

February 2023

# TOWER TOPICS

How does an evening of laughter and good food sound? How would you like to help FUMC reach 100% of our fair share this year? How would you like to have a casual way to introduce prospective members to our church? WE HAVE THE ANSWER!



## CHILI & CHUCKLES A Friday Night FOOD & FUN EVENT

6:00, Feb 17<sup>th</sup> in Fellowship Hall

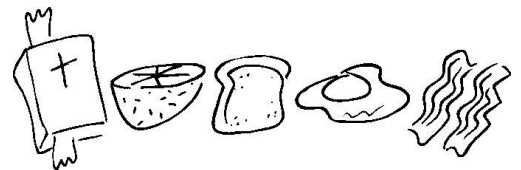
Our Wednesday Willing Workers and a few others will be making chili for a Chili Cook-Off that will be followed by a Dessert Auction of our choir's best desserts. Meanwhile, you will be fabulously entertained by a variety of talented children, youth & adults. The emphasis will be on FUN. Nothing serious allowed! Our goal is to gather a minimum of \$1000 toward OUR FAIR SHARE. A worthy cause, good food and plenty of laughs – what more could you ask for? Bring your wallet, bring your family, bring your neighbors & friends.



The Lenten Season is fast approaching, and it is a time for us to slow down and reflect on ourselves and our world as we prepare for the coming of Easter. Lent lasts forty days, not including Sundays, and represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness being tempted before starting his ministry. So, we today also take this opportunity to fast, examine, and focus on our relationship to God.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, and this year we will offer a couple options for you to welcome in this holy season with worship and the imposition of ashes. On Feb. 22, the first way to receive ashes, whether on your head or your hand, will be offering an Ashes on the Go. You can come to the church on Ash Wednesday from 8:30-9:30 am to be marked with a cross on your way to work or to begin your day. You'll be able to drive through the parking lot to receive a blessing and be reminded that "you are dust and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).

As is tradition, we will also be having an evening worship service following our usual fellowship meal. Worship will begin at 6 pm, and we will reflect on themes of repentance and human mortality. This will help us to focus us for the Lenten Season on Christ who came into this world to experience life as a human and sacrifice himself for our sins. We hope you'll join us for one or both of these services!



## Men's Prayer Breakfast

Men's breakfast is coming back February 11th with some new times. We will start at 8 with coffee, juice and fellowship. Breakfast will be ready by 8:30. The menu will be the same with eggs, sausage gravy, bacon and biscuits. A short devotion will follow and a time for a program.



I would like to say a few words about how proud I am of the Sanctuary Choir for all they accomplished throughout the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the Christmas Season. In case you've forgotten, may I spend a few words reminding you that they performed beautiful, celebratory music for the 150<sup>th</sup> service, aided by several former choir members and the always terrific

Lincoln Brass? A few short weeks later in November they once again performed major music with Lincoln Brass for All Saints Days. Less than a month after that, they presented a dramatic Christmas musical in the fellowship hall, complete with acting, singing, and a mountain of desserts that they themselves provided. And to finish off the Christmas Season, on the Sunday before Christmas they, along with Lincoln Brass, timpani & 2 pianists provided glorious music that will not soon be forgotten. Whew! Lots of music!

All in all, they have completed a VERY ambitious Fall season and all who have enjoyed their music should make an effort to thank them. Because of the separation between the choir loft and the congregation, choir members don't always see congregants; I urge you to make the effort to thank them for their music & their dedication week after week after week.

WESLEY CHOIR

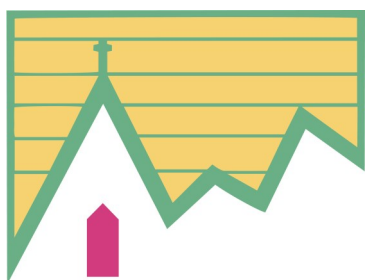
The children are already busy preparing new music for the coming months, including a musical for their year-ending finale. They meet every Wednesday from 6:00 - 6:45 & always welcome new singers. Surely there's someone you know who would like to be involved; invite them!

Schedule of singing for church:

- Feb 12
- Mar 12
- April 9 (Easter)
- May 21 (Musical)
- Special Performance: Feb 17 for Chili & Chuckles

**FEBRUARY**  
Birthdays

- 2/1 Yeon Choi
- 2/2 Jean Frederick  
Leslie Cummings
- 2/4 Paxton Brown
- 2/7 Jim Cummings  
Jax O'Roark
- 2/9 Karen Shanholtzer  
Matt Duncan
- 2/10 Abby Naegele
- 2/12 Forrest Wamsley  
Zara Harold
- 2/13 Ashley Davis
- 2/14 Alex Nelson
- 2/17 Emily Phipps  
Justin Legg
- 2/18 Willa May Weekley  
Harriett Evans
- 2/20 Claire McClure  
Bill Archer  
Rick Brown  
Drew Cummings
- 2/21 Betsy Hager  
Mathew Allen
- 2/22 Becky McCoy  
Jana Haslam
- 2/23 Fenton Cummings  
Jeanette Bailey  
Evelyn DeMuth
- 2/24 Jordan Fulford  
Watson Stefanides
- 2/26 Olivia Butterfield  
Linden Chiles
- 2/27 Troy Jones  
Drew Adkins



**Church  
FINANCES**

**2022 Financial Overview**

Income for Operating Budget: 377,395.79  
 Expenses for Operations: 383,419.81  
 Amount of Conference Fair Share: 107,888  
 Paid toward Fair Share Amount: 48,303  
 Amount of District Fair Share: 7,552  
 Paid toward District Fair Share: 7,552  
 Amounts given to UMCOR and other UM  
 Missions through directed giving: 13,422

**SEA 3 – Sunday Evening  
Academy**

The third edition of the Sunday Evening Academy will begin on February 26 and will run through Palm Sunday (with the exception of March 5). Meetings will be from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. This study will focus on the Biblical Passages from the gospels (and other Old Testament and New Testament passages that make reference to them) that show us the seven days leading up to Easter Sunday. If you are interested in being a part of this study please email Pastor Scott and say, "Sign me up for SEA 3!" at [sears.scott@gmail.com](mailto:sears.scott@gmail.com).

## Not Quite Home... from the Senior Pastor

A friend of mine was recently recalling the events of January 2014. She noted that in the first two weeks of that year she had experienced two power outages, an ice storm, and their drinking water had been poisoned by a chemical spill in the area where they lived. As she reflected on this she wrote, "I guess every year has its challenges." Isn't that the truth?

For the past few years, we have passed through some of our own challenges. There is no reason to name or list them because we know and are still living the aftermath of the main challenge we faced. Many challenges still face the UMC that we love as well.

However, one thing has not changed from 2014 to 2023 or any year before and in between. *God is present.*

Sure, some of you may tire of saying that as we gather for worship on some Sunday morning. You may tire of hearing it and just phase out the other phrases as well - *God is active. God is in control.*

One of the fundamental things that we need to learn as Christians, however, is the basic truth contained in those phrases. It is not just the first step we need to make in the Christian life, it is the very foundation of living a Christian life every day.



When we are about to lose it at work with a co-worker because of their actions - God is present.

When we look at the bills piling up on our desk - God is active.

When we look at ourselves in the mirror and don't like what we see - God is in control.

When we are happy that we successfully completed some task - God is present.

When we are thrilled that our children listened to our advice - God is active.

When we look at the sunshine - God is in control.

Learning to live a spiritual life, a life that is flooded with the presence of Jesus Christ is not something that is ever "completed". We learn it repeatedly through every heartache, every success, every trial, and every moment of joy.

I hope and pray that 2023 is filled with more moments of joy for you and for us as a congregation than any year in our past 151 as a community of faith. But no matter what, *God is present. God is active. God is in control.*

Peace,  
Pastor Scott

# Youth INFORMATION



Youth 2023 will be selling chocolate covered cherries to help raise funds for their trip! The cherries will be available after church February 5th and 12th. The cost will be \$20 a box. This will make for a great gift for the ones you love! If you are unable to make it to church, don't worry-you can call the church office and make an order. If ordering with a check, please put Youth2023 in the memo line.



The youth will be going ice skating March 11th at the South Charleston Ice Arena. Prices will depend on how many people go. If you are interested in going on the trip, please contact Schauna or the church office.



It seems wild to be thinking about VBS in February, but preparation ensures that the kids will have a great time! This year's theme is "Pets Unleashed-Where Jesus Cares 'Fur' You." The fun will begin June 4th and end the next day.

Schauna will be sending out and posting a donation list at the end of this month-each item is greatly appreciated and makes a difference in the success of VBS. If you do not want to make an item donation, consider donating your time by volunteering to help with the many moving parts that go into making VBS happen each year. Help is always needed in decorating, teaching, tear down, and many other places. With your help, VBS can be 'paw'some!

# February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Finance Meeting 6:00 Dinner: Hamburgers, hotdogs, French fries	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Trustee Meeting 6:00 Dinner: RanchChicken	9	10	11 Men's Breakfast 8:00 a.m.
12	13	14 Dorcas Circle Meeting 1:00	15 SPRC Meeting 7:00 Dinner: Lasagna	16	17 Chili and Chuckles 6:00	18
19	20	21	22 Ashes on the Go 8:30-9:30 am Ash Wednesday Service: 6:00 Dinner: Baked Steak	23	24	25
26	27	28				

Our First Church family has served as Jesus' hands in many ways this holiday season. Here are a few of the ways you served:

-Adopted 21 Ebenezer Angels and four children from the Homeless veterans program.

-Provided food, clothing, gloves, hats, and volunteers

-The Mitten Tree produced a bountiful crop of 150+ items-hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, socks, and blankets-which were distributed to Ebenezer Outreach, Cridlin, Branches, City Mission and Cabell-Huntington nursery.

-Tie blankets to warm the needy

-Clothes and supplies for Homeless Veterans

-Animals, water, honey, and trees for Heifer Project

-Cookies to Branches, Ebenezer, and the City Mission

## United Women in Faith:

We may have a new name, but it has not slowed us down. Thanks to our donations, the flower sale, the brunch, and the Cookie Walk, we were able to donate \$2600 to the ongoing Missions of UWC. Locally, the Dorcas Circle have learned about ongoing missions and have donated generously to their work. In 2022, we supported Branches, Homeless Veterans, Cridlin, and Scott's Run (for the Celebration of Mission Event), and Harmony House. We keep in contact with our shut-ins, write letters to legislators, and collect bedding for flood victims. We made health kits and helped fill flood buckets. Next month, we will be filling Valentine's bags for our shut-ins.



# BUSY HANDS

## Mission Update

### A MESSAGE OF *Love*

Make this valentine for a family member or friend.



#### What you need:

- 10 wooden craft sticks
- Painter's tape
- Markers
- A photo and glue (optional)
- Craft knife (and adult help)
- Ribbon or a rubber band

#### What you do:

1. Set the sticks side by side. Secure with two tape strips.
2. Flip the sticks over. Draw (or glue on) a picture or write a message or Bible verse. If using glue, let dry.
3. Flip the sticks again and remove tape. If you glued on a photo, have an adult help cut the sticks (and photo) apart.
4. Secure the sticks with ribbon or a rubber band.
5. Deliver the gift and invite the recipient to assemble the puzzle.

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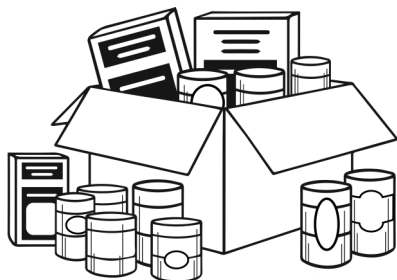
Director of Christian Education  
Schauna Chambers

**Sunday Worship Opportunities**

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



**Next Tower Topics Deadline February 17, 2023**



**Food Donations**

**Cridlin Food and Clothing  
Pantry Needs**

*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, Leona Davis, GinnyLee Hastings, Claire McClure, Jane McColgan, Dan Smith, Pat Sydnor, Jean White, Tracy Jones, JD Maue, Nancy Palmer, Mike Goodall, Beth McVey, Mike Conley, Anne Weeks, Carolyn Waggoner, Jack Patrick, Caretakers.

**February: 96 Cans of Carrots  
March: 96 Cans of Vegetable  
Soup**