidly approaching. We ask that you pay attention to your yearly giving and help us by completing your 2018 commitment. Through the end of October, we have been able to pay \$80,000 of our current year's Fair Share (which supports the work we do with other United Methodist Churches for mission and ministry locally, conference wide, and globally). That is 79% of our total Fair Share commitment. We need your gifts in support of the church budget to help us care for our local expenses as well as our congregation's mission support through our Fair Share. Thank you for your generous care.

MU Campus Ministry Looking for United Methodist Graduates

United Methodist Campus Ministry at MU is compiling a list of United Methodist church members who attended or graduated from Marshall University. Campus Ministry is considered a mission of the UMC, and your support and interest in the ministry is appreciated. Students from the ministry traveled to North Carolina during the Thanksgiving break to assist residents affected by Hurricane Florence. They will return during their Christmas break. As the students are maturing, they are looking for ways to be of service. Valuable activities are available.

If you are a former student at MU, please email Pam McCoy with your name, address, phone/email, class year, major, degree(s). Your reply is appreciated. Please email to pamelamccoy64@gmail.com.

It's Cookie Time!



It is time for our annual Cookie Walk. On **Sunday, December 16**, immediately after morning worship, you will have the opportunity to stock up on yummy Christmas

cookies and other goodies. But don't be late. They will be gone in a miraculous 20 minutes.

How does this happen? If we have lots of volunteer cookie bakers, it is very little work for all. So, all you good

cooks out there, dig out your favorite holiday recipes and bake up a 6-dozen batch of goodies. Then, bring them on December 16, pick up an empty box and fill it with a wide variety of everybody else's cookies. After you fill your box it is weighed and you pay \$6.00 a pound. All proceeds go to the Missions of United Methodist Women.

Pecans: The United Methodist Women have fresh pecans (pieces and halves) for sale for \$11/pound. You can find them in the fellowship hall. These are from this year's crop and perfect for your Christmas baking!



Brrrrr! Don't forget the Mitten Tree! Bring warmth to those who need it by filling the mitten tree with hats, mittens and scarves. They will be distributed to those in need at Cridlin and Ebenezer.

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...

Bobby Adkins, Randy Adkins, Dawn Aikin, Jason Anderson, Drew Apgar, Pris Beard, Kenny Berry, Mary Berry, Faye Brangham, Cyndi Bright, Mark Brookover, Jeanne Burford, Carolyn Cummings, Dorothy Cutright, Mary Jo Danford, David Daugherty, Leona Davis, Samantha Davis, Carl Dilley, Jeanette Dorsey, Scott Drown, Betty Duke, Jack Eblin, Meghan Elkins, Sue Furbee, Bob Ganzer, Grace Hammond, Ginny Lee Hastings, Dick Hensley, Christi Holley, Johnny Jackson, Nancy Kincade, Timothy Lee, Gil & Sally Lester, Claire McClure, James May, Cheryl Mossman, Barbara Pafford, Jocelyn Page, Nancy Palmer, Christine Phipps, Sharon Riley, Kaysen Rose, Charlotte Tallman, Bobby Thacker, Wyatt Weeks, Jean White

For those beginning a new life together...

John Archambault and Amanda Nichols who were married on November 17

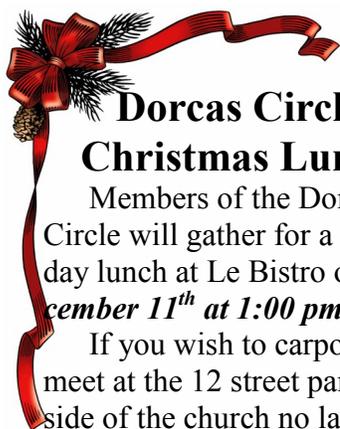
For those experiencing the waters of baptism...

Avett Cole Bannon, son of Ashleigh Bailey Bannon and Steven Dyer baptized on November 25

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



12/1	Trinity Casto
12/4	Jennifer Niemann
12/5	Andrew Canterbury Grace Gooding Joseph Eddins, III
12/6	Susan Wylie
12/7	Leah O'Roark Elizabeth Sergent Steven Powers
12/8	Joey Bacon
12/10	John Baker Missy Young Robin Mankins Ben Chiles Allie Bright
12/11	Jonathan Bartram Carter Matthews
12/12	Richard Drown Wesley Tebbetts Samuel Archer
12/13	Jack Eblin
12/17	Paige Cruz Tyler Cummings
12/18	Jack Welch Molly Sergent Brooks Anderson
12/19	Derek Barker Quentin Neighborgall
12/20	Ken Bannon
12/21	Joyce Ray Marie Archambault Kristy Coleman-Burgess Caleb Morgan Conner Smith
12/22	Pam McCoy Mel Cummings IV
12/23	Linda Eddins Katherine Reid Elise Hager Vivian Yoost August Cooke IX
12/25	Kevin Dillon
12/27	Geneva Shanholtzer
12/28	Brenda Tanner John Young Jolie Eddins



Dorcas Circle

Christmas Lunch

Members of the Dorcas Circle will gather for a holiday lunch at Le Bistro on **December 11th at 1:00 pm.**

If you wish to carpool meet at the 12 street parking side of the church no later than 12:45.

Please let Alice Stone (304-525-1729) or Betsy Grandstaff (304-840-9627) know if you plan to attend.

Men's Group News

by Bob Ganzer

Saturday December 8th is the next Men's Breakfast. Our speaker will be Ken Bannon. Ken and his wife, Jeanette, were involved in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade this year. They were part of the team that helped get the people dressed in their character costumes.

Last month we heard from Les Shanholtzer and his experiences on board the navy ship Robinson. I am always looking around our congregation for ideas for programs and I have my sights on a couple of members.

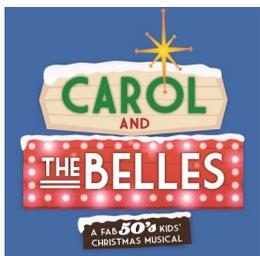
So come out on the 8th for breakfast and to hear what Ken has to say about the Big Apple and the parade.

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.

Notes from Debbie



The year is 1954. The location is Big Bill's Drive-In. The menu is burgers, fries and shakes. And we just can't wait any

longer for Christmas to come!!

Dig out your poodle skirts and saddle oxfords so you'll be ready to rock in the Christmas season with the children of the church as they present "Carol and the Belles" on Wednesday evening, December 12th at 6pm in the fellowship hall. (Better make your dinner reservation early!). If you're there, you'll see 25 of the cutest 50's-era kids you've ever seen! And you might even see some of the "pillars of the church" up on the stage, as well. No one can tell the Christmas story quite like children, so make sure you're there to get "all the feels" for this one-time performance that's sure to put your Christmas season on the right track.

AND... just to make it a bit more fun, a fabulous prize will be awarded to the person in the best 50's costume or

the person with the best 50's memorabilia. So dig through your attic and join us for 50's Fun on Wednesday, December 12th! We'll also be trying to raise some money for one of our children's charities, so bring a full wallet.

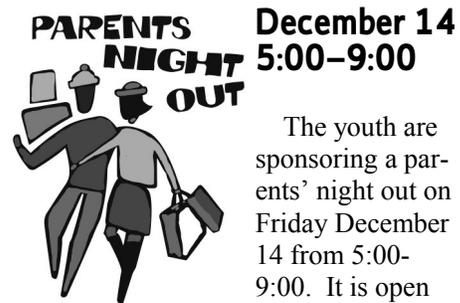
Choir Parents

Thanks SO MUCH for your awesome singing on Thanksgiving Sunday!! It was very impressive and seeing young families participate in worship was truly inspiring!

Here's our December schedule:

December 9 Sing and Dress Rehearsal: We sing for 10:45 service on the 9th. Susan Nickels will have a snack lunch for all of us after church (bring a \$ donation) and then help get your child in costume for the dress rehearsal, which begins at 1:00 and ends at 2:30.

December 12: On the night of the program, children should meet upstairs in the choir room by 5:30 to get dressed. After both the dress rehearsal and performance, we could use your help getting all the costumes properly hung up and stored. Jeanette and Ken Bannon do a tremendous job with our costumes and sound, but they can use our help.



The youth are sponsoring a parents' night out on Friday December 14 from 5:00-9:00. It is open for children ages 2 years old to 5th grade. The cost is \$20 for the first child and \$10 for each additional child.

Bring your children, have a date night out, date night in, go shopping, or just watch some TV uninterrupted. You know you want to!!! The kids will be doing Christmas crafts, eating pizza, playing games and watching The Star, the Christmas movie.

Reservations are required. A reservation sheet can be found on the table in the back of the sanctuary. All proceeds go toward the 2019 youth mission trip. See Schauna for more information.

Getting Involved with Our Children

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation while we are updating the downstairs nursery and Sunday school rooms. The end is near, and with that we are making preparations to getting everything ready for a new start.

We are looking for people who will be willing to help out once a month during Sunday school, Second Service, or Wednesday Nights. This is a need that must be met and a way that you can get involved in our children's faith life; you will never be doing it by yourself when you choose to get involved.

Our children's ministry is growing, and our Wednesday night program will have to be split into 2 different age groups starting in January because of the number of children we have.

There is a place for you to help out in this ministry and we are excited with what is happening for our children. If you want to be involved in this exciting time and are willing to donate an hour of your time a month, please let Schauna know.

Youth Christmas Party December 8

The annual Youth Christmas Party will be at Schauna's house on Saturday, December 8th from 5:00-7:30.

White Elephant
Gift Exchange



Please bring a gift if you would like to participate in the White Elephant gift game. Please do not spend anything more than \$15.

There will be food, games, and a prize for the most festive dressed!

Confirmation Class/ Mentors 2019

If you know of any youth that would be interested in going through confirmation class 2019 and become a member of the church, please let Schauna Chambers know. The class will begin in March.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, the duties will be a little different. The focus is on building a relationship with the youth you are mentoring. You will come to the first class to meet your youth, reaching out and building a relationship outside of the class, coming to the last class, and being there for confirmation Sunday if your schedule allows it. Please see Schauna if you are interested in participating in this awesome time for the youth.

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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 January 2

**Merry
Christmas**