

November 2022

TOWER TOPICS



THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Community Thanksgiving Service

The Community Thanksgiving Service will be held at Fifth Avenue Baptist Church on Sunday, November 20th at 6:00 pm.

People from all faith communities – Christianity, Islam, and

Judaism – will gather to give thanks to God for the many blessings that we have all encountered. First United Methodist will be participating in the service, and we hope to have over 50 of our congregants present! This is a wonderful inter-faith opportunity for all!

“THE END IS NEAR!! (WELL,...)” A Journey to the SEA – Part 2

The next Sunday evening Academy will be held on the first three Sunday evenings of November, December, and January (11/6, 11/13, 11/20, 12/4, 12/11, 12/18, 1/8, 1/15, and 1/22). This journey to the SEA will be “Our Greatest Book of Hope – Revelation” and yes, we will be diving into the Book of Revelation on each night of the study from 6:30 pm till 8:00 pm. If you would like to join us on this journey, please send an email to Pastor Scott – sears.scott@gmail.com and just say, “Sign me up!” I hope you will join us for the in-depth look at a book of the Bible that is often quite misunderstood.

It is not too late to sign up, but “the end is near!”



Erenrich Address

As many people know, Janice Erenrich, wife of Rev. David Erenrich, suffered a stroke recently. She is currently at home and is working to correct problems with her speech and communication. She is fully mobile. Cards may be sent to Janice Erenrich, 21601 O’Toole Drive, Hagerstown MD 21742. They appreciate all your prayers!

Gratitude Sunday

One of the many ways that we show our gratitude to God for all the gifts we have been given is by living out our vow to support the church with our “gifts.” As members, we take time each year to plan our next year’s giving based on how much gratitude we desire to show God by filling out an Estimate of Giving Card. Our Finance Team uses the Estimate of

Giving cards we receive to plan the next year’s budget. (Please know that these estimates are just that – estimates – and they can be changed as your financial situation changes! God sees and God understands.)

We will be holding our annual Gratitude Sunday on **November 13, 2022**. Two speakers from our congregation will share during the Sundays leading up to this worship service. Our guest speaker on the 13th will be Rev. Deborah Coble, who

serves as the Communications Director for the West Virginia Annual Conference. To show our gratitude for all that God has given us, we will be receiving Estimate of Giving Cards for the 2023 calendar year during the worship service. The service will be followed by a covered dish meal in the Fellowship Hall. The church will provide the pork roast, rolls, and drinks. Details on what to bring to the lunch will be shared in the bulletin, on screen, and through social media.





Prayer is an opportunity for us to listen and talk to God in order to be shaped more into the disciples we're all called to be. We are a community of believers, and together we form relationships with God, with creation, and with other people. Through this companionship we come to know Christ even more and to love all of creation as God does.

The Church Council at its last meeting discussed how we and the whole church could be searching for God's guidance and seek to be a faithful body in our community. Prayer is where we begin. Prayer is where we connect with God to connect with others.

So we ask all of First United Methodist Church to join us in prayer every day at 7:07 am or pm or both. Pray for the church and for God's guidance. For we acknowledge that God is present, God is active, and God is in control. The Spirit of God speaks to us in a variety of ways. Be ready to receive God's

word in every moment, in prayer, in conversations, in silence. We gather to experience God each Sunday, and as you pray at 7:07 each day, pray to experience God. Pray for the church and its missions so that others may also be able to experience God through us.

You can set an alarm on your phone or put a sticky note somewhere in your house to help you remember to pray at 7:07 and to look for God's presence. Remember that each day God is present, God is active, and God is in control of your life and the life of the church. Be on the lookout for how God is speaking to you.

Blessings,
Pastor Heather



11/1	Ben Fischer
11/2	Jacob Hensley
11/3	Gus Cooke IX
11/4	Libby Knight
11/5	Steve Hensley
11/7	Madison Sergent
11/8	Emily Dye
11/10	Ansel Meade Oskar Meade
11/11	Harper Ashley
11/12	Megan Archambault Abby Birkhimer
11/13	Ed Stone Martha Cummings
11/14	Campbell Chiles Brooke Anderson
11/15	Margaret Reichenbecher Chris Hutchison
11/17	Marc Rutherford
11/18	Bob Palmer Emelia Adkins Meagan Shepherd
11/19	Micah Krantz Rhonda Adkins
11/20	Isaiah Crager
11/21	Anne Weeks
11/22	Anne Tebbetts Stephanie Smith
11/23	Sue King Joe Denning Charlee Adkins Elliott Shepherd Max Shepherd
11/24	Evan Knight Jay Brooks
11/26	Ying Tian
11/25	Clark Neighborgall II
11/28	Cynthia Beal Andy Tschop Jonathan Hager
11/29	Mel Cummings III Mike Brown Stone Arthur Cyrus Cummings



It is time for our annual Cookie Walk. On Sunday, December 11, immediately after morning worship, you will have the opportunity to stock up on yummy Christmas cookies and other goodies. But don't be late. They will be gone in 20 minutes!

So, all you good cooks out there, dig out your favorite holiday recipes and bake up a 6-dozen batch of goodies. Then, bring them on the 11th, pick up an empty box and fill it with a wide variety of everybody else's cookies. After you fill your box, the box is weighed and you pay \$7.00 a pound. All proceeds go to the Missions of United Women in Faith.

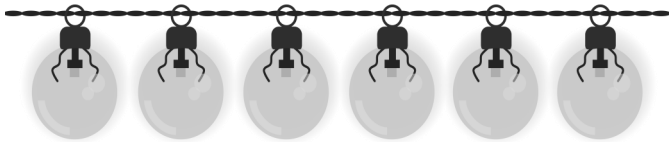
CHARGE Conference REPORTS

Our Annual Charge Conference was held at Community of Grace UMC on Sunday, October 23rd. Officers for 2023 were elected, salaries were set for our pastors, and we received the amounts we are hoping to pay in Conference and District Apportionments. Other business was transacted. Reports from the Charge Conference can be found in the office or on the table at the back of the sanctuary.



Ways To Give This Holiday Season

- Ebenezer Angels: The names and wish lists of children of Ebenezer Outreach will be posted soon on the Fellowship Hall doors
- Mitten Tree
- Cridlin Food and Clothing Pantry: Donate non-perishable foods, socks, underwear and winter clothes
- Christmas for a child in Nicaragua
- UMCOR: Monetary donations go to disaster relief, Heifer Project, or to the City Mission



On October 7th through 9th the congregation of First Church celebrated a Homecoming in such a powerful and wonderful way that I am sure that there are people still talking about it. Our wonderful weekend culminated in a worship service where guest preacher and former pastor Rev. David Erenrich encouraged us to be the people who “poke light into the darkness” in a world that is filled with division and brokenness. It was a powerful time to remind us that every little act we do can bring light into this world – and this world needs the light of Christ Bearers.

I think we can all acknowledge that brokenness is a part of our world. I also think that anyone who watches the news or participates in any way on social media know that we are a society that are thriving on our divisions. We do not have to look far in the UMC to notice that there are divisions within it as well – the second largest church in Texas recently “left the denomination” without even a church vote on the matter! We can even acknowledge that not everyone agrees on everything in our own congregation. However, Jesus never once intended for us to focus upon our differences. Instead, Jesus invites us to know several things that unite us.

First, God is present. The Incarnation (God becoming fully human and fully divine in Jesus) is the prime example to us of God’s presence among us. John 1:14 reminds us, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” This presence did not end with Jesus’ death on the cross, but that death was shown as the ultimate victory of God as Jesus was resurrected on Easter. God is still present.

Second, God is active. There is a wonderful story in the Book of Acts about an Ethiopian eunuch reading the scriptures and not understanding what they were reading. The Holy Spirit moved Philip to run and catch up with the chariot in which the eunuch

Christmas Corner



Hanging of the Greens

Novembers 20th at 1:00

If you are interested in helping prepare our Sanctuary for the season of Advent, please contact the church office!

Christmas Day Worship

Since Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, the Church Council has asked that we prepare ourselves for a special day of worship. There will only be one service on Christmas Sunday, and we will not be having Sunday School. Although details of the service are still being worked out, you can go ahead and include this in your Christmas Day plans because it will be a casual – even pajama – friendly service that will focus on the special joy of this day!

YES! We still will have two worship services on Christmas EVE – 6:00 pm and 11:00 pm!

was reading. It further led Philip to bring to light the Scripture and baptize this person. This story is a powerful reminder that God is “active” in the lives of both believers (as Philip) and in those who have yet to come to believe (the eunuch). We can proclaim with unity always that God is active.

Finally, we can also share together that God is in control. The whole testimony of Scripture shows us the story of God’s power as it is told by the people of God through the ages. The resurrection of Jesus and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the people are both testimonies that there is nothing beyond the control of God. You may have already figured out where there is going, and if so, thank you. If not, you will notice in our worship services going forward we will be “centering” ourselves on what we expect to happen during worship: God is present, God is active, and God is in control. This is a proclamation that we do not control how God speaks to us during worship or how God moves us during worship. What we control is our response to God’s call.

I do not know how long we will continue this practice in worship. It may be a brief time...It may well last till Jesus returns. What I do hope is that we will find ourselves drawing together around this centering time knowing that however God speaks to us about “poking light into the darkness” we will do so as the people of God, loved by Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Peace,
Pastor Scott Sears



Mercy Me Concert is November 19th, if you have not paid please do so when you can.

December 9th will be our annual youth Christmas party, be on the lookout for more information.

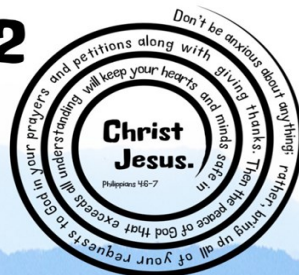
The Youth will be starting to fundraiser for Youth2023 with a soup drive December 16th. This is an easy way to warm up and fill your stomachs while providing funds for the youth's trip to Florida next year!

Fall Workshop '22

This is our prayer!



Council on Youth Ministries
West Virginia Conference
The United Methodist Church



Fall Workshop is November 18th -20th for youth. It is \$125. Youth get to pick between workshops such as prayer hike, painting and prayer, praying with scripture, writing as a devotional practice, games with staff, mystery, getting crafty and Mario kart tournament. Get in contact with Schauna Chambers for more information.

The recent Homecoming Celebration gave the choirs a real reason to rejoice! We had lots of former members singing and ringing with us and it created quite a joyful noise. It was a true highlight of our weekend of remembrance & celebration. We are grateful to those who added their voices and to those who worked so hard to make the entire celebration meaningful and memorable. There truly was "*Joy in the Morning!*"

As we turn our thoughts forward now the choirs have lots going on to prepare for All Saints' Day, Thanksgiving, Advent & Christmas.



The Sanctuary Choir, Wesley Choir and Lincoln Brass will be presenting special music during our All Saints Day worship on Nov 6. This is always a very meaningful service so make plans now to be there. We are also planning some special music on Nov 20th with choir, bells and flute, so don't miss that either!

The Wesley Choir are also busy preparing their Christmas Musical, entitled *A Christmas Yarn*. From now until the musical is over, their choir rehearsal time will be from 6:00-7:00 and there will be NO KFC during Nov & Dec. The musical will be presented on Wednesday night, Dec 14th.

If you were one of the many people who attended our Christmas Dessert Theater last year you're going to be happy to hear we're doing another one! More yummy, scrumptious desserts; more fabulous music; more funny yet poignant drama! This year's production is called *Love Was Born a King* and it will be presented on Sunday afternoon, Dec 4th at 3pm. Last year was standing room only, so plan accordingly.

On Sunday morning, Dec 18th the Sanctuary Choir and Lincoln Brass will once again join forces to present some very special Christmas music during the worship service. Celebrating the birth of our Savior demands our very best efforts and we'll be attempting to musically do just that on the 18th. Your help will be required as we sing hymns and carols to proclaim our joy in this wonderful, holy season.

So, make a conscious effort to be a physical part of all these special musical and worship events. As we discovered during our Homecoming there is real **POWER in PRESENCE**. God's spirit is felt more powerfully when we are worshipping together; it is contagious. We need each other and that means **YOU** are important to spreading God's spirit.

150th CELEBRATION

PICTURES

Rev. David Erenrich



Display of past activities of the church



Post service dinner



Welcome music on the Banjo for visitors



Bell Choir led by Chris Thomas



Dr. Mark Conner reads the scripture



Choir on Sunday morning





Banner Designed by Joe Eddins Designs for the Celebration



Gathering of pastors and guest speakers

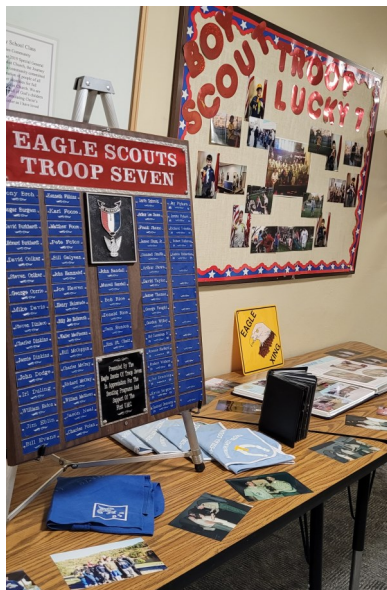


Saturday morning choir rehearsal



Dr. Jane Ellen Nickell delivers a pastoral prayer

Boy Scout table



Showing off wonderful memories of the past activities



Banners and displays in the sanctuary



Susan and Fran cooking dinner



A soldier welcomes visitors on the tours

November 2022

Sundays

8:30 The Gathering
9:30 Small Groups
10:45 Traditional Worship

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

Wednesday

10-12 Veterans Group (Parlor)
11:00 Bible Study
5:00 Fellowship dinner
6:00 Yoga (\$5.00 a person)
Handbell choir
Wesley Choir
Bible Study
NO KFC DURING NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER
7:00 Sanctuary Choir

		1	2	3	4	5
			Finance Meeting 6:00	First Stage Winnie The Pooh		
6 Soup Fundraiser for Youth 2023 SEA: Part 2 Begins 6:30	7	8 Dorcas Circle 1:00	9 Finance Meeting 6:00	10	11	12
13 Stewardship Sunday and Dinner	14 Crdlin Meeting 1:00	15	16 Staff Parish Meeting 7:00	17	18 Episcopal Church Night 5:00	19 Episcopal Church Night 3:00 Mercy Me Concert →
20 Hanging of the Green 1:00 Community Thanksgiving Service 6:00 (FAB)	21	22	23 Lifhouse Dinner (Volunteers welcome!)	24 Thanksgiving (Office Closed)	25 (Office Closed)	26
27 1st Sunday of Advent	28	29	30			

Upcoming Dates in December

4: Adult Music Program
7: Finance Meeting
11: Cookie Walk
13: Dorcas Circle
14: Kids Music Program
Trustee Meeting (Check near date for possible cancellation)
21: Staff Parish
24: Christmas Eve Services
25: Casual Christmas Service
26: Office Closed
30: Blood Drive

First United Methodist Church
1124 Fifth Avenue
Huntington, West Virginia 25701-2288
 Phone: (304) 522-0357

firstumc@firstunitedmethodist.com
 www.firstunitedmethodist.com



CHANGE SERVICE
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Senior Pastor,
 Scott Sears

Associate Pastor
 Heather Barker

Director of Christian Education
 Schauna Chambers

Sunday Worship Opportunities

The Gathering 8:30 a.m.
 Small Groups 9:30 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.



**God is present,
 God is active,
 God is in control**

Next Tower Topics Deadline November 18, 2022

November Calendar

SUNDAY, NOV. 6

SERVICE PROJECT:

COOKING IN THE CHURCH KITCHEN

SUNDAY, NOV. 13

**CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP IN
 FELLOWSHIP HALL**

SUNDAY, NOV. 20

HIKING CHURCH AT RITTER PARK

SUNDAY, NOV. 27

**CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP IN
 FELLOWSHIP HALL**

THE
GATHERING
 SUNDAYS - 8:30 A.M.

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...

Janice Erenrich, Lisa Cooke, Mel Cummings, Martha Cummings, Mary Plyde Bell, Jon Bradley, Judy Davis, Dawn Aikin, Jeanne Burford, Leona Davis, GinnyLee Hastings, Betty Keeling, Claire McClure, Jane McColgan, Dan Smith, Pat Sydnor, Jean White, Tracy Jones, JD Maue, Nancy Palmer, Mike Goodall, Beth McVey, Anna Archer, Richard Drown, Mike Conley, Anne Weeks, Carolyn Waggoner, Jack Patrick, Caretakers.