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Vital Signs

While there are some things we have not been able to do while our church building has been closed, we have remained a vitally active congregation as passionate worshippers and lifelong learners!

Our average online weekly worship attendance for the 12-week period from March 15 through May 31 was 582! During this same 12-week period in 2019 it was 433... this is 35% increase!

This year, our total online worship attendance during Easter week (which includes the Maundy Thursday service, a sunrise service, plus our regular Sunday morning worship) was 1,517! In 2019 it was 1,085... this is a 40% increase!

While our number of small groups and number of people participating in small groups was understandably down during the stay-at-home order, we did have an average of 16 groups meeting each week online, with an average total weekly attendance of 181! We started slowly as we adjusted to our "new normal" and learned new ways of connecting through technology, and participation built over time. At our peak during this period, we had more than 20 groups meeting, which engaged 288 adults, youth and children in small groups meeting for the purposes of spiritual growth! Considering our circumstances, that is a lot of discipleship!

Not being able to gather in-person has been very difficult for us, and it will be so wonderful to gather in-person again! However, our circumstances have also brought blessings... by learning new ways to connect using technology, we have opened doors to reach new people that we were not able to reach before. Thank you Jesus for making all things new so that our blessings could be used to bless others during this difficult time! As we move forward into this next "new normal" phase, I look forward to seeing what new blessings we experience together!

We encourage you to continue to stay engaged as we begin a new sermon series, "Shifting Perspectives: A Study in Romans 8." In the eighth chapter of his Letter to the Romans, Paul beautifully describes how being in Christ and living in the Spirit gives us a new perspective on everything, including seasons of suffering. Join us this summer as we dig deep into the rich soil of what many have called the greatest chapter in the Bible!

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| July 5 | "Freedom in Christ" | Romans 8:1-4 |
| July 12 | "The Mind Set on the Spirit" | Romans 8:5-8 |
| July 19 | "Transformed By the Spirit" | Romans 8:9-11 |
| July 26 | "Children of God" | Romans 8:12-17 |
| August 2 | "Waiting in Hope" | Romans 8:18-25 |
| August 9 | "The Spirit's Intercession" | Romans 8:26-27 |
| August 16 | "All Things For Good" | Romans 8:28-30 |
| August 23 | "God Is For Us" | Romans 8:31-34 |
| August 30 | "Love Conquers All" | Romans 8:35-39 |



Bible Reading Plan

Use our Bible reading plan to remain in God's word daily. This reading plan is available on our church website at www.fumchurch.com, and on page 10 of this newsletter.

Connect Using The Bible App

Check out the YouVersion Bible app, available for both android and iOS smartphones/tablets, or on your laptop at bible.com. There are many wonderful devotional studies, plus you can create groups to study, chat with friends and share prayer requests!

Small Groups

Over these past few months, several small groups have been meeting on Zoom for the purposes of spiritual growth, and these groups have engaged many people on a weekly basis. How wonderful! While some of these groups will continue to meet over the summer, others will take a break and resume in the fall.

We would like to start some new summertime small groups, either on Zoom or in backyards now that it is considered safe to do so while maintaining physical distancing. Do you feel called to offer something for a few weeks this summer? Ideas for groups include:

- A book study/book club
- A fellowship group that shares brief devotions together
- A group study on the YouVersion Bible app or another app
- An activity-based group (such as our knitters group)
- A study group that uses our Bible reading plan/sermon series outlines (available on our website, fumchurch.com) or other study materials
- A worship group

The options are endless! Please pray for God's guidance in how you can offer a way to help people grow spiritually, stay connected to one another and stay connected to Christ. If you feel led to start a new group, please contact Tina Eaton at adultministry@fumchurch.com. If you would prefer to use Zoom, the church account information and training will be provided.

For a listing of both ongoing and new groups meeting, please see the weekly bulletin announcements (available on our church website, www.fumchurch.com).

The Upper Room Devotional

July is here and so is the July/August 2020 issue of The Upper Room! To download the free digital version, use this [link](#)! Or, if you would like to receive a paper copy, please contact Janice Bowen at wecare@fumchurch.com or 717-766-4611 x112.

From the Library

I just heard on the news that our county will be going green next week, but I do not know what that means for our church services and whether the building will be opening. I have started receiving new books from Christian Publications and will have them ready when I see you next.

Denise Hunter is one of my favorite romance authors. Yes, you read that right. Sometimes I read romance novels, and this one has a dollop of mystery. I like Ms. Hunter because her characters are down to earth and her scenarios plausible. I reviewed the first book, **Lake Season**, when it arrived last November, and the Bluebell Inn was introduced. Though not necessary, I like to read most books in order to keep the characters in sequence. The second book in the series is **Carolina Breeze** and again is set in North Carolina. Mia Emerson, a rising Hollywood star, has had a very public break-up and celebrity scandal. While looking for a quiet place to recover and hide out, she chooses the site of her cancelled honeymoon, Bluebell Inn. She and Levi Bennett, part-time proprietor of the inn hit it off immediately. Realizing they each have secrets, they come to trust each other. Levi's secret is that the inn is not stable financially; something his sisters don't know. During an exploration of the old inn, they find a journal that hints of a

diamond necklace hidden somewhere in the inn. I'll let you discover the secret of the inn, and if Mia will go back to Hollywood or stay with Levi! I can envision watching fireflies come out while reading this summer escape novel.

I know many of you love Amish fiction. Bestselling author Amy Clipston has the perfect summer read—**The Farm Stand**. The story is set around Salina Petersheim running a farm stand and dating an acceptable Amish roofer, Josiah, who her parents think she will marry soon. But Salina feels more like a sister to Josiah than a girlfriend, but she is a dutiful daughter. Then she meets local chef, Will Zimmerman, who would like to use her produce in his restaurant. As they work together Salina knows what was missing with Josiah is very present with Will. But Will is a Mennonite, and not what her parents expect. Will Salina follow her heart or bow to her parents' will? Or will God provide a surprising new road? If neither of these books appeals to you, I hope to help you find just the right book for you in the library—fingers crossed.

~ Donna and Pam

Praying Follower



Prayer Guides

You are invited to use any of our prayer guides or other materials available on our church website, www.fumchurch.com. Simply go to the “Resources” tab and click on “Fun and Faith”. Take this opportunity to spend more personal time with God!

Weekly Prayer Letter

If you have not already done so, sign up for our weekly prayer email so that you can receive a list of praises and requests from our church family. Contact Janice Bowen at wecare@fumchurch.com to share requests and to sign up for this once-a-week list.

Passionate Worshipper



Livestream Team — New Ministry

While our conversations continue on providing online Sunday morning worship, we will be looking to shift to *livestreaming our worship services* for long-term. This is a new group forming, with exciting potential to reach beyond the walls of our church. *Because of the higher demand for more volunteers to livestream, we are looking for more individuals to help grow our livestream team.* No prior experience is needed, and training is provided. If you would like to meet the challenge of modern church and advance the kingdom into a digital era, please contact Sarah Pugh at worship@fumchurch.com.

Spotify Playlist

On the first Wednesday of each month, we will release a new monthly playlist on Spotify. Each song-- hand-picked by staff, musicians, and volunteers-- has been on our hearts, and prayed over for a holy and meaningful connection with our congregation. For Spotify users, search for the user 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>

Worship DVDs Available

If you or someone you know are unable to access the online church worship services, we have DVD copies of worship available upon request! Please contact Janice Bowen at wecare@fumchurch.com or 717-766-4611 x112 for more information.

Dedicated Missionary



Change for Water ~ Located at the Sierra Leone Display in the Tower Hallway

In March 2020, 535 “pennies” (\$5.35) were contributed to the Well Drilling Fund for Sierra Leone. One hundred percent (100%) of your donations are used to provide training and dig wells that supply safe drinking water for schools and communities in Sierra Leone. Every penny helps! Thank you everyone!

Help Us Feed Those In Need

We are asking all who can to help us fill our Little Free Pantry – the food is going fast and your donations are needed. Go to our church website for information on what you can donate and contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com if you have questions.

Get Connected With Service Opportunities

If you have not already done so, sign up to receive our periodic “Service Opportunities” email. Contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com to share opportunities and to sign up.

Relationship Builder



Hospitality Tip

When I think back to the last time I was writing this, I am reminded that we were expecting this separation to be short. Well, that certainly has not been the case, and even though we may not be together yet, we need to be showing more hospitality, than ever before, to all those around us. As I am writing this article our world is in a time of GREAT need for prayer and love, from all of us, to everyone. God has shown us how to be loving and hospitable, but right now we need to show that more than ever to everyone. I hope that by the time you read this, we will be back to the physical building of church and be together, even if it will look different. I know it's tough to smile with a mask on, but I think we can come up with ways to show God's love to all that we meet, without the physical touch.

~ Judi Buddenbaum, Hospitality Committee

Food Trucks Return July 17

First Church is pleased to announce that the Third Friday Food Trucks will be returning Friday, July 17th! The trucks will serve in the church parking lot from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. Food will be **takeout only** due to recent restrictions, and guests are asked to follow physical distancing guidelines. Mark your calendar now for upcoming Food Truck dates on August 21st, September 18th, and October 16th. Please Like our Facebook page at First United Methodist Church of Mechanicsburg, PA for updates and future events.

Community Dinner

First Church will once again partner with community churches to serve a meal to our neighbors in Mechanicsburg on Sunday, July 19th. The meal will take place at Trinity Lutheran, 132 E. Main Street, Mechanicsburg. The meal will be **takeout only**. Watch for more details!

Community Day Update

Community Day in the Park has now been transformed into ‘Going on a Wrench Hunt!’ Participants will receive a map of the wrenches, which celebrate the rich history of Mechanicsburg, and after locating them at participating businesses, can receive a prize! The Wrench Hunt will take place the week of August 3rd to 7th and culminate on Saturday, **August 8th**. More details will be provided on the Downtown Mechanicsburg Partnership website at downtownmechanicsburg.com.

Summertime Backyard Book Club

Do you enjoy reading? If so, please join us in reading "Small Great Things" by Jodi Picoult, a riveting novel from 2016 based on a true life story that looks at race issues in America from many perspectives. It is currently being adapted into a movie starring Viola Davis and Julia Roberts.

Then, if you would like to participate in a discussion of this book, you are invited to join on Monday evenings from July 13th - August 17th from 6:45 - 8:00 pm at the home of Patti Vogl. Call Patti for more details/sign up at 717-691-3427 or email her at pvogl7@gmail.com.

Faith, Feathers and Friends,

Have you ever wondered how to bring together faith, your interest in birding and spending time with friends? Well, now is the opportunity! On Tuesdays in July at 1pm, we will gather by Zoom to explore God's word and references to birds. We will share our birding stories, observations and the question, "How do we discourage squirrels from storming the feeders?" All of this will be done with an openness to our neighbors and friends. It will be about 45 minutes to 1 hour long. Send your email interest to pastorjohn@fumchurch.com to receive a Zoom invitation.

Pickleball Players & Prayers

You are invited to come to Adam Ricci Park in Eastern Cumberland County on Wednesdays beginning in July from 6:00pm to 7:30pm to play some pickleball. Persons of all abilities are welcome. Please bring own equipment and remember we will practice some physical distancing by asking couples to play together and also any singles to play with a particular partner that evening. We will provide hand sanitizer as well. We will discuss other venues, courts and times. Hope to see you there!

"First Church Forum"

If you are on Facebook, we invite you to join our private Facebook Group, First Church Forum! As a private group, the 'First Church Forum' is a great space to support and connect with one another during this season of sheltering at home. The First Church Forum is a "space for sharing information, encouragement, discussion, and fellowship among members and friends of First Church." Let us know how we can support you or your local business during these challenging times. Please 'Like' our page, First United Methodist Church of Mechanicsburg, PA and then feel free to join the First Church Forum private group. If you have questions, please contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com.

Generous Giver



FINANCIAL REPORT

Through May 31, 2020 — 42 % of year

General Fund

| | | |
|------------------|------------|-----|
| 2020 budget | \$ 955,000 | |
| Projected giving | \$ 397,957 | 42% |
| Actual giving | \$ 392,111 | 41% |
| Actual expenses | \$ 359,064 | 38% |

During this pandemic, our church continues to serve the Lord and its members by offering services and hosting Sunday classes and meetings throughout the week online. Please be sure to visit the FUMC website for regular updates and services online. Our actual expenses continue to be less than planned as the church staff is working hard to reduce discretionary spending to help keep our financial position in good shape. Giving is running behind our budget, but has recovered since March as our members have mailed in contributions or used electronic giving to support our ministry during this extraordinary time. Our "Actual giving" includes approximately \$25,000 received "early" this year versus prior years. Until we gather again, we hope you will consider mailing your contributions to the church office or utilizing electronic giving via the church website. Thank you for your continued support of the First Church ministry with your prayers and gifts.

UMW Yard, Book and Bake Sale, August 15

We are looking forward to the annual UMW Yard, Book and Bake Sale in our church parking lot on Saturday, August 15th from 8:00 a.m. to noon. See all the details below:

- Yard sale spots in the parking lot (2 parking spaces) are still **\$10**, proceeds benefit the UMW. To reserve your spot, contact Donna Nichols at djnichols43@hotmail.com. Sign-ups begin on July 1st on a first-come, first serve basis. You may cancel up to August 1st, with a refund, but no refund after that date (we will consider it a donation to the UMW).

- Support our wonderful **Youth** by donating your treasures! The Youth will sell the items to raise funds for future mission trips. The collection will start in July, watch for more details on where and when to bring your donations. Questions? Contact Lisa Aronson at uthrock@fumchurch.com.
- The Children's Department will once again hand out **free** school supplies in handmade pouches to children who visit the sale.
- The church **Library** will have a variety of books, puzzles, CD's, DVD's available for purchase. Watch for more details on where to bring your donations for the Library sale.
- The church Handbell Choir will have **food** available for purchase.
- Enjoy tasty **treats** from the UMW Bake Sale! (We will be asking for donations of baked goods, so start thinking of something yummy to make!)

There is something for everyone at the sale! If you have any questions, please contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com or Donna Nichols at djnichols43@hotmail.com. Thanks for your support!

Ways to Give

Even though we are not able to meet right now, there are still several ways that you can continue to give and financially support the ministry of First Church. We encourage you to explore the following options and discover which method of giving works best for you!:

- Mail offerings to the church at 135 West Simpson, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
- Give electronically, it's simple and easy! Contact our Office Manager, Ellen Hill, at office@fumchurch.com to sign-up or receive more information
- Use the "Donate" button on the church website, www.fumchurch.com
- Download the "GivePlus" app and search for First United Methodist Church

Questions? Contact Ellen Hill at office@fumchurch.com.

The Ministry of First Church

Rejoicing Spirits

Greetings on this beautiful Monday morning as I write to you about Rejoicing Spirits. During this pandemic, we have kept connected by phone contacts and with weekly video messages from me to the other Rejoicers. I can assure you that as Rejoicers we have enjoyed some beautiful days in the neighborhood. Our first but not our last Zoom worship for Rejoicing Spirits was in May. It was so good to connect. We shared songs, prayers, scripture, the message and even our Birthday Celebrations. A highlight for Merri and I was to share the Rejoicing Spirits worship with our dear friends Dave and Yvonne from York England. We bridged the gap of thousands of miles while also connecting with their young adult son, Nathan, who has autism. Dave and Yvonne are British Methodists. We met Dave on a ministerial exchange many years ago. As Rejoicers, we hope to get back together for in person worship. But until the time when we are able to return to church, we will continue our Zoom worship. All are welcome to join us! We will be trying to get it recorded for the future.

~ *Pastor John*

Communication Update

There has been a lot of traffic on our communications platforms in the recent months via the church website, FB page and Youtube Channel.

Website Google Analytics: After doing a little research on what the reports tell us, there are three main points:

- Who is looking at our site (**Audience**)
- How are they getting to our site (**Acquisition**)
- What are they looking for (**Behavior**)

Here are some statistics from the period March 1st to May 25th, 2019 (last year at this time):

Audience

We had 2,452 users, with 2,389 considered new users to our website.

We had 8,313 page views

Acquisition

57% organic searches, which means they searched for our website on their web browser
 22% direct, which means they typed in the website directly
 16% was from other sources, such as FB page or other social media
 In total, there were 3,216 sessions (a group of interactions on our page)

Behavior

This shows us what people were searching, the **top 5 pages** on our website:
 Home page (2,217)
 Staff page (427)
 General news (409)
 Food trucks (151)
 VBS (150)

Here are the statistics from March 1st to May 25th, 2020:

Audience

We had 3,632 users, with 3,439 considered as new users to our website
 We had 20,670 page views

Acquisition

50.6% organic searches
 31.8 direct searches
 15.5% other sources
 In total, there were 8,512 sessions (quite an increase from last year at this time)

Behavior (top 5 searches)

Home page (8,695)
 Sermons (1,024)
 General news (609)
 Staff page (412)
 Holy Week (325)

Other interesting information:

- Most of the visitors are from the US (98.2%) but we have people who visit us from 9 other countries.
- How are they visiting us: 54% on a desktop, 32% mobile phone, 13.5% tablet.
- Most people are watching the sermons at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings.

Our **YouTube Channel** had a few sermon videos posted over the past 2 years, with the highest viewing of 40 views and the lowest at 9. Since the first full worship video was launched on March 15th, we've had an increase of viewership:

| Date | Sermon | Views |
|----------|--------------------------------|-------|
| 15-March | Letting Go of Shame | 169 |
| 22-March | Opening Blind Eyes | 393 |
| 29-March | Unbinding Belief | 384 |
| 5-April | Laying it All Down | 425 |
| 9-April | On our Knees (Maundy Thursday) | 276 |
| 12-April | Rising up to New Life | 409 |
| 19-April | We are Easter People | 325 |
| 26-April | Do Not Mope | 240 |
| 3-May | Feelings are Okay | 531 |
| 10-May | Prodigal | 299 |
| 17-May | Anything Mentionable | 303 |
| 24-May | Won't you be My Neighbor | 216 |

Our **Facebook Page**, First United Methodist Church of Mechanicsburg, PA continues to be a popular place for people to find and share information and now to watch our Sunday service. We had 552 'likes' to our FB page as of May 2019 and have increased to 664 'likes' as of May 2020. We have also added a few more private

Groups to our church FB page, such as the Children's Group, Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood Group, Drawing Closer to God Group and the Men's Ministry Group. These private groups allow members to post and share information relative to the group topic.

~ *Lori Hoffnagle*

Outreach Update

First Church continues to partner with other community churches to meet the needs of our neighbors. We participated in a food collection for Mechanicsburg School District alongside Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ and in June we collected personal care items for Mission Central in our parking lot every Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Those items support families in need locally and in other surrounding school districts.

The Little Free Pantry has been a tremendous blessing to our neighbors. We've made a concentrated effort to ensure that the pantry stays full to help those in need. We are also sharing the pantry items with two other Blessing Boxes in our community.

~ *Lori Hoffnagle*





To Our Beloved FUMC Camp & Retreat Families and Supporters,

As you already may know, the **Susquehanna Conference's Camp & Retreat Ministry Board has made the decision to suspend all summer camp and retreat programming through September 1, 2020.**

We trust deeply in the growth and possibilities that have and will emerge as we move forward. The full-time Camping staff continues to maintain the camp facilities, as well as, to stay connected with camp volunteer teams, campers and families to keep camp alive.

While all of us acknowledge our shared disappointment at not experiencing camp as normal this summer, we know God will make a way forward through this time.

Funding is still required to sustain leadership, facilities, and programs critical to fulfilling the on-going mission of the Camp & Retreat ministries – not just for this year, but for years to come.

Please be in prayer and ask how you can participate in His Kingdom work.

In the coming weeks, there will be opportunities for generosity in financial giving. Your generosity can be a part of the way God provides "*streams in the wilderness.*"

The special giving program entitled the "Camp Comeback Campaign," will kick off with a unique "**Matching Monday**" opportunity to DOUBLE gifts to Camp & Retreat Ministry.

"**Matching Monday**" starts June 22 and will continue through July 27.

Matching Monday weekly amounts and [giving instructions](#) will be posted at 8 a.m. every Monday on each campsite Facebook page.

Donate through the conference website - www.susumcamps.org.

With Hope and in Christ's Service,

The FUMC Camping & Retreat Ministry Team

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

DISCOVERING GOD'S LOVE IN ROMANS 8

Sunday, June 28

Monday, June 29

Tuesday, June 30

Wednesday, July 1

Thursday, July 2

Friday, July 3

Saturday, July 4

“Certainty”

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

Psalms 45:10-17

Romans 5:1-8

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Romans 8:1-4

Rest and Reflect

Sunday, July 5

Monday, July 6

Tuesday, July 7

Wednesday, July 8

Thursday, July 9

Friday, July 10

Saturday, July 11

“Freedom in Christ”

Genesis 25:19-34

Psalms 119:105-112

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Romans 6:1b-11

Romans 8:5-8

Rest and Reflect

Sunday, July 12

Monday, July 13

Tuesday, July 14

Wednesday, July 15

Thursday, July 16

Friday, July 17

Saturday, July 18

“The Mind Set on the Spirit”

Genesis 28:10-19

Psalms 139:1-12, 23-24

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Romans 6:12-23

Romans 8:9-11

Rest and Reflect

Sunday, July 19

Monday, July 20

Tuesday, July 21

Wednesday, July 22

Thursday, July 23

Friday, July 24

Saturday, July 25

“Transformed By the Spirit”

Genesis 29:15-28

Psalms 105:1-11, 45b

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Romans 7:15-25

Romans 8:12-17

Rest and Reflect

Sunday, July 26

Monday, July 27

Tuesday, July 28

Wednesday, July 29

Thursday, July 30

Friday, July 31

Saturday, August 1

“Children of God”

Genesis 32:22-31

Psalms 17:1-7, 15

Matthew 14:13-20

Romans 9:1-5

Romans 8:18-25

Rest and Reflect

Church News and Notes

Love & sympathy...

to Nancy Robinson and family in the death of Nancy's aunt, Nancy, on May 11th
 to Dan Gunsallus and family in the death of Dan's mother
 to Lora, Tom, Evan and Madeleine Bourgeois in the death of Lora's father, Ron Pumphy, on May 23rd
 to Eve and Jonathan Kellenberger upon the recent loss of Eve's father
 to Betsy and Denny Keller and family in the death of Betsy's uncle, Bert Miller, on May 26th
 to Jim, Shannon, Chelsea, Jake and Shawn O'Leary in the death of Jim's step-father
 to the friends and family of Ada Lynn who passed away on June 1st
 to Ed Blum and family in the death of Polly Blum on June 5th



Special Birthdays

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Charlotte Hess..... | July 5th | Grace Koser | August 2nd |
| Richard Hayworth..... | July 6th | Jane Heller | August 3rd |
| Mildred Neagley | July 6th | Helen Kelly..... | August 10th |
| Veloice Washburn | July 6th | Pauline Trace | August 12th |
| George Snoke | July 16th | Bonnie Jeona | August 17th |
| Jack Koser..... | July 22nd | Gerry Sheely..... | August 18th |
| Harry Woods..... | July 27th | Morris Barr | August 22nd |
| Jean Adams..... | July 28th | Kay Coldren..... | August 25th |
| Lincoln Washburn | July 29th | Jo Barth..... | August 27th |
| Marty Coover..... | August 1st | Victor Norris..... | August 29th |

Special Anniversaries

- ♥ Larry & Judi Buddenbaum married 53 years on July 1st
- ♥ Marlin & Kay Simmons married 54 years on July 2nd
- ♥ Pat & Tracy Rainelli married 52 years on July 6th
- ♥ Gary & Bonnie Klinger married 55 years on July 24th



FIRST NEWS FIRST

Editor: Ellen Hill

The **deadline** for submitting articles
 for the **August 2020** issue is
July 15th

**Early submissions always
 appreciated!**