CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9
8:00—12:00 Church Office Hours

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11
Nursery is available from 9:00 am till 11:30 am
9:15 AM CONFIRMATION CLASS
9:15 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES
Clegg/Open Door - Parlor—led by David Cole, Billie Dadgar, Roger Guevara
Explorers/Morning Star—Upstairs—Scott Nipper/Dan Grantham
Children Sunday School - Preschool - 5th Grade
Upstairs in Treehouse - led by Shelly Burgess/Diana Courson
Jr. High and High School—Basement—led by Pastor Kenny
10:15 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP
Ways to attend: In-Person, Facebook Live, Recording (posted later) on Website, YouTube
4:30 PM YOUTH

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Church Office Hours
4:00 PM STEWPOT

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Church Office Hours
4:00 PM STEWPOT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Church Office Hours
6:00 PM ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE (SANCTUARY)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Church Office Hours
10:00 AM THE CARING PLACE
4:00 PM STEWPOT

A Record of Our Faithfulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Offerings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>$7,333.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday School (9:15)</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>Sanctuary (10:15)</td>
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Special dates
- African American History Month
- Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 11, 2024
- Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024
- Valentine’s Day, February 14, 2024
- Presidents Day, February 19, 2024
- Leap Day, February 29, 2024

OUR SYMPATHY
Sympathy is extended to the family of Dr. Larry and Harriett Franks in the death of his sister, Peggy Franks Wright.

First United Methodist Church
320 West Main, Magnolia, Arkansas 71753
www.magnoliafumc.org
To invite all to know the love of God, to share grace, and to develop relationships
February 7, 2024

THE VISITOR
First United Methodist Church
320 West Main, Magnolia, Arkansas 71753
www.magnoliafumc.org

THE CARING PLACE
870-234-4530

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CROSS OF ASHES
On Ash Wednesday, as Lent begins, worshipers’ foreheads are often marked with ashes in the sign of the cross. The ashes traditionally come from burning palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday. In the Old Testament, ashes were a sign of mourning and repentance. Today, some worshipers wipe off the ashes before leaving church, to symbolize being cleansed from sin by Jesus’ death; others wear the ashes the rest of the day, carrying the cross of Christ into the world. Reciting Genesis 3:19 often accompanies the placement of ashes: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.”
Quiet time

At this very moment, it is probably the quietest I've ever known this building to be on a weekday. No children raucously playing outside. No other staff person needs to talk. Tracie had already left for the day. It is so still that I can hear the seconds ticking by on the clock behind me. I can't begin to tell you how unusual or different it makes me feel.

Writing is a process that takes discipline, focus, and inspiration. Sometimes, I stand in front of my computer, trying to get an idea or a direction. Usually, on any given Monday, there is a steady procession of people coming in and out of the office. That can include the postal carrier, faithful servants who see to the decorations and supplies in the sanctuary, CDC workers, and people from the broader community.

I can hear Sharon practicing at the organ now, and I realize I’ve missed that for a week or two. It is one of the ways I know what time it is on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. She is a creature of habit, and I really enjoy listening from my office. It provides a soothing background of music for my work. It also signals me to round up loose ends before picking up Penny at 3:00 PM.

Much of my day is grounded in a routine. Monday is my day to write; it is one of my favorite days. Monday is a day of new beginnings, a fresh start to the workweek. The newsletter article is usually the first significant task I tackle. Probably because I enjoy it so much.

I'm coming to the work of writing a little later than usual due to an early appointment with my dermatologist, Hayden Franks. I left his office with less than six nitrogen cryotherapies, far fewer than usual. It was a nice drive on a beautiful, blue-sky morning. With an hour to kill, I used the time there and back to catch up on my favorite podcast.

What an exceptional joy to worship in the main sanctuary on Sunday morning. I must say how much I have come to love that portion of the facility. It is a rare privilege to share the sacred space of the grand sanctuary again.

I'm glad to say that I finally connected with one of my close friends in ministry. We've been trying to connect for almost a week and finally got the stars to align. It's always good to catch up with a friend. We always have a lot to talk about and a couple of prayer requests to leave with each other.

Yesterday, we looked at what Jesus did in Capernaum in his early ministry. He moved from the sacred space of the synagogue to the private space of Simon's home. I hope you took away from the last two weeks of preaching that Jesus' ministry would not be contained in either of these spaces.

In the prologue of John's gospel, the evangelist tells us that "the Word became flesh, and dwelled among us." The actual word for "dwell" is more closely interpreted as "tabernacled" or "pitched a tent." Jesus became a sacred space where the holiness of God's presence no longer needs to be cordoned off from humanity to be beneficial. Instead, God's very presence in the person of Christ meets ordinary people in ordinary places, "offering healing in his wings."

Jesus embodies the incarnate presence of God, becoming a mobile tabernacle that brings the holiness of God into contact with the brokenness of humanity. Messiah restores shalom, a holistic combination of peace, purpose, and physical health, to all who embrace the kingdom of God. Jesus is still in the business of bringing hope to the hopeless, help to the helpless, and healing to the broken. He is not confined to sacred spaces and calls us as disciples to follow him into the mission field.

And wherever he went—into villages, towns, or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

Mark 6:56