



April / May TOWER TOPICS

Holy (Maundy) Thursday Service

Thursday, April 17 at 7:00pm

Our Holy/Maundy Thursday service will take place in the Sanctuary on Thursday, April, 17, 2025 at 7:00 pm. The service theme is "everything [in] between: power and humility" and will include the celebration of The Lord's Supper and will close with a reading of the Passion Narrative (story of Jesus' trial and crucifixion) for reflection on Good Friday.

Easter Service

Sunday, April 20 at 10:45am

Please join us for Easter Morning Worship on Sunday, April 21 at 10:45 am! Special music, beautiful flowers, and a message on "grief and hope" as found in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Palm AND Easter Sundays will be filled with the joyful sounds of music throughout the sanctuary. Wesley & Sanctuary Choirs will sing, Brass & Bell Choirs will play & the congregation will have the opportunity to join in. Be prepared to **MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE!**

**Singers who wish to join the Sanctuary Choir in singing Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" at the end of the Easter service will be invited to the choir loft during the singing of the final hymn. Music will be provided.*

-Debbie Bradley

Easter Meditation

(Based on a poem by Sarah Speed)

In the Direction of Hope

I am on my way.
Wait for me in the garden;
I will be there soon.

I am not the fastest runner,
Lord, knows that,
but these legs are moving.

I suppose I could lame my weary spirit for the slow speed.

I could blame the grief I've shoved into my pockets
and laid around my neck.

I could blame my own hesitation to hope,
a hesitation that clings like mud.

But I don't know that Jesus cares about my speed.

So tell God when you see them –

I am on my way.

Wait for me in the garden.

I will be there soon.

Somewhere *in between* all that is happening in this world, whether you see it through eyes of hope or eyes of fear, we are all on our way. And none of us can get where we need to be – in the presence of the resurrected Christ – often enough, or fast enough. Our earthbound hope keeps us from seeing the need for new life that can only come from Christ. Our earthbound grief drives us to anger or despair and keeps us from moving towards the only true hope we have in the resurrected Christ.

So, I am on my way, too. Will you join me?

- Pastor Scott Sears

Mission: Discipleship

We often think of being and growing as a disciple of Jesus as something that just happens as we participate in church. However, there are times that we can be intentional – dare we even say “methodical” – about it. Yes, the early movement in the Anglican Church that gave rise to Methodism as we know it today was very methodical. They were jokingly called “Holy Clubs” because members of small groups would gather to encourage one another to carry out certain activities that would help them grow spiritually.

First UMC is taking part in an intentional effort to grow in our Discipleship through our own small group-based program being called “Mission: Discipleship.”

So far, seven small groups have formed to take part in the kick-off event, a Rise Against Hunger Food Packing event, that will take place at Huntington Mall on April 5th. ***Although registration for that kick off event has ended, you can still sign up to be in one of the small groups!*** Those groups and contact person for them are: Asbury Group (Scott Sears), Choir (Debbie Bradley), Dorcas (Jane Morse), Fellowship Group (Harriett Evans), FISH (Kelly Kinsey), Seekers (Anne Weeks), and Youth (Schuana Chambers).

After the kick-off event, groups will be taking part in friendly competition with one another to see how well their members can do – on average – of completing other discipleship growing activities and recording these activities in a Mission Discipleship Passport. Some activities are individual in nature, while others are for the small group. However, all of the activities fall under one of the original “marks of discipleship” shared by John Wesley: Acts of Devotion, Acts of Worship, Acts of Compassion, Acts of Justice. We will be calling these for areas our passport destinations and each destination has different activities to arrive. *Just remember that going on the journey to that destination earns each small groups points towards their overall growth.*

Our hope is that in the six+ months between now and our Charge Conference in November we will be recording our progress on the journey and sharing/celebrating it with one another at that Charge Conference, which will also include another Rise Against Hunger food packing event.

If you need any help finding a small group to participate in, or would like to start your own small group (6 to 12 people) please contact Pastor Scott ASAP!

Let's all be in prayer for one another as we work together on this journey of Mission: Discipleship!!

Church Finances

As you know the last 60 days has been cold and snowy, particularly on weekends. Our church attendance has been average, but our pledged contributions are down approximately \$12,000 compared to the budget. There are reasons that would cause this situation, the primary one being that some of the received pledges were for quarterly or annual payment. Another reason could be Christmas expenses and tax expenses overlapping into the first quarter of the year. Our apportionment payment to the Conference is the area that does not get paid when there is not enough money in the account.

During the first quarter, our monthly gas bill has been running in excess of \$4,200. We are blessed that the Trustees reimburse the church for any amount over \$2,000.

I am hoping that by end of March, we will be able to send something to the conference. It is important that we continue to pray for our congregation, our staff, and do the best we can to meet our obligations. Thank you for your support.

-Harriett Evans, Finance Chair

Wednesday Night Bible Study

We will continue having Bible Study on Wednesday nights in the FUMC library from 6:00-6:50pm, Anyone is welcome to join us on any single night!

-Grace Gooding

Choir News

Wesley Choir

Mothers' Day, May 11 will be extra special this year because the children will be presenting a mini-musical during 10:45 worship. Don't be surprised if the sanctuary looks a bit "sheepish" on Mothers' Day. Just come anticipating lots of fun & extra blessings that Sunday.

Sanctuary Choir

The imagery of water will be the focus of a special program of music on **May 18th** during the 10:45 service, when the choir presents a program called "***The Witness of Water.***"

This service will feature dancing, original liturgy, new paraments, & artwork by some of our members; as well as choral, solo & instrumental music – all referencing the use of water in our spiritual traditions & formation. This service will be a true celebration of the creative arts in worship. If you are a "creator" and have something to share, please contact Debbie Bradley -all are welcome!

Ebenezer Update

Plans are well underway for the Ebenezer Building project. As part of our participation in that project, we are hosting an entertainment & information dinner in May. Stay tuned for date. In the mean time, Ebenezer is bustling with 63 children enrolled and new requests for help. People are hurting. There have been 3 referrals for utility help, 12 referrals for food, and 27 basinet kits handed out. **The center always need diapers.** Director Celes Sheffield reported that the outreach has passed all of their food and health reviews. She hopes to meet soon with mayor Farrell about service fees preventing purchase of our much needed lot to the east.

COME

Unfortunately, I have no news about the Celebration of Mission Event. Information and a new name may be available in April. At present, we are planning to have an ingathering at the District Conference on **May 18**. That doesn't mean that your group could not raise money or collect items-school supplies, baby items, personal care items, cleaning supplies, etc., because the need is there even if the conference is behind in planning.

Dorcas Circle

Met with Lynn Cummings, Executive Director of Cridlin Food and Clothing Closet. She talked about everything from their roomy new building on 6th Ave. to their new bed project. Each child being housed requires a bed of their own. Cridlin is accepting new single beds & new and gently used bedding for this project. Food and clothing donations are always welcome. Presently men's clothing is most needed. There's always a need for new underwear, socks, & diapers in all sizes. They always need volunteers. The Dorcas Circle donated bedding. Join us for our next meeting on **April 8 at 1:00 pm.**

Spring Flower Sale

Red Geraniums - \$1.50_____

"Rose" Geraniums - \$1.50_____

Purple Wave Petunias - \$2.00 _____

Hanging Baskets -\$16.00_____

Order by Wednesday, April 23

Pick-up date: April 30, WEDNESDAY 5-7 P.M

Name _____

Phone Number_____

Proceeds support Missions of United Women in Faith

Youth Dates:

- April 5** - We will be participating in the Rise Against Hunger event at the Huntington Mall
- April 13** - Youth can help with the egg hunt at Asbury Woods and go to Hiking Church
- April 20** - Confirmation Sunday & Easter Sunday
- April 27** - Parent meeting about the summer months at 4:30pm
- May 18** - End of Year Cookout
- May 26** - Helping with VBS prep

Coffee & Connection

Schauna is trying to see if there is interest in people meeting weekly/biweekly at a local coffee shop for some devotion and conversations. If you are interested, please contact Schauna Chambers at (304) 634-9684



Photo from Galentine's Day on February 22, 2025

Children's News

Important Dates

- April 13** : Easter Egg Hunt Festivities at Asbury Woods!
- June 1-4** : Vacation Bible School! "Step Right Up" Carnival theme



Scholarship Opportunity

Attention High school seniors and college students! Scholarship applications will be available in late May. This is a great opportunity to receive financial support for your education. Stay tuned for more details, and start thinking about how this could benefit your future!

-Jim Cummings

Camp Scholarships

As most of the congregation knows, we have a lot of children and youth that go to Asbury Woods. Most United Methodist Churches pay for half of the kids registration that goes to a UMC camp. This helps the financial burden for families; especially in the case that they have multiple children going to camp. You can help us support our children going to Asbury Woods by donating to the camp fund. All you need to do is put "Camp Fund" in the memo of the check. We appreciate you being a part of this ministry. If you have any questions please contact Schauna Chambers 304-634-9684

Donations

Donations are needed for the Easter Egg Hunt. Eggs, candy, and more are needed! If you are interested in helping prepare for the Easter Egg Hunt please contact Katrina or Schauna.

Greening Our Church: Eco-Friendly Changes

Over the past year and a half, I have been working to make our church a more environmentally friendly space by implementing small but impactful changes in our daily operations. As stewards of God's creation, we have a responsibility to care for the earth, and I'm excited to share some of the sustainable practices we've put in place.

Reducing Waste

One of the changes I made was replacing our plastic trash bags with compostable ones. These decompose naturally, reducing the amount of plastic waste in landfills. We also switched to 100% recycled toilet paper and paper towels, further minimizing our environmental impact.

Sustainable Supplies

Our office now exclusively uses tree-free copy paper made entirely from sugarcane waste! Not only does this prevent deforestation, but it is also a 100% carbon-neutral product. This means our printing and copying needs no longer contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

Reimagining Cleaning and Hygiene

We've transitioned to reusable soap dispensers, eliminating the need for single-use plastic containers. Instead, we use tiny concentrated glass refills, which reduce plastic waste while still keeping our hands clean and sanitized.

These changes may seem small, but they add up to a big impact. By making thoughtful choices about the materials we use, we are taking steps to honor God's creation and care for our planet. I hope these efforts inspire others to consider their own habits—at church, at home, and in their daily lives.

If you have ideas for more ways we can continue our journey toward sustainability, I would love to hear them!
- Allie Bright

News from the Woods

Spring is upon us, and Asbury Woods is springing to life. From the fish in the pond to the trees in the forest, everything is stirring. Important reminders:

- **Summer camp registration is open**, and all information is on our website www.asburywoodswv.com/camp-registraton. Two weeks of camp are available (1st and 3rd week of July). Get your spot while you can! This year we will have special visits from the WV DNR, local library, fitness instructor and more.
- **Easter Egg Hunt on Palm Sunday - April 13** You don't want to miss this egg hunt along with hiking church and lots of fellowship opportunities.
- **Asbury Fathers Day Picnic – June 14** Fun will flow with swimming, games, and relaxation opportunities for Dad and family. Also a good time to come see our new multi-age playset, gaga ball pit and maybe a new pickleball court.

Asbury Woods is thrilled with the opportunities of the coming year. If you ever want to visit, please visit our website, www.asburywoodswv.com, and email us or contact Chris Thomas or any other staff. Asbury Woods is a place for everyone at all times.

-Chris Thomas



Hiking Church

April 13 - Asbury Woods "A Holy Week Walk"

May 18 - Beech Fork "From Showers to Flowers"



April



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

		1	2	3	4	5
			5:00pm Dinner - Tacos		4:00-7:00pm Drive Thru Girl Scout Cookie Sale 6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	9:00-11:00am Rise Against Hunger Event @ Huntington Mall
6 12:00pm Confirmation Class 5:00pm - Youth	7	8 1:00pm Dorcas Circle	9 5:00pm Dinner - Burgers 6:00pm Trustees Meeting	10	11 6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	12
13 12:00pm Confirmation Clas 2:00-5:00pm Easter Egg Hunt @ Asbury Woods	14	15	16 5:00pm Dinner - Pork Loin 6:00pm Finance Meeting	17	18 6:30-9:00pm NA Meting	19 1:30pm Visitation for Nancy Echols 2:00pm Service
20 Easter Sunday! Confirmation 5:00pm - Youth	21 Easter Monday! Office Closed	22	23 5:00pm Dinner - Spaghetti Spring Flower Orders Due	24	25 6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	26
27 4:30pm Youth parent meeting 5:00pm - Youth	28	29	30 5:00pm Dinner - Chicken 5:00-7:00pm Flower Pick Up	Wednesday Night Activity Schedule 5:00pm ~ Dinner 5:45-6:30pm ~ Children's Choir 6:00pm ~ Bible Study, Young Adult Bible Study, Bell Choir 6:30 ~ KFC 6:45pm ~ Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal 7:15pm ~ Youth Bells		

04/01	Rebecca Baker Robert Tebbetts Bill Weekley
04/03	Sara Allen Alexis Baskowsky
04/05	Tricia Derrig
04/06	Benjamin Howard Elijah Lenley
04/07	Logan Phipps Gina Davis Nathan Edmonds
04/09	Stephen Riggs Kelly Daniel
04/11	Ginnie Tebbetts
04/12	Gavin Eddins
04/14	Andrew Gooding
04/15	Amy Young Jody Eddins
04/17	Donna Griffith Ricky Huckabee Jr.
04/18	Scott Archer Gabriel Polcyn
04/19	Mike Sheets
04/22	Benjamin Fuls
04/24	Bonnie Hughes
04/25	Alexa Hensley Hannah Hansen
04/26	Chase Rutherford Maribeth Anderson
04/29	Jenneth Lemley Kevin Sergent Maddie Legg Evelyn Rutherford



May



Birthdays

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

05/01 Emily Lee
05/02 Shirley Kincade

Olivia Moss
05/03 Adam Young
William Reed

05/04 Marlene Sheets
05/05 Daylen Reeves
05/07 C.R. Neighborgall IV
05/08 Rev. Craig Michel
Matt Birkhimer
Kil Choi

05/09 Kyle Foster
Christopher Gooding

Trevor Stone
05/13 Sheri Duncan
Tucker Leithoff

05/14 Alyse Lewis
Rowan McCoy
05/16 Tess Anderson
Peggy Brown

05/17 Nancie Perry
Craig Sergeant
05/18 Erik Legg
Tyne Walker

05/19 Rosie Bright
Dan Choi
Rodney Honaker

Alexander Naegele
05/21 Wendy Bacon
Vance Burn

Ella Kinsey
05/23 Avett Bannon
Sally Duncan-McCasky

05/24 Keir Adkins-Coleman
Ethan Burgess
05/26 Andrew Legg

Karianne Fischer
05/27 Ted Johnson
Harrison Massie

Creed Sinclair
05/28 J.D. Maue
05/29 Robert Archer

Ryan Woodward
05/30 Autumn Arthur
05/31 Ellen Winkler

Wednesday Night Activity Schedule

5:00pm ~ Dinner 5:45-6:30pm ~ Children's Choir

6:00pm ~ Bible Study, Young Adult Bible Study, Bell Choir

6:30 ~ KFC 6:45pm ~ Sanctuary Choir 7:15pm ~ Youth Bells

				1	2	3
					6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5:00pm Youth			5:00pm Dinner 6:00pm SPRC Meeting		6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Mothers Day Musical 5:00pm Youth		1:00pm Dorcas Circle	5:00pm Dinner 6:00pm Trustees Meeting		6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Witness of Water Program End of Year Cookout!			6:00pm Finance Meeting		6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
5:00pm Youth			6:00pm Church/ Administrative Council Meeting		6:30-9:00pm NA Meeting	

First United Methodist Church
1124 Fifth Avenue
Huntington, West Virginia 25701-2288



Phone: (304) 522-0357

firstumc@firstunitedmethodist.com
www.firstunitedmethodist.com

**CHANGE SERVICE
REQUESTED**

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Huntington, WV
PERMIT NO. 173

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: May 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 grieving, sick, or homebound,

Randall Adkins, Dawn Aikin, Kathy Bartram, Pat Broce, Chase Childers, Chris Chiles, Debbie Conley, Mark Conner, Mark Cornell, Mel Cummings, Family of Nancy Echols, Jackie Eplion, Family of Sandee Folsom, Sonny Hammer, Brian Justice, Emma Mace, Kim Mangle, JD & Diana Maue, Family of Margie McInerney, Jane McColgan, Steven McGill, Beth McVey, Bob Palmer, Nancy Palmer, Jack Patrick, Sally Richards-Bartram, Marlene Sheets, Dan Smith, Ed & Alice Stone, Family of Brenda Turner, Jean White, Carolyn Waggoner, Gene Weekly, Carole Wilson