

June and July 2023

TOWER TOPICS

“Dream Team”

Following the conversations that took place when the Cabinet asked First Church and Johnson Memorial to think about sharing pastoral leadership there were a lot of topics that still needed further investigation and conversation. Pastor Scott and Pastor Heather, after prayer and discernment, decided to call together a group of lay people from various ages and stages in the congregation to join us in a time of dreaming about future ministries of the church. This team is made up of Charlie Buell, Leslie Cummings, Jarrett Gerlach, Sandy King, Shelby Nelson, Margaret Reichenbecher, Christy Stephanides, Chris Thomas, Jack Welch, Pastor Heather and Pastor Scott.

At our first meeting, the importance of prayer surrounding this endeavor was the main emphasis and each person on the team invited someone (not from their family) to serve as a prayer partner. These prayer partners are also being asked to share their ideas for growing church ministry and reaching New People in New Places to the person for whom they are praying. Soon, those prayer partners will be asked to recruit yet another prayer partner. Eventually the whole church will be in prayer and conversation about reaching New People in New Places. So, in the meantime, if you have ideas that you would like to share, contact Pastor Scott or Pastor Heather, so that they can link you up in the prayer chain!!



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 it to the correct address.

Christian Associates
invites you to join us at
Cridlin Food & Clothing Pantry's
OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, June 6, 2023
4:30-6:30 PM
1038 Sixth Avenue
Huntington | West Virginia

Please come and tour our new facility.
Because of your dedication to our mission, we will
now be better able to serve our community.



Jesus said, "I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear."

Matthew 25:35-36

THEOLOGY ON TAP

A casual atmosphere where people can come with their questions and opinions to share and be in fellowship with others in the community.

Our first Theology on Tap will be on
Monday, June 26 from 6:30-8 pm at
Summit Beer Station



THEY
NEED
OUR
HELP!



Before they move into their new home, Cridlin is looking for volunteers to help sort, pack and move food and clothing. Meet at Trinity Episcopal on the dates below or call 304-633-1102

Opportunities to help
Friday June 2nd (2:30 – 5:30)
Saturday June 3rd (11:00 – 4:00)
Sunday, if needed, June 4th (1:00 – 5:00)

The choirs have wrapped up a very successful year and will be on a much-deserved break until Fall. However, music will continue to be a priority in our worship service; we'll be utilizing the talents of individual singers and instrumentalists throughout the summer. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact DebbieBradleyfume@gmail.com.

In the month of June we'll be soliciting your input on favorite hymns to sing during worship on Sunday, July 2nd. Submit as many as you wish and get your vocal cords in shape before July 2nd. You may send your choices to the e mail above or turn in the form below. Thanks for your input.

Hymn Sing Requests

1.	Hymn #
2.	Hymn #
3.	Hymn #

Your name _____



The Children's musical, "Tell Me The Truth" on May 21st AND the dinner that followed were a lot of fun and everyone did a terrific job. If you weren't in attendance that day, I recommend you watch it on YouTube so you won't miss out. Thanks to all the wonderful people who helped: Carolyn Waggoner, Rhonda Adkins, Ken & Jeanette Bannon, Jack Welch, Jane & Jerry Morse, Wednesday Willing Workers, Scott Sears, Susan Nickels, Fran Alfred, Schauna Chambers – and many others. Thanks to everyone for making this a success!

Not Quite Home

"As Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," he said, "and I'll show you how to fish for people." Right away, they left their nets and followed him." Matthew 4:19-20

In some ways, I am always amazed at the way the call of Jesus is answered by the disciples in the Gospel accounts. There is no debate. There is no discernment. There is no talking it over with family. There is no checking the calendar. There is no figuring out what is most important. Jesus calls the disciples to follow, and they drop everything and follow.

Some people read these stories and think that they are totally unrealistic. There is no way that people just left their jobs and family to follow Jesus. There is no way that they changed priorities that quickly and in fact, it is not a good way to live your life now. It may have worked then, but that was such a different time, it could never work today.

Others read these stories and think that Jesus had to be exuding some powerful charisma to get these people to leave everything and follow him. And these folks translate this story today into being a story that they hear and say, "Sure, if the right person comes along and has that kind of charisma, power, and compelling need, I will follow in a heartbeat." (The problem with charisma, power, and compelling needs, however, is that they are always based on OUR perspective, so we can easily decide what to focus on or not.)

Yet others read these stories and think, "You know, perhaps the fisherman had heard about this teacher from Galilee. Perhaps they had even met him on some other occasion. They knew what he was about. They knew that he was a faithful follower of God, so that made it simple for them to do what he asked."

Jesus is still calling people to follow him today. First and foremost, Jesus wants people to become disciples by giving their

lives and heart to Jesus and Jesus' Kingdom. Many people have done this. Most people involved in the life of the church have made this decision at some point.

However, the call does not stop there. To really live out the life of a disciple of Jesus, we must constantly listen for *the next thing* Jesus wants us to do. Perhaps we will hear this second call (or third or fourth or whatever number) as we listen to the needs of the Kingdom being lived out in the church. The call to teach. The call to serve. The call to preach. The call to lead. The call to simply give more – of our time, our talents, and our resources – to the work of the Kingdom.

How are you responding to "call" you are hearing these days from Jesus or Jesus' Kingdom? Are you waiting on someone with the right charisma or the need that speaks to your agenda? Are you finding ways to look at your time and saying to yourself, "I've nothing left to give to the One who gave his life for me." Or are you thinking about all that Jesus has done for you and just finding some way to say "Yes" when Jesus calls.

Listen, I know how difficult this can be. I spent several years avoiding the real call Jesus placed upon me to become a pastor. However, nothing brings me more peace than living my life in the way that I know God has called me to live it.

Listen. Listen to God calling you today or sometime in the future.

And drop everything...and follow.
You will never regret it.

Peace,
Pastor Scott



Kathy Bartram is turning 60! Everyone is invited to her birthday party on June 24 at Ritter Park shelter #1 from 2-4 pm. Hot dogs will be served, and you are welcome to bring a side dish if you want!

just married!

Join your First Church Family in congratulating Sean Adkins and Leslie Cummings, who were married on May 28, 2023 in a beautiful ceremony at First Church. Sean is the son of Rhonda Adkins and Leslie is the daughter of Margaret Reichenbecher and Fenton Cummings.

Missions

April and May were busy months for Mission.

UWF sponsored a Spring brunch for Mission projects cleared \$491.00

On May 6, UMC sold and planted \$403.59 worth of geraniums, petunias, and hanging baskets.

On May 7, Nine Rivers District gathered for the first ever Nine Rivers Celebration of Mission Event raising over \$9000 in cash and over \$7400 in donated goods for WV Mission projects.

First Huntington was well represented at the Event. Donating over \$4200 in cash and over \$850 in donated goods. Items donated included school backpacks, baby hats, layette items and toothpaste

The Circle was blessed with Dr Jennie Yoost, Obstetrics and Gynecology, as our guest speaker. The topic of her talk dealt with the inadequacies of female hygiene for youth and women. The group along with church members provided hygiene products to be given to Marshall medical students for their free clinics.

(Below: Dorcas Circle members with Dr. Jennie Yoost, center)



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

6/3 Abby Rutherford
6/4 Talley Sergent
Elliot Hughes
6/6 Hannah Crager
6/7 Norma Denning
6/9 Lucy Brown
6/12 Gus Meade
6/13 Alma Johnson
Fletcher Kinsey
6/15 Danny Fulks
Jackson Denning
6/18 Jaxon Hill
6/19 Margie McNerney
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
Kimberlee Lockwood
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
7/8 Heather Barker
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

United Methodism and the “Disaffiliation Movement”

Many of you may have read or heard about churches within the United Methodist denomination disaffiliating from the denomination. Some of this news has included the improper language that these churches chose to become member churches of a new, more conservative, Methodist denomination known as the Global Methodist Church. There are no provisions in the Discipline to allow to transfer a church to The Global Methodist Church.

In 2019, the special session General Conference added a paragraph to the *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* that says in part: “Because of the current deep conflict within the United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to disaffiliate...” This paragraph, 2553, goes on to say that Annual Conference Boards of Trustees set up the plan for churches to disaffiliate and that these plans then are approved by the annual conference. Our Board of Trustees drafted the plan for disaffiliation within the WVAC and it was approved by the Annual Conference in 2019. To date, NO churches within the WVAC have held a vote to disaffiliate under this paragraph, although many have chosen to close – a different paragraph of the Discipline covers closures. (This year Annual Conference will vote on the closure of approximately 55 churches in WV, half of which are closing for financial reasons, the other half of which are closing for theological differences.) It is not possible under paragraph 2553 to become a Global Methodist Church. This paragraph only allows the church to pay a predetermined amount of money for the Conference owned property along with payments to cover unfunded pension debts and become a disaffiliated church.


Any church that chooses to disaffiliate must complete the process by December 31 of this year. Below is a chart from The United Methodist News Service showing the number of disaffiliations since the passage of this paragraph in 2019. The grand total represents about 13% of the total number of UM Churches in the United States. (Please note that this information is dated May 25, 2023)

There is a lot of misinformation floating around concerning disaffiliation, the upcoming session of General Conference, and what the United Methodist Church is doing. If you want the most accurate information, please visit <https://umnews.org> for that information.


Conference	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022 special sessions	2023 sessions
Alabama-West Florida	0	0	8	4	35	193
Alaska	0	0	1	0		1
Arkansas	1	4	0	0	35	67
Baltimore-Washington	0	0	0	2		
California-Pacific	0	0	0	0		
California-Nevada	0	0	0	0		
Central Texas	0	0	0	0	81	
Dakotas	1	0	1	0	18	
Desert Southwest	0	0	0	0		
East Ohio	0	1	1	11		
Eastern Pennsylvania	0	1	0	0		5
Florida	0	0	3	14		55
Great Plains	0	6	4	12	55	
Greater New Jersey	0	0	0	0		8
Holston	0	0	0	0		264
Illinois Great Rivers	0	0	2	1		28
Indiana	0	1	9	29	105	
Iowa	0	0	0	1		83
Kentucky	3	3	0	8	57	
Louisiana	1	0	2	9	58	
Memphis	0	2	1			
Michigan	0	3	1	4		
Minnesota	0	1	0	3		
Mississippi	7	0	23	13		
Missouri	0	0	5	11		
Mountain Sky	0	2	2	0	6	
New England	0	1	3	0		
New Mexico	0	0	0	0		31
New York	0	0	0	0		
North Alabama	1	0	0	0	198	132
North Carolina	0	0	0	0	249	
North Georgia	0	0	0	71		
North Texas	0	0	0	0		41
Northern Illinois	0	0	0	0		
Northwest Texas	0	0	0	0	145	
Oklahoma	2	0	0	0	29	55
Oklahoma Indian Missionary	0	0	0	0		
Oregon-Idaho	0	0	0	0		3
Pacific Northwest	0	0	0	0		13
Peninsula-Delaware	0	0	11	5		
Red Bird Missionary Conference	0	0	0	0		
Rio Texas	0	0	0	1		33
South Carolina	0	0	1	1		
South Georgia	0	7	9	18	62	193
Susquehanna	0	2	1	4		141
Tennessee	0	7	6	0		
Tennessee-Western Kentucky	0	0	0	60		162
Texas	0	0	1	0	294	20
Upper New York	0	0	0	8		18
Virginia	0	0	1	0	10	97
West Ohio	0	0	0	0	80	
West Virginia	0	0	0	0		
Western North Carolina	0	7	16	18		192
Western Pennsylvania	0	0	1	0		
Wisconsin	0	0	1	0		
Totals for each round of sessions	16	48	114	308	1517	1835
Cumulative totals	16	64	178	486	2003	3838

SUMMER CAMPS AT ASBURY WOODS

**ASBURY WOODS
MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL CAMP**
Level Up: It's Not Just a Game



When: July 5th-July 9th
Where: Asbury Woods Church Camp
Price: \$250 (Scholarships available)
Dean: Schauna Chambers
Contact: 304-634-9684
schambers@firstunitedmethodist.com



SCAN ME

**LEGO & LET GOD
ASBURY WOODS OLDER ELEMENTARY CAMP**



When: July 10th through the 15th
Where: Asbury Woods Church Camp
Price: \$250 (Scholarships available)
Dean: Alexa Hensley
Contact: 304-690-3790



SCAN ME

**CAMP OUT
ASBURY WOODS DAY CAMP**



When: July 10th - 15th Ages 5-7
Where: Asbury Woods Church Camp
Price: \$175 (Scholarships available)
Dean: Katrina Lee
Contact: 304-416-0303



SCAN ME

Reflection of the Past Year

As the school year comes to a close and reflect over how fast another year has passed. We got a new playground, celebrated our 150th, served for Lifehouse dinner, celebrated back to school, and had a cookout. This fall brought on Octoberfest, skiing, a winter retreat. We also sold a lot of soup and cherries, memorized Bible verse, had work days, and messy games. One thing I would like to say is I love being able to watch our kids and youth grow. I believe our community could grow even bigger when we come together. I look forward to what the next year has in store and, if you haven't, hope that you find a way to be a part of this amazing community. If you have any ideas or things you would like to see happen with our children and youth, feel free to meet with Schauna Chambers and let's dream together!

Looking ahead

We have students that are interested in being picked up on Wednesdays when they start back up. If there are people interested in driving the van and helping with this new ministry please see Schauna Chambers. This could also be available on Sundays as well if needed.

Youth has ended for the year but there are still things happening. Be on the lookout for posts and postcards for game nights, outings, and pool parties.

We would love to have an older and younger classroom on Wednesday nights to help the elementary kids engage and ask questions. If you are interested in being a part of the rotation, please contact Schauna.

PETS UNLEASHED
WHERE JESUS CARES FOR YOU



**First United Methodist
Vacation Bible School
June 4th & 5th**



SCAN ME

You're Invited
Come Experience Where Jesus Cares For You
Where: 1124 5th Ave Huntington, WV
When: June 4th 1:00-3:30 (Lunch at 12:30) & June 5th 6:00-8:30 (Dinner at 5:30)
You can Register now at www.firstunitedmethodist.com
For More Information Contact Schauna Chambers 304-522-0357

June 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 VBS	5 VBS	6 Cridlin Open House 4:30-6:30	7 Finance Meeting 6:00	8 Annual Conference (Pastors out of Office)	9	10
11 →	12	13 Dorcas Circle	14 Trustee Meeting 6:00	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 SPRC Meeting TBD	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

July 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4 Office Closed	5 Finance Meeting 6:00	6	7	8
9	10 Cridlin Meeting 3:00	11 Dorcas Circle 1:00	12 Trustee Meeting 6:00	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 SPRC Meeting TBD	20	21 Tower Topics Due	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

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

firstumc@firstunitedmethodist.com
 www.firstunitedmethodist.com



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Senior Pastor,
 Scott Sears

Associate Pastor
 Heather Barker

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: July 21



**Do you want to own a piece of
 First Church History?**

As many of you know, we celebrated our 150th Anniversary in 2022. To commemorate the event, we got a picture of the congregation on the lawn. If you would like a print of the picture, contact Hillary in the church office and she will send you one or they can be found in the sanctuary. Donations are gladly accepted, but not required.

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...

Joan Meredith, Nancy Palmer, Ella Mae Adkins (Grandmother of Sean Adkins, mother-in-law of Rhonda Adkins, great-grandmother of Amelia Adkins), Marlene Sheets, Jane Morse, Jackie Eplion, Sue Atkinson, Campbell Chiles, Mike and Mileva Marcy (Friends of Jody Eddins), Myra Creek, Banfie and Page Family (Schauna's friends), Susann Meurer, Mark Cornell, Chris and Mike Chiles, Sally Richards-Bartram, Sandee Folsom, Bob Palmer, Billie Wood (sister of Jane Ferguson), Lisa Cooke, Judy Davis, Dawn Aikin, Leona Davis, Jane McColgan, Dan Smith, Jean White, Tracy Jones, JD Maue, Beth McVey, Anne Weeks, Carolyn Waggoner,