



# February / March TOWER TOPICS

## Super Sunday

February 9, 2025

The oldest and most effective way to increase worship attendance is by personal invitation from members of the congregation. This is not something that needs special preparations or teams of people to carry out, we simply need every member to fulfill the great commission of Jesus to share the Kingdom of God. We are practicing this method for a special Sunday on **February 9, 2025 and calling it a “Super Sunday”**. However, you could do this on any given date!! Here are the four main things you need to know in order to help your church grow:

**Pray** – Pray that the Holy Spirit opens a path for you (and your brothers and sisters at First Church) to find a person to host on February 9<sup>th</sup>

**Invite** – Give a personal invitation to someone to JOIN YOU at a place where you find spiritual growth and fellowship – First UMC, Huntington – on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Welcome** – Meet your guest in the parking lot or give them a ride. Remember, they do not know this building, these people, or our customs. Be a welcoming presence!

**Host** – Walk in with them, sit down with them, introduce them to your friends, explain what is happening in the bulletin, and when everything is over, consider the possibility of extending your welcome by going to lunch with them. Practice hospitality in the same way Jesus gives it to you in **God’s Kingdom**

May God be with you and all of us on this Super Journey!!

## Ash Wednesday

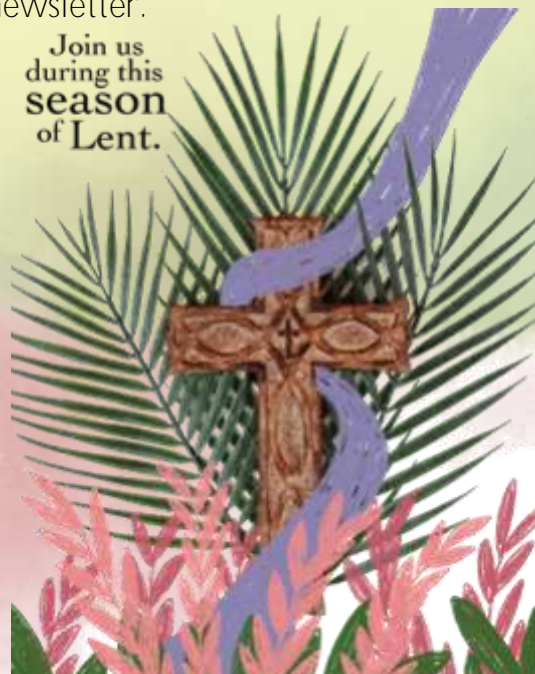
March 5, 2025

We will be celebrating Ash Wednesday with two opportunities to receive the imposition of ashes. (These are ashes applied to the forehead of Christ followers to remind ourselves that ultimately, we all live and die by the grace of God.)

On the morning of **Ash Wednesday, March 5th**, Pastor Scott will be at the entrance to the Westside Parking Lot of First UMC for anyone who would like to drive through and receive their ashes. **He will be there from 6:30 am to 8:30 am.**

**At 6:00 pm that evening**, we will gather for an Ash Wednesday Worship Service. The theme of the service is **“everything [in] between – intention & action”** and is part of the larger Lenten series that you can read about elsewhere in this newsletter.

Join us  
during this  
season  
of Lent.



## **“Everything [in] between” - Our series for Lent 2025**

This series, inspired by the Narrative Lectionary (Year 3)\*, allows the Gospel of Luke to guide us through Lent. Beginning with Jesus setting his face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), the series flows through several familiar stories—the Good Samaritan, Mary and Martha, the fruitless fig tree, the Lost Sheep, Zacchaeus, and more. Many of these stories are well-known in both sacred and secular imagination, carrying cultural relevance and lore. For example, have you ever identified yourself as either a “Mary” or a “Martha?” The “Good Samaritan” title alone could reference a hospital, a charitable organization, a type of law, or a good deed. Perhaps you grew up singing “Zacchaeus was a wee little man” in Sunday School. So many of these scriptures hold significance in pop culture, church history, politics, and everything in between.

**As the designers studied these scriptures, they were struck by how Jesus’ ministry was rooted in relationships that disrupted the established social, political, and religious divides of his time. As modern readers, we sometimes lose the “shock factor” behind Jesus’ words, as his teaching tactics likely felt extreme for those in his context. He described a stigmatized Samaritan as a good neighbor. He emphasized the value of 1 sheep in a herd of 100. He dined with a tax collector who amassed wealth through extortion. While dying on the cross, he told a convicted criminal he would soon find paradise. Jesus intentionally highlighted the cultural and political polarities of his time to emphasize the radical, inclusive, and surprising love of God. When we study these stories in their historical and cultural context, we see how they mirror the cultural and political divides many of us experience in our families, churches, and communities today.**

This series is an invitation to navigate the polarities in our lives with more faith, intention, and openness to be transformed. Each weekly sub-theme explores two supposed opposites, like “faith & works” or “rest & growth,” or “grief & hope.” We often consider these ideas to be opposing. However, as we explore these concepts within the scriptures, we find nuance and complexity. We find that these dichotomies are false. We might begin to see a full spectrum instead of black and white. We might find that God is present in between.

**And so, this season, you are invited to look beyond black and white “opposites” and easy answers.** We encourage you to notice the dichotomies that define our lives, but also imagine where God might be meeting us beyond the categories we create. This theme may resonate with anyone who is in discernment or trying to find their way through an undefined space. It will speak to anyone who feels as if they are living in a divided world. It is for those who seek a spiritual life that engages with complexity instead of avoiding it. This Lent, we're trusting that God shows up in shades of gray, rainbow hues, and everywhere in between.

**“So much of the beauty of the world comes from the in-between spaces. In the space between night and day, the sun and atmosphere collide into a dazzling display of color. Waterfalls span the space between cliffs and the river below with astonishing power. Mangrove forests, beaches, and bayous exist entirely in the space between land and water. The edges of things, the mixing spaces, the spaces where biomes collide, are the most interesting places on earth. And yet, we feel the compulsion to exist in categories. We construct boxes around ‘sacred’ and ‘secular,’ ‘woman’ and ‘man,’ ‘left’ and ‘right,’ compressing the complexity and beauty of the whole spectrum of being into just two words. What a gift it is to set the boxes aside and follow the example of our Creator who created night and day and everything in between; land and water and everything in between; you and me and everything in between. The Alpha and the Omega is surely with us in the space in between.”**

— Rev. Anna Strickland, Creative Partner & Operations Support



## The Lesson and Themes for Each Week of Lent:

Ash Wednesday	“intention and action”	Luke 9:51-62
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent	“stranger and neighbor”	Luke 10:25-37
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent	“faith & works”	Luke 10:38-42
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent	“rest & growth”	Luke 13:6-9
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent	“lost & found”	Luke 15:1-7
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent	“righteousness & mercy”	Luke 19:1-10
Palm Sunday	“shouting & silence”	Luke 19:29-40
Maundy Thursday	“power & humility”	Luke 22:1-27
Easter Sunday	“grief & hope”	Luke 24:1-12

\*To learn more about “The Narrative Lectionary” which is quite different from the Revised Common Lectionary that we often use at First UMC, please visit <https://www.workingpreacher.org/narrative-faq>

## Lenten Studies

Pastor Scott will be offering Lenten Studies based on the upcoming Sunday theme and passage at two times during the season: Sunday Evenings from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm and Wednesday Mornings from 11:00 am to Noon. Please call the church office to register or email pastor Scott at [sears.scott@gmail.com](mailto:sears.scott@gmail.com) and let him know which meeting you will be attending.

## Devotional Books or Devotional Cards

This season we are making available either Books (based on a weekly reading) or Cards (based on a **daily reading**) for the series “**everything [in] between**]. These will be available in the back of the sanctuary starting Sunday March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## Wednesday Night Bible Study

We will continue having Bible Study on Wednesday nights in the church library from 6:00-6:30pm, including throughout Lent. Anyone is welcome to join us on any single night and see if they want to keep coming. There is generally no homework and we are happy to have folks join as they are able!

-Grace Gooding



## Church Finances for 2025

I am pleased to share with you that at the end of 2024, we were able to send an additional \$20,000.00 to the Conference for our apportionments, which made the total for 2024 to be \$34,094 (31%).

Our total pledges for 2025 ended up being \$306,990 which represents 59 giving units. The pledges represent 60% of our 2025 Budget. Again, the Finance Committee wants to thank each person that made a commitment to help offset the budget for this current year.

The Finance Committee is planning on providing you the status of our finances in each Tower Topics. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any member of the **committee**. **The Church's finances are a group effort.**

Harriett Evans  
Finance Chairperson

## News from the Woods

Asbury Woods in the winter is a wonderful sight while blanketed with fresh snow. The buildings are warm and staff are busy planning the upcoming year. We invite all that want to be a part of Asbury Woods to reach out and experience the serenity.

Please take note of our upcoming events (keep up to date on events and rental information by checking out our website at [www.asburywoodswv.com](http://www.asburywoodswv.com)):

Winter Retreat: February 7-9

**Father's Day Weekend Picnic: June 14**

Community Swim Days: Multiple Saturdays throughout the summer, stay tuned

Swim Lessons: June 26-28

Summer Camp (All grades welcome for both weeks): 1st and 3rd week in July

May you enjoy the winter and look forward to spring just around the corner. We hope to see you out at Asbury Woods soon. Thank you all for your continued support of our mission at Asbury Woods Camp and Retreat Center.

## Dorcas Circle

The circle celebrated the Christmas Season with a luncheon December 10th. A wonderful fellowship and great food was experienced by everyone.

The January meeting had to be cancelled due to weather conditions. The next meeting is scheduled for February 11. Please come and join our group or for just a visit all are welcome.



# Mission News

I heard an expert say recently, that the country has lost compassion. That may well be true for a large part of the population, but for our church family compassion is alive and well. How do I know this? Because of how generously you give to Missions near and far. This has been a rough few years for our church, but still you give. In 2024,

- We supported the Celebration of Mission Event with a donation of \$2300 and \$270 in donated goods to WV Mission Projects
- Thanks also to the Mission Grant, we maintain the porta-pot; donated \$1500 to Cridlin for food; \$400 to Branches; \$1200 to the City Mission Lunch program; \$2000 to the Ebenezer building fund; and \$400 to Harmony House
- In the Spring, we collected undies and socks for Cridlin and Ebenezer (They can always use more).
- Then there were the 10,250 food bags we filled for Rise Against Hunger-a great day for Missions and intergenerational fellowship.
- We have responded to disasters with an outpouring of donations to UMCOR.
- Each month we collect food and clothing for Cridlin and then help distribute it.
- The youth went to Ronald McDonald House to bake cookies
- At Christmas, our 23 Ebenezer Angels got their presents and their Christmas cookies.
- The magic Mitten Tree was filled to overflowing twice. Those items have gone to Cridlin, Ebenezer, Branches, and Asheville, NC Helene victims with a little bit of help from Brooks-Howell Home in Asheville.

Thank you, thank you for all you do for others.

## United Women of Faith

United Women of Faith have had a busy year. Each meeting has been dedicated to some area of Mission. To name a few, we made prayer shawls for Hospice. Personal hygiene kits for the Veterans Hospital, Collected items for Ebenezer Medical, Tri-**State Life Care and Dr. Jenny Yoost's women's** health project. WE also sponsor the Flower Sale in the Spring and the Cookie Walk in the Fall with all our proceeds going to the mission work of UWF. We made \$1031 at the Cookie Walk and sent a total of \$5100 to the UWF for our ongoing mission projects.

## Cridlin Pantry

96 boxes of tuna helper in February.

96 boxes of mac n cheese in March.

Drop off donations at the church office or by the soda machine downstairs.

## United Methodist Men

The next United Methodist Men's breakfast will be **Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup> @ 8:30**. Tony Stroud will be our speaker. Tony is the Chief Legal Officer and VP of Strategic Initiatives and External Affairs. It will be a great morning of food, fellowship and education on happenings at Marshall.





## The Sanctuary Choir

Adults & youth are always welcome to join the Sanctuary Choir, which meets Wednesdays at 6:45 and sings every **Sunday morning**. We're happy to welcome new member Ann Snyder who joined us shortly before Christmas. Ann is a trained musician & former music teacher, so we're especially glad to have her. And we'd also like to welcome Forrest Wamsley who joined us for Christmas Choir & decided to make it permanent.

Sanctuary Choir will be presenting a special service of "Water" music on Sunday, May 18, Plan to be there!

## Children's News

### Easter Egg Hunt

**Mark your calendars for FUMC's annual Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>.** The location is still being determined, so keep an eye out for that announcement closer to this date. If you are wanting to donate to this event, we are looking for things to fill the eggs with whether it be candy, little toys, stickers, etc. If you are not sure what to donate, we are accepting monetary donations to purchase additional things for the event such as decorations or egg fillers. **Please let our children's director know if you need more information or want to donate to this event!**

## Wesley Children's Choir

All children are invited to join us on Wednesdays at 5:45pm, as we sing, dance & learn about living as followers of Jesus. Our SUNDAY SINGING schedule for spring semester is

Feb 9

March 16

April 20 (Easter)

**May 11 (Mother's Day & Musical)**

On the Sundays we're singing, please meet in kids' choir room at 10:30 for robing & warm-up.

On May 11 we will be presenting a mini-musical during the worship service. Parents can expect more info on that in the coming weeks.

**We're always excited to welcome new singers, so look around your school & neighborhood and invite some people to church & choir!**

BIG thank you to Rhonda Adkins & Carolyn Waggoner for being the best choir assistants!

## Thank Y O U !

Thank you to those who pour time into our **children's ministry program! We appreciate everything you do to keep our children loved, safe, and glowing in the light of God!** If you feel like God is calling you to be involved in our church, please consider doing something for **our children's ministry! You could volunteer your time in one of our classrooms for a day (or longer), help set up the classroom before the children come in, donate monetarily to the program itself, donate items for events, teach a lesson during a class or a children's minutes mini lesson during our service, and pray for our children as often as you're able. Contact the Children's Ministries Director to help find your place in our children's ministry!**

Katrina Lee

Email: [katrinamlee1124@gmail.com](mailto:katrinamlee1124@gmail.com)

# Important Dates for Youth

February 7-9 - Winter Retreat

February 9 - No Youth

February 16 - **Hiking Church (Theme: "Walk in Love")**  
Super Sunday, Youth Edition

February 22 - **Galentine's**

February 23 - Youth Mission Meeting

March 2 - **Hiking Church (Theme: "Into the Deep")**

March 5 - Ash Wednesday (Youth Lent series begins)

March 9 - Ice Skating

## Bulletin Board

To keep up to date on all things Children and Youth, check the bulletin board between the elevator and the sanctuary!

## Confirmation Class

Confirmation Class will start on Sundays after church from 12-1 at the end of February. It will be 8 weeks long and confirmation Sunday will be on Easter. There will be a light lunch provided for **each lesson. If you haven't already,** please reach out to Schauna for anyone interested in participating.

## Young Adults

Young Adults who are wanting to grow our ministry please reach out to Schauna Chambers at 304-634-9684. She wants to hear your thoughts on what you want out of the ministry and the church.



# Youth

## Galentine's

Youth girls are invited to a Galentine's Celebration at Schauna's house on February 22<sup>nd</sup> from 12-2 pm. Girls will have some snacks, a couple of games/crafts and a lesson on love.

## Youth Mission Meeting

Mission Meeting will be held at 5:30 before youth on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. If you are interested in going on the mission trip this is a mandatory meeting.

## Hiking Church

We will have hiking church on February **16, with the theme "Walk in Love", and March 2, with the theme "Into the Deep".** Join us and bring your friends and family (pets included)!



# February

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

*This Month*

02/01	Yeon Choi
02/02	Leslie Adkins

Leslie Cummins

Jean Fredrick

Paxton Brown

Jim Cummings

Jax O'Roark

Heather Metz

Lewis Aldridge

Matthew Duncan

Karen Shanholtzer

Abigail Nae

Bill Rhoten

Zara Harold

Forrest Wam

Ashley Davis

Brianne Holk

Alex Nelson

Scott Henry

Justin Legg

Emily Phipps

Harriett Evans

James Meeks

Willa May Weekley

Hayden McCloy

Bill Archer

Vangle Bradley

DEAN J. CUNNINGHAM

Drew Cummings  
Matthew AllenMatthew Allen  
Dustin Hagan

Deisy Hagei  
Luis C. Medina

ERIC Cummings  
Roberta McCoy

Redecla Wilco  
Lombard+ Railov

Jeanette Bailey  
Eaton Cummings

Terrell Cummings  
Evelyn Dabuth

Lveilyn Deividd  
Jordan Eilford

Watson Stefanides  
JOURNAL 1 ALLIED


Olivia Butterfield

Olivia Barr  
Linden Chi

Sarah Haymes Turbavetskiy

Drew Adkins

Troy Jones

Wednesday Night Activity Schedule							1
5:00pm ~ Dinner 5:45-6:30pm ~ Children's Choir 6:00pm ~ Bible Study, Young Adult Bible Study, Bell Choir, Yoga 6:30 ~ KFC 6:45pm ~ Sanctuary Choir 7:15pm ~ Youth Bells							
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
12:00pm Worship Committee Meeting 5:00pm Youth			5:00pm Dinner - Tacos		Winter Retreat 6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	Winter Retreat	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Super Goal Sunday!		1:00pm Dorcas Circle	5:00pm Dinner - Hamburgers		6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	8:30am UM Men's Breakfast	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
Hiking Church 5:00pm Super Sunday - Youth Edition			5:00pm Dinner - Spaghetti		6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	12-2:00pm Calentine's	
23	24	25	26	27	28		
12:00pm Confirmation Class 5:30pm Youth Mission Meeting			5:00pm Dinner - Chicken 6:00pm Church/Administrative Council Meeting				

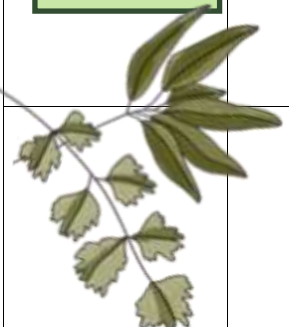






Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat

2 <i>Hiking Church</i> 12:00pm Confirmation Class 5:00pm - Youth	3	4	5 5:00pm Dinner - Lasagna 6:00pm Ash Wednesday	6	7 6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	1
9 12:00pm Confirmation Class 5:00pm - Youth 6:00pm Lenten Study	10	11 1:00pm Dorcas Circle	12 5:00pm Dinner - Chicken	13	14 6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	15
16 12:00pm Confirmation Class 5:00pm - Youth 6:00pm Lenten Study	17	18	19 5:00pm Dinner - Baked Steak	20	21 <i>Tower Topics</i> <i>Articles Due</i> 6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	22
23 12:00pm Confirmation Class 5:00pm - Youth 6:00pm Lenten Study	24	25	26 5:00pm Dinner - Pizza	27	28 6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	29
30 12:00pm Confirmation Class 5:00pm - Youth 6:00pm Lenten Study	31	<div> <b>Wednesday Night Activity Schedule</b>                      5:00pm ~ Dinner 5:45-6:30pm ~ <b>Children's Choir</b>                      6:00pm ~ Bible Study, Young Adult Bible Study, Bell Choir, Yoga                      6:30 ~ KFC 6:45pm ~ Sanctuary Choir 7:15pm ~ Youth Bells                 </div>				



## Birthdays!

03/02	Edna Brooks Meghan Elkins Zoe Harold
03/04	Charles Neighborgall III
03/05	Carter Bacon
03/06	Janice Naegele
03/07	Linda Hay
03/09	Brian Massie Hunter Massie Christopher Reardon Belle Thomas Parks Ward III Bert Fulk
03/10	Logan Bush
03/11	Scout Archer
03/13	Sophie Bright
03/14	Cordie Jo Canterbury
03/15	Marcia Canterbury
03/16	Daniel Maue Winifred Chiles
03/17	Jon Dawson Shelby Nelson
03/20	Ken Wolfe Joy Brown Caroline Chiles Suzanne Forsythe Katie Fulk
03/22	Pat Daugherty Nikki Kemball Karia Vigilanco Michelle Adkins
03/23	Shaylynn Kutcher
03/24	Lynn Cummings Susan Nickels
03/26	Diana Archer Ian Vidal-Bowman
03/27	Jonathon Perry
03/28	Alec Cyrus
03/29	Norah Gerlach Nancy Crum
03/30	Rebecca Hamilton Vern Reichenbecher
03/31	Eric Legg Hayden Drakes Julie Henry Stephanie Wilson

**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  
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: March 21

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, Kathy Bartram, Family of Edith Hay, Pat Broce, Chase Childers, Chris Chiles, Debbie Conley, Mark Cornell, Myra Creek, Mel Cummings, Jackie Eplion, Sandee Folsom, Sonny Hammer, Brian Justice, Emma Mace, JD & Diana Maue, Jane McColgan, Steven McGill, Beth McVey, Bob Palmer, Nancy Palmer, Jack Patrick, Sally Richards Bartram, Marlene Sheets, Dan Smith, Ed & Alice Stone, Jean White, Carolyn Waggoner, Gene Weekly, Carole Wilson

