



# APRIL TOWER TOPICS

## Not Quite Home...

from Pastor Scott

*Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Jesus said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him... Matthew 14:28-31a*

I have really enjoyed preaching during this series "Wandering Heart - Figuring Out Faith with Peter". The material has been both refreshing and challenging. At times during the series, I really wish the material had come with pre-written sermons, but alas, they did not. I had to wrestle with the passages and the commentaries included (as well as those I am more familiar with in my library) to come up with the messages. Looking back on doing those messages, however, I am especially glad that they did not include sermons. The learning that I gained during the process is something that I now value. I was especially fond of the lesson from the second week of Lent that focused on the Scripture above. Like many people, whenever I read that story, I focused in upon Peter taking his eyes off Jesus and sinking in the stormy water around him. I wanted to somehow focus on Peter's failure.

The wrestling with the scripture that I did during this time, however, got me to focus on what is most important about the disciple Peter in this story - PETER ACTUALLY GOT OUT OF THE BOAT AND WALKED ON THE WATER TOWARD

JESUS! That is an incredible step of faith on behalf of the disciple! It was something that had only been done by Jesus and as far as I know, has not been done since!

The story goes on to say that even after Peter got into some trouble while living out his faith in Jesus, Jesus was there in an instant to rescue him from danger.

All of this led me to believe that this lesson from the life of the disciple was a call to us as a congregation to find where Jesus was calling us to act on our faith in a new and powerful way - some way that may be risky and where we would have to trust in Jesus to rescue us if danger came our way. I feel it has to be something new, yet something we know Jesus cares about. It needs to be something that stretches our faith as far as possible.

I have waited on someone to be moved by the Spirit to share something that might be what God is calling us to do, but I have also been praying too. During this prayer and watching and listening, one question came to my mind that I just can't put aside. I want to share that question with you because I think it might be the start of some conversation that we can have about what God is calling us to do. I'm just going to end with the question, but if you want to talk to me about it, feel free to call me at the church office or on my cell phone (304) 615-4715. Or send me an email at [sears.scott@gmail.com](mailto:sears.scott@gmail.com). Here is the question:

***What do all the children who are residents of homeless shelters in our area do during Spring or Fall Breaks?***

Peace,  
Pastor Scott

# 2024 West Virginia Annual Conference Goals

Recently, the Bishop's Cabinet met and established a set of goals for our Conference. This is something that hasn't been attempted in quite a while, but that has resulted in a true biblical vision for our conference to strive for through measurable and achievable goals. It provides the pathway for us to see the beauty in the desert and usher in the new life that exists just below the surface.

This goal-setting process has brought about a renewed sense of gladness and will result in tender stems of new life, buds that will blossom, and places and people who will take root, grow, and rejoice! How will we get there? Through three goals: Connection, Discipleship, and New Places New People. (Read the [2024 West Virginia Conference Goals](#))

**Connection.** Good things happen when we discover that we are better together. We have been able to feed, clothe, provide shelter and medical care - when we have connected and worked together. Congregations have connected to help close to 10 families from the Ukraine resettle and find new life in West Virginia. We have brought new life and hope by connecting with schools, first responders, hospitals, and other churches and outreach ministries in our communities in a variety of ways.

**GOAL:** *We will build on the biblical vision and our value of connection in this new year. To strengthen our connection throughout the West Virginia Conference, we have a goal to equip and certify at least 10 lighthouse congregations.*

These congregations will help us share best practices and learnings, and training resources with every congregation in the West Virginia Conference. You will hear more about this soon! (Check out this Portico course to learn more: [Lighthouse Congregations](#))

**Discipleship.** Discipleship goes hand in hand with our value of connection. A second component of living into the biblical vision and a second goal in this new year necessarily addresses our call to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

**GOAL:** *Because the world needs us to be more like Jesus, we will build upon the foundation of prayer to transition 49 current expressions of faith formation into the Wesleyan model of class meetings with a focus on the Bible.*

The response to Dynamite Prayer in September was overwhelming! Prayer is the foundation upon which we build this goal. Wesley's class meeting style brings with it an emphasis on the Bible, more discussion than presentation, and accountability for growing in discipleship. This is a goal that can help Sunday School classes, small groups, and other faith formation groups to "kick it up" a notch for Jesus!

**New Places, New People.** Our third Conference goal builds upon what has already begun and acknowledges that God is already at work among us.

**GOAL:** *In response to Jesus' call for us to go where people are, we will equip, resource, and support the launching 15 New Places, New People efforts connected to existing congregations/charges.*

This goal relates to both connection and discipleship as New Places, New People efforts strengthen both - our connection with one another and the communities we serve and discipleship as we intentionally reach new people for Christ.

Yes, these goals provide a clear biblical vision. One where I see the wild and wonderful hills and valley of West Virginia and Garrett County Maryland come alive with new growth, with tender shoots, and new blossoms. It is a vision in the midst of a challenging world that calls us to move through the challenges and into gladness - for indeed the Lord, Jesus Christ, is and will do great things among us. It is a vision of hope, promise, and new life!

Mother Teresa once said, "Prayer changes us; we change the world." May we pray together and live into the Biblical Vision that is as fresh, relevant, glad, and powerful today as it was in the time of Isaiah!

May it be so!

Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball

We encourage you to take the [2024 WV Conference Goals](#) course on Portico and to share it with others in your church.

# Church Community News

## Cridlin Food and Clothing Pantry

Cridlin Pantry is asking for **96 cans of diced tomatoes** this month. If you would like to donate please drop off donations either at the Church Office or by the soda machines downstairs by the multipurpose room.

At [Cridlinpantry.org](http://Cridlinpantry.org) you can access information about the shelter, current needs, and a form to fill out to get involved.

## Dorcas Circle

Dorcas Circle met with a thought-provoking program by Joyce Ray. The women have been filling comfort bags for women hospitalized for long-term complications. At our next meeting on **April 9 at 1:00**, we will be collecting items for Ebenezer Outreach (COME needs list posted on line and throughout Church) with a program provided by Jane Morse. Join us.

## Narcotics Anonymous Meetings

Narcotics Anonymous meetings take place every Friday night from 6:30-9:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

## Spiritual Growth Retreat

**April 12-13** at Cedar Lakes. The speaker will be Rev. Janet Wolf, pastor, poverty rights organizer, mediator, professor, author and grandma. Information and applications are posted on the bulletin board at the bottom of the stairs.

## Spring District Meeting

The Spring District Meeting was held at Community of Grace with a lively program presented by Facing Hunger Foodbank. Fall District meeting will be September 28 at Humphries UMC in Tornado.

## 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, a team has come 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 is 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 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.

# Church News



## Spring Flower Sale

Geraniums: \$1.25      Red \_\_\_\_\_      White \_\_\_\_\_

Limited Colors:      Salmon \_\_\_\_\_      Lavender \_\_\_\_\_

Purple Wave Petunias: \$2.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Hanging Baskets: \$17.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_      Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Must have order in by Wednesday, April 24th.

Pick up date is Saturday, May 4.

Proceeds support Missions of United Women in Faith.

To order fill out the above form and mail it to or bring it by the church. There will also be order forms in the bulletins in April and around the church.

## New Apostles' Creed Video Lecture Series

After Easter we are starting a new Wednesday evening video/discussion series.

**6-7 pm in Room 207, starting on April 10**

We will be delving into The Apostles' Creed with Adam Hamilton for six weeks. Facilitated by Grace Gooding.

How do we discover and examine the truths that give meaning and purpose to life? Adam Hamilton believes that some powerful answers are contained in the Apostles' Creed, an early statement of foundational Christian beliefs.

In this six-week study, Hamilton considers important questions of life, reality, and truth. He explores not only what Christians believe, but also why they believe it and why it matters.

You can see more about it on this website:

<https://www.adamhamilton.com/books/item/9781501813764/>

## Hiking Church!

Hiking Church will begin **April 14th**, weather permitting. We will meet at Rotary Park for our first week back at 9:30 am. I encourage you to use this opportunity to invite friends and family. We will try this out for a couple of months and may switch days in order to reach more people. If you have any questions or suggestions about hiking church contact Schauna Chambers at 304-634-9684.

# Choir News

## Sanctuary Choir

The Sanctuary Choir is busy rehearsing great music for each Sunday, as well as an entire program of music for **May 19<sup>th</sup>** (Pentecost Sunday). But, one of the highlights for April will be a dance solo

performed by Shelby Nelson Burcham during the choir anthem on **April 21<sup>st</sup>**. This will be an especially meaningful way to blend the musical message with movement.



The refresh/remodel of the choir room is complete and the choir couldn't be happier about it. We have new storage for robes, music & folders; and increased seating in the room itself. Many thanks to The Trustees and especially Jody Eddins, Chuck Hanshaw and The Wednesday Willing Workers. Check it out!

## Wesley Children's Choir News

The children (and their adult helpers) are getting excited to share their spring musical with you on Sunday morning, **April 28<sup>th</sup>**, during the 10:45 worship service. The title of the musical is **iAM**; it is set in an on-line gaming factory & it teaches about the characteristics of God. The children will be joined on stage by some familiar adult faces and it's highly unlikely that you will be bored or tempted to snooze. Plan to sit up front and join the excitement on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

## Handbell Choir News

The newly-formed *Youth Handbell Choir* will make its debut on Sunday morning, **April 21<sup>st</sup>** as part of *Youth Sunday*. We're grateful to Chris Thomas for initiating this new music ensemble & look forward to hearing them. In the meantime, the adult bell choir continues to rehearse and will be sharing their music in May.

## Wednesday Night Schedule

5:00 pm Dinner

6:00 pm Bell Choir, Bible Study, Children's Choir, Video Lecture Series, Youth & Yoga

6:45 pm KFC

7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir

7:15 pm Youth Bell Choir





# Vacation Bible School!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!! Vacation Bible School will be **Monday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> - Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup>**

Our theme this year will be **"I Wonder..."** which will get our kids curious about science, engineering, and technology, but also about the God who created it all! What made the stories of some of our bible leaders unique? What gifts did God give us and what do we do with them? What can we learn from others around us? How can we spend more time with God? If you want your kid involved in a VBS that is hands-on, challenging, and full of imagination, then keep on the lookout for how to register your child! Also, share the news with friends and family! We would love to have the best and biggest Vacation Bible School yet!

Hello, Everyone!

Our Easter Egg Hunt and Celebration on March 20<sup>th</sup> was amazing! For it being the first event I have completely planned from start to finish here at First United Methodist, I am pretty pleased with how it all turned out. Thank you to those who donated time, candy, toys, and monetary assistance. The kids had a blast, and I truly enjoyed watching them all hunting for glow-in-the-dark eggs. Thank you to Schauna Chambers and Jennie Yoost for helping set up our obstacle course as well as the Youth for helping hide 200 easter eggs (150 for the KFC and 50 for the nursery). You guys did amazing! Ashleigh and Avitt Bannon and Schauna also deserve a shoutout for helping with clean-up! I am grateful with the support the First United Methodist community has provided me, and I cannot wait to see the success of our other events this year.

Thank you, everyone!

-Katrina Lee

## Summer camps are open for registration!

Elementary School camp is **July 14 - 19**. Flyers can be found on the church bulletin board, please sign up through the Asbury woods Facebook page or website.

Middle & High School camp is **June 30 - July 4<sup>th</sup> at noon**.

## YOUTH 2024

4/21	Youth Sunday
5/01	Salvation Army @ 5:45pm
6/11	Mission @ 10:45am
6/17	Cridlin @ 12:30pm
6/24	Ebenezer / Cridlin
6/30	District Camp
TBD	Pool Party
TBD	Game Night
8/11	Ace Adventure

For more information contact Schauna Chambers (304) 634-9684



# Mission Update

**COME - ATTENTION!**

The 9 Rivers District Celebration of Mission Event has a new DATE.

The Ingathering will now be  
**SUNDAY, April 21 from 2-4 pm, CROSSLANES UMC**

Plan now to attend. Bring your gifts and donated goods and meet the Mission directors. There will be musicians from several churches and desserts to eat and desserts to buy. The needs lists for Ebenezer Outreach, House of the Carpenter, and Volunteers in Mission are to be found throughout the church.

**EBENEZER OUTREACH:** Well, it is official. The working plans are complete and a timetable is being completed for the first phase of the building - the gymnasium. When it is complete, over 30 after school students will have room enough to study and play and the community room will be available to serve the community. The Board is working on fund raising ideas and would welcome ideas and expertise. Director Celes Sheffield reported that presently there are 67 children enrolled. The building has updated air conditioning and passed the fire marshal's inspection. This summer the children will once again be attending Bible School at Steele Memorial. We will be providing cookies for the Easter party on April 28.

Celes also needs a 7-passenger van for all the trips she takes around the Conference, for speaking engagements, training, and ingatherings. Her car is beyond making those trips. Anybody out there have a van for Ebenezer??

**SUNFLOWER:** The Tri-state area is blessed to have a new 501C3 charity - SUNFLOWERS SEEDS INC. - organized right here. This is not a political agency. It is an humanitarian agency - reaching out to the victims of the war in Ukraine. The people of Ukraine did not ask for war, but Putin is determined to restore the Russian empire. The results of that greed are :

- over 15 million Ukrainians are displaced both within and outside the country.
- about 13 million are stranded within the battle areas
- most refugees are women and children
- 700,000 Ukrainian children have "disappeared " within Russia

What can we do to ease the suffering? We can pray. Through SUNFLOWER, we can send life-saving food and medical supplies to the victims of this senseless war. We can participate in SUNFLOWER activities. The first is a community run on May 18. Watch for more.

**RISE:** 10,000 meals filled and packed in less than 3 hours! WOW! Now that's mission - a roomful of happy people serving as God's hands on earth.

**FACING HUNGER FOODBANK:** needs volunteers to fill backpacks, senior boxes, medical boxes, make mobile deliveries, and fulfill office duties. With only 2 food banks in WV, Facing Hunger serves 42% of the hungry people. That is amazing since Facing Hunger serves only 12 of WV's 55 counties.

- In 2023, Facing Hunger provided over 8,000,000 meals or 11 million pounds.
- Facing Hunger provides food to over 300 feeding agencies
- One out of four WV children is food insecure
- Facing Hunger also serves 4 counties in KY and Lawrence in Ohio.

**First United Methodist Church**  
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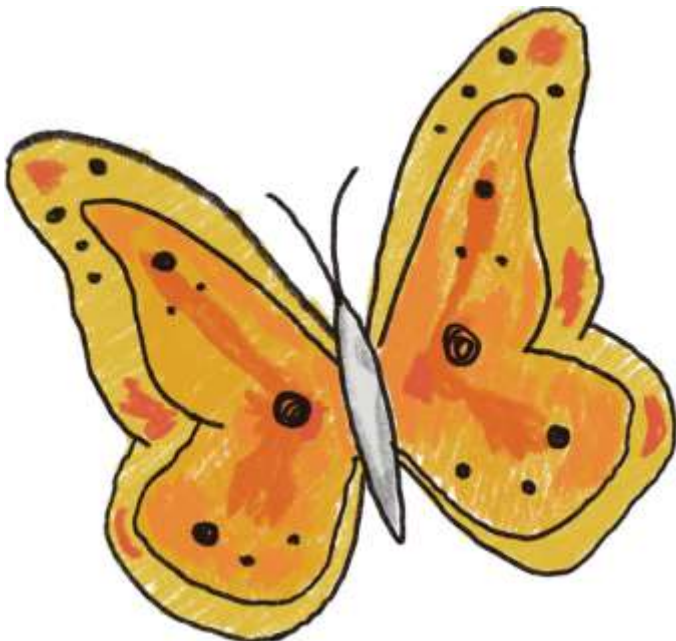
Pastor: Scott Sears  
Music Director: Debbie Bradley  
Director of Youth & Young Adult  
Ministry: Schauna Chambers  
**Director of Children's Ministries:**  
Katrina Lee  
Church Hostess: Susan Nickels  
Office Manager: Allie Bright

**Sunday Worship Opportunities**

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



**Next Tower Topics Deadline: April 22**



**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 grieving, sick, or homebound,*  
Dawn Aikin, Sue Atkinson, Hunter Barry, Kathy Bartram,  
Pris Beard, Pat Broce, Chase Childers, Debbie Conley,  
Mark Cornell, Myra Creek, Family of Judy Davis, Leona  
Davis, Family of Judy Eblin, Linda Eddins, Jackie Eplion,  
Mary Griffith, Emma Mace, JD Maue, Jane McColgan,  
Beth McVey, Bob Palmer, Nancy Palmer, Rev. Jim Ply-  
burn, Jack Patrick, Sally Richards-Bartram, Craig Rogers,  
Family of Wes Shanholtzer, Marlene Sheets, Dan Smith,  
Alice Stone, Maria Thacker, Jean White, Carolyn Wag-  
goner, Gene Weekly, Family of Peggy Wills, Carole Wil-  
son (cousin of Lisa Lucas)





Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

# APRIL

# HAPPY Birthdays

	<b>1</b> Easter Monday Office Closed	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> (Hamburgers & Hot Dogs) Finance Meeting	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 6:30 - 9:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 6:30 pm Finance Course	<b>9</b> 1:00 pm Dorcas Circle	<b>10</b> (Pizza) 6:00 pm Trustees Meeting	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 6:30 - 9:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> 9:30 am Hiking Church @ Rotary Park	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> (Ranch Chicken, Mac & Cheese, Broccoli) 6:00 pm SPRC Meeting	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 6:30 - 9:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> Youth Sunday	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> (Tacos & Brown Beans) Cut Off Date to Order Flowers	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 6:30 - 9:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> IAM Children's Musical Spaghetti Dinner following Worship	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>May 1</b> Youth Volunteering for Salvation Army 6:00 pm Finance Meeting			

04/01 Rebecca Baker

Bill Weekley

Robert Tebbetts

04/03 Sara Allen

Alexis Baskowsky

Tricia Derrig

04/05 Benjamin Howard

Elijah Lemley

Logan Phipps

04/07 Gina Davis

Nathan Edmonds

Stephen Riggs

Kelly Daniel

04/09 Ginnie Tebbetts

Gavin Eddins

04/12 Andrew Gooding

Amy Young

Jody Eddins

04/15 Donna Griffith

Ricky Huckabay Jr.

04/17 Scott Archer

Gabriel Polcyn

04/18 Leona Davis

Mike Sheets

04/19 Benjamin Fulks

Bonnie Hughes

04/22 Alexa Hensley

Chase Rutherford

04/25 Marbeth Anderson

Jenneth Lemley

Kevin Sergeant

04/26 Maddie Legg

Evelyn Rutherford