

August 2023

# TOWER TOPICS

## Not Quite Home – Stewardship Builds YOUR Faith

Summertime is one of our favorite times of the year. Summer sports. Leisure time from longer days. Travel and vacation. Many things come together to make summer a wonderful time.

However, summer can also be one of the most fruitful times for growing our own faith through the practice of “thankful generosity.” As we count the blessings that God has given us from year to year and explore the wonderful creation God has entrusted to us, we can – if we so choose – to take a few moments to respond to God’s generosity by being generous ourselves. Every time we do this, our faith grows because we put more faith in God ability to provide for us than our own ability to provide for ourselves.

There is one effect of faithful, generous giving that as a pastor I must emphasize to you – *faithful, generous stewardship helps you more than it will ever help anyone else.*

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus makes a profound statement about money. He says, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” I have no doubt that you have heard many sermons and many explanations on this passage, but I hope you will allow me to remind you of one more.

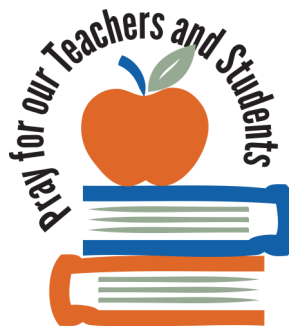
Jesus does not say, “Put your treasure where your heart is” or “Your heart will show you where to put your treasure.” Jesus knew that as human beings our hearts can be fickle at times. Jesus knew that we often need to teach ourselves how to best direct our hearts. So, he picked the one thing that we all

care about – our finances – and said, “Put your treasure in the place you *want your heart to be!*” He didn’t say, “Find the things you love the most and put your treasure there.” Jesus wanted our hearts to grow in generosity by admitting that it takes effort on our part to give to the church because that money may not benefit us directly – it may fund mission or go to fund ministry done by others. And yet -- *faithful, generous stewardship helps you more than it will ever help anyone else.*

As you take time this summer to not only enjoy life, but to give generously from all that God has given you, you will be making a profound step of faith. You are continuing to build your relationship with God by placing your treasure in a place you know God has been, is, and will be working in the future, First United Methodist Church, Huntington.

I know that these have been difficult economic times and for some of you giving to the church is hard right now. As your pastor, I want to encourage you to really, really, think about where you want your heart to be in six weeks, six months, or a year from now. Do you want it drawn closer to God? Then do what you need to do, for, as Jesus said: “Where your treasure is, THERE your heart will be also.” Thank you for your faithful stewardship and for your prayerful consideration of how you can grow your heart even closer to God in the midst of this beautiful season of summer!

Peace,  
Pastor Scott



## Back to School Blessings

As kids and adults alike gear up for back to school this fall, we as a church want to bless students and teachers as they head to the classrooms.

Sunday, August 13 during traditional worship, we will offer a backpack blessing where all kids, teachers, and even other adults can bring their backpacks or other bags to be blessed. We will pray over the bags that help carry us through our schooling and work and have a tag to tie onto it so you can be reminded of the love and support that God and the church provide.

During this Sunday we will also be handing out scholarships to undergraduates and seminary students to be used for their university studies. Even though many of these students move away from Huntington to continue their studies, we as a church believe in supporting their endeavors as they follow the call Christ has placed on their lives.

Lastly, during worship Aug 13, we will giveaway supplies to the teachers in our congregations. We know the hard work they put in to all the kids and their teaching, so we hope we can be a blessing for their classroom by helping to supply some of the necessities they require. We will be continuing to collect supplies until Aug. 6 which can be brought to the office or put on the back table in the sanctuary.



# Upcoming Small Group Studies

## Meet Me at the SEA – Sunday Evening Academy

“Three Simple Rules – A Wesleyan Way of Living” will be the topic for the next Sunday Evening Academy meetings with Pastor Scott. Whether you realized it or not, the “method” in “Methodist” was a well earned nickname by the early practitioners that led to our denomination. In fact, the “General Rules for United Methodists” still exist in our modern *Book of Discipline*. This academy study will look at each of the three rules as they are both understood and practiced. The six week sessions begin on August 27 and run through October 8. If you would like to be a part of this Sunday Evening Academy which will meet from 6:30 to 8:00 pm each Sunday evening on those dates, please email Pastor Scott (sears.scott@gmail.com) and say, “I will meet you at the SEA!”

PS – The rules are “Do no harm,” “Do all the good you can,” and “Stay in love with God.” Simple...but life changing.



## Pastor Heather Studies:

### Wednesday Morning Bible Study – 11 am – Panel Room – Starting Aug 16, 2023

Book: *The Class Meeting: Reclaiming a Forgotten (and Essential) Small Group Experience* by Kevin M. Watson

Price: \$18, funds available to help cover the cost of the book if needed

Description: “Watson's book unfolds a vision and a practical strategy for developing small groups that are much simpler than the typical group, while being more productive and with greater spiritual depth. The Class Meeting is structured into an eight-week study resource designed for a small group to work through together. Along the way, your group will be progressively equipped with a shared language to talk about the work of the Holy Spirit in the inner person and a structure for holding these kinds of meetings.”

### Wednesday Evening Bible Study – 6 pm – Room 207 – Starting Aug 23, 2023

Book: *Dancing with God: The Trinity from a Womanist Perspective* by Karen Baker-Fletcher

Price: \$25, funds available to help cover the cost of the book if needed

Description: “Dancing With God is an exploration of the divine gifts of courage and grace in the face of evil. Moreover, it is a doctrine of God as the source of that courage. Baker-Fletcher presents an understanding of the work of the Trinity with regard to the problem of crucifixion, a metaphor she uses for unnecessary violence. She develops a process of relational, womanist theology that considers the empathetic omnipresence of God in the midst of unnecessary suffering and the healing power of God in movement of the Holy Spirit.”

Dear friends of First Church,

It saddens me to be writing to inform you that I will be leaving First Church on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Looking back, it is amazing how when I first started, it was in the height of COVID-19. We experienced meetings over Zoom in separate offices and recorded worship services and then had to learn what the new “normal” for the church would look like, while adjusting to those changes. I hope to carry the skills that I have learned here to my new position that I will start in August.

I would like to thank the staff for their kindness and help during my time here and this transition. I have enjoyed working with you all so much and will miss our morning meeting talks about cats, books, and many other subjects.

Thank you to those that have reached out to me and for your kind parting words! Working at a church that I don't attend each week had its own challenges, but I will remember how welcoming you were whenever you came to see me in the office.

I am very sad to leave the church, but I feel that it is my time to explore another opportunity and wish you all the best after I am gone.

Blessings,  
Hillary H.



“To my Church Family,

During my hospital stay, I want to thank you for your prayers, cards, and visits. All were very much appreciated. Please continue to keep me in your prayers

God Bless!  
Jane McColgan”  
(Letter sent June 5th)

# Church and Community Ministry News

## Dorcas Circle

Dorcas Circle meeting on July 11 was blessed to have Bryan Gilpin and Alisha Adkins as our guest representatives from the Emogene Dolen Hospice House. Bryan informed our group as to the services available and he also provided brochures to each member. Alisha explained how volunteers are needed, along with services they can provide from office work to snacks for families of patients. The Circle members collected snacks for the Hospice House. The next Circle meeting will be August 8th. Please consider visiting with our group. (Pictured: Members of Dorcas Circle on their meeting from July 11 with the snacks that they collected.)



## Cridlin Food and Clothing Pantry

In June, Cridlin Food and Clothing Pantry moved into their new home on 6th Avenue in Huntington. Thank you to those that volunteered to help with their move and for those that continue to volunteer there. In addition to their new space, they are excited to have a new website, **Cridlinpantry.org**. You can access information about the shelter, current needs, and a form to fill out to get involved. Right now, they are in special need of children's shoes and men's casual shoes (tennis/sneakers).

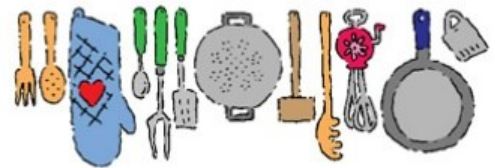
## We Care Ministry

The We Care Ministry has been an important way to connect with those who are homebound or ill but have not been active in the past few years. So, this fall, a team is coming together to share their gifts of love and compassion through visitation, card writing, home communion, and other ways to be attentive to the needs of our congregation. Tim Hamilton will be leading this team with the help of the pastoral staff in equipping laity to care for those who need it. If you would like to be included on the list of those who want to receive at-home communion, please call the church office at 304-522-0357. Volunteers part of the We Care Ministry can participate in whatever form they feel comfortable, but if you feel called to serve in this way, reach out to Tim Hamilton at 304-529-7260.

## The Gathering

Over the past month some of our young adults in the congregation and the community have been meeting around town to talk theology and grow in their discipleship. This is a very casual meeting where we have discussed some deep topics such as miracles, our experiences of growing up in the church, and areas where the church has done harm. One thing we've discovered from this group is that it is extremely difficult to make friends as young adults with busy schedules, so this group has grown close quickly. Our next meeting dates will be Aug 7 and Aug 21. Look to Facebook for more details or reach out to Pastor Heather.

## **NEWS FROM THE KITCHEN**



Starting in late June the kitchen underwent some renovations. The majority of kitchen items were removed, sorted, and organized. All cabinets inside and outside were painted. The wallpaper was removed and the walls were painted. Additionally, a new drop ceiling and lighting were installed, along with three new faucets. This job could not have been accomplished without the careful guidance of the Trustee's and the help from Fran Allred. Please stop in and check out the updates.

Susan Nickels

## **August Meals**

**All meals are on Wednesday nights beginning at 5:00**

Cost:  
\$5 for adults  
\$3 for children under 12  
\$20 for family

Dates:  
16 Pizza (Back to School Paper Signing)  
23 Tacos and Brown Beans  
30 Spaghetti





The July Hymn Sing was a BIG success! We had lots of hymn suggestions and tried to incorporate as many as possible into the service. If yours wasn't sung, we'll be trying to use many of them in the coming weeks, so stay tuned. Special thanks to Jay Brooks and Rhonda Adkins for their beautiful hymn-playing!

A big THANK YOU to all our soloists this summer who have provided special music while the choir is on summer hiatus. We really appreciate you!

**CHOIRS** will all be starting back on **August 23rd** and we're hoping to have some new singers and ringers. If you have ever considered joining one of our choirs, now's the time to give it a try.

**SANCTUARY CHOIR (7:00)** will have our first rehearsal of the new year in the adult choir room if the renovations are finished. If not, we'll be in the chapel. If you are a returning member, please think about inviting new singers. If you haven't sung with us before, we welcome you! If you can't be here every week but would still like to sing, we'll be glad to work with you on your schedule. If you want to give it a try for a week or two and see what you think, that's fine also. If you'll let me know you're coming ahead of time (debbiebradleyfumc@gmail.com) I'll have a folder of music ready for you.

**WESLEY CHILDREN'S CHOIR (6:00)** will meet in the children's choir room, which is upstairs. Choir lasts for 45 minutes each week. We will be singing for church once a month, as well as preparing a musical for December 13<sup>th</sup>. Please invite children K-5<sup>th</sup> grade to be in this choir.

**HANDBELL CHOIR (6:00)** will be in the bell room, which is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. New ringers are always welcome; however, being able to read music is important. If you're not sure, show up and give it a try! Director Chris Thomas is a patient man!

## HAPPY Birthday

8/1	Logan Chambers
8/2	Vicki Hanshaw
8/3	Tim Cummings Parker Shepherd
8/4	Mary Ganzer Tyler Eddins
8/6	Elsa Meade
8/7	David Denning Amanda Duncan Carter Sergent
8/8	Ellie Buell
8/9	Macy Archer
8/11	Campbell Neighborgall
8/12	Madison Reed
8/14	Mark Richardson
8/15	Katie Brown Evan Gooding
8/17	Judy Davis Jill Nelson
8/18	Judy Taylor
8/21	Jeri Danford
8/23	John Tanner
8/25	Josie Curry
8/27	Ann O'Roark
8/28	Jeff Davis Joe Eddins II Austin Davis
8/29	Kathy Patrick Shawna Thomas Allie Sears
8/30	Jeff Archambault

# Youth Group

## Back to School Bash:

August 16th. While parents hang out and sign paper work, the kids can have some fun outside. Susan will be on hand as a Notary. Pizza, salad bar, and dessert will be served at regular dinner prices. There will be bounce houses, ice cream, and fun out by the Ark!

## Ace adventure

The youth will be going to Ace Adventure on Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> following the Back to School service. We will hang out at the water park until 7:30 and start to head back around 8:00. Cost is \$18 for youth up to age 15 and older than 15 it is \$23. Families are welcome. Please let Schauna Chambers know who is going by August 6<sup>th</sup> so she can make the reservations. Money is due no later than the day of the trip. If the youth cannot cover the cost, please let Schauna know so we can figure it out.

**Wednesday Evenings** start back up again and this will be our first full school year in our new youth room. We want to thank to the church committees to help spruce up the room, Wednesday Willing Workers for their hard work in completing the project, and Linda and Jody Eddins for helping organize the storage closet, and the donations of furniture from Joseph Randolph. We appreciate it more than you know. If you haven't seen it, please stop by and experience the new space!

## Getting Involved

Kids for Christ is starting on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. We would love to have some of the congregation involved in teaching with Alexa Hensley. If you want more information please contact Schauna Chambers 304-634-9684

# August 2023

## Wednesday Night Activity Schedule

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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5:00  
Dinner (Menu will be  
available in the bulletin  
and online)

6:00

Committee Meetings  
Bell Choir  
Bible Study  
Wesley Children's Choir  
YOUTH Group  
Yoga (Start Date TBD)

7:00

Sanctuary Choir

7:45

Kids for Christ (KFC)

		1	2 Finance Meeting 6:00	3	4	5
6	7 The Gathering Meeting Time/Place TBD	8 Dorcas Circle Meeting 1:00	9 Trustee Meeting 6:00	10	11	12
13 Back to School Sunday Ace Adventure Trip	14 Dream Team Meeting 7:00	15	16 Morning Bible Study 11:00 Back to School Bash 5:00 SPRC Meeting 6:00	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 Wednesday Night Activities Begin 5:00	24	25 Tower Topic Deadline	26
27 SEA 6:30-8:00	28	29	30	31		

There is  
a space  
for  
YOU!

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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: August 25**

**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,*

Pat Broce, Nancy Palmer, 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, Jack Patrick

**HIKING CHURCH**

SUNDAY, AUG. 27 - 9:30 A.M.

BEECH FORK STATE PARK

**GATHERING**  
 First United Methodist Church