



First News First

Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors

From Pastor Denny's Desk...

"Lord, Surprise Us"

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Bible Reading Plan 11

In Draw the Circle, the book we've been using for our 40-Day Prayer Challenge during Lent, author Mark Batterson recalls a staff meeting at his church that turned into a prayer meeting. While they were praying, these words came to Pastor Mark, **Lord, surprise us. Lord, surprise us.** Praying this prayer affirms the good news we celebrate at Easter. Although the four gospel accounts of Easter morning differ in the details, they all agree on one thing. Everyone involved was truly surprised that the tomb was empty and the body of Jesus was missing.

According to John's account (John 20:1-18), Mary Magdalene went to the tomb on the first day of the week. Her eyes were clouded with tears as she grieved the death of the Lord Jesus. Looking up, she saw that the stone, which sealed the tomb, had been rolled away. Mary's first thought was not, "Hallelujah! Christ is risen!" It was, "Who has stolen the body?" Nothing else seemed possible.

Seeing the empty tomb, Mary ran to the place where the other disciples were hiding. Soon Peter and "the beloved disciple" raced to the tomb. Like Mary, they saw that it was empty. John says "the beloved disciple" looked into the tomb and he believed. John also says they were confused because they did not yet "understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead."

When Peter and the other disciple returned to their homes, Mary lingered beside the tomb. Looking in, she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain. The angels asked her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have taken him."

Then, turning around, Mary saw Jesus standing there, only she thought it was the gardener. Jesus asked, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Mary said, "Tell me where you've taken him, and I'll take him away." Then the "gardener" called her by name, "Mary." Suddenly, her eyes were opened and she recognized him, "Rabboni." **Surprised**, Mary was so excited that she grabbed hold of him and does not want to let him go!

At the word of Jesus, Mary let go, but Jesus had **yet another surprise**. He commissioned Mary to take the good news of the resurrection to the rest of the disciples. By making Mary the first witness to the Resurrection, Jesus affirmed that he calls women and men equally to witness to the good news of the gospel.

In Draw the Circle, Batterson observes that the prayer, **Lord, surprise us** feels like a dangerous prayer because to pray it we have to give up control. We have to trust God's timing. But praying **Lord, surprise us** also expresses our faith that "nothing is impossible for God" (Luke 1:37).

As we celebrate the Resurrection this year, let this be our prayer, **Lord, surprise us!** Pray in anticipation that you will experience holy surprises. The Risen Lord, who surprised Mary Magdalene in the garden long ago, still forgives sin, still conquers death, still heals the broken, still comforts the hurting, still opens doors, and still makes all things new. **Lord, surprise us.** As we keep circling God's promises, we are confident that God is able to move in and through First Church far beyond what we can ask or imagine!

Praying **Lord, surprise me! Lord, surprise us!**
Pastor Denny



Holy Week Plans

Remember Easter 2020? We were just a few weeks into the COVID-19 pandemic and our church building was closed on Easter Sunday! We broadcast our Easter Sunrise service live from the Mechanicsburg Cemetery and our worship celebration from the church sanctuary was recorded and made available through the church website. As a congregation you showed amazing resilience! Hundreds worshiped from home, celebrating the Resurrection in that space between you and your screen that became holy ground!

A year later in 2021, we were blessed to be able to hold Easter services in person, still in the midst of the pandemic, and with many restrictions still in place. Looking ahead to Easter this year, we have some very special things in store for Holy Week:

April 10 - NEW! Palm Sunday Eggstravaganza: Details on page 8 of this newsletter

April 14 - Maundy Thursday Worship: Join us for this special time of worship as we remember the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples. 7:00 pm in the sanctuary and livestreamed

April 15 – Good Friday Prayer Walk: Details on page 4 of this newsletter

April 17 – Easter Sunday Worship

- **6:30 a.m. - Easter Sunrise Service** at the mausoleum in the Mechanicsburg Cemetery led by our Youth
- **8:30 a.m. - Foundation Service** in the sanctuary (and live-streamed)
- **11:00 a.m. - The Gathering Service** in the sanctuary

Whether you worship from home or you gather at one or all of our in-person services, we invite you to join us as we experience the hope and joy found in the Good News that Christ is Risen!

Lifelong Learner



Adult Discipleship

How is your journey with Jesus going? Is your faith deepening? Are you growing into a more mature disciple? Are you becoming a fully devoted follower? No matter where you are in this journey, there is always something new to learn, and First Church is here to help by providing a variety of offerings for your next faithful step:

- **Daily Bible Reading Plan**

God speaks to us through His Word, and our daily Bible reading plan is customized to go along with our weekly sermons! You can find the plan in our weekly worship bulletin, which is posted on our church website, fumchurch.com.

- **Next Step - New Member Class**

If you are ready to take your next faithful step by exploring church membership, contact Tina Eaton at adultministry@fumchurch.com to be added to the contact list for a class to be scheduled later this year.

- **Steps Beyond**

Draw the Circle: Prayer Challenge for Lent

Do you pray as often and as boldly as you want to? Do you wish you could engage your family in praying with you? If you are searching for a deeper, more intimate prayer life for your whole family, it's not too late to participate in **Draw the Circle**, our congregation-wide prayer experience for Lent. Here are some of the ways you can participate:

- ◇ Order a copy of the daily devotional book, **“Draw the Circle: a 40-Day Prayer Challenge,”** by Mark Batterson to read on your own through any online retailer. You can start reading this great little book anytime, not just during Lent!

- ◇ **Worship with us** (either in person or online) Sunday mornings to deepen your experience through the “Draw the Circle” sermon series.
- ◇ **Share your thoughts, prayers and stories** throughout this experience at church on our Prayer & Vision board (located under the balcony in the sanctuary) or share on our Instagram page @fumchurch.
- ◇ **Gather with a “check-in” partner or join a small group** (some virtual and some in-person meeting options). Watch study videos, engage in discussion, pray, and encourage one another. There are groups meeting on Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays – they began in March, but you are welcome to join... contact Tina Eaton at adultministry@fumchurch.com for group choices.

Draw the Circle prayer journals (cost \$5) also are available while supplies last. Email Tina Eaton if you have any questions.

Additional Bible Study Opportunities

Study Gateway – There are no new Bible Study classes beginning this spring, however, Study Gateway makes it very easy to stay in the Word with guided studies that you can do on your own or invite a few friends to do with you! Study Gateway, an online streaming library, provides a vast number of video-based studies for adults, youth and children. To set up your FREE account, please contact Tina at adultministry@fumchurch.com.

From the Library

Happy Easter!! I am hoping April will be a time of celebrating the resurrection of our Lord and a time of rebirth of hope and calm in your life and the world. After two years of the pandemic, run away inflation, war in Ukraine and just general uncertainty in the world, now is the time to rest on the promises of Jesus. Today, in the beginning of March, I noticed my tulips and daffodils peeking out of the soil, and while I love those flowers, all I could think was it is way too early for them. But just like the weather, I can't hold back mother nature, and I just plan to enjoy each day as it comes knowing God is in charge. Take it from me, breathe deep, brew some extra strong coffee, and relax with a book. And as always, I have some good titles to share with you.

Tracie Peterson has long been a favorite author in the library and all three books of her new trilogy titled Ladies of the Lake are on the shelf ready for you to read. The series is set around Lake Superior and set in the mid-1800's. Gloriana Womack, the main character in *Destined for You*, is left to care for her father and young brother after her mother and two other siblings die of scarlet fever. Her father is a fisherman on the lake and is frequently gone on long fishing trips. Luke Carson has come to Duluth, Minnesota, to shepherd the arrival of the railroad into the city's port, but there is great competition for the railroad to go through the neighboring city of Superior, Wisconsin instead. As each of these main characters deal with the strife in their lives, they find their lives are linked and both wonder if they can weather the storm and be together.

Next up is *Forever on My Own* also set in Duluth, Minnesota. Kirstin Hallberg has come to the city to care for her elderly grandmother, Lena, only to find Lena doesn't need a caregiver. Lena has a secret that she has been keeping, and she needs Kirsten to help keep it. Living with Lena is Kirsten's brother, Domar, that everyone thought was dead. Kristin feels dishonest not telling her parents, but Domar is insistent that she does not tell. When Domar's friend Ilian is hurt in a logging accident, Kristin and her grandmother volunteer to nurse him back to health. Ilian, like Domar, has family problems that he doesn't know how to overcome. Kristin and Ilian develop an attraction to each other, but coming from broken families, can they make a family of their own?

Waiting for Love is the tale of Elise Wright who has grown up on a fishing boat, cooking and caring for the crew. She and her sister are estranged because of Elise's refusal to come ashore and live the conventional life. Nick Clark is grateful to join the crew after some mistakes he made when he captained his own ship. Nick tries to intervene when a rough sailor starts causing trouble aboard. Though attracted to each other, Nick and Elise have problems they have to work through before they can commit to each other. You might have to stay up late to find out how each of these couples works through their problems to find love.

The library recently received a DVD donation of the TV series *The Chosen*. While waiting for Easter, you

may want to watch this retelling of Jesus' ministry. It brings to life the experience of Jesus during his life on earth. The DVD contains the first eight episodes of the series and a bonus Christmas story and some extra content on how the series was developed. It might fill in the gap left by another year of no passion play!

If this DVD or books don't interest you, stop by the library and let our volunteer staff help you find just the right book.

See you in the library!!

~Pam and Donna

Praying Follower



April Prayer Challenge:

“Draw the Circle: A 40-Day Prayer Challenge”

Are you looking to strengthen your relationship with God and experience a deeper, more intentional prayer life? See the article in the “Lifelong Learner” section of this newsletter for more details on **Draw the Circle**, and how it will change the way you pray! If you have questions, contact Tina Eaton at adult-ministry@fumchurch.com.

Good Friday Prayer Walk, April 15, 2022 at 10:30a.m.

The Mechanicsburg churches invite the community to participate in a Good Friday Prayer Walk ending with a children's Easter Egg Hunt.

The goal is to cover the town of Mechanicsburg in prayer. Prayer walkers will gather on the lawn at **Mechanicsburg First Church of God**, 28 E. Main Street, at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, April 15. Participants will walk and pray throughout the Mechanicsburg community in groups. Focus areas of prayer include but are not limited to: local parks, churches, schools, library, police and fire departments, etc. Prayer prompts will be provided for adults and children and each group will have a prayer leader.

All participants will then reconvene at 11:30 on the lawn at **Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church**, 132 E. Main Street, for a brief closing prayer. Children ages 2 to 12 will be invited to participate in the **Easter Egg Hunt!** Children are asked to bring their own basket/container to collect the plastic Easter eggs. A container will be provided if they do not have one. All are welcome to participate! No registration required, the event will take place rain or shine. Parking is available at both Trinity Lutheran and Mechanicsburg First Church of God or on the street. For all the details, visit trinity-on-main.org.

Questions, contact Lori Hoffnagle at l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com.

Weekly Prayer Letter

If you have not already done so, we invite you to sign up for First Church's FirstLink Prayer Letter to receive updated prayer requests and praises from our church family once a week. Contact Janice Bowen at wecare@fumchurch.com to share joys, requests and to sign up for the Prayer Letter email..

Passionate Worshipper



Disability Awareness Sunday

DisAbility Awareness Sunday will take place on Sunday, April 24th. Plans are in the works now to help make each of us more aware of the differently abled community and their families. I often wonder if acknowledging the need for more awareness about the church and the differently abled community is needed. Aren't we doing a great job here at First Church? We have Day of Pampering and Rejoicing Spirits. Isn't that enough?

The real answer is no. Many families with a member who is differently abled want to belong to a faith community but sadly they often don't feel welcome or feel marginalized. As a community of faith, we must continue to welcome all God's children. Remember that Jesus taught “You shall love your neighbor

as yourself.” Mark 12:32
Speaker for the morning TBA.

Sound & Media Upgrades Updates

Hearing and seeing differences with the sound system upgrades are on the horizon! Over the past month, we've set up the digital system in a temporary location, while the Gathering worship teams learn how to use in-ear monitors and personal mixers at practices. This will let musicians hear more clearly and reduce stage volumes, giving the sound team more control over how things sound. We've also tuned the system to sound best in both sanctuaries and have completed the installation of wireless "paddle" antennas between the sanctuaries for a cleaner look and better reception for our existing wireless microphones.

In April, we will begin training and learning this new digital system to start using during the 11am Gathering services. Our next steps are to shift the video equipment out of the sound booth, so we can prepare for Phase 2 and using the system during 8:30a Foundation services.

This is an exciting time for First Church, as we reshape our sound and media ministry! If you are interested or feel called to learn the new system with us, we invite you to reach out to Sarah at worship@fumchurch.com for training. Thank you for your continued prayers and support!



Spotify Playlist

On the first Wednesday of each month, we release a new monthly playlist on Spotify. Search for First UMC of Mechanicsburg, and click on the playlist titled “Where Words Fail, Music Speaks”. For non-Spotify users, click this link to listen to the playlist: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5rbHEYEFHei97cUI8rjwNJ?si=qzOB7cTVRg6iAU1L4BY2hA>

Isaiah 61 Continues in Harrisburg!

First Church is pleased to support Isaiah 61 Ministries, a local organization that serves the needs of the homeless in Dauphin County. They provide a variety of services including a soup kitchen, clothing bank and Life groups. Specifically, First Church members help serve meals to the homeless in downtown Harrisburg on the third Wednesday of each month. The next volunteer opportunity is **Wednesday, April 20** at 6:30 p.m. New safety protocols have been established, such as wearing a mask, gloves and physical distancing. If you would like to carpool or have any questions, please contact Tiffany Holland tholland1967@gmail.com.

Dedicated Missionary



DiscipleMakers Update

All are invited to gather and hear from **Josh and Megan Herring**, who are engaged in campus ministry for **DiscipleMakers**, working with students at both Muhlenberg and Lafayette Colleges. We are excited that they will be coming to First Church to provide us with a ministry update on Sunday, April 24 in the Multipurpose room from 9:45 – 10:45 am!

DiscipleMakers is a Christian campus ministry based in Pennsylvania. Their goal is to raise up the next generation of leaders for the Church by training college students in Bible study, gospel-driven discipleship, and evangelism.

First Church is proud to support Josh and Megan as missionaries, and we look forward to hearing their stories of how lives are being changed by coming to know Christ through their mission work, how God is being glorified, and how we can pray and support their efforts. So, mark your calendars now, and contact Tina Eaton at adultministry@fumchurch.com if you have any questions.



Change (or Paper) for Water!

Water is the foundation of our very lives; yet, according to CDC estimates, only 2% of the population in Sierra Leone has access to clean, readily available drinking water! Help us to support the **Well Drilling Fund for Sierra Leone** by dropping your loose change, or even paper bills, into the blue "Change for Water" bucket located back on the Sierra Leone mission table in the Main Entrance hallway. Donations from February totaled **\$105.17**. 100% of your donations will be used to provide training and dig wells for schools and communities in need.

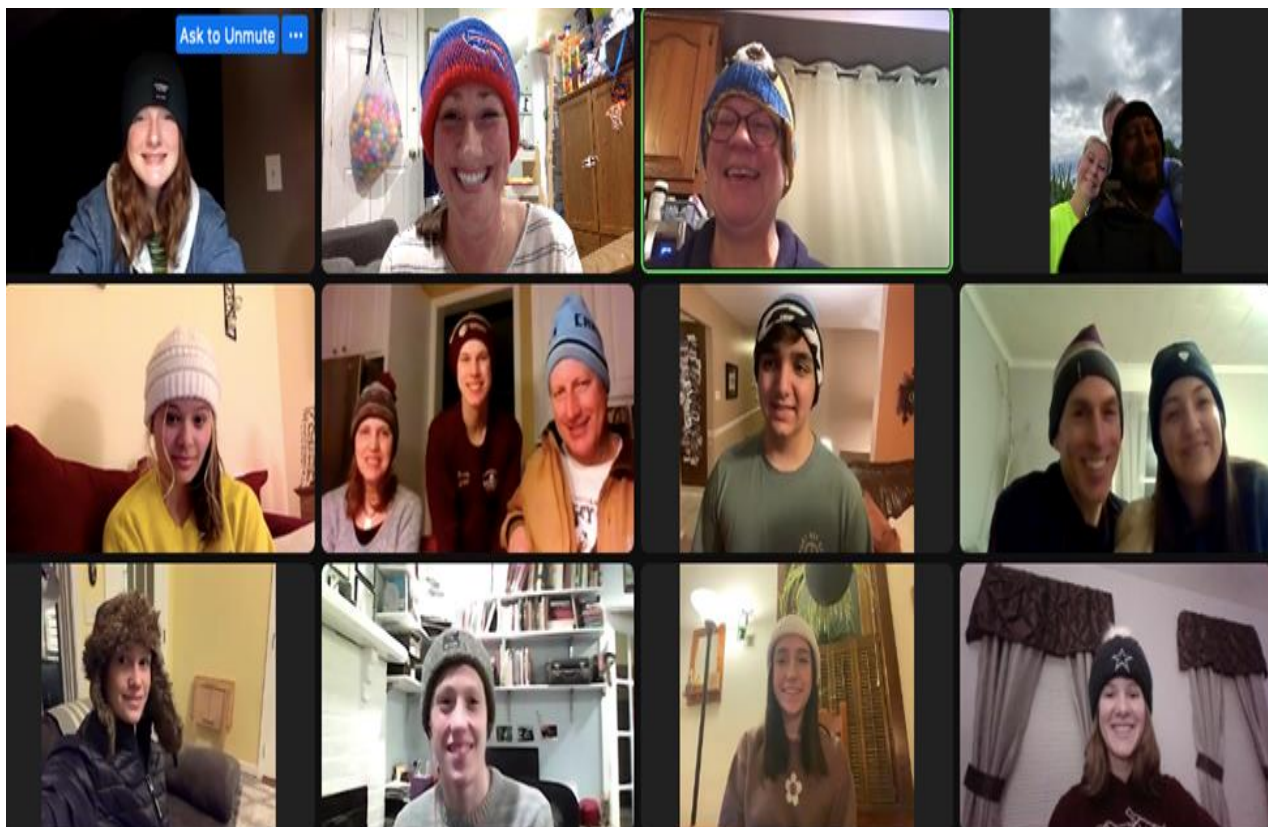
Youth 2022 Summer Mission: Wasilla, Alaska

A team of 23 youth and adult leaders are making plans to return to Mat-Su Covenant Church in Wasilla, Alaska during July.

Why Alaska?: A goal of the youth ministry at FUMC is to help expand a student's understanding and experience of mission and service during their time as a student at FUMC. We plan trips following the mentality of Acts 1:8 – going to "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth." Over our four-year rotation we venture from Harrisburg (local) to an international experience (ends of the earth). Missions and service range from disaster relief, community provider support, rural, city, and everything in between. We hope that students grow in their awareness of need in the world but also have their hearts stirred by the Spirit as to how they can use their skills and gifting to be a help to others. We partner with organizations that either have deep roots in a community or who serve by way of the local church. This way, even though our time in the area may be short, there is long lasting efforts and presence being made by the permanent organizations. While Alaska is not international, it is indeed cross cultural and is a more ideal option for us amidst of pandemic conditions.



Partner with us in sending our team!: We have an envelope challenge starting in March that we would love your help with! Choose an envelope number that matches an amount you are able to donate.



The annual learning event will take place in person at the Best Western hotel, attached to Country Cupboard in Lewisburg on July 15 and 16. The Express Days will be held on July 14 at the Best Western hotel and July 30 at Chambers Hill UM Church, Harrisburg (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) The theme for this year is Building Communities of Hope and Joy. All women are invited to these events. Details and registration information will be shared as it becomes available. For more information, contact Lori Hoffnagle, First UM UMW President at l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com. For all the information and updates about the Susquehanna United Methodist Women, see the latest newsletter here: <https://susumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Sus-Conf-UMW-feb-22-UPDATED.pdf>.

Relationship Builder



Extravagant Hospitality

As we approach the warmer temperatures that springtime promises, let's remember to continue to warmly welcome our visitors and our newest church members. Let's extend our hospitality beyond Sunday morning services ~ in our Sunday School classes, in our Draw the Circle small groups, in our church committee meetings, in our choir rehearsals! We need to be **intentionally** open and inviting to our visitors and newest members they will likely continue coming back to church if they feel invited to connect and engage in smaller groups to build deeper relationships! Let's stay focused on those who are new to our groups!

Covered in Love Knitting Group

The Covered in Love Knitting Group has returned to in person meetings every Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. and will gather downstairs in the Fellowship Hall. Feel free to join if you love to knit or crochet or do some other kind of crafty work. Questions? Contact Judi Buddenbaum at [717-697-2524](tel:717-697-2524) or ljcbuddenbaum@verizon.net.

Widows and Widowers Fellowship

The Widows and Widowers fellowship group will dine at Momma Spriggs in Carlisle on Tuesday, April 12th at 11:30 a.m. If you plan on attending, please call Bonnie Guyer at [717-766-0145](tel:717-766-0145).

Trinity's Closet on Main, April 9, 2022

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church is holding a Clothing Closet on the 2nd Saturday of each month. They have a variety of gently used clothes (in all sizes) for men and women to choose from. Breakfast to go is provided for each person - including a cup of coffee! The Closet is open from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. every 2nd Saturday. Trinity is located at 132 E. Main Street, Mechanicsburg. The next Clothing Closet will be held on **Saturday, April 9**. Questions, contact Vanessa Storlie at trinityburgoutreach@gmail.com.

Meals on Wheels Seeking Volunteers!

The Mechanicsburg Area Meals On Wheels program is in need of volunteers heading into the winter season. Since it was founded in March 1969, the program has served over 750,000 meals to the elderly and infirmed. Now the nonprofit needs the community's help in return. See volunteer needs and descriptions [here](#). If you have questions about volunteering, contact Harvey Bilger at [717-766-6083](tel:717-766-6083). Thanks for helping our neighbors!

Third Friday Food Trucks Return in 2022!

The Food Trucks are back for another season starting May 20! The dates are May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19, September 16 and October 21. This is a great opportunity to meet our neighbors in a fun and casual atmosphere! Each month, we welcome six to seven gourmet food trucks that serve a variety of delicious and fun foods. We are always looking for help with set up and clean up. If you are interested in lending a hand with setting up tables and chairs or putting them away, we'd love to have you! Contact Lori Hoffnagle at l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com for more details. The food trucks serve from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. See you there!

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through February 28, 2022 16 % of year

General Fund

2022 budget	\$ 925,985	
Expected income	\$ 154,330	(16% of budget)
Actual income	\$ 154,749	(16% of budget)
Actual expenses	\$ 141,949	(15 % of budget)

As we turn our eyes to Lent and Spring, the financial support of our mission and ministry continues to be a blessing. Thank you again for your faithfulness. Please keep our congregation and our country in your prayers as you Draw a Circle around your prayer focus. We are excited to see what the good Lord has prepared for us in 2022 and look forward to having your join us as we serve the King together.

Scholarships Available

The Trustees Scholarship forms are now available. There will be paper copies in the office or from Lisa and we will have them available electronically. They will need to be returned to Judi Buddenbaum by May 21st to be accepted. They can be put in her church mailbox or mailed to her directly.

Little Free Pantry Update

Thanks for your support of the **Little Free Pantry** on our property. Please consider helping to stock our pantry during this difficult time for families. Please be sure to place items that are not expired or near expiration. If you or your group would like to sign up, see the available months [here](#). A simpler list of suggestions can be found [here](#). **Feel free to sign up for just one week, if that works better for you!** If you would like to choose a week or would like to make a financial donation to the pantry, please contact Lori Hoffnagle at l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com.

The Ministry of First Church

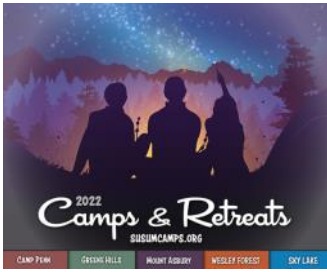
Children and Family Ministries

Sunday School for Kids is back! We have been offering childcare for those preschool and younger during that time but now we are reopening Sunday School for our elementary kids! Join me (Miss Katie) for games, activities, and a lesson (it will be a different lesson than what they would experience at the 11:00 AM KidsWorship time) where we can learn about God in fun, exciting ways! Interested in helping out in KidsMinistry? We would LOVE to talk to you about the ways you can serve! Email Katie, Director of Children and Family Ministry at kidscount@fumchurch.com.

Palm Sunday Eggstravaganza

Join us at 1pm on Sunday, April 10th for an afternoon of food, faith, and fun where we can celebrate Palm Sunday as a church community! Bring a blanket or chair (or use one of ours) and watch a past Passion Play performance and play some Easter Trivia. Welcome to all ages! Also, make sure to sign up with a Bell Choir member (or find an order sheet outside the sanctuary) to purchase your R&K sub or pretzel sandwich that will be delivered on Palm Sunday! Proceeds from the sub sale will benefit the Bell Choir as they travel this summer to Nashville, TN for their 4th International Symposium! You can pick up your sub (or bring something else for you to eat) and head right over to our watch party, let's come together for lunch and a show!





It's Official! Summer Church Camp is a GO!

The Camp and Retreat Ministry is excited to share details and registration information about summer camps!

Visit the camping website <https://www.susumcamps.org> to see all the offerings for camp this summer in the **2022 Camp Retreat Brochure** along with related registration/medical forms. Access the online link to complete your registration.

Send camping registration confirmations to our Camp Coordinators (Deb Noss or Amy Ortiz) so that we can pair you with a prayer partner. The Camp Coordinators can assist you with financial assistance (First Church will pay for one half of the camping fees!).

Early Bird Discount: Register for summer camp by May 1, 2022 for a **\$25** Early Bird discount! Early bird only applies to summer events, unless otherwise listed. There are also **Sibling Discounts** as well as an **Invite-a-Friend Gift** when you invite a friend who has never been to a Conference camp. You will receive the gift after friend registers as per the instructions.

- Attend a camp, retreat or event this year, or
- Volunteer as a Dean, Nurse, Counselor or Jr. Counselor, or
- Be a prayer partner for a camper, or
- Provide financial assistance to support a camper or camp program, or
- Help with a work camp at one of the camp sites?

If you have any questions about Camp or can't access the website and need a brochure, feel free to contact Deb Noss (sdppp@msn.com) or Amy Ortiz (amy.ogden7@gmail.com).

Pray and ask God how He would like you to use your gifts for Him this year!

First Church Accepting Applications for Two Open Positions

First United Methodist Church, Mechanicsburg is seeking and now accepting applications for:

- **A full-time Director of Office Management & Communications.** This person will be responsible for working with staff to plan and supervise office operations, as well as all internal and external church communications, in line with the mission, vision, core values and strategic objectives of First Church. Education related to business and/or communications, or applicable experience is required. Further details describing the qualifications, skills, experience, and responsibilities related to this position can be found in the full job description. [Click here](#) to view the current job description.
- **A part-time Administrative Assistant.** This person will be responsible for performing the day-to-day tasks in the church office, and working with volunteers to cover the office needs in a way that contributes to the ministry efforts of the staff, committees, ministry teams and church members. Proficiency with desktop publishing software (e.g. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher) is required. Further details describing the qualifications, skills, experience, and responsibilities related to this position can be found in the full job description. [Click here](#) to view the current job description.

Selected applicants must submit a PA State Police Criminal History Report, a PA Department of Human Services Certification, and an FBI Criminal History Report Check. Interested candidates should submit their resume to office@fumchurch.com.

Timeless Connections

WHY? This simple one-word question applies to so many things in our world right now.

Why is there a new war going on that makes no sense and is hurting innocent people?

Why is there so much political unrest here in our own country?

Why do terrible things happen to good people?

Where is God in this and if He is a loving God then why doesn't he intervene?

Why them? Why me? Where is the good in this? Why does life hurt so much for some people and other people seem to sail on through?

What about God's promises?

These are questions that most of us, if not all, ask at times. And it is good to ask these questions, and good to seek answers for ourselves. The Bible provides many answers and is our true guide for truth and love. But, answers in the Bible for questions such as these are not clear-cut or bullet point. The death of a loved one can lead to many more questions than answers. Still it is good to keep asking the questions. God understands our questions and our doubts and our anger at times like this. He has all the answers; we do not. But, if we keep this dialogue with God open and go to Him with all of our hurt and despair, He does provide for us in our times of deepest pain. He may not provide answers to our questions, but He provides His comforting touch and the comfort of others. He provides strength to do things that we are not sure we can do. He provides connections to people that we were not connected to before, but now our paths have crossed and we share a bond. He provides moments of peace, that later become hours of peace, and then days of peace. He provides His reassurance that He is with us, that our loved one is with Him, and that we are all still connected between our imperfect world here and the eternal and perfect world of heaven.

And so we hope and we believe and we go on, hour by hour, day by day, knowing that God is with us, especially in our darkest days. Our world down here may look shattered for a time, but our eternity is beautiful and perfect, and so we continue to live between our imperfect world and our promises for our forever home.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
In our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity,
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

3rd verse of Hymn of Promise by
Natalie Sleeth, 1986

~Patti Vogl





Daily Bible Readings April 2022

Friday, April 1	Psalm 36:5-11
Saturday, April 2	Rest and Reflect
Sunday, April 3	Worship "Draw the Circle" The Ripple Effect
Monday, April 4	Psalm 118:1-2; 19-29
Tuesday, April 5	Luke 19:28-40
Wednesday, April 6	Isaiah 50:4-9
Thursday, April 7	Philippians 2:5-11
Friday, April 8	Luke 23:1-49
Saturday, April 9	Rest and Reflect
Sunday, April 10	Worship-Palm Sunday
Monday, April 11	John 12:1-11
Tuesday, April 12	John 12:20-36
Wednesday, April 13	John 13:21-32
Thursday, April 14	John 13:1-17, 31b-35 Maundy Thursday
Friday, April 15	John 18:1-19:42 Good Friday
Saturday, April 16	Rest and Reflect
Sunday, April 17	Worship-Easter Sunday
Monday, April 18	Acts 5:27-32
Tuesday, April 19	Psalm 150
Wednesday, April 20	Revelation 20:19-31
Thursday, April 21	John 20:19-23
Friday, April 22	John 20:24-31
Saturday, April 23	Rest and Reflect
Sunday, April 24	Worship-Disability Awareness Sunday
Monday, April 25	Acts 9:1-6
Tuesday, April 26	Psalm 30
Wednesday, April 27	Revelation 5:11-14
Thursday, April 28	John 21:1-14
Friday, April 29	John 21:15-19
Saturday, April 30	Rest and Reflect

Church News and Notes

Our love & sympathy...

to Debbie and Don Karns on the passing of Debbie’s father, Dean, on March 21st and to Steve and Sarah Allison on the passing of Steve’s mother, Bonnie, on March 16th.



Special Birthdays

Robert Meck	April 2	Ann Elder.....	May 10
Marilyn Seig	April 2	Jane Gunder	May 11
Dolores Farr	April 3	Nancy Otstot.....	May 12
Linda Hall	April 9	Denny Kauffman	May 13
Darlene Wilkinson	April 17	Marjorie Kohr	May 15
Tom Mullikin.....	April 23	Donald Heiges	May 16
Janet Baker.....	April 25	Bob Bittenbender.....	May 27
Grace Brandt.....	April 25	Flossie Ryder.....	May 31

Special Anniversaries

- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Terry Ketrow married 58 years on April 2, 1963
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Dick Scott married 55 years on April 2, 1966
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Elvin Hess married 61 years on April 10, 1960
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Haines married 56 years on April 17, 1965
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Dean Otto married 58 years on April 21, 1963
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Donald Heiges married 63 years on April 26, 1958



<p><i>FIRST NEWS FIRST</i> Editor: Ellen Hill</p>	<p>The deadline for submitting articles for the May 2022 issue is April 15</p>	<p>Early submissions <u>always</u> appreciated!</p>
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