



News at First

Monthly Newsletter of First United Methodist Church | March 2021



MARCH 28
PALM
SUNDAY



APRIL 1
MAUNDY
THURSDAY



APRIL 2
GOOD
FRIDAY



APRIL 4
EASTER
SUNDAY

Save the Date

IN-PERSON WORSHIP

PALM SUNDAY
MARCH 28



LOOK OUT FOR DETAILS TO COME.



APRIL 2 @ 10:30 A.M.

JOIN US AS WE REMEMBER THE TRUE MEANING OF EASTER BY
PROCESSING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS ON GOOD FRIDAY.



MAUNDY THURSDAY | APRIL 1, 2021

an opportunity for everyone

In-Person communion: Small groups 11 am- 1 pm & 5-7 pm. Sign- up required
by calling the church office or visiting www.fumcgastonia.org/holy-week

Drive-thru 5-7 pm to receive communion or you can pick up the elements and
join virtual communion at 7pm with Rev. Dr. Jim Westmoreland.

Announcement from our *Re-Opening Task Force*

On Thursday evening February 25, The Reopening Task Force of First United Methodist decided to return to in-person worship on Palm Sunday, March 28. As a result of the Governor's updated recommendations, the Bishop and Cabinet of the Western North Carolina Conference issued the following recommendations:

Covid-19 Update for Local Churches

Yesterday, Governor Cooper issued an easing of Covid-19 restrictions. The Bishop and Cabinet remain committed to our biblical mandate to "love our neighbors as ourselves" and our Wesleyan call to "Do no harm. Do all the good we can. Follow the ordinances (stay in love) with God."

We celebrate that percentages of positive test results and hospitalizations continue to show improvement while vaccine distribution increases. However, we are also aware that people across our conference are losing loved ones each day. Thus, we continue to recommend that all local churches and other ministries follow the guidance of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services ([NCDHHS](#)) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) as they make decisions about indoor worship, small groups, and other gatherings.

Using Governor Cooper's [Executive Order No. 195](#) as a guide, the Bishop and Cabinet make these specific recommendations:

- For those churches whose counties are not in the "[red](#)," indoor worship may be considered using a limit of 30% capacity or 250 persons, whichever is less. When determining the number who can safely gather in the sanctuary or worship space, social distancing should be maintained, and masks must be worn. The recommendation for no full-choir or congregational singing remains in effect.
- A 25-person limit should be maintained for all other gatherings inside the church building. Please continue to socially distance and wear masks at these events as well.

As we continue to journey through the season of Lent, may we be mindful of the over 500,000 persons in the United States who have lost their lives during this pandemic and may we keep all of those who mourn their loss in prayer.

Staff and others will meet in the next few days to determine what worship services will be open to in-person and how we will keep our congregation safe. We will get information to you as soon as possible. We ask for your prayers and patience as we determine how to provide safe, responsible, and meaningful worship at FUMC.

COVID-19 Update

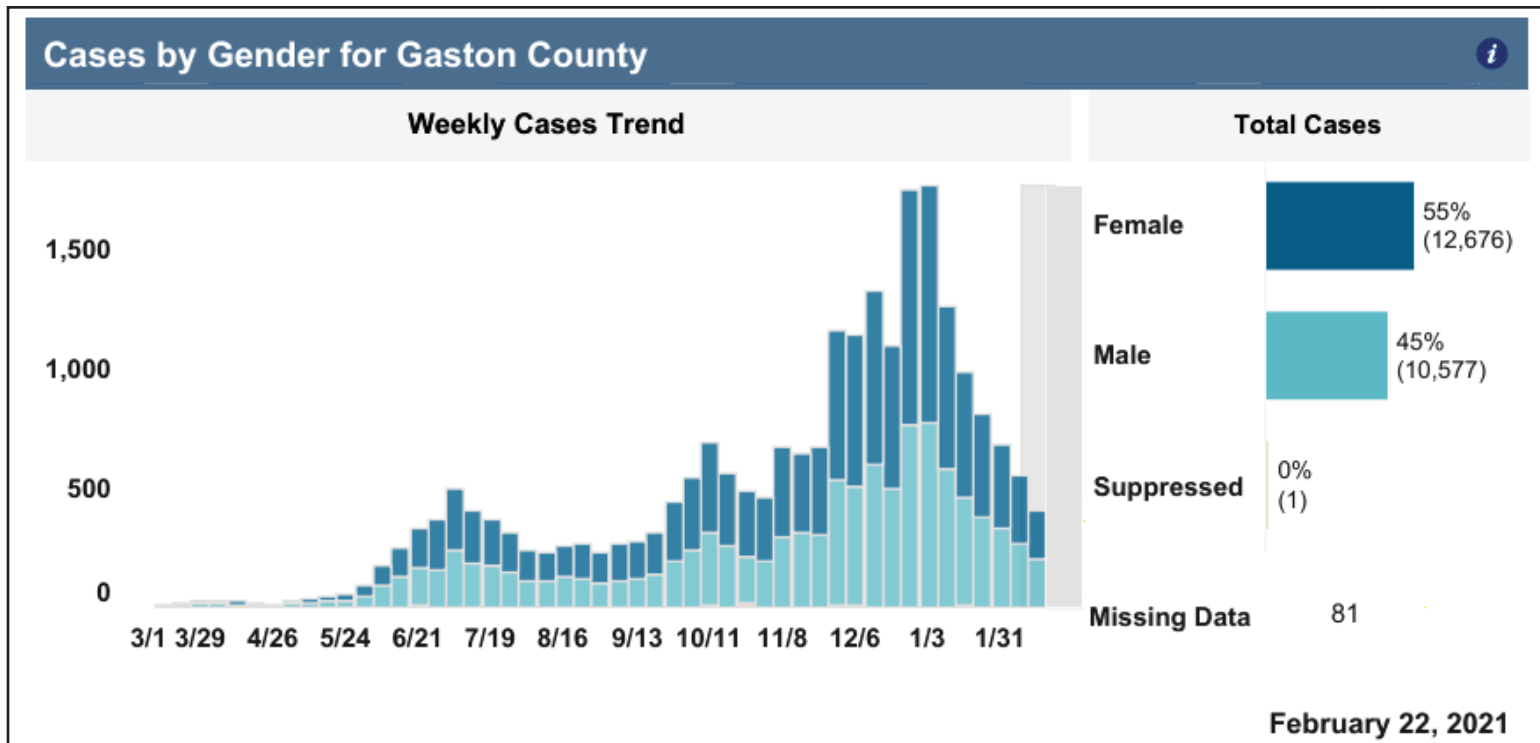
Gaston County COVID-19 Vaccination Doses Administered (Through Feb. 24, 2021):

First Doses Administered: 21,443

Second Doses Administered: 13,888

Percentage First Doses: 9.55%

Percentage Second Doses: 6.19%



WAIT

6 feet apart. Avoid close contact.

@NCDHHS

#StayStrongNC



WASH

your hands or use hand sanitizer.

@NCDHHS

#StayStrongNC



WEAR

a cloth mask over your nose and mouth.

@NCDHHS

#StayStrongNC

Take Note

Minister on Call Schedule

Matthew: 704-750-9126

Tripp: 704-477-7715

Avery: 704-559-9942

March 5-7 - Matthew

March 12-14 - Avery

March 19-21 - Tripp

March 26-28 - Matthew

Sunday Morning Views

Date:	FUMC Views:	162 Views:
Feb. 7	622	418
Feb. 14	566	432
Feb. 21	405	204
Feb. 28	573	261



Please email Amanda to update any of your contact information in our systems.

Amanda@fumcgastonia.org

Sympathy to

- Beth Stanforth and Family on the death of Mike Stanforth.
- Rev. Dr. Jim Westmoreland and Family on the death of Barbara Westmoreland.
- Peggy Pittman and Family on the death of Leroy Pittman.

Joy to

- Allison and Will Windley on the birth of Molly Lynn Windley
- George and Abby Thompson, on the baptism of Augustus Charles Thompson and Audrey Grace Thompson. Grandmother is Beth Stanforth.

Welcome, Rev. Shelton Davis



Shelton is excited to begin work at FUMC as a pastoral counselor for Sanctuary Counseling Group. Shelton is also the Clinical Director for Sanctuary Counseling Group and has an additional office in Belmont. She is a North Carolina Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC), a National Certified Counselor (NCC), and an ordained elder in the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. Prior to working as a pastoral counselor, Rev. Davis was a Board Certified Chaplain (Association of Professional Chaplains) having worked at Gaston Memorial Hospital and Novant Health Huntersville Medical Center.

Learn more about her and Sanctuary Counseling Group at fumcgastonia.org/about-us/staff

FINANCE AND BUDGET UPDATE

First United Methodist Church 2021 Budget			Passed Feb. 16, 2021
	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2021 Budget Based on 2020 Actual
Total Budget Income	\$1,814,941	\$1,646,039	1,589,232
Budget Expenditures			
Conference And District	96%	96%	100%
Total Conference And District	136,147	136,147	131,181
Outreach			
Missions	6,850	3,000	3,000
Outreach	57,351	49,909	49,909
Total Outreach Ministry	64,201	52,909	52,909
Communications/Digital Ministry			
Total Communications/Digital Ministry	12,680	14,148	14,148
Worship Ministry			
Total Traditional Worship	9,150	9,218	9,218
Total 162 East Worship	7,200	4,938	4,938
Total Worship	16,350	14,156	14,156
Total Music	31,250	7,223	7,223
Total Worship & Music Ministry	47,600	21,379	21,379
Educational Ministry			
Total Adult Ministry	34,750	13,492	13,492
Total Children's Ministry	30,500	7,719	7,719
Total Youth and College Ministry	18,350	8,236	8,236
Total Youth Outreach	19,375	5,598	5,598
Total Recreation Ministry	4,700	2,257	2,257
Total Educational Ministry	107,675	37,302	37,302
Nurture Ministry			
Total Nurture Expenses	50,200	35,713	35,713
Total Planning and Stewardship	1,000	839	839
Personnel Expenses (SPRC)			
Total Employee Benefits & Insurance	189,759	159,273	159,273
Total Employee Compensation	917,644	843,385	843,385
Total Personnel	1,107,403	1,002,658	1,002,658
Administrative Expenses			
Total Administrative Expense	134,396	136,095	136,095
Buildings & Grounds Expenses			
Total Buildings And Grounds Expense	242,880	171,952	171,952
Total Assets Ministry	377,276	308,047	308,047
Total Budget Expenses	1,904,182	1,609,142	1,604,176
Surplus / (Deficit)	(89,241)	36,897	(14,944)

“Unprecedented” and “challenging” are staples for describing the last year. During these uncertain times, you continue to faithfully support the mission and ministry of First United Methodist Church. The staff and finance committee continue to work hard managing spending and expenses. We are grateful to everyone for their efforts and support.

The attached spreadsheet gives an overview of our 2020 finances. You will notice that our income (2020 Actual) was \$1,646,039 and expenses were \$1,609,142. This left us with +\$36,897 at the end of the year. That's something to celebrate!

The spreadsheet also provides information on the approved budget for 2021. This budget was predicated on income from 2020, estimate of giving cards received during our stewardship campaign, and an analysis of donors who continue to give but have not turned in an estimate of giving card. Using all this data, coupled with a concern that we will continue to receive a reduced income for 2021, governed the Finance Committee's decision.

We need to remember that most giving has moved to mailed checks and online giving. We no longer receive loose offering or impromptu checks placed in an offering plate. We are also experiencing some attrition as a result of death, moving out of the community, and changing situations due to job loss or reduced income. We also did not receive as many estimate of giving cards as in previous years. This is certainly a result of not meeting in-person or being on campus as in normal times. All these things impact our bottom line.

The final analysis is that we are financially secure and doing well considering everything that has happened. We are looking forward to better times as we continue to move forward. In the meantime, thank you for supporting the mission and ministry of First United Methodist.

Worship Arts Ministry



Susan Lisle
Music Associate
704-864-4371 ext. 237
susan@fumcgastonia.org



Timothy Scruggs
Organist
timothy@fumcgastonia.org



Jim O'Dell
Director of Music Ministries
704-864-4371 ext. 233
jaodell@fumcgastonia.org

Letter from our new Director of Music Ministries, Jim O'Dell

It's not easy condensing the first month as your new music director into a couple of paragraphs, but I'll give it a shot:

First, it is an extraordinary honor to be a part of one of the Western North Carolina's premier churches and music programs. The congregation, staff, and extraordinary volunteers at First have been welcoming, helpful, and loving. I have had a blessed start, and am so very grateful! I am also grateful to our Senior Minister, Matthew Burton, for having the vision, and faith in me, that he had when I was hired at Central UMC, Monroe 15 years ago.

I understand how proud you all are of First's extensive, and varied music program. This would have been a much different learning period for me without the unconditional, and enthusiastic help from your Associate Director of Music – Susan Lisle. She has been by my side every step of the way and, because of her, the music program has weathered, and even prospered, through the restrictions of the pandemic. I am blessed to be her colleague!

The volunteer musician base at First is one of the most talented, and dedicated that I have ever seen. It is heartbreaking for me that we will still have to wait to safely meet in person, but, It will happen! Many thanks go to James Smith and his son, Jim Jr. for taking on the immense job of filming, compiling, and editing the over 100 videos being assembled for Palm Sunday and Easter. I know, with God's blessing, that what you see on your screen will be an accurate representation of the life, beauty, and spirit of the resurrection.

Thank you all so much for sharing this beautiful house of worship with me and allowing me to call it, and you, home. God is good. All the time!

Now, back to my continued unpacking.

Jim



Worship Online
WITH US
SUNDAY!

JOIN US ON OUR WEBSITE
OR OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

162 EAST- 8:45AM
TRADITIONAL- 11:00AM



DOWNLOAD THE BOXCAST APP



SEARCH FOR:
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday worship online:

Facebook.com/FUMCgastonia

Facebook.com/162East

Fumcgastonia.org/worship/view-services

 MARCH 28 PALM SUNDAY	 APRIL 1 MAUNDY THURSDAY	 APRIL 2 GOOD FRIDAY	 APRIL 4 EASTER SUNDAY
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Parish Nurse Ministry



Lisa Marisiddaiah
Parish Nurse
nurse@fumcgastonia.org

Spring Cleaning & Safety event

FREE SHREDDING AND MORE

SATURDAY, MARCH 13 @ 10 AM - 1 PM

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

190 E FRANKLIN BLVD. GASTONIA, NC 28052

- You can bring up to 3 boxes of paper per person to shred.
- COVID-19 vaccination education provided
- Assistance with registration to receive the vaccine.
- Free Personal Protective Equipment (masks, face shields, etc..)
- Medicine Take-Back (Expired prescription and over the counter medications will be collected and safely disposed of).

Sponsored by:
Gastonia Parish Nurse Ministry
in partnership with **Humana**

Humana



Do you know if YOU are eligible to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine?

To date...the following individuals are eligible to receive the vaccine, based on state guidelines:

Group 1- Health Care Workers and Long-term Care Staff & Residents

Group 2- Anyone 65 years or older

Group 3- March 10- NC will move to additional frontline essential workers (see illustration)

3 Frontline Essential Workers

Group 3: The goal is to protect those at high risk of exposure.

Frontline essential workers are people who:

- Must be in-person at their place of work
- Work in one of the eight essential sectors listed below*

Critical Manufacturing	Education	Essential Goods	Food and Agriculture
Including for example: • Workers manufacturing medical supplies, medical equipment or PPE • Workers manufacturing products needed for food and agricultural supply chains	Including for example: • Child care staff** • K-12 teachers and support staff** • College and university instructors and support staff	Including for example: • Workers in stores that sell groceries and medicine	Including for example: • Meat packing workers • Food processing workers • Farm workers • Migrant farm/fishery workers • Food distribution and supply chain workers • Restaurant workers
Government and Community Services	Health Care and Public Health	Public Safety	Transportation
Including for example: • U.S. Postal Service and other shipping workers • Court workers • Elected officials • Clergy • Homeless shelter staff • Veterinarians and veterinarian staff	Including for example: • Public health workers • Social workers	Including for example: • Firefighters and EMS • Law enforcement • Corrections workers • Security officers • Public agency workers responding to abuse and neglect	Including for example: • Public transit workers • Division of Motor Vehicles workers • Transportation maintenance and repair technicians • Workers supporting highway infrastructure

FREE COVID-19 TESTING by Kintegra Health

First Presbyterian: MARCH 8 @ 10am - 2pm

FUMC: March 22 @ 10am - 2pm

Pre-registration is highly recommended by calling 704-874-3316.

**This does NOT require a physician referral*



Learning to Swim in a World That is Treading Water:

Self-Care in the Wake of a Pandemic
March 9, 2021, 12pm-1pm

<https://zoom.us/j/96272696755?pwd=dnBTMThtRVGtqTmlVRGh5JlVpQnRldz09>

Presented by: Garry Crites, PhD
Executive Director of National Alliance on Mental Illness

SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISH
CREATING YOUR OWN PERSONAL CARE PLAN

Women's Event

PRESENTED BY GASTONIA PARISH NURSE MINISTRY

FOR THE WOMEN OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST & FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES OF GASTONIA *and friends*

MARCH 18, 2021 @ 6:30 - 8:00 P.M.



WELCOME GUEST PRESENTERS:

STEFANIE PETYAK JESTER
MA, LMFT, CSAT

KIM LEPPERT
MSW, LCSW, CSAT



A SELF-CARE GIFT BAG, A CHARCUTERIE BOX, AND A BEVERAGE WILL BE PROVIDED IN ADVANCE TO THE FIRST 100 WOMEN THAT SIGN UP BY WEDNESDAY, **MARCH 10TH!**

SIGN UP AT FUMCGASTONIA.ORG/MINISTRIES/PARISH-NURSE TO RECEIVE THE ZOOM LINK

More information at fumcgastonia.org/ministries/parish-nurse

Children's Ministry



Kristi McClellan
Director of Children's Ministries
& Weekday Preschool
kristi@fumcgastonia.org

DONATIONS NEEDED

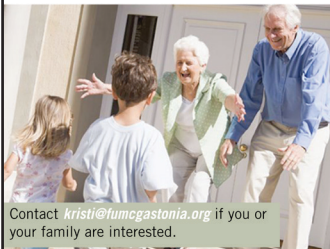
*Candy Filled
Easter Eggs*

PLEASE HAVE EGGS FILLED WITH
INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED CANDY.
YOU CAN DROP THEM OFF AT
THE CHURCH OFFICE DURING
BUSINESS HOURS.



NEW MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY:

PORCH PALS



Contact kristi@fumcgastonia.org if you or
your family are interested.

We are all one big family.
Let's connect with each other.
Do you or your family have more love
to share? Would you be interested in
connecting? This ministry is about
building relationships
through the generations.

- Make a phone call
- Send a card
- Visit on a porch
- Pray for someone
- Help with deliveries
- Make someone feel special



Just wanted you to know that your
visit today was a bright spot in a
cold rainy day. We have been
feeling somewhat disconnected
from our church family and seeing
your kind faces meant so much
and I enjoyed tea with my cookies
for dessert. Thank you for your
kindness.

This meant so much.

We love our church

Save the Date
EASTER ON THE FARM
(PENEGAR'S FARM)
MARCH 28, 2021



**TEKOA
FOOTHILLS**

Breaking News- Updated Plans: Family Camp will NOT
be overnight at Camp Tekoa in Hendersonville

SAVE THE DATE

Church-wide Family Day Outing
© Camp Tekoa **FOOTHILLS** on May 2, 2021



**Children's
Ministry**



**March 10 @
5:30 pm**



Please use weekly sensory
reflection items and other
Lent activities provided in
the Lenten Bags and
weekly emails.

Fat Tuesday



**Pancakes &
FUN!**

SAVE THE DATE

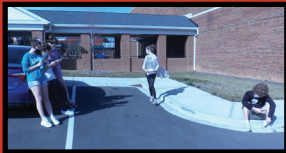
May 16, 2021
Current 5th & 6th Grade
Day Retreat

Youth Ministry



Stephanie Jenkins
Director of Student Ministries
980-292-3182
sjenkins@fumcgastonia.org

Sneak Peak



YOUTH SUNDAY

March 14, 2021

8:45 & 11:00 am services

Once a year the youth have the honor & privilege of leading the congregation in worship. Sermons, music, scripture & skits... all will be brought forth by our youth group (6th grade - 12th grade).

We hope you'll join us online!

WILLIAM H. WILLIMON

SINNING LIKE A CHRISTIAN



A NEW LOOK

AT THE

7

DEADLY SINS

Pride

Envy

Anger

Sloth

Greedy

Glattony

Lust

UMYF Crowders Mountain Hike Sunday March 21 @ 8:15am



- * Meet @ Main Entrance (522 Park Office Ln Kings Mountain, NC 28086)
- * Pickup Time: 10:15am
- * Bring mask, refillable water bottle & snack
- * Sign-up link in email/remind



Looking for Youth Volunteers to help with the



CAM Food Drive
March 14th
1-3pm & 3-5pm

Sign-up link in email/remind text
Youth: Please drop off microwavable pastas & snacks



FUMC Scholarship Applications Due
Tuesday April 6, 2021 @ 5:00pm

Applications & requirements are available on our church website:
fumcgastonia.org/ministries/college

Attention FUMC Class of 2021

2021

Graduate Sunday
May 23rd



Graduation is right around the corner. Please turn in items for the senior book (info & senior portrait). Parents/Guardians, please check your email for an email from Stephanie Jenkins with more instructions regarding May 23rd's worship & Graduate Dinner.

Check us out via Social Media



@FUMCGastoniaYouth



@fumcumyf

REFLECTION ON ASH WEDNESDAY

Resurrection, Reverent, Raw, and Real, are words that come to mind as I remember the experiences of Ash Wednesday.

As I was preparing a worship table and prayer station for our Ash Wednesday service, I wondered if we may have any strangers, or our neighbors that often “hang out” on main street, join us? I stopped what I was doing, paused, and sat with my thoughts and prayed. I asked God to be with me as I may have an opportunity to pray and witness to those who walk a different path. I asked God to show me ways to welcome them to this sanctuary space near main street. I wanted to welcome them with a caring heart, eyes that really see them, ears that listen, and hands that comfortably touch them.

Well, some strangers and main street neighbors did come. They had observed what we were doing, from the bus depot. They wanted Ashes. They wanted Prayer. They came, understanding the meaning of the Ashes and Resurrection. They came walking quietly and kneeling reverently. They came with raw and needy emotions. They came begging for very specific prayer requests, and real, honest “life circumstances” needs. As we knelt on the prayer benches, and I placed my hand on their shoulders, we were connected. We were the same – “children of God”. We were equal. My prayers were answered. God gave me the words to meet them with love and understanding, and offer them peace and hope. God was present in that space “in between us”.

And then there was one...who came and prayed with us... his friend, a church member, and me. We formed a circle, elbow to elbow, the four of us. It was amazing!! The words came eloquently, personally, and with grace. A long beautiful prayer was offered by this stranger (new friend).

As these visitors, left our church property, I watched them go. I wondered what the rest of the day would bring for them? I then realized that I have no idea how they live, and what their world is like. What I do know, is this: they are my brothers and sisters in Christ. They walk a different path, but what they wanted on Ash Wednesday, was the same as me, “Ashes and Prayer” – a time for “Remembering the Resurrection”, and a time for remembering “God’s Promises for All People”.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

Juta Carpenter





The Labyrinth will be open for socially distanced walking and prayer during Holy Week (March 29- April 2)

Monday, Tuesday, and Friday 9:00 a.m. – 12 Noon

Wednesday 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Thursday 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Participating in the labyrinth is like taking a thoughtful walk. There is no “right” way to walk the labyrinth. The beauty of the labyrinth is that people can approach the experience on their own terms.

The labyrinth is not a maze, it’s not meant to trip you up.

It is a prayer journey with 3 movements:

As you move inward, it is a time to cast off our many roles and unload our guilt, failures, anxieties, and depression.

As you pause in the center, it is a time to be open, expectant and receptive to the holy spirit.

As you move outward, you rest in the knowledge of God’s unconditional love and choose to move toward his peace.

There will be reflections after walking the labyrinth.

If you are unable to physically walk, you can experience a similar journey using a wooden finger labyrinth.

Easter Lily Order Form

Please print clearly and return no later than
Friday, March 26

If you would like to place an Easter Lily in the church in honor or in memory of a loved one, please fill out the form & return the form and your money to Amanda. The cost is \$12 each, and the flowers will decorate our altars on Easter Sunday. Any additional funds, after the cost of the flowers, will go to the Ministers' Assistance Fund.

Would you like to:

☐ Pick up your lily

☐ In lieu of lily, donate to Ministers' Assistance Fund



Contact name: _____

Telephone number: _____

Qty. _____

In honor or memory of: _____

Given by: _____

Total number ordered: _____
(\$12 each)

Total amount paid: _____

Connect with us...

Website: www.fumcgastonia.org

Phone: 704.864.4371

Email: contact@fumcgastonia.org



First United
Methodist
Church of
Gastonia, NC



FUMCGastonia



@FUMCGastonia



Sign up to receive
Newsletters online



Give Online!

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Gastonia, NC 28053

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at 190 East Franklin
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(USPS 198-720)
Periodicals postage
paid at Gastonia, NC.
POSTMASTER: Send
address changes to
Newsletter of First
United Methodist
Church, PO Box 218
Gastonia, NC 28053