

December 2022 and January 2023

TOWER TOPICS



informal but (we hope) very meaningful celebration of the birth of Christ. You are encouraged to “not make a fuss” about getting ready for the worship service – wear your pajamas if you want – and join us for singing carols, saying prayers, telling the story of Jesus’ birth, and celebrating God’s presence among us.

New Year’s Day

Since the New Year begins on a Sunday as well, we will not have early service or Small Groups on that day. Coffee will be available in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 am and worship will be held in the Sanctuary at 10:45 am.

Estimate of Giving Cards

Most families have received at least one copy of an Estimate of Giving for 2023 either through the mail or during our worship service. If you have not received one or need another one, feel free to contact the church office. We hoped to have all these forms in by the end of November, but realize that in these current economic times some are still making plans for their 2023 giving. Please try to have it to us by the end of the year!

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

We will have Christmas Eve worship on Saturday, December 24th at 6:00 pm and 11:00 pm. Both services end with a candlelight ceremony that marks the birth of the Light of the World. The earlier service is meant to help with the schedules of those who have young children in their families but please know that children are welcome at either service!

On Christmas Day, Sunday, the 25th, we will not be having our early service (8:30 am) or Small Groups. Instead, we will gather in the Sanctuary at 10:45 am for an



| | |
|-------|----------------------|
| 12/1 | Trinity Casto |
| 12/4 | Jennifer Niemann |
| 12/5 | Andrew Canterbury |
| | Grace Gooding |
| | Joseph Eddins, III |
| 12/6 | Susan Wylie |
| 12/7 | Leah O’Roark |
| | Elizabeth Sergent |
| 12/8 | Joey Bacon |
| 12/10 | Allie Bright |
| 12/11 | Carter Matthews |
| 12/12 | Richard Drown |
| 12/17 | Paige Cruz |
| | Tyler Cummings |
| 12/18 | Jack Welch |
| | Molly Sergent |
| | Brooks Anderson |
| 12/19 | Quentin Neighborgall |
| 12/20 | Ken Bannon |
| 12/21 | Joyce Ray |
| | Marie Archambault |
| | Caleb Morgan |
| | Conner Smith |
| 12/22 | Pam McCoy |
| | Mel Cummings IV |
| 12/23 | Linda Eddins |
| | Katherine Reid |
| | Vivian Yoost |
| | August Cooke IX |
| 12/25 | Kevin Dillon |
| 12/27 | Geneva Shanholtzer |
| 12/28 | Brenda Tanner |
| | Jolie Eddins |
| 12/30 | Otto Denning |



On 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.

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

firstumc@firstunitedmethodist.com
www.firstunitedmethodist.com



CHANGE SERVICE
REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Huntington, WV
PERMIT NO. 173

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.



Next Tower Topics Deadline January 20, 2022

SEASON OF PREPARATION ORDER FORM

CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATES CRIDLIN FOOD/CLOTHING PANTRY

2022 "Warmed and Fed" Campaign
Now through 12/31/22



A Season of Preparation

"she wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger..."

HONOR SOMEONE YOU LOVE and PROVIDE

A New Coat - Nutritional Food - Other Basic Needs

For Someone Who Can Least Afford It!

Please make checks payable to

Christian Associates

P. O. Box 595

Huntington, WV 25710-0595

Enclosed please find a check for:

\$ _____ Coats/Basic Needs (\$20/Coat)

\$ _____ Nutritional Food (\$5/person/day)

_____ Please check here if you would like a Gift
Acknowledgement Card/s

_____ Please indicate the number of cards requested

THANK YOU!

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, 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.

Pastor's Article

"Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke 2:10b-11 NRSV

It is our 151st year of celebrating the birth of Jesus as the congregation known as First United Methodist Church in Huntington. If you think about it, that almost five times as many years as Jesus walked upon this earth after his birth.

A lot has taken place since the birth of Jesus and even in the years since the birth of this congregation. We have seen bloody crusades, World Wars, countless small wars, so many natural disasters that we cannot count, plagues, and pandemics. We have also seen major innovations that the first century world could not even imagine in technology, travel, communication, and medicine. Sometimes it boggles my mind to think about everything that has changed in

the world just since my own birth, let alone since the birth of Christ.

That's why the words of the angels from Luke 2 above are still very important to us today as we celebrate Christmas 2022 and welcome in the new year of 2023. "Do not be afraid...I am bringing you good news of great joy for ALL the people..." (emphasis added). Good news of great joy for ALL. The angel did not have any idea who any of us were when those words were spoken and yet, these words are meant for us as much as they were meant for the shepherds who heard them first.

We have no reason to fear in this world, or if we do become afraid for some reason, we have not reason to remain in fear. God has sent us salvation. God has sent us a Savior. God has sent us our Lord – Jesus.

In the movie, "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby", there is a classic (and somewhat irreligious) scene which nonetheless has a message for us. If you've seen the movie, no doubt you know of

which I speak but for those who have not, suffice it to say that the title character is coerced to pray at a meal and insists that he can pray to the "Dear 8 pounds 6 ounces... newborn infant Jesus, don't even know a word yet..." and he proceeds to do so in hilarious fashion.

What this scene can remind us all is that there is something about seeing Jesus as a baby that makes God relevant and close to ALL people. There is something about God becoming one of us in our most vulnerable states that can speak to ALL of us. That is Good News.

As you celebrate Christmas and New Year's this time around, I pray that you will do it as the people of the baby Jesus. I pray you will do it as those who are willing to reach all those around you as much as God was willing to reach us – by becoming as vulnerable as a newborn to those who don't yet know Jesus.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Pastor Scott Sears



| | |
|------|-------------------|
| 1/3 | GinnyLee Hastings |
| | Killian Rowe |
| | Levi Krantz |
| 1/6 | Jacob Eddins |
| 1/11 | Sophia Wylie |
| 1/13 | Sarah Thomas |
| 1/15 | Tina Goings |
| 1/17 | John Archambault |
| | Eli Crager |
| 1/19 | Jay Shepherd |
| 1/20 | Sarah Young |
| 1/23 | Jack Patrick |
| | Stephen Fowler |
| 1/25 | Wes Shanholtzer |
| | Kevin Ray |
| | Holly McKenna |
| | Alex Bradley |
| 1/30 | Alex Hagan |
| 1/31 | Emily Tschop |
| | Cassie Bacon |

Budget and Apportionment Giving

Throughout 2022 we have been blessed to be able to pay our operating expenses without too much of a struggle. However, the same cannot be said for our Missional Giving through the Apportionments of the WVAC of the UMC. We are currently only just above 40% of the amount we accepted to work towards paying for this year.

Please look at your latest statement of giving to First Church and help us reach even closer to our apportionment goal by giving what you can to be at your estimate for 2022. Please know that if God has blessed you this year in some special way, an extra gift to your church would be greatly appreciated.

2022 has been an extremely difficult year for our Annual Conference. Although we have reduced the number of Districts from 9 to 7 in order to cut back on expenses, giving to the apportionments and missions of the conference are reaching all time lows. First Church has often been a leader when times are at their worst for our Conference. Let's all be in prayer that we will do all that we can to reach our apportioned amount for 2022!

Small Group Feature

The Dorcas Circle November meeting was blessed to have as our guest speaker Jennie Yoost, MD, a specialist in pediatric and adolescent Gynecology. She shared her experiences and knowledge of children's issues. Dr. Yoost also gave us insight into WV law pertaining to her field of medicine. Our many thanks to Dr. Yoost for taking the time to share with us.



DECEMBER

YOUTH2023
SOUP TO GO FUNDRAISER

When:
December 18th

Where: First
United
Methodist

Time: Noon

Choices:
Vegetable &
Potato

Price: \$15/Quart

Deadline for
orders:
December 14th



**All Proceeds go towards
Youth2023 trip
Delivery is available upon
request**

**Contact Schauna
Chambers for more info:
304-634-9684**

CHRISTMAS PARTY



Youth Christmas Party will be held at the church Friday December 9th from 6pm to 8pm. Bring a white elephant gift worth no more than \$10. If you would like to help with food please let Schauna know.

ASBURY WOODS
Presents



Love Your Selfie
MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT

January 13th - 15th

\$25 early bird rate by Dec. 15th
\$50 after Dec. 15th

*group/multi camper discount available

middle school contact: Alexa Hensley 304-690-3790
high school contact: schauna chambers 304-634-9684



The youth are going on a day ski trip to Winterplace on January 21st. This is also open to people of the congregation. If your youth has not been skiing before we encourage a parent or guardian to come with and a ski lesson must take place which can be arranged.

Also if there is anyone that would like to come and be the "safe spot" where we can meet up we would love to have you on the trip! If you are interested, Schauna needs to know as soon as possible so she can get a group rate. Money will be due by January 8th in order to reserve your spot.

JANUARY

Confirmation

If you have a youth that is wanting to go through confirmation please get that information to Schauna as soon as possible.

Save the Date

As the new year begins keep in mind these dates for the summer.

Vacation Bible School June 4th and 5th.
Middle School/High School Camp July 5th-9th
Elementary Camp July 10th- 14th

SUPPORT A GIVING CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:15-17

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES



EBENEZER ANGELS

The names and wish lists of children from Ebenezer Outreach are posted on the Fellowship Hall doors. Let's help them have a Merry Christmas



MITTEN TREE

Soon the mitten tree will appear at the foot of the stairs. Decorate it with hats, scarves, mittens and gloves for cold, needy children in our community.



SIMPLE GIFTS

If you dread facing the shopping frenzy, consider giving a First Church gift- bag of pecans, a box of cookies, a knife, or ornament.



CRIDLIN FOOD PANTRY

Non-perishable foods, socks, underwear, and winter clothes.

Items requested from FUMC
96 jars of peanut butter/jelly



WRITE A CHECK

to UMCOR for disaster relief, Heifer Project, City Mission or to any of the many reputable charities that are struggling to meet the needs of the suffering.



HOMELESS VETERANS OUTREACH CENTER

Donate basic household supplies, clothing and other winter items for homeless going into their own apartments

CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS



December 4: Christmas Dessert Theater is back, sweeter than ever! Sunday, December 4 at 3 pm in the fellowship hall you can experience all of the desserts your heart desires while enjoying a Christmas musical produced by our Sanctuary choir. The program, *LOVE Was Born A KING*, lasts about an hour and features more than a few familiar actors and singers. Our singers have worked very hard to make this a memorable time of music & fellowship, and we hope to see YOU there. Donations will be accepted and used toward future music projects.

December 14: The Wesley Children's Choir will be presenting *A Christmas Yarn* on Wednesday evening, December 14 at 6 pm in the fellowship hall. This year's tale takes place in a sweater factory owned by Samantha Ebenezer who is visited three times, in order to help her experience the spirit of Christmas.

Father Christmas usually makes an appearance at the conclusion of the program, so children of all ages should be present to visit him!

On Sunday morning, December 18 The Lincoln Brass will open our worship service with a pre-service concert of Christmas music starting at 10:30. So please come early that day and enjoy the sounds of Christmas before the regular worship service begins. Jay Brooks, Rhonda Adkins, Cindy Legg, guest artist Gale Poe, and all the singers in Sanctuary Choir will be pulling out all of the stops to present glorious, unforgettable Christmas music. You don't want to miss this celebration!

December & January calendar

SUNDAY, DEC. 4

Service Project:
Packing hygiene kits at Cridlin Food Pantry

Sunday, Dec. 18

Hiking Church:
Christmas decorations at Pullman Square
(Starbucks for Hot Coco/Coffee)

Sunday, Jan. 1

Service Project:
Details to Come

Sunday, Jan. 15

Hiking Church:
Ritter Park

THE
GATHERING
SUNDAYS - 8:30 A.M.

After several months since launching The Gathering, we have learned a lot and experienced God in many ways besides traditional worship. Hiking Church has been a blast each third Sunday. Lots of people and several dogs have been hitting the trails to connect with one another and share in a devotional. It's been such a blessing for me (Pastor Heather) to witness people of all ages enjoying God's creation and worshiping in a new way. On Dec. 18 we'll be getting in the holiday spirit by taking hiking church downtown to walk around Pullman Square to grab coffee/hot chocolate and share an advent devotional.

The Gathering has been reaching out to the community in their service projects over the past couple months by collecting pet supplies and preparing meals. We will continue to be God's hands and feet through service by packing hygiene kits for our siblings who are experiencing homelessness and low income at Cridlin Food and Clothing Pantry on Dec. 4. All ages are welcome to come help but be aware that the stairs down to the pantry may be difficult for some.

A few months ago, The Gathering began offering a contemporary worship experience twice a month. It has been fun to have the band lead us in

music and share in communion each worship week. However, the pastoral staff has decided to hit "pause" on the contemporary service to lead a time of reflection on how we along with those who lead music and tech can offer worship in a way our community needs and wants. Attendance has been low at the contemporary service and the lack of interest particularly in the service has us wondering what else we can offer to God and to our church. As we go into the new year, we will be brainstorming with those in the church some other worship experiences. If you have any ideas of how you'd do worship or would like to be involved in The Gathering in any way, reach out to Pastor Heather.

Blessings,

Pastor Heather

December 2022



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

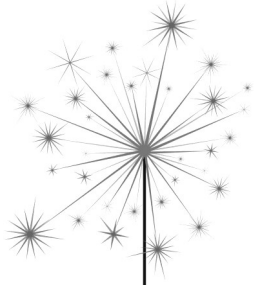
Sundays

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

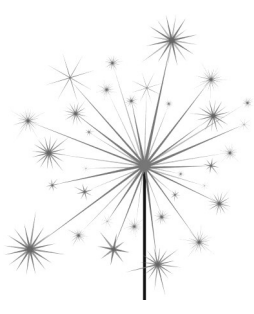
Wednesday

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
7:00 Sanctuary Choir

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------------|--|----|--|--|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 Adult Music Program and Dessert Bar 3:00 pm SEA | 5 | 6 | 7 Finance Meeting 7:00 | 8 | 9 Faith in Action Christmas Dinner | 10 |
| 11 Cookie Walk Fairland High School Concert 7:00 SEA Study | 12 | 13 Dorcas Circle 1:00 | 14 Kid's Music Program 6:00 Trustee meeting TBD | 15 | 16 Youth Soup Fundraiser | 17 |
| 18 Christmas music concert 10:30 a.m. | 19 | 20 | 21 Staff Parish 7:00 | 22 | 23 | 24 Christmas Eve Services 6:00 & 11:00 p.m. |
| 25 Christmas Day Service (Casual service, pajamas encouraged) | 26 Office is Closed | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 New Years Eve |



January 2023



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

| | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|---|----|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 No Gathering or Small Groups Coffee fellowship at 9:30 | 2 | 3 | 4 Veterans Christmas Breakfast Finance Meeting 6:00 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 Trustee Meeting 6:00 | 12 | 13 Asbury Woods Camp | 14 Asbury Woods Camp |
| 15 Asbury Woods Camp | 16 | 17 | 18 Staff Parish 7:00 | 19 | 20 | 21 Youth Ski Trip Winterplace |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |