FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

February 2020

1  Allison Carter
2  Cynthia Craig
3  Jonah Page
4  Ken Hudson
5  Linda Snyder
6  Dixie Roberts
7  Susan Riggins
8  Rohn Small
9  Pierce Cauthen
10  Sarah Melton
11  Bill Balch
12  Erica Crews
13  Alair Higgins
14  Jimmy Walters
15  Sarah Ellen Ghent
16  Jimmy Talbert, Jr.
17  Angie Jackson
18  Tony Crolley
19  Edith Talbert
20  Terry Schönberg
21  Rhys O’Shea
22  Kelsey Jackson
23  Hannah Phillips
24  Jay White
25  Randy Vaughan
26  Mike Wells
27  Ethan Emory
28  Peg Hoover

The Connector
First United Methodist Church
Lancaster, SC
www.firstumclancaster.com

INVITATION TO A JOURNEY

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds...”
Romans 12:2, NRSV

It’s well known that Lent consists of forty days. But go to the calendar and begin counting on Ash Wednesday and end the day before Easter. The result? Not forty days but forty-six days! Why? Because the forty days of Lent are fast days, in a general sense. It is a time of discipline and self-restraint. But the Lord’s Day is always a feast day within the Church. Therefore, in order to have forty days of fasting, six Sundays must be excluded from the count. Lent in truth is forty weekdays plus six Lord’s Days.

Why forty days? In biblical terms forty is a round number symbolizing fullness. It’s a span of time sufficient to accomplish what needs to take place; therefore, the number is used frequently and becomes a kind of shorthand for much of sacred history. Rain fell in Noah’s time for forty days and nights. For forty days Moses and Elijah (who represent respectively the Law and the Prophets) dwelt at Horeb. For forty days Jesus endured temptation in the wilderness and the same period was revealed to the disciples after the resurrection. Nineteen was given forty days to repent. For forty years Israel wandered in the wilderness prior to admission into the Promised Land.

We have a forty-day journey ahead of us through the season of Lent. It is sufficient time to accomplish what needs to take place: Transformation. Yes, the Lenten Journey is about spiritual transformation – from the inside out.

But first an insight: Too often spiritual formation is seen as something “added on” to our personality that solves all our emotional, psychological, physical and mental problems. When this happens, problems can be repressed or covered over with a veneer of “spirituality” that claims to solve the problem. Perhaps someone has told you, “You just need to pray more, go to church more, read your Bible more, be more obedient to God, deal with unconfessed sin in your life, and everything will be fine.” This is like telling someone with a broken leg that they just need to run more and strengthen the muscles. Our spiritual formation is not an “add-on,” it is the very essence of our being.

We are spiritual beings created to seek and to be sought by God. One primary truth of the process of spiritual formation is that we are confronted with our instant gratification culture. Authentic spiritual formation invites us to engage in an all-of-life endeavor where our whole of life is receptive to God’s transforming grace. We simply must consent to God’s work of grace in our lives and leave the result to God. We do, however, take an active role in our own spiritual formation. Here are three suggestions for the forty-day journey through Lent:

PRAYER – Being to cultivate a time for prayer that attends not to what you want, but to what God wants for you.

SPIRITUAL READING – Carve out time daily to read, study and meditate on God’s truth found in literature both ancient and contemporary. You might find a favorite spiritual classic that is also meaningful to a friend. Share your insights.

LITURGY – Consider approaching the services of worship in new ways. Come expecting to see, hear and experience something each Lord’s Day.

In closing, although we walk together along this journey through Lent, we each must take each step for ourselves. May God enable you to walk closer to the Lord. Welcome to the journey of spiritual formation.

Peace,
Charles
SUNDAYS IN FEBRUARY
February 2 “Rejoice and Be Glad” Matthew 5:1-12
February 9 “Salt and Light” Matthew 5:13-20
February 16 “The Gift of Reconciliation” Matthew 5:21-27
February 23 “Glory Revealed” Matthew 17:1-9

IN OUR PRAYERS
Our Members
Shelly Holder, Sharon Holder, Zeddie Williams, Adrian Pettit, Betty Vassey, Charlaine Simpson, Lorraine Harper, Tommy Grier, Steve Rothrock, DeLee Ballard, Paul Van Riper, Lou Collier, Art Collier, Larry Baskins, Pam Vaughn, Betsy Sims Gardner, Travis Berry, Bill Bradley, Dixie Roberts
Our Community
Forrest Sellers, brother of Nancy Fleming; Glenn Garner, brother of George Garner; George Gottier, brother-in-law of Beverly and Bill Bradley
Louise Hayes, aunt of Debra Rowell; Sherry Stalvey, Wilkins family, Robinson family; friends of Erica Crews
Eric Hough, friend of Kay Stewart; Ashley Thomasson, niece of Sis and Bob Yoder; Hal Plyler, son of Carolyn Plyler
Marvin Baker, father of Mica Edwards; Forrest Sellars, brother of Nancy Fleming; Ernie Woodland Reddick

2020 FLOWER CALENDAR
The 2020 Flower Calendar is in the office. Please call the office at 285-1290 to place flowers in the church for a Sunday in memory or honor of a loved one. You may call the florist of your choice to order your flowers.

MEALS ON WHEELS
As part of our church’s service to the community, members participate in the local Meals on Wheels program by delivering meals to the Manor on Chesterfield Avenue. Our week will be February 3-7, 2020.

THE LUNCH BUNCH
The lunch bunch will be February 4th at noon at Seagull’s Grill. It is Dutch treat. Please bring a friend.

THE UNITED METHODIST MEN
The United Methodist Men’s Breakfast will meet Sunday, February 9th at 7:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE
The Worship Committee will meet Monday, February 10th at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference room.

COMMUNITY/CHURCH SIGN UP FOR 2020
Please sign up for a month...or two, to sponsor a Community/Church Meal in 2020. If you are a part of a small group, Sunday School Class, UMW, Youth Group, or church committee, consider sponsoring a meal! Let’s fill up the whole year soon! The sign-up sheet is in the Connector. Thank you.

FEBRUARY COMMUNITY/CHURCH MEAL
Please join us Monday, February 17th at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for our February Community/Church meal. The Hannah/Mary Circle will host, and we will have soup and cornbread.

THE STITCH AND PRAY GROUP
The Stitch and Pray Group will meet Wednesday, February 19th at 10:00 a.m. in the Church Library.

SROKE-TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER
The Men of First UMC are pleased to announce our Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 25th from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Join us in the Fellowship Hall for pancakes and sausage as we prepare for the Season of Lent. We will begin serving promptly at 5:30 p.m., so come hungry! Meantime, contact Ronnie Little or Willis Ballard if you will volunteer to help with set up, food prep, and clean up. Contributions toward Men’s Ministry will be gladly accepted.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP
On Wednesday, February 26th at 12 o’clock noon and at 6:00 p.m., we will offer worship to place flowers in the church for a Sunday in memory or honor of a loved one. You may call the florist of your choice to order your flowers.

CHRIST WALK: A JOURNEY OF SPIRITUAL FITNESS
Beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 26th, and throughout the 40 days of Lent, join us each weekday at 12 o’clock noon at Springfield track at the Center for Creation, weather permitting, for prayer and walking fellowship. All fitness levels will find companionship on this journey of growth. Prayfully consider joining us as we engage the mind, body and spirit to build up our spiritual fitness. Pastor Charles is your point of contact.

UMW NEWS
On March 23, 1869 eight women gathered at Tremont Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston. They talked about two Methodist missionaries on a mission in India. They talked about the educational and health needs of women in India and how cultural norms prevented male missionaries from meeting these needs. These women responded to this need by organizing the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society.

The movement started in the nineteenth century by mission-minded women continued into the twentieth century and became United Methodist Women in 1972. Today, United Methodist Women is the largest denominational faith organization for women in the United States.

The United Methodist Women of First United Methodist Church of Lancaster began their venture of mission in the year 1886. From these early beginnings we have been a group that is creative, loving and sharing. This past year our three circles had a general meeting with information on Human Trafficking, one of the worst crimes against women and children we have in the United States. The Lancaster County Sheriff is a member of the Human Trafficking Division in Columbia presented this most informative program.

We furnished used and new winter coats, mittens and gloves to those in need in the Lancaster schools. We baked cookies at Christmas and gave them to the Lancaster Children’s Home and to our shut-ins. We provided period packs to girls in the Lancaster schools. The Emergency kits throughout the church were replaced by the Methodist Women. The kitchen of the church was cleaned and organized by UMW. We furnished a Christmas Tea for those living at Morningside. These projects and many others are what we do as Methodist Women.

We would like to invite all women of the church to join us this year so we can continue the work of missions that our foremothers began in 1869. As a diverse community of women rooted in Christian faith and joined together by history, shared experiences and deep commitment, let’s turn our faith, hope and love into action.

GIFTS IN MEMORY
Foxie Plyler
Mary N. Plyler
Dr. W.E. Sims and Betsy Bill Sims
Charlie Blankenship
Dottie and Alan Blankenship
Betty Turner
Dottie and Alan Blankenship
Ellene Reddick
Mary and Bob Collins
Phylis and Bill Jarvis

GIFTS IN HONOR
Doug McClellan
Nancy and Steve Fleming

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE
To date, we have received pledges of $305,000.00. If you have not yet returned your pledge card, you may put it in the offering plate or bring it by the church office.

NEW CHURCH PICTORIAL DIRECTORY
If you didn’t have your picture made for the church directory and would like to receive a directory you may come by the church office and Libby will assist you in obtaining a directory. Please come by or call the church office if you have questions.

ADDRESS
Shelly Holder
UAB Spain Rehabilitation Center
Room R330
1717 6th Ave. S.
Birmingham, AL 35233

CORRECTION
CHURCH DIRECTORY
Jimmy Barton 285-1949

THANK YOU
From HOPE in Lancaster
Thank you for the contribution of $1,600.00 on October 9th, 2019.