

June and July 2022

TOWER TOPICS



A message from
Associate Pastor
Steve Hensley

It is hard to believe it's been 17 years. My first Sunday as youth pastor at this church was May 6, 2005. A lot has happened since then.

This has been a wonderful place to serve. I have worked with some great people and together I feel there has been great ministry that has taken place by this church family.

My focus as I transition to a new church is one of gratitude. We came here as a young family. Alexa had just turned 3 and Jacob was 6 months. Alexa is now 20 and a junior at Marshall. Jacob is 17 and will be a senior at Spring Valley High School.

Our children were raised in this church. Terry and I could not be more thankful for the people who have been a part of their life growing up. You have helped shape and mold them into the young people they are and we know this church family will always be a part of who they become.

My ministry has grown because of the staff and people of this church. I will be forever grateful for the many people who touched my life, helped me grow, and taught me along the way. I feel prepared for this next chapter because of each of you.

Most especially thank you for loving us. Our

family had some milestones while here and you celebrated with and you prayed for us when we especially needed prayers. It's good to be able to say in 17 years we have never felt unloved.

So, thank you. We have loved our time here and love the people of First UMC. We are excited to see what the future holds for we know the best is yet to come.

Thank you to our church family for a wonderful luncheon, great fellowship, kind words, and very generous gift on May 22. All is greatly appreciated, but over the past 17 years you have given us so much more than all that with your love for our family. We can honestly say in 17 years there has not been a time we have not felt loved but this church family.

Thank you again for the luncheon and gift and especially for your love. This church will always hold a special place in our hearts and you will all remain in our prayers. We love you all.

Thank you, we love you and will miss you all,
Pastor Stephen, Terry, Alexa, Jacob



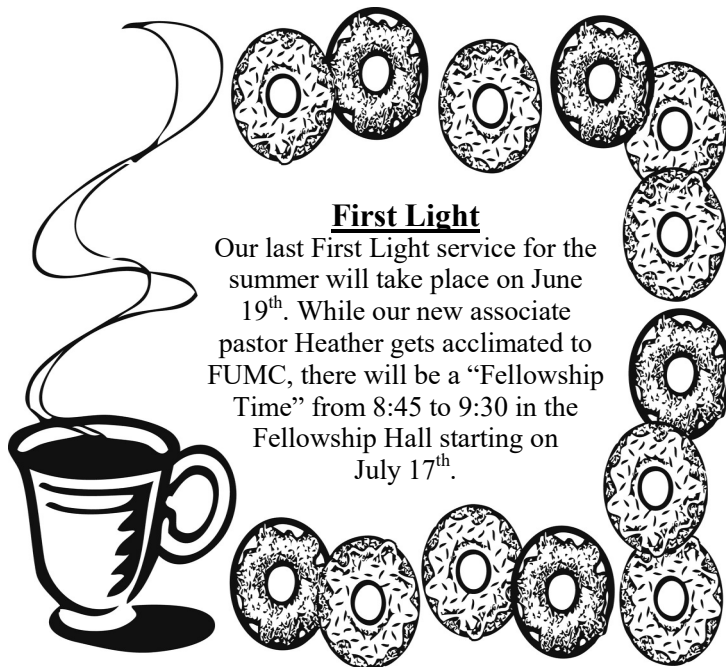
A memorial service for Jim McVey
will be held June 25th at FUMC.

Visitation begins at 11 and the
service will be at Noon.

From Staff Parish Relations Committee

The Staff Parish Relations Committee is saddened to announce that Dr. Johan Botes has accepted a new job as organist at Kanawha Presbyterian Church in Charleston, WV beginning in July. We are saddened to see Johan leave First Church but are happy for him in that he has found a position that better fits his academic schedule. We will miss you Dr. Botes!!

Johan will be giving a concert in June! Look under the music section for more information.



First Light

Our last First Light service for the summer will take place on June 19th. While our new associate pastor Heather gets acclimated to FUMC, there will be a "Fellowship Time" from 8:45 to 9:30 in the Fellowship Hall starting on July 17th.



The Choir Year In Review

With June comes the cessation of weekly choir rehearsals; summer is a time of recharging. In the words of wonderful children's choir expert, Helen Kemp: "Body, Mind, Spirit, Voice – it takes the whole person to sing and rejoice!". Our singers & ringers will be back in September, recharged and ready to once again enliven our worship with the sounds of music.

In the meantime, let's take a look back at how our choirs have spent the last 9 months or so.

The Sanctuary Choir has sung over 40 anthems since September, some with the children and some with Lincoln Brass, some with piano and some a cappella. This group produced a very successful Christmas drama/musical that pulled in a "standing room only" crowd. We have welcomed several new choir members this year, including Leslie Cummings, Sean Adkins, Brenda Tanner, Ade Adeluola, and John Floyd; (we have room for more, in case anyone is wondering!) and all of them – old & new- have been wonderfully faithful! We have been doubly blessed by having both Jay Brooks on organ and Rhonda Adkins on piano – and both of them can also sing like birds!

All said, it has been a very fulfilling choir year for the adults and we're already looking forward to next Fall, when we have two special events lined up to help celebrate our 150th Anniversary: our homecoming weekend Oct 7, 8 & 9, when we'll be welcoming former singers to join us with special rehearsals and music on Sunday morning; and Sunday, Nov 6 – a musical celebration of All Saints Day. If you've been considering joining the Sanctuary Choir, we'd love to have you; join us in the Fall!

And speaking of joining, the Bell Choir, under the direction of Chris Thomas, is also looking for new ringers. These talented musicians rehearse each Wednesday from 6-7 and would love to welcome new people. They play for church every month and also accompany on some of the adult & children choir anthems. Their May Prelude, "Morning Has Broken" was a highlight of their talent.

The Wesley Kids Choir (for children K-5th grade) has had a banner year! They have sung for church every month, plus performed 2 musicals, "The Christmas Express" and another one just a few weeks ago. They have sung several times with the Sanctuary Choir this past year, including the anthems "All Things Bright & Beautiful" and "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee". With only a 45 minute per week rehearsal they have managed to produce some really memorable performances. At the conclusion of their musical, "The Sailor's Bible" on May 11, the "graduating" 5th graders were recognized: Riley Mancuso, Emelia Adkins and Audra Gerlach. These girls will be greatly missed! Many thanks go to the

choir's accompanist, Rhonda Adkins; and the two faithful assistants: Carolyn Waggoner & Emily Riggio. They make everything go more smoothly. We have real pros who handle lights and sound: Jerry Morse, Jeanette & Ken Bannon, & Jack Welch; what a privilege to have them work our productions! And special thanks to church staff members who had "cameo" appearances in "The Sailor's Bible": Scott Sears, Schauna Chambers, Susan Nickels, Harriett Evans, and our former assistant pastor, whose name cannot be remembered, who tried to hog the spotlight. We appreciate these "nameless extras"! LOL!

So, our musicians have had a very productive year and we wish them a restful summer. See you in September!



Organ Recital and Reception

You are invited to a very special afternoon of music and celebration on June 19th at 3:00 pm in our sanctuary. We will kick off the afternoon by honoring our former Director of Music and Organist, Ms. Sandra Folsom, who served for over 1/3 of the life of this congregation! This will be followed by an organ recital by our current organist Dr. Johan Botes, who will be showcasing both his talent and the beauty of the wonderful instrument we have in our sanctuary. A reception honoring both musicians will be held in the Fellowship Hall following the recital.

As part of our 150th Anniversary Celebration, we hope you will spread the word about this special musical event taking place with your friends and family. No tickets will be sold for this performance.



Huntington Floods- Huntington families are hurting. They need our helping cleaning. They need our gifts. They need our prayers. Make monetary gifts to the Church designated to Conference Disaster Relief.

Undie Sunday- To date, you have donated 462 pieces of underwear which will help stock the shelves at Cridlin and Ebenezer. T shirts of all sizes are needed at Cridlin now. New underwear is needed year round.

COME-Western District has not been able to have a Celebration of mission Event for three years. Nevertheless, District churches have donated more than \$8700 in 2022, with First Church giving \$3195 plus donated goods for Scott's Run and New Vision Depot.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Flower Sale- Many thanks to all the folks who bought flowers. Your purchase went towards the Mission work of United Meth-

odist Women (United Women of Faith)

Spring District Meeting-At our first post-pandemic meeting, we learned about the impressive work being done at Grace Pantry, Guyandotte UMC. Connie Miller with her other seven church members fed over 30,000 people last year.

Dorcas Circle-Lynn Cummings, Exec. Director of Cridlin Food and Clothing Closet visited our May meeting. At their next meeting on June 14, the women will be collecting items for Cridlin. In addition to food and clothing, the Closet needs shoes in good condition, pots, pans, and kitchen items. Join us.

FAREWELL BRUNCH- June 19 is Steve's last First Light service. In his honor, United Methodist Women will host a Brunch between services 9:30-10:30. Donations accepted. Proceeds support the Missions of United Methodist Women.



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

6/3 Abby Rutherford
6/4 Talley Sergent
Elliot Hughes
6/6 Hannah Crager
6/9 Jeanne Burford
Lucy Brown
6/12 Gus Meade
6/13 Alma Johnson
6/15 Danny Fuls
Jackson Denning
6/18 Jaxon Hill
6/19 Margie McInerney
Sarah Spurlock
Macee Buell
6/20 Judy Eblin
6/21 Olivia Woodward
6/22 Owen Denning
6/27 Carrie Tanner
6/28 Bob Ganzer
Rylie Richardson
John Viglianco
6/29 Dona Bunn
Kathy Bartram
6/30 Jessie Alford
Bennett Cooke

JULY BIRTHDAYS

7/3 Cindy LeGrand
Jared Bradley
7/5 Oscar Yoost
7/6 Diana Maue
Cindy Legg
7/7 Betsy Grandstaff
Mallory Matthews
7/10 Drew Birkhimer
7/11 Robert Neighborgall
Noah LeGrand
7/13 Jane Morse
7/14 Patryk Ray
7/16 Catina Naegele
7/17 Zelda McKenna
7/18 Lillian Sergent
Molly Archer
7/19 Vicki Buell
7/20 Jeanne Anne Rutherford
Kicker Chiles
Ashleigh Bailey-Bannon
7/22 Jane McColgan
Amy Ward
7/23 Erin Bradley
7/25 Keegan Rowe
7/27 Tracy Jones
Jon Bradley
7/28 Brenda Harlow
7/31 Mark Conner

From the Pastor

"God is great. God is good. And we thank him for our food..."

I think that some variation of this prayer said before meals has been used by countless Christian families throughout the centuries. I know that I have heard more than one of our children at First Church offer it as "grace" before a meal.

The idea of giving thanks before or even after sharing together in a meal makes perfect sense to us. We realize that much of the world around us does not have the access to food that we have in the United States. We also know that even in our own community, there are people who miss meals or who can only afford those meals by accepting what is available from our City Mission.

So, it makes sense for us to show how grateful we are because of the generosity of God.

Making note of our generous God should happen before meals, but it should also be taking place at many other times in our lives...perhaps, every moment of our lives as each and every breath that we take is gift from an all-loving God.

And it is this spirit of gratitude for *God's generosity* that will instill in us a similar attitude of generosity. The more that we see God as generous, the more we are able to be generous ourselves. Just as we are practicing compassion that is an outgrowth of the compassion Jesus has shown us, I hope and pray that we will become generous people, just as God is generous with us.

There are lots of ways that we can talk about church finances. We can use *budgets* and talk about *the needs*. We can also use *stewardship campaigns* and talk about *the need to give*. However, my favorite way of looking at anything that even touches upon church finances and our giving to the church is to talk about how we are generous givers because of God's generosity with us. I think that if we are truly honest about that, then the church will never lack.

You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous in every way. Such generosity produces thanksgiving to God through us.

2 Corinthians 9:11

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Scott

July 2022

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

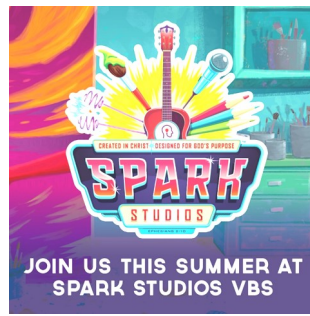
Thu

Fri

Sat

				1	2
3	4	5 Asbury Woods Elementary Camp	6 Finance Meeting 6:00	7	8
10 Reception for Heather Following 10:45 service Asbury Woods High School Camp	11 Cridlin Meeting 3:00 Panel Room	12 Dorcas Circle meeting 1:00	13 Trustee Meeting 6:00	14	15
17 Fellowship Time Begins 8:45-9:30	18	19	20	21	22
24	25	26	27	28	29
31					30

summer YOUTH events



It's never too late to volunteer or join the fun! There is a place for everyone. It is Sunday June 5th from noon to 4 (lunch and snack is provided) and Monday June 6th from 6-8 (snack supper before is provided at 5:30 for kids and volunteers)

The youth would like to take a trip to Ace Adventure Water Park in July! This waterpark features a waterslide, zip lines, waterslides and other fun things to do in the lake. There is group pricing available so the whole family can come! Contact Schauna if interested.

Youth 2023 conference

If your youth is wanting to go to the UMC youth conference YOUTH 2023 in Daytona Beach on July 22-29 2023. Schauna needs to know by **July 1st** so she can book the hotel.



NURSERY *Workers Needed*

Nursery workers are needed to have the nursery open. Workers must be 18 or old, be able to pass a background check, and be available Sundays 9:30-Noon. This is a paid position and would be perfect for someone that wants to work with children

Please contact Schauna or the church office if you are interested!

Camp is on at Asbury Woods!

What is camp you ask?

It is "a fun environment where you get to make new friends, and share in love of Christ together. You also help each other grow and be there for one another." - Alexa Hensley

You will experience games, campfire, vesper services, swimming, and opportunities to learn about God.

Elementary camp is July 5th -9th

Theme: Escape Room (Times in the Bible when people had to escape and how they got out of their situation)

Middle/High camp is July 10th-15th

Theme: Christmas in July (An Advent themed camp leading up to Christmas Morning)

Register today at
Asburywoodswv@wordpress.com
(Upcoming Events tab)



Day Spring Is CALLING You

Johnson Memorial UMC and First UMC are working together to provide a "Day Camp" experience for all children – ages 5 -13 in Ritter Park on June 27, 28, and 29 from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. In order for the children to experience this outreach of our Conference Camp at Spring Heights, **we will need 5 people to volunteer** to be camper "shepherds" for the days of the camp. Activities will be provided by the camp staff at Spring Heights, but those who accompany the children to and from activities will be blessed in ways that they cannot imagine with the joy they will experience from these campers. If you are interested, please contact our children and youth director, Schauna Chambers or Pastor Scott. The time you give will be priceless to these children!

The Sailor's Bible

Wesley Children's Choir



June 2022

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1 Finance Meeting 6:00	2	3	4 The Table Bible Study 9-11
5 VBS After church - 4:30 →	6 VBS-6:00	7	8 Trustee Meeting 6:00	9 Annual Conference →	10	11 →
12	13	14 Dorcas Circle Meeting 1:00	15 SPRC Meeting 7:00	16	17	18
19 Last First Light Service Brunch after First Light Service Concert: Johan Botes 3:00 p.m.	20	21	22	23	24	25 Jim McVey Memorial Service
26	27 Spring Heights Day Spring Camp Ritter Park →	28	29 →	30		

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Senior Pastor,
 Scott Sears

Associate Pastor
 Stephen Hensley

Director of Christian Education
 Schauna Chambers

Sunday Worship Opportunities

First Light 8:45 a.m.
 Small Groups 9:30 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.



Next Tower Topics Deadline July 22, 2022.

Food Pantry Needs:

June- 96 Canned spinach

July- 96 Canned tomatoes



Scholarship applications have been sent out to
 High School Seniors & College Undergrads

If you haven't received one, please contact the
 church office and we will send one to you. If
 your address has changed please let us know so
 we will send to correct address.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Eternal God! Grant us gratitude enough to look backward and be thankful; courage enough to look forward and be hopeful; faith enough to look upward and be humble; kindness enough to look outward and be helpful. Together let us pray...

For those who are sick or homebound...

Mel Cummings, JD Maue, Nancy Palmer, Anna Archer, GinnyLee Hastings, Richard Drown, Alec Cyrus, Mike Conley, Anne Weeks, Leona Davis, Jon Bradley, Mark Burton, Nancy Crum, Martha Cummings, Jack Patrick, caretakers.

For those who grieve

For our community...

Those battling addiction, those who are without shelter, our local leaders

For our world...

The people of Ukraine, victims of natural disasters, those who welcome refugees, and for peace