

FIRST NEWS AND NOTES

A Newsletter of The First United Methodist Church in Hagerstown

June Newsletter 2021



The Pastor's Pen Well, it's that moment in our time together we knew one day would come yet is still difficult to accept. As I write my final Pastor Pen as the pastor of our great local church family, there are so many things I want say, but mostly thank you.

Thank you for welcoming Jen and I and our young family to First Church and to the Hagerstown community. We have been loved and have loved this community. Our children have gone from babies and toddlers to young men and women, and we are so blessed to have been able to watch them grow in our church and community.

During our time together we have grown deeper roots in God's love and wisdom, and longer branches in loving and serving God's people. Whether that has been Work Camps, Bible studies, Creative Arts Camps, Gleaners Food Distribution, or all of the wonderful baptisms and new faith professions made, God's spirit has been fully present.

I know that Covid took so much from our time and ministry together. However I am so thankful for the bold leadership and faithful following of Jesus exhibited in this congregation during one of our world's darkest moments. First Church was and still is a bright light of hope, help, and healing in this community and I am so thankful I was able to walk together with you through it.

As we leave this month, please know that Hagerstown will never leave our prayers and thoughts. We are excited for what God has in store for us in Churubusco and excited for what God has in store for Hagerstown and the Eckert family. I trust that you will welcome them with the same big arms and hearts as you welcomed us five years ago.

One of the common phrases us pastors hear when in transition is "The next person is going to have some big shoes to fill." Please know that I am literally and metaphorically taking my shoes with me. Pastor Nate loves Jesus and wants to see others know Jesus as well. He is passionate about building relationships for Christ in and outside the church, and will do great in his own way of leading and shepherding First Church.

Once again, thank you for letting me have the absolute honor of being your pastor over these last five years. May God continue to bless this great congregation in years to come. Grace and Peace, Pastor John

[A reminder of what the transition looks like going forward. On July 1, Pastor Nate becomes the Senior Pastor of First Church. On that day, Pastor Nate will be responsible for all ministry related areas including funerals and weddings. Any requests for another minister other than the senior pastor must be approved and invited by the current senior pastor.]

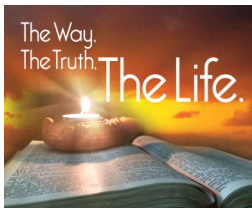
SEASONS OF HOPE AND JOY by Paula Guth

As a farmer's daughter I learned to embrace the seasonal changes of life. After a long dark winter season, I rejoice at the miracles of new life unfolding around us: the return of migrating birds, lush green grass, trees and shrubs blooming with new leaves and the early flowers are in full bloom. Local farmers are starting the spring planting field work. The Easter message of resurrection and new life fills us all with hope and joy. I am overjoyed to be able to spend time with family again in person around Grandma's oak table, a birthday party for my youngest great-nephew in MI and a 70th birthday celebration for my twin brothers. I am eager to plant my garden beds and flower tubs. Spring is wonderful!

Our extended family will be traveling to Iowa for my oldest great-niece's wedding in mid-summer. All of my siblings will be together for the first time in a few years. I am looking forward to the road trip through the varied landscapes and fields of tall corn, lush grain and alfalfa fields on neat family farms and large corporate farms. I can't wait for the delicious summer bounty from my garden and the cascading colors of my flowers in full bloom. Summer is amazing!

Then comes fall and the harvest season which is make it or break it time for many farmers. They take a huge gamble each year when they plan their crops and what animals to have. My sister and I are planning a WI trip in September to visit with family and friends. After losing several older friends and relatives to Covid and old age, we are reminded yet again of the fragility of life. We need to reconnect and spend time together with others before it is too late. I am praying most people will be vaccinated and we can safely hold a Loomis reunion. We are staying in a cabin on the Peshtigo River where we can relax on the deck with pops of brilliant fall color and watch the river flow by. Yea, Fall!

Soon comes the winter season of rest and reflection. We can snuggle up with a good book or an old classic movie and try some new recipes or enjoy the old favorites with friends and family. Continued on Page Two.



Daily Devotion Booklets
 Upper Rooms & Daily Bread on
 Bookrack in Friendship Haven Café
 Cost: \$1.00 Place in the box.

**The Church Mouse Musings by
 Paula Guth Continued: Winter can**

be a good thing, too! Yes, I am hopeful as we are moving into new seasons of life with appreciation for all the blessings God has provided. May you and your family stay safe and enjoy the changing seasons with hope and joy!

A Word From Our President Mindy Smith

As United Methodist Women we have a focus each year in our program book. This year our focus is “Knitted Together for God’s Good Work”. This focus is based on a couple of passages in Ephesians (2:21 and 4:16). I want to share with everyone how our Knitting has been progressing this spring.



On April 17th we had a **Virtual Spring District Meeting**, I’m proud to share that Hagerstown Unit had six members to participate, far more than any other church in our District. **WAY TO GO GIRLS!!** However, since that meeting we’ve been contacted by our District Treasurer Alice Crouse and unfortunately only three checks have been received as an offering for this event. As you can imagine when we are able to meet in person we are able to raise a significant amount to boost our funds that are used for our many ministries. Please prayerfully consider making a special donation toward our District Ministries. While speaking of District news I want to include updates from **The Raines Residence**, which we have a responsibility to support with our prayers, our gifts, our witness to others about the healing work done at Raines, and by keeping up to date about what’s happening at Raines and what the current needs at the Residence are: Twin sheet sets (regular length), pillows, Shower Curtain Liners (Heavy) & Curtain Rings, Laundry Detergent, Hygiene Products, toilet paper, Shampoo & Conditioner, Body Wash (esp. Men’s), your time and monetary donations.

Now for new from the home unit: On Sunday, April 25th we presented **Dreu Doerstler** with our special

Invite Your Friends

Fun Stuff Happening for Youth



Bring the Kids
 Fun stuff happens
 Every Sunday Morning
 Beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Agnes Birth thru 3rd Grade



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

**Adult Classes
 are back!
 Join one.**

Stacy Herr is working with
 the group. Children are
 dismissed after the
 Pastor’s Welcome.

Mission Recognition Pin. COVID 19 prevented our presenting this honor in a more timely fashion. We so appreciate the service and time Dreu put into our Church’s Mission Committee.

On May 3rd the Reflections invited all our Circle Units and friends to a **special party to recognize Karen Leonard’s years of outstanding service to our United Methodist Women’s** organization. Almost all of the 32 people in attendance took time to share a special memory of some aspect of Karen’s service to our UMW, our choir, or one of the Bible study groups she contributed to. Thank You Marti and your Reflections group for bringing us all together to celebrate Karen. Good Luck to Karen as she moves to become part of her daughter Dawn’s household at Avon.

Things yet to come: You can still find encouragement and inspiration from our UMW Faith Talks and earn Reading Points at the same time. If you haven’t checked out Faith Talks yet give it a try. You can turn on your computer, Google search Faith Talks UMW. Then you can choose from 34 past presentations or see a brand new one on the 3rd Thursday each month @ 2 p.m.

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UMW continues: **Sunday May 30th will be Senior Sunday**, UMW and the Church will present Bibles to our two Graduating Seniors, **Shay Doerstler & Ashlynn Oliger**.

Our Next General Meeting is coming on Monday, July 5th. The program and time still being worked out and will be announced.

Finally, you might want to consider attending **Mission U this July**. The virtual format will be held on four Saturdays in July; the 10th, 17th, 24th, and 31st. There will be no travel, no room and board, only a small fee of \$50. to cover materials you need for the various studies to be presented.

Hope you're inspired to get busy Knitting yourself into some area of service through UMW. There's lot of opportunities available. President Mindy

UMW Continue saving box labels.
Containers located in Narthex.



Congratulations to Joe & Mindy Smith are the proud grandparents to **Drew & Amanda's** baby girl, **Sedara Amerenthe Wager-Smith**. She was born **April 24**. The family resides in **Canada**. **Congratulations to all the family**. She joined brothers **Eric and Sylvain**.

Gleaners - Volunteer helping with this Mission Outreach!
Thursday, June 24 10-12 Noon

Sympathies to the family of Fran Workman who died April 23. She was a faithful attendee.

The church rejoices in the Parker family Baptisms. Pastor John baptized Cynthia (Cindy) Lea Parker and children Jayden Scott, Leighanna Jeannine, and Ethan Bradley on April 25th.

	April 2021 YTD	April 2020 YTD	Increase (Decrease)
Total Operating Receipts	\$52,568	\$51,650	\$918
Less: Total Operating Expenses	\$54,542	\$55,949	(\$1,407)
Net Operating Income (Expense)	(\$1,974)	(\$4,299)	\$2,325

Year-to-Date we have a (\$1,974) Loss which is much more promising than a (\$4,299) Loss last year.

In April 2021 we completed and passed our financial audit.

We have continued to explore ways to tighten the budget and are optimistic that we will finish the year without a loss.

<u>Fund Balances at April 30</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Increase (Decrease)</u>
Operating Expense Fund	31,770	11,931	19,839
Faith Promise	11,106	16,196	(5,090)
Designated Giving	14,808	12,927	1,882
GOOD Building Fund	23,547	19,267	4,280
Long Term Savings	47,189	46,809	380
	<u>\$ 128,420</u>	<u>\$ 107,129</u>	<u>\$21,291</u>

Year-to-Date Faith Promise and GOOD fund donations are down versus last year and more so since 2019.

Designated Giving is primarily funds for Adult Work Camp & donations for Creative Arts Camp and Youth activities.

Leadership approved the replacement of the failing Air Conditioning units at an estimated cost of \$9,500 which will come from the GOOD Fund. Things should get more comfortable in the balcony.

Trustee's Work Day Saturday, June 5th

8am to 12pm Outside clean up day at parsonage. Need all the helpers we can get. Contact Trustee Chair Chris Lane @ 765-914-5809 for any questions

Mission Pin
Award Dreu
Doerstler Center



Mindy Smith, UMW President
Dreu and Jean Dilley, Circle of Friendship Chair

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