

# FIRST NEWS AND NOTES

A Newsletter of The First United Methodist Church in Hagerstown

February Newsletter 2019



February is usually when I would write a pastor pen about love and Valentine's Day. However, this February finds the United Methodist Church setting the stage for monumental decisions that will set the direction for our denomination from now on.

On February 23-26, a special called General Conference session will take place to seek to find a way forward as a global denomination on many issues.

The issue that is most talked about is human sexuality.

Since I have been a United Methodist attending Annual Conferences, I was 16 when I went to my first Annual Conference, there has not been a single large gathering where the issue of human sexuality has not been debated. I have watched as the denomination in which I felt my call into ministry fall further and further into the abyss of in quarreling leading us to forget why the church even exists, to make disciples of Jesus Christ. I lament the thought of how many donations to caucus groups has been dissected from our offerings so that we can support our side in the fight to win an ecclesial war. Every passing year leaves us less as a witness to resurrection of Jesus Christ and more a mirror of the brokenness of the world that we also grieve.

In our discussions on the Way Forward Report, I shared that my biggest fear is that we, as a denomination, would become John Wesley's biggest fear in that Methodists would have the appearance and form of religion without the power. Both sides (traditional and progressive) argue that the lack of power within the UMC derives from the other side. I wholeheartedly disagree. Our lack of power is not from our doing, but rather from our lack of being. We have forgotten who we are. We have forgotten who God says we are. The power of the early church came not from their doing but from their remembrance and identity as a citizen of heaven. Our identity in Christ and the power that comes from the name of Jesus is what spurs us on. Not our clever ecclesial rhetoric or our nuanced expertise at Robert's Rule. It starts and ends with Jesus.

We in our attempt to solve our biggest problems, we have built systems and institutions to exalt ourselves rather than sacrifice for our solution. The power of the United Methodist Church is not owned by The United Methodist Church. It is God's and God will implement this power to bring as many to Himself as possible.

If there was ever a time for Methodists all over the world to pray, it is now. Pray for the delegates, lay and clergy, traveling to St. Louis. Pray for the various agencies that are working diligently to facilitate the most productive gathering as possible. Most importantly, pray that the hearts and minds of all in attendance would be centered in our sole identity in Christ who has given us the power of the Holy Spirit to be bold witnesses to the Kingdom of God.

Pastor John



2019 is quickly moving along and it will be filled with all kinds of new and fun activities for the Youth, Tweens, and Children. Before I jump into upcoming events, I just wanted to take a moment to thank all those individuals who have worked with the young people of our church. You are truly life-changers and I am extremely grateful for all that you do!

The first thing I wanted to share with you all is that we had a Creative Arts Camp meeting in late November and it went extremely well. I selected a handful of volunteers, teachers, and creative minds to discuss the past, present, and future of CAC. In the meeting we realized that there are some improvements that can be made to the structure of CAC, but we also are still doing some things that are very positive. Everyone left the meeting energized for the future and it looks like CAC 2019 could really be something special!

A big announcement is that the Youth Mission Trip has been selected! This year we will be joining forces with the annual Work camp trip our church takes in the spring. The dates will be March 24-30<sup>th</sup>, which is during Spring Break. We will be traveling to Talboro, North Carolina and will be helping those that suffered damage and setbacks from Hurricane Florence. The cost for each person to attend equals \$100 dollars, but we will do what we can to help out with scholarships if necessary. A flyer will be made in January to give a fuller picture and there will be a meeting in February for all participants. IF you have any questions about this trip in the meantime, I will do my best to answer any of them.

January will also be a time where a new Confirmation Class begins. Anyone that is between the grades of 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade is welcome to attend. IF you feel you went through the classes and you didn't learn a whole lot, or don't remember much, you are welcome to attend again as well. In February, I will also begin a girl's study. I am aware that the young ladies of our church go through a lot of difficult experiences in their teenage years and may need a safe place to talk. I have spent the past month reading through materials to craft a small group and will have things ready to go by February. I am still looking for a female adult to work with me; feel free to contact me and I will catch you up on the topics I hope to discuss. These two events will have specific dates and times in the coming weeks, so stay alert if you are interested in taking part in either one.

With regards to any or all of the above topics, you can email me at [duellahagerstown@gmail.com](mailto:duellahagerstown@gmail.com) or can call or text me at (317) 709-4250. I hope you've enjoyed a very Merry Christmas and are excited for the New Year!

Blessings, Adam Duell Director of Family Ministries

So they read  
from the **BOOK,**  
from the  
**LAW OF GOD...**



Nehemiah 8:8, NRSV

### Daily Devotion Booklets

Upper Rooms & Daily  
Bread on bookrack in  
Friendship Haven Café

Cost: \$1.00

Place in the box in the rack.



"Tell Mom I'll stay home today  
and do Sunday school online."

Invite Your Friends

Fun Stuff Happening for Youth

**7th—12th 2nd & 4th Sundays 6<sup>30</sup> - 8**

**Tweens (4th-6th) 3rd Sundays 6:30-8 pm**

**Sometimes there are changes.**

**Always check with Adam**

**Bring the Kids**

**Fun stuff happens**

**Every Sunday Morning**

**Beginning at 9:00 a.m.**

**Ages Birth thru 3rd Grade**



Every Sunday during Worship Service  
there is a special time just for  
Kids In Divine Service Ages 3-3rd

## UMW President Mindy Smith expresses Thanks and Shares Scripture



A Big Thank You! To all our Church Family who baked, made candy, set up or cleaned up for our Cookie Walk. Because our family worked together the United Methodist Women were able to earn \$800.00 for use toward Youth Programs for the Calendar year 2019. I'm always blessed (and so is the church) when we worked together as Family.

Another Thank You goes out to Amanda Stainbrook for our informative program for our November General Meeting. I've heard many positive comments about what a Great Job she did. Thanks for your part in our meeting Amanda.

And Thank You to The Morning Glories Circle for providing our meal that evening.

It was a meaningful evening for those who attended. Again see how beautiful life can be when we live as Family—which is the Scripture we taught to our JAM Kids in October "Look how Good and Pleasing it is when families live together as one! Psalm 133:1

As we look forward to a new year starting in a few short days, I'm encouraged to see new opportunities for our Family to work and grow together which leads me to another scripture I feel led to share with you in 2 Chronicles 7:14 'if my people who belong to me will humbly pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land.'

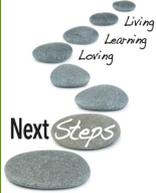
I've been wondering what might happen with our shrinking attendance and shrinking budget if we all would join in humble prayer and seek God's face. I hope that's something we could have as a goal for 2019. To pray over our concerns and seek God's face for solutions to how to grow. Let's work on that as a Church Family, we're good at getting things done when we work together.

In closing I would want to wish all of my Church Family a Happy New Year.  
May God Bless each of you this year of 2019.

United Methodist Women's President *Mindy Smith*

# Living ...

17% of all the financial gifts given through the church offerings are used to support ministries outside the church walls in our community, our country, and around the globe. We invite you to live out your faith by helping to transform the world through acts of hospitality, care and service.



**Gleaners - Volunteer helping with this Mission Outreach!**  
**No Winter months**  
**Back here April 26, 2019**

**UMW**  
Continue saving postage stamps & box labels. Containers located in Narthex.

### Food Donations Always Needed Community Food Pantry

Place food donations in the shopping carts located in the front hallway of the church. Or Drop off at the Trustee's Office, 37 E Main St  
[Jeffersontwpwayne@comcast.net](mailto:Jeffersontwpwayne@comcast.net)

**Happy 80+ Feb. 17th** Doris Luellen, 2030  
Chester Blvd Bldg 1H101 Richmond IN 47374

**Happy 90+ Feb. 21st**

Martha Giggy, 2507 Oak Park Ct  
Richmond IN 47374

**Karen Leonard turns 80 Feb. 26th**  
152 W College St Hagerstown In 47346



## Help out Tarboro NC United Methodist Long Term Recovery Center

*What can I do today to shine the light of Christ to the World?*

Be the best at showing honor to each other. Romans 12:10

The Work Campers head to NC March 24-30, 2019. North Carolina was hit hard with many locations getting more than 30" inches of water in a very short period of time.

Plans are underway. The folks at NC are well organized ... this is not the first disaster they've been thru in recent years.

The Center has beds, showers, and kitchen facilities. There is ample room for RV parking. Work sites will be close by. The number of houses needing repair numbers about 20.

Tarboro is about one hour east of Raleigh NC and 20 miles north of Greenville NC and about 650 miles from Hagerstown. Cost is the same: \$100/person for the week.

The Pre-trip meeting for Sunday, February 24 at 2 p.m. is here at our church to share additional info, answer questions, and fill out needed forms.

This year our Hagerstown youth will be participating.

*Let Jim Howell know of your interest to better plan the details.*

## Stewardship News **Please look over your giving statements to see if correct.** **Contact Susie Lewis or Church Office if there are errors.**

**Total Giving** \$216,639.28 as of Dec. 31st, 2018

YTD Faith Promise (Mission) \$6896.35

YTD Total Giving for GOOD Fund  
(Capital Projects) \$2631.00

YTD Total Giving for Hours of Service

**Offering Envelopes** The church no longer identifies those that give by a number.

Our giving records are maintained by the name of the giver either on the envelope used or by the name on the check. You may still designate your giving on the envelope to the same categories as we have always had: **Church Ministries (budget), Faith Promise missions), GOOD Fund (Capital Projects), and other special offerings or gifts.**

**We have also provided space to acknowledge the numerous gifts of time our congregation gives to the church and our community. These are all gifts of love!**

Did you pray for someone, read to the children, attend Bible study, work at the Thrift Shop, etc.? Put down your hours you volunteer on the bottom of the offering envelope. It is amazing to see hours you've given for God.

**Offering Envelopes are in the Pews, Balcony, Café or Church Office. Just let Carol Meyer, Secretary if you need envelopes and they can be provided.**



Stop collecting treasures for your own benefit on earth, where moth and rust eat them and where thieves break in and steal them. Instead, collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don't eat them and where thieves don't break in and steal them. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

My loving gift of treasure for God's Kingdom:

Church Ministries \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Faith Promise \$ \_\_\_\_\_

GOOD Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My loving gift of time and talent to others:

I gave \_\_\_\_\_ hours of service to \_\_\_\_\_

I gave \_\_\_\_\_ hours of service to \_\_\_\_\_

## Excitement Coming In March– Mark Your Calendars!

Hello First Church! We are excited to invite you to Mission Conference Weekend! This (MCW) exciting event is part of our March Missions Madness month as we focus on the living, learning and loving of Christ's work through missions.

The 2019 Mission Conference Weekend is slated for Thursday, March 14, Saturday March 16 and Sunday March 17th. This year's theme focuses on missions in poverty and justice with a special focus on children and families. Each of our speakers have special experience in programs and ministries involving children and families who are faced with daily struggles.

Please note the weekend's schedule as detailed below:

### Thursday March 14, 6:30 p.m. Church Fellowship Hall

Donnie Benedict and panel TBD presenters "School to Prison Pipeline"

### Saturday, March 16: 9:30 a.m. Cottage Meetings

Karen Bowen, Wayne Co Director of Court Appointed (CASA) Special Advocate  
A Fresh perspective The Wayne CO CASA Program Topic:

CASA program: A unique mission opportunity.

\*Rita Gaither-Gant Secretary of Global Ministries of UMC

Topic: United Methodist Church Missions: From Indiana to around the world.

### Sunday, March 17 10:15 a.m. Worship Service

Mrs. Phyllis Newton Topic: Prison Ministry Changing Lives of all ages.

*We hope to see you at Mission Conference Weekend! We are hopeful that lives will be touched as we strive to make Disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

*Blessings, Dreu Doerstler*

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**Connect with Us-**

[www.firsthagerstown.org](http://www.firsthagerstown.org)



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