

F i r s t   U n i t e d   M e t h o d i s t   C h u r c h

# NEWSLETTER

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Pearisburg, Virginia 24134 [921-1021]

December 2020

Dr. Brian Burch, Pastor

## ***Christmas Eve***

Two years ago, Pastor Brian completed a training on church growth; and they were emphatic: churches should offer more than one Christmas Eve Service. In 2020, we are going to do so!

Here is the schedule for Thursday, December 24:

2 p.m. Sanctuary Service

5 p.m. Service available on Facebook and YouTube

6 p.m. Parking Lot Service

All three services will feature communion, candlelight, soul-moving music and teaching on the word of God. Of course, if you are one of our online persons, we will need to know by Tuesday, December 22 so we can provide communion and candles. Plans are being developed so that we continue to meet or exceed all requirements for a safe gathering.

## ***Parking Lot Worship***

When the Governor's updated restrictions were announced, our church council shared that on one condition they would encourage us to continue offering our service options that meet or exceed the standards. The condition was that our church staff be kept warm while they led the outdoor worship service. On Nov. 22, a propane heater was put into action. On Nov. 29, a second propane heater was made available for free. On Dec. 6, the next step in "keeping warm" goes into effect. The Lord's Acre team ordered a bright red 10'x15' canopy with sides. It is flame resistant, and industrial strength. Roger Houck, Steve Taylor, and Carl Adams are already planning on using it to cook ham in the 2021 Lord's Acre Sale. Who knows the other ways we can use this as a tool for ministry.

## ***Printing Cash***

The Bible shares that those who sow sparingly will reap sparingly. Those who sow generously will reap generously. Thanks to you, our church is certainly reaping generous rewards. In fact, one person joked that the church must be printing money! In mid-November the Giles County Board of Supervisors announced that CARES grant money was available for non-profits. This grant came with both state and federal guidelines, but we were highly encouraged to apply. Thanks to Sherry Fleeman's attention to detail, the application was completed in a couple of days and 18 hours later we were awarded over \$3,700. This money was to pay back all the extra ministries and expenses we had because of COVID. Then the next week our previous insurance company sent us a dividend check for \$650. Then the next day, a local Lions Club brought in a check for \$300 to continue the work of the Macy Backpack program. The Lord is good! Now, we can do more ministries with children, seniors, and continue to improve the safety of our building. Yes, the Lord is blessing your generous spirit.

## ***Improvise, Adapt, and Overcome***

You may recognize those words; they are the motto of the U.S. Marines. This year, you as a church family and community have had opportunity to put them into practice. We celebrate...

Instead of masses of children making crafts for Family Advent night, it is now done at home. Thanks to the Holston Annual Conference, sixty children in our church family received a free Advent Box. For each of the 28 days in Advent the children get a devotional, and a project to help them prepare for Christmas. For our Hispanic children, Spanish versions are even available.

How do you deliver backpacks of weekend food when children are barely attending school? You adapt and get permission to deliver the food directly to their homes. Teresa Fields and her team is fully back in action with the Macy Backpack ministry.

To Our House, the ministry for homeless individuals, understands improvising. Is there any way possible to provide safe housing? Yes! Each of the homeless individuals now gets a mattress, a sleeping bag (that they can keep), and an individual tent. This way they can get the support and protection from the cold weather; and stay safe from any virus. They are asking for extra cash donations this year, and on Christmas Eve it is suggested that you come prepared to donate to help the homeless have safe housing this winter.

## ***Angel Tree***

In 2019, almost three hundred children were signed up by their parents to receive gifts from individuals. Every one of those kids were blessed. Can Giles County do the same in 2020? The number of children needing help is basically the same. Yet, normal places to pick out a child are vastly different because of health restrictions. So, this year go straight to the source. Leisa Palmer as a part of her role as director of the Giles County Christian Service Mission is also coordinating this service project. Call her at the Mission 921-3006 or email her at [gccsmissondirector@gmail.com](mailto:gccsmissondirector@gmail.com)

## ***UMW – Angel Tree***

The United Methodist Women have adopted 2 angels from the Angel Tree this year. If you would like to make a donation to go towards the purchase of gifts for these 2 angels, you may drop your donation in the offering plate and mark accordingly. You may also drop donations at the church office.

# MEMORIAL GIFTS

Were given this month in loving memory of:

*Barbara Adams  
Bobby Barnett*

### Stewardship Report-Budget

Received November a year ago.....	\$ 18,375.71
Received November.....	\$ 23,163.78
Received Y-T-D a year ago .....	\$ 209,348.15
Received Y-T-D .....	\$ 203,652.45

### **Thanksgiving Was Saved**

Our annual feast was facing a host of challenges in 2020. The Holy Spirit enabled a new version of this tradition to take place. First, a member of our church family declared we should do this, and they volunteered to pay for the cost. Diane Haynie took up her annual challenge: determine who all would enjoy a meal. Her list was extensive. If you know of others who should be included, let us know. Plans are being made for other blessings coming in the next couple of months. Sylvia's Catering agreed to prepare 60 meals all pre-packaged and ready to go. Rita Palmer and Mary Ellen Thomas the co-chairs of our church dinner committee rounded up volunteers to prepare desserts. Thanks to Grace Carpenter, Jan Houck, Sandy Peters, Ann Price, Peggy Bronnenkant, and others we had plenty. Then Joe Williams, DeAnne Burch, Diane Haynie, Diane Israel, Justin Israel, Jackson Israel, Samantha Huskey, Renee Williams, and DJ Johnston had a delightful time finding homes in the dark and seeing friends through doors and windows.

<i>In Memoriam</i> Bobby Barnett November 18, 2020
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Our condolences go out to the family of Bobby Barnett at his passing. Bobby was a member of Pearisburg First UMC since September 9, 1962.

### **Welcome Harry**

Harry Seeberger, husband of Diane, grew up at Grace United Methodist church in rural New York. His brother was baptized and joined that church, but somehow Harry never made that step of faith himself. Since the pandemic hit, Harry has not missed a church service online. The Lord has used that and his recent medical issues to cause Harry to ask some faith questions. The solution at age 71. Declare your faith, experience the joy of baptism, and become a part of Pearisburg First UMC. With Trish Poole representing the congregation, he boldly said "yes" to the questions of faith on Friday, November 20. You probably know him best from his grandchildren Lily, Hunter, and Charleigh who love being a part of our church children's ministries.

### **Still Dreaming!**

True thinking more than a month down the road seems challenging. Yet, the Lord has provided a chance for our church to do so. If you were going to invite someone to church which of our ten outside doors would you tell them to use? The front door makes sense; but 80% of our folks in normal times park in the back lot. Now which door should you use? If it is raining or snowing, and you want to stay dry is there a way into our church building? When the Lord defeats this virus, we are going to cherish talking with friends before and after church. Is there a way we could make modifications to our building so that this would not cause a bottleneck? Why not find solutions now? Take a minute now and pray that we can be prepared to be a thriving community of faith for years to come.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org. Permit No. 37 Pearisburg, VA 24134
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<b>First United Methodist Church</b>