



NEWS AT

first

Monthly
Newsletter
of
First United
Methodist
Church

OCTOBER 2025

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Note from our Lead Pastors

A Holy Jubilee!

Dear Friends,

Occasionally, God blesses us with a moment that feels almost too good to be true—a moment so full of joy that it can only be described as how David articulated it, “my cup runneth over” (Psalm 23:5). October brings us just such a moment at First United Methodist Church.

After years of dreaming, building, giving, and praying, we are thrilled to announce that our debt of over \$3 million has been fully paid off from the building expansion and renovations. That’s right—every single dollar! What once felt like a mountain has been moved by faith, perseverance, and God’s abundant provision.

Think of the story we now carry: a congregation who stepped out in boldness to create sacred space, who weathered challenges, who gave and gave again—not for themselves alone, but for the generations to come. And now, we are free. Free from debt. Free to dream anew. Free to listen more deeply for how God is calling us to serve our community and world.

And every freedom deserves a celebration! On Sunday, October 12 at 9:45 am in the Gathering Space, we will gather for a holy party as we burn the note together. Picture it: the very paper that once represented millions of dollars in obligation turning to smoke and ash, rising toward heaven as a fragrant offering of gratitude. What a sight it will be!

This isn’t just a financial milestone—it’s a spiritual one. It’s a living testimony that with God, all things are possible. It’s a reminder that faithfulness over time bears fruit. And it’s an invitation to step boldly into the next chapter of ministry, with our hands and hearts open to wherever the Spirit leads.

So, mark your calendars, bring your joy, and come ready to celebrate! Let’s lift our voices, clap our hands, maybe even bust a groove, as we say together: “Look what the Lord has done!” (Psalm 66:5)

With overflowing gratitude and joy,

Revs. Justin and Melissa Lowe

Justin & Melissa

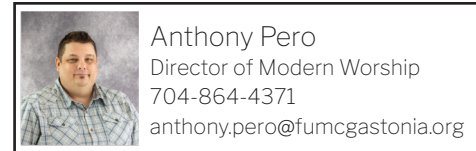


Rev. Justin Lowe
Lead Pastor of Worship, Care and Administration
704-864-4371
justin.lowe@fumcgastonia.org



Rev. Melissa Lowe
Lead Pastor of Connection, Mission and Outreach
704-864-4371
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Worship Arts Ministry



This Month in Worship, join us at any of our worship services on Sunday:

8:45 am - Modern

9:00 am - Relaxed Traditional

11:00 am - Traditional

October 5 - We celebrate World Communion Sunday as we are reminded that we are connected to the world-wide Church. We affirm this in our Creeds - one holy and apostolic church.

October 12 - This Sunday we will be celebrating as a church that we are debt free! Don't forget at 9:45 am we will join together as a church in the Gathering Space to burn the mortgage note. What a gift this will be!

October 19 - It's Laity Sunday! History records that the first Laity Sunday was in 1929 in the Methodist Episcopal Church South. This day is set aside to celebrate a reality that we practice 24/7 - that all believers have gifts to use to serve in the body of Christ. It is a recognition of the relationship. John Crane, our Church Council Chairperson and Western North Carolina Annual Conference Lay Leader, will be preaching in all services. At our Traditional Worship Service at 11:00 am, our Lay Leaders will announce our Lay Servant of the Year award.

October 26 - We begin our new Sermon Series - Is Anyone Out There? During this series will explore together the spiritual resources available to help us with some of the biggest needs in life - Facing Big Decisions, Navigating Grief, Coping with Change, Overcoming Apathy, and the Grip of Anxiety.



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH GASTONIA

Join Us!
Sunday
WORSHIP

TIME

Modern Worship	8:45 AM
Relaxed Traditional	9 AM
Traditional	11 AM

Children's Ministry



Margaret Petrey Smith
Director of Children's Ministries
704-864-4371
margaret.smith@fumcgastonia.org

Greetings, Church Family!

Fall Fest 2025 is almost here! It's our annual night of family, fun and fellowship! We are looking for volunteers to help us with candy, hosting games, as well as setup and breakdown. Would you consider serving in these areas? Contact me at margaret.smith@fumcgastonia.org.

Also, FISH - First In Serving Him - is gathering for our monthly fellowship on Sunday, October 26 at the Wesley Center from 5-7:30 p.m. Bring your 4th and 5th graders for off-campus adventure!

Yay, God!

- Margaret



Preschool



Rebecca Denton
Director of Preschool
704-864-5188
rebecca@fumcgastonia.org

We are beyond grateful for the joyful start to our new school year! Thank you to our preschool families for sharing your wonderful children with us. We feel truly blessed to be part of such a supportive community. In our first month, we explored themes that reminded us how God created each of us to be special and unique. The children enjoyed learning about the letters M – Me, F – Family, and N – Name. Each week, they also joined Ms. Margaret in Chapel, where they sang, prayed, and learned more about God’s love. Our teachers also had the privilege of attending a luncheon with guest speaker Meredith Dangel, who shared practical ways to make our classrooms more inclusive and to encourage empathy for every child. Thank you again for your continued support. We look forward to all that God has in store for this exciting year ahead!

- Rebecca



Youth Ministry



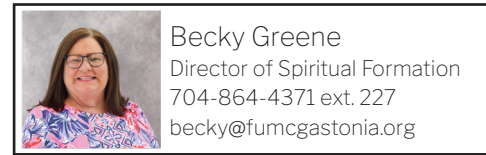
Hollie Luther
Director of Youth Ministries
704-864-4371
hollie.luther@fumcgastonia.org

We are so grateful for the many ways our youth can get involved in ministry here at First! Check out the calendar for events happening this month. If you are interested in volunteering or would like to learn more, send an email to hollie.luther@fumcgastonia.org.

- Hollie

YOUTH AT FIRST CALENDAR							OCTOBER 2025
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
			1 WEDNESDAY EVENING MEET UP 5:30-7:30	2	3 MID-HI FALL RETREAT	4	
5 Sr-Hi Youth sunday school 10am	6	7	8 WEDNESDAY EVENING MEET UP 5:30-7:30	9	10	11	
12 SUNDAY SCHOOL 10AM YOUTH HANDBELLS 4PM YOUTH CHOIR 4:45 SUNDAY EVENING MEET UP 5:30-7:30	13	14	15 WEDNESDAY EVENING MEET UP 5:30-7:30	16	17 SR-HI BEACH RETREAT	18	
19 Mid-Hi Youth sunday school 10am Confirmation Sunday School 10am	20	21	22 FALL FEST	23	24	25 CONFIRMATION DAY RETREAT	
26 SUNDAY SCHOOL 10AM YOUTH HANDBELLS 4PM YOUTH CHOIR 4:45 SUNDAY EVENING MEET UP 5:30-7:30	27	28	29 WEDNESDAY EVENING MEET UP 5:30-7:30	30	31		
Confirmation Mid-Hi Youth All youth Sr-Hi Youth							

Adult Discipleship Ministry



Recent events in our country plus the anniversary of September 11 caused some anxiety for me as I headed up the mountain. A dear spiritual friend sent me this message: "Everyone going loves you and knows someone else going that they love; It will be amazing to be together and worship." These refreshing words filled my spirit and lifted my soul. And indeed, the weekend was amazing!

Fifty-five women focused on the theme "You Are God's Masterpiece" from Ephesians 2:10. Rev. Palmer Cantler reminded us that God is making a masterpiece. He is shaping our souls and moving where we can't see. Bishop Debra Wallace Padgett (Holson Conference) reminded us to actively choose love, civility and compassion in how we speak, how we act and how we treat one another. The world needs Christians who embody Christ's reconciling love.

The story of scripture is still being written, and we are involved in it. The gift is salvation, and our response is to live accordingly. Wouldn't it be good to see ourselves through the creator's eyes? I imagine it to be like children's artwork. Everything hangs on the refrigerator door in heaven!

- Becky

Cathryn Beasley

"The weekend at Lake Junaluska was exactly what I needed. To be in community with my people, sisters in Christ in God's country...so peaceful, so relaxing and most of all, so Spirit-filled."



Friends On The Go

Annual Fall Leaf Trip

Join us on October 21 for a time of lunch, laughter and listening! We'll leave from the covered driveway to spend the day in Beech Mountain, NC at the home of Barbara Warlick.

Register with Stephanie Sholtzes at stephanie.s@fumcgastonia.org.



Sunday Adult Small Groups



Parent Network

How do we cherish relationships with our children as they grow and mature? This time of dinner, devotion and dialogue will help answer those questions. Join us on Sunday, October 26 in the Family Life Center from 6-7:30 p.m. with guest McKenzie Wheeler, counselor.



Monday Adult Small Groups



Mahjong Mondays

Play Mahjong, the tile-based game of skill and strategy. On **Sunday, October 5**, learn how to play at our boot camp from 3-5 p.m. in the Family Life Center. Regular weekly play begins on **Monday, October 6** from **7-8:30 p.m.** in the Family Life Center.

To sign-up, send an email to stephaniebelliott@gmail.com.

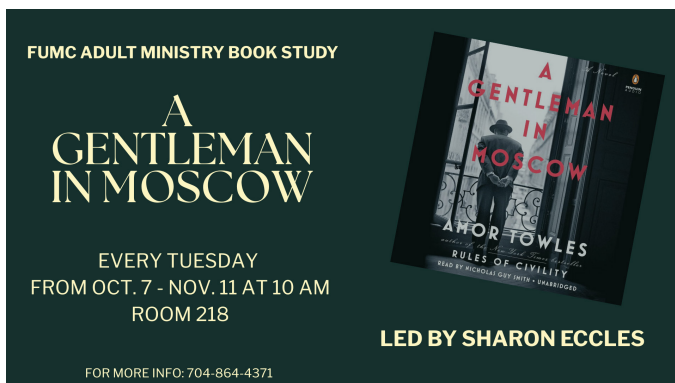


Interfaith Trialogue

Join us for our monthly gathering of Christians, Muslims and Jews, as we discuss what we have in common.

Our next meeting is **Monday, October 20, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.** at Queen of the Apostles in Belmont. Address is 503 N Main St, Belmont, NC 28012.

Tuesday Adult Small Groups



A Gentleman in Moscow

Join us for month-long book study of *A Gentleman in Moscow*. We'll meet each Tuesday from October 7 – November 11 at 10 a.m. in Room 218. Sharon Eccles will lead our group.

DEMENTIA CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Providing support and practical tips for caregivers dealing with loved ones with cognitive issues.

Next Meeting
Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2025
4 pm
FUMC Room 218

Check out the link below:
<https://teepasnow.com/>

Dementia Caregiver Support Group

Join our dementia caregiver support group meeting on October 28 at 4 p.m. in room 218. This group will provide support and tips for caregivers dealing with loved ones who have cognitive issues.

Wednesday Adult Small Groups

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

KNITTING SHAWLS THAT BRING COMFORT TO OTHERS IN TIME OF NEED

JOIN US

Wednesdays @ 4:30 PM

FUMC Gathering Space Lobby

Yarn, needles, hooks,
and patterns are provided

For more info, text Joy Owens at 704-860-1486

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Each Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. in the Gathering Space lobby, knitters and crocheters come together to make comfort items for members of our church family affected by illness. Yarn, knitting needles, crochet hooks, and patterns are provided. Text Joy Owens at 704-860-1486 to learn more.

WEDNESDAY SMALL GROUPS



Holding On & Letting Go:
Faithful Parenting for Empty Nesting

OCTOBER 1, 8, 15 & 29
NOVEMBER 5 & 12
6:30 - 7:30 PM

3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

Led by Andy and Lisa Jurs

Holding On & Letting Go

How do parents embrace a new season?

How do parents navigate loving adult children? We'll discuss during this six-week session. Join us on Wednesday evenings in the third floor conference room.

Led by: Andy and Lisa Jurs

PRAYER PAUSE

A Time to Reflect, Reset and Pray

Room 312



WEDNESDAYS
6:30 PM



Men Don't Run in the Rain
Wednesdays at 6:30 PM
Room 316

SABBATH: WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY
A STUDY OF RUTH AND ESTHER

CONVERSATION & CONNECTION

WEDNESDAYS FROM OCT. 15 - NOV. 19
6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

FUMC CHURCH PARLOR

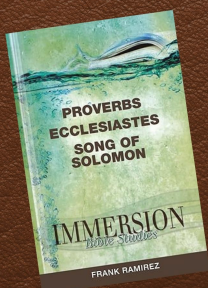
LED BY BETH CHOPLIN

WEF SMALL GROUPS MORNINGS

Ancient Wisdom for an Ultramodern World

Every Wednesday morning
from October 1 - November 12
10 AM
Room 315

LED BY DAVID AND BEE POSTON



Ancient Wisdom for an Ultramodern World

In a world driven by social media, we all need perspective. We'll spend seven weeks discussing how Proverbs and Ecclesiastes still speak to the world. Join us each Wednesday at 10 a.m. in Room 315.

Thursday Adult Small Groups

EMBRACE

12 Daring Women of the Bible
Every other Thursday
6:30 PM
Room 218

Embrace - 12 Daring Women of the Bible

This Bible study helps you learn to live through life's failures and successes, draw near to God in a world of trials, find contentment in all circumstances, and much more. Meet us every other Thursday. Upcoming dates: Oct. 9 & Oct. 23

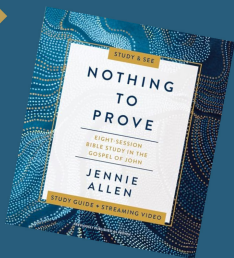
THURSDAY ONLINE SMALL GROUP

Women of the Word

THURSDAYS at 9:30 AM
Meetings held on Zoom

LED BY: MARTI SELL

To sign up, email
martisell01@gmail.com



WOW - Nothing to Prove

This fall study for Women of the Word on Zoom features an exploration through the Gospel of John with the book *Nothing to Prove*. Join us on Thursdays as we receive the good news that Jesus has proven everything! To sign up, email martisell01@gmail.com.

Led by: Marti Sell

FUMC MEN'S SMALL GROUP

Theology on Tap

Keepsake Brewery

October 16 @ 6:30 pm
211 Columbia St
Gastonia, NC 28054

Leader: Patrick McConnell



Theology on Tap

Join us for a time of fellowship and engaging Biblical conversation. Our next gathering is October 16 at 6:30 p.m. at Keepsake Brewery. Led by: Patrick McConnell



Men's Base Camp

On October 23 at 6:30 p.m., the men will enjoy a time of fellowship, faith, food, football and fire pits at 3630 Roxburgh Lane, the home of the Heaths. Let's connect together!

Bruce Tindall Retirement



First United Methodist Church thanks Bruce Tindall for his 13 years as Director of Food Services! We will miss your ministry of hospitality, your delicious food and your winsome personality!

We are grateful to have had you serve the LORD's people through culinary arts and wish you God's best in retirement!

Numbers 6:24-26

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

First UMC Community Health Ministry

Mental Health First Aid Training - Nov. 7 & Nov. 8



Mental Health First Aid is a skills-based training that teaches participants to identify, understand and respond to mental health and substance use challenges. This free training will be held at First UMC on **Friday, Nov. 7** from 6-9 p.m. and **Saturday, Nov. 8**, from 9 am-noon. Both sessions are required. To register, scan the QR code.

You can also reach out to
Hollie Luther at hollie.luther@fumcgastonia.org
or Lisa Marisiddaiah at nurse@fumcgastonia.org.



Raising Awareness

October is **Depression Awareness & Mental Health Screening Month**,
Breast Cancer Awareness Month & Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Available resources:

Hope United Survivor Network: 704-862-6783 or 704-852-6000

Mental Health Screening Website: <https://screening.mhanational.org/>



Lisa Marisiddaiah

First UMC Community
Health Ministry
nurse@fumcgastonia.org

Flu Clinics - Oct. 8 & Nov. 12

First UMC is hosting flu clinics in the Family Life Center on October 8 and November 12 from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

October 8:

- Flu vaccine available for those 12 and older
- Flu shots are free for those with insurance
- Without insurance, cost is \$30 for the low dose flu (under 65) and \$100 for high dose flu (65 years and older)
- COVID shot available to those over 65 years old without a prescription
- COVID vaccine available to those over 18 years old, if they meet criteria

November 12:

- All flu and COVID vaccines offered on October 8 will be available
- Pneumonia and shingles vaccines will also be available



Use QR code to sign up

The Walk To End Alzheimer's Oct. 11

Please consider joining the GSM Team led by FUMC church members, Steven & Janet Long. Scan QR code inside the graphic to register.

Registration at 9 a.m.
Opening Ceremony and Walk at 10 a.m.

Location:
Rotary Centennial Pavilion
107 N. South Street
Gastonia, NC 28052



Veterans Day Luncheon Nov. 10

Join us on Monday, Nov. 10 at 11 a.m. in the First UMC Family Life Center for a free luncheon honoring our veterans.

Captain (Ret.) Larry Thompson and TSgt (Ret.) Michael Dowdle will be our guest speakers.

To register, scan QR code, or go to fumcgastonia.org/events. You can also call 704-864-4371.





Dave Davis
Business Administrator
704-864-4371
ddavis@fumcgastonia.org

Financial Report



E. Marie Revels
Bookkeeper
704-864-4371
marie.revels@fumcgastonia.org

Total spending through August 2025 was \$1,407,678 (\$29,890 less than budget). Total revenue in the same period was \$1,315,789 (\$87,138 more than budget). Consolidated cash flow was \$91,889 negative (Kitchen/Food Service was \$6,376 positive, Preschool was \$2,436 positive, and Church Operations was \$100,701 negative). If you desire additional information please do not hesitate to contact the Church Business Office. Your continued support of our Church is deeply appreciated. FUMC Gastonia is actively carrying out our ministries and missions throughout the year. Please make every effort to make your donations as early as possible during the year. Thank you for being a valued member of First UMC!

- Your Finance Committee

Hands & Feet Missions



Rev. Melissa Lowe
Lead Pastor of Connection, Mission and Outreach
704-864-4371
melissa.lowe@fumcgastonia.org



THANK
YOU!

**You are making a difference for
the children in our community!
Thank you for volunteering!**

We are pleased to announce that all sign-up slots for Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Gaston have been filled. Thank you for your hearts of service to our community!



HONORING OUR VETERANS

If you know a veteran who is resting in our memory garden,
please contact May Robinson at mgr47@icloud.com so we can honor them during our
Friends on the Go: Day of Reflection & Remembrance on Nov. 13. The deadline to contact
May is Nov. 6.



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH DRIVE THRU/DROP-OFF DONATIONS

**SUNDAY, OCT. 12
10 AM - 11 AM
FUMC GATHERING SPACE**

COLLECTING INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED
SNACKS AND DRINKS FOR ROBIN JOHNSON HOSPICE HOUSE

**FOR MORE INFO,
EMAIL STEPHANIE.S@FUMCGASTONIA.ORG**



First UMC is Debt-Free

First United Methodist Church is proud to announce that we are debt-free! Our co-senior pastors and our finance team commemorate the occasion on Wednesday, October 1 with photos and a special celebration. Join us for a church-wide celebration on Sunday, October 12 at 9:45 a.m. in the gathering space!



From left to right: Dave Davis, Larry Brannock, Pastor Melissa, Pastor Justin, Natalie Tindol, John Land, Jr.



Joy and Sympathy:

Joy to:

Price and Katherine Martin on the birth of their son, Myers Lee Martin, who was born on August 26, 2025. Grandparents are David and Lee Martin.

Sympathy to:

Kelly and Philip Myers on the death of Kelly's mother, Winn Lyon Moore, who died on August 24, 2025.

The family and friends of Casey Habich, who died on September 16, 2025.

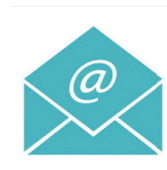
Debbie Ware on the death of her mother, and Joyce Lowery on the death of her sister, Lorene Gribble Bumgarner, who died on September 23, 2025.



Minister on Call Schedule

*To reach a Pastor on nights or weekends, please call the church office **704-864-4371** it will direct you to the ext. 247 and you will be forwarded to the minister on call.*

To get a weekly e-blast or a monthly newsletter in your inbox, email ***stephanie.s@fumcgastonia.org***



**JOIN OUR
EMAIL LIST!**

Take Note

Sunday Morning Views & Attendance

Date:	8:45 AM In-Person	8:45 AM Online	9:00 AM In-Person	11:00 AM In Person	11:00 AM Online	In Person Totals
Aug. 31	34	37	48	101	156	183
Sept. 7	45	38	58	166	219	269
Sept. 14	41	44	44	187	134	272
Sept. 21	34	58	40	182	176	256
Sept. 28	33	45	49	156	168	238

* Sept. 14 - Women's Retreat - 55

**For any additions to the newsletter, please submit submissions by
the 15th of the month at**

fumcgastonia.org/resources/communications-promotions-request

Connect with us...

Website: www.fumcgastonia.org

Phone: 704.864.4371

Email: contact@fumcgastonia.org



First United Methodist
Church of Gastonia, NC



FUMCGastonia



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