



# September TOWER TOPICS

## Community Picnic!

If you know a United Methodist, you know we love our food! We love to fellowship with our community here at First United Methodist Church. So, we are doing things a little different for our church picnic this year, and making it a community picnic. We are so excited to provide a space where we aren't asking people to come to us, but where we go to them. We get to show our community how we love!

The date will be September 29<sup>th</sup> from 12:30 to 4 pm at Ritter Park Picnic Shelter number 2. We will be asking people to bring their best sides! I am talking about bringing ALL the casseroles, vegetables, salads, and don't forget the deviled eggs! The church will provide hot dogs, condiments, and desserts.

I bet you were thinking that the fun stops there, but it doesn't! Bring picnic blankets, chairs, and hammocks. Bring your favorite yard games and we will bring ours! We are going to have a fun filled fellowship afternoon with food, games, and music!

Here is the catch: besides trying to figure out what delicious dish you are going to make and who is going to beat me at 9 square, we need you to do just one more thing... INVITE YOUR FRIENDS! Invite your friends, neighbors, and your neighbors' neighbor. Some of the best conversations happen over food and fellowship. So let us come together and make some memories and some new friends.

~ Schauna Chambers



## Hiking Church

This has been a great way to worship differently and reach people outside of our church. We would love to have you and your friends and neighbors at our next hiking church

September 15 at Barboursville Park.

October 27 (location to be determined)

November 17 (location to be determined)



## News from the Woods

Asbury Woods is hard at work preparing for an exciting end of 2024 and beginning of 2025.

The first ever Christmas Market at Camp will be held on Saturday December 14 with a likely visit by Father Christmas. Artisans, musicians, and others are welcome to apply to take part in this festive event (Please contact Chris Thomas or email [asburywoods.wv@gmail.com](mailto:asburywoods.wv@gmail.com)). As the winter comes to an end we plan to hold a K-12th grade End of Winter Retreat. More information to come soon on the End of Winter Retreat and our annual Summer Camps. For the latest updates see us at our website [Asburywoodswv.com](http://Asburywoodswv.com).



# Not Quite Home

(Jesus said) *“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”*

Matthew 11:28-30

It seems almost counterintuitive that when disciples are tired and worn out, Jesus offers them the opportunity to learn more and do more by following them. He doesn’t tell them to take a nap. He doesn’t tell them to get away for a vacation. He doesn’t even mention the possibility of stopping. He offers an invitation to “keep company with me.”

And yet, I think what Jesus is offering here is the key to truly having a restful attitude towards our spiritual lives.

Recently in a Bible Study group I was leading, one of the members of the group said that they had to share an epiphany that they had as a result of studying that week. It went something like this: “I don’t know exactly what triggered it, but I remember reading the story and thinking, ‘I am totally free from having to judge anyone else in this world. I don’t have to worry about whether what they do is right or wrong. I can let God take care of that.’” And they paused and added, “This is the most freeing thing I have ever experienced.”

I believe that this is what Jesus is saying to the disciples in Matthew. As we walk with Jesus, we are able to learn the “unforced rhythms of grace.” We feel the grace that is lavished upon us and that grace spills out and over onto anyone and anything that may come our way.

We can be concerned about our brothers and sisters in this world, but we can love them the way that Jesus loves us – without question, without demand, without judgment.

So much of our lives today are spent trying to figure out what is right and wrong. We deal with that in our workplaces, the lives of young people as we look at the education system, economic decisions, political decisions, and even our own physical health. It is no wonder that some of this wanting to judge should spill over into the relationships we have with our siblings in Christ and even with those in the wider world around us.

And that can weigh us down – it can be heavy and ill fitting simply because as those who worship Christ, we are recipients of GRACE and thus grace could be spilling forth from us.

So, are you feeling tired of church? Are you fed up with religion? Are you worn out with all the battles taking place within and without? Walk with Jesus a little bit and learn again those unforced rhythms of grace. Be set free from judging and just experience grace!

Peace and GRACE,

Pastor Scott



# Choir News

All of our choirs are back in action and ready to lead & enhance our worship services this Fall. We are very blessed to have so many talented, skilled, and faithful musicians in our choirs. It's a true act of service to volunteer so much time and effort toward making music and we want to recognize and celebrate ALL our choir members: Adult Handbell Ringers, Youth Ringers, Wesley Children's Choir and Sanctuary Choir. And let's not forget to say a huge thank you to the fabulous fingers (and feet!) of Jay Brooks and Rhonda Adkins. They are unparalleled in both their talents & dedication. Jay gets a little obnoxious at times, but Rhonda can keep him in line!

Sanctuary Choir had a delicious appetizer party after church on Aug 18<sup>th</sup> to host and thank Harmonia, our musical guests from Chillicothe, OH. If you were there, you know what beautiful music they made during the worship service! And thanks to all the choir members who brought delicious food!

Thanks to the Trustees & The Wednesday Willing Workers the Sanctuary Choir is enjoying their newly remodeled choir room. AND there is plenty of room for MORE SINGERS! If you aren't a singer, maybe you can encourage others to join us? And the Wesley Choir has room for more singers, too. Remember: "All God's children got a place in the choir!"

## Choir Schedules:

5:45-6:30pm      Children's Wesley Choir

6:00-7:00pm      Adult Handbells

7:15- 7:45pm      Youth Handbells    \*\*\*please double check that time

6:45-8:15pm      Sanctuary Choir      \* maybe 7:00 instead of 6:45; yet to be determined

## Children's Choir Performance Schedule:

*(Parents, please put these dates in your calendar)*

Sunday, September 29

Sunday, October 20

Sunday, November 17

Sunday, December 8

**Children's Christmas Musical is Wednesday, December 11**

# Children's Sunday

Children's Sunday will be October 20<sup>th</sup> this year, and it will be a service you will definitely want to attend! The kids will be talking about how God made each of us special, and how we can use what makes us special to glorify him! We will have our kids showcasing some of their talents for you on this day as well as singing in the choir, so please come ready to be amazed and proud of what FUMC's wonderful children can do. Kids: Be thinking about what you want to showcase on Children's Sunday!

## All About Youth

As we are heading into another school year after our summer break, I wanted to give you a small glimpse into our youth ministry. Last year, we averaged about 10 on a Wednesday night. Our students are all involved in academics and extracurricular activities that had them missing youth nights. I would have messages being sent to me saying they missed being at church. It is our job to provide a space for the youth and going where they are.

I made the decision to move youth on Sunday evenings to create the opportunity for everyone to join. Some have asked why 5 pm to 7 pm and why have another dinner? Fellowship is important, when we are around the table that is when conversations start, that is when you know about their weeks and how they are doing in life. Our goal is not to just give them Jesus and send them on their way. Our goal is providing a safe place where they feel seen, poured into, and a place where they can be guided through their faith journey.

This year we will be having quarterly challenges where they must work together in different small groups, quarterly mission moments where we give back to our community, and monthly outings that will be opportunities to just have fun together. Our first Sunday, we had 17 youth that came to Youth night. We will still be doing Sunday School on Sunday mornings at 9:30 and if they are available and want to come hang out on Wednesday with us, the youth room is open. There is just not structure or a plan for Wednesday. We can hang out, pay cards, set up the Wii, do homework or just talk. Again, an opportunity for the youth to feel seen.

We have an amazing group of youth and are growing. If you ever want to help with the meal, come and hang out, get to know the youth and help out in the ministry we would love to have you. Even if you just want to come and be a part of the group without doing a lesson. You are welcome. Our goal for this year of transition is to adapt to changes and thrive in areas we may have pushed aside, creating a community based ministry where our youth feel comfortable talking about their faith not just within the walls of the church but in their every day lives.

Thank you for entrusting me with these young people, for your prayers, for your support and I hope you get a chance to be apart of their lives as well.

With Love,  
Schauna Chambers



## Team Reach App

Would you like to know what is happening each week in our children and youth ministries, get friendly reminders of upcoming events, and have an opportunity for direct communication with Katrina, Schauna, and other children and youth parents? Download TeamReach and get involved in our children and youth ministries! Contact Katrina Lee or Schauna Chambers for the group codes!



## Youth Dates

September 29 there will be no youth because there will be a picnic at Ritter Park! Bring your friends and come and eat and have fun with us!

October 13 is the 2nd annual Halloween Party at the Shepherd's house, more details to come.

November 22-24 is the Fall Workshop (Schauna will be teaching one of the workshops)



# Scholarship Application Excerpts

The commandment has helped me keep true to myself and my friends and family. It makes me question if what I am doing is following that commandment or if it is going to cause harm and not do any good. The commandment also reminds me to pray every night to strengthen my connection with Jesus.

This commandment has been foundational in shaping my Christian faith. It has encouraged me to look beyond myself, to serve others selflessly, and to cultivate a heart of empathy and kindness. It has reminded me that true discipleship is measured by our love for one another, and that in loving others, we reflect Christ's love in the world.

The way I can use these 3 simple rules as a guide in college is that I will continue to be me. By being a good person, treating others the way they would want to be treated, and keeping my focus on God.

The church members have reached out to me in one way or another. Schauna would send me notes to see how I was doing, invited me to youth functions, and give me big hugs when I would see her. The church has always made me feel WELCOME. Another student wrote that when he came back he was always greeted with love. People came to hug him, talk to him, check on him to make sure that he was doing alright. At no time did he feel judged or have any negative feelings from anyone. First Church has provided him with a spiritual family whose continuous acts of love and care have positively impacted his character, a third student said.

Maintaining a strong relationship with God has provided strength, alleviating fear and worry about the future and enhancing all aspects of life. By letting the relationship with God guide me, I have found comfort and confidence in navigating the uncertainties of college.

One of the most powerful and important times was when Jesus said, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." For this is the true meaning of Christianity - to love endlessly. This has helped me as I grew in my faith, not only as a Christian, but a son, partner, and friend.

To stay in love with God, I will continue to attend our chapel services, and join life groups so I do not stray away from that aspect of my life which is important to me.





# Church News

## UM Men

John Yeager, retired pastor from Enslow Park Presbyterian will be our speaker at the United Methodist Men's Breakfast on September 21<sup>st</sup> at 8.am. Reverend Yeager works with Sunflower Seeds. Sunflower Seeds is a non-profit established to provide resources (humanitarian) for Ukrainian refugees & war victims. Working with other partners, this aid is delivered to refugees as well as directly to medics in the field.

## Cridlin Pantry

Cridlin Pantry is asking for 96 cans of vegetable soup in September. Drop off donations at the church office or by the soda machine downstairs.

## Young Adults

Be on the lookout for announcements about our new group we are putting together. If you know of any young adult(s) that would like to be a part of a group that gets together, hangs out, and talks about the Bible, invite them to join us or to reach out for more information!

[schambers@firstunitedmethodist.com](mailto:schambers@firstunitedmethodist.com)

## Dorcas Circle

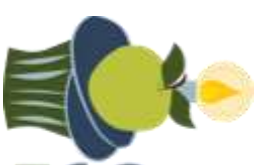
The Circle met August 13, sharing a picnic at Harris Riverfront Park. We were blessed with cooler temperatures, a great breeze, and beautiful river views. The group enjoyed a peach cobbler made by Jane Morse and ice cream brought by Cynthia Beal.

We will meet September 10 at 1:00pm in the Panel Room. The guest speaker will be Dan Hager, Medical Outreach Executive Director for Ebenezer. This will be an open meeting for anyone wanting to attend.

# SEPTEMBER



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat



1 5:00-7:00 pm Youth	2	3	4 7:00pm SPRC Meeting	5	6 6:30 - 9:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	7
8 5:00-7:00 pm Youth	9	10 1:00 pm Dorcas Circle	11 6:00pm Trustees Meeting	12	13 6:30 - 9:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	14
15 9:00 am Hiking Church @ Barboursville Park 5:00-7:00 pm Youth	16	17	18 6:30pm Finance Meeting	19	20 6:30 - 9:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	21 8:00 am United Methodist Men's Breakfast
22 5:00-7:00 pm Youth	23	24	25	26	27 6:30 - 9:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous Meeting	28
29 12:30-4:00 pm Community Picnic at Ritter Park	30	<div> <p>Wednesday Night Activity Schedule</p> <p>5:00pm ~ Dinner 6:00pm ~ Bible Study, Adult Bell Choir, Video Lecture Series, &amp; Yoga 6:30-7:30pm ~ KFC 7:15pm ~ Youth Handbell</p> <p>5:45-6:30pm ~ Children's Choir 6:45pm ~ Sanctuary Choir</p> </div>				



09/02 Katie Cundiff  
 09/03 Melanie Hughes  
 09/04 Charlie Buell  
 09/06 Timothy Reed  
 09/07 Riley Blake  
 09/08 Gary Taylor  
 09/10 Jonathan Fredrick  
 09/11 Todd Bacon  
 09/12 Zealand Wylie  
 09/14 Lois Chatfield  
 09/15 Nikolas Klek  
 09/16 Olivia Day  
 09/17 Mary Arthur  
 09/18 Lily Hager  
 09/19 Chris Thomas  
 09/20 John Knight  
 09/21 Gene Weekley  
 09/22 Schauga Chambers  
 09/23 John Holtzworth  
 09/24 Jennifer Price  
 09/25 John Edwards  
 09/26 Chuck Hanshaw  
 09/27 Bart Stone  
 09/28 Taylor Davis  
 09/29 Ashley Duncan  
 09/30 Sharon Powers  
 Katrina Lee  
 Stacy Morgan  
 Karen Hagan  
 Evalae Kyger  
 Steven Richardson  
 Joann Vanover  
 Robert Hagan  
 Tim Dillon  
 Deborah Bradley  
 Waverly Hughes  
 Joshua Crum  
 09/26 Michael Broce  
 09/27 Shelby Naegele  
 09/28 Chase Thomas  
 09/29 Jake Maue  
 09/30 Leann Haines  
 Adam Nuckols  
 Justin Swann  
 Jeremy Vest

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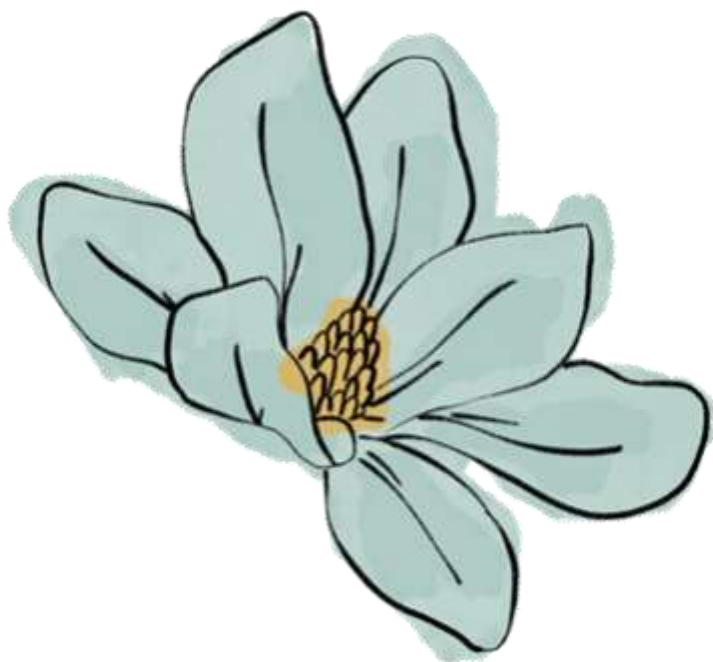
Pastor: Scott Sears  
Music Director: Debbie Bradley  
Director of Youth & Young Adult  
Ministry: Schauna Chambers  
**Director of Children's Ministries:**  
Katrina Lee  
Finance Secretary: Amy Ward  
Church Hostess: Susan Nickels  
Office Manager: Allie Bright

**Sunday Worship Opportunities**

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



**Next Tower Topics Deadline: September 23**



**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, Hunter Barry, Kathy Bartram, Tabitha Berry, Pris Beard, Pat Broce, Chase Childers, Chris Chiles, Debbie Conley, Mark Cornell, Myra Creek, Leona Davis, Norma Denning, Linda Eddins, Jackie Eplion, Sonny Hammer, Emma Mace, JD & Diana Maue, Jane McColgan, Steven McGill, Beth McVey, Bob Morris, Bob Palmer, Nancy Palmer, Jack Patrick, Joyce Ray, Sally Richards-Bartram, Marlene Sheets, Dan Smith, Ed & Alice Stone, Jean White, Carolyn Waggoner, Gene Weekly, Carole Wilson