

# First News First

*Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors*

## "Sacred Spaces"

*"Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee.*

(Augustine, 4th Century)

The famous prayer of Augustine comes to mind for me as I think about this present time. Many of us are restless these days. So much in our lives has been rearranged in the midst of this pandemic. A new school year approaches, filled with uncertainty. Many of us are growing impatient and asking, "will there be an end to this?" We yearn for peace for our souls. Now more than ever we need sacred spaces.

*What would you consider the sacred spaces in your life?*

For many of us, churches are sacred spaces. The worship space of every church I've served, including First Church, has been a space where I could hear the gracious invitation to come away for a while and rest. The sanctuary of my home church in Carlisle holds special meaning for me. In that space, as I gaze at the beautiful architecture and stained glass windows and breathe in all that is so familiar to me, I recall special people and special experiences. Always, I feel close to God when I'm there. I pray that our church sanctuary is, for all of us, a place like that.

Churches are not the only places that are sacred to us. Our homes can be sacred spaces. During our quarantine time, before we began re-gathering in the building a few weeks ago, our family room became our Sunday morning place of worship. Like many of you, Betsy and I have claimed the space between the sofa and the television set as "holy ground." We have been so very blessed as we've joined online with our church family in worship.

We can find sacred space in our homes all week long. If you're working from home now, or you have young children at home, it may be challenging, but we can all find God's presence in the midst of our daily life there. Some of you may have a special room or a corner in your home where you can go to pray, or read, or listen to worshipful music, or write in a journal, or work with your hands, open to the presence of God.

Many find sacred spaces in the outdoors. Perhaps you have a spot at a church camp or a retreat center where you feel close to God. Or, you like to meet God on hiking trails, or digging in the garden, or mowing the lawn, or fishing by a stream, or floating in a raft, or lying on the beach, or walking in the neighborhood.

Relationships can be sacred spaces. With Christ at the center, the relationship between a husband and wife can be a holy place of blessing and peace. The love shared between parent and child, grandparent and grandchild, brothers and sisters, family and friends can be sacred spaces. Perhaps you have found, as I have, that sacred space formed in relationships within the Body of Christ.

*What would you consider the sacred spaces in your life?* Whatever they may be, I encourage you to return to them often! For God is there, yearning to be with you and to give rest to your souls.

May the peace of Christ be with you,  
Pastor Denny

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### 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](http://www.fumchurch.com), and on page 7 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 and Bible Studies

Thank you all for your creativity and flexibility these past 5 months as we moved our studies online, outside and over the phone! Despite the uncertainty, participation in our groups and classes held steady, and in some cases actually grew! Our building remains closed right now (with the exception of Sunday worship and a few vitally important ministries). For that reason, we are asking groups and classes to continue meeting on Zoom or outside while the weather is still nice.

We would love to start some new studies and small groups! Do you feel called to offer something for a few weeks this fall? Ideas for groups include:

- A book study/book club
- A fellowship or activity group that shares brief devotions and prayers together (such as our pickleball "Players & Prayers" group, our "Faith, Feathers & Friends group or our knitters group)
- A group study using the YouVersion Bible app or another app
- A study group that uses our Bible reading plan/sermon series outlines (available on our website, [www.fumchurch.com](http://www.fumchurch.com)) or other study materials
- A Bible study (I have many choices to offer for video-based, online studies)
- A prayer group that meets (to sit or walk!) at a park

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](mailto: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](http://www.fumchurch.com)).

Our Re-Gathering Task Force and staff are prayerfully considering a cautious, gradual, step-wise approach to resuming our studies and groups in the building later in the fall. Thank you so much for your patience and perseverance! *Wishing you Many Blessings - Tina Eaton*

### The Upper Room Devotional

September is here, and so is the September/October 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](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4611 x112.

### Email and Text Scam-Alert

In response to receiving an email or text message from someone you know and trust from First Church (including recent incidents involving Pastor Denny's list of contacts), our first reaction is to open the text or email and respond. We would like to caution you, however, to be alert for a message that seems 'suspicious' or does not sound like something the sender would typically say, or ask you to do.

- If you receive emails, text messages, or Facebook posts from First Church staff or friends asking you for money, or asking you to purchase Walmart or Amazon gift cards etc., this is most certainly a scam.
- There is no way to stop this kind of scammer, so we caution you to look twice to check the email address or phone contact, which typically will be different from the email or number you have in your personal contacts.
- When in doubt, please do not respond by replying to the text/email that you received.
- Try calling or emailing the individual directly from your contact list to determine if they are truly trying to reach you.

For more information on how to protect yourself from scams and fraud, please visit the AARP web site: <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/>.

### From the Library

I cannot believe that summer is almost over. Usually I would be writing about back to school and anticipating the start of football and soccer season. But this is such an unusual year—time to make other goals—like more time to sew or crochet or, even better, read! The best thing about books is you can be sitting in your recliner with a double espresso latte and be anywhere in the world or any place in time. When H. G. Wells tried to invent the time machine, he didn't realize it had already been invented in writing. So let me take you to Scotland and then on to England today. Get that coffee brewing.

The MacDonald Family Trilogy is written by Carla Laureano and is set in Scotland. In **Five Days in Skye**, Andrea Sullivan, a hospitality consultant is trying to snag a rich client, James MacDonald. Andrea has five days on the beautiful Isle of Skye to convince James she is the perfect consultant. And, of course, you know there is going to be romance. Though both Andrea and James are highly successful people, their private lives are full of turmoil. Can they really find a meaningful relationship in just five days?

But enough of Scotland, let's go to London. Grace Brennan, Irish photojournalist, has traveled war zones all over the world, documenting the helpless victims of war. She left Ian MacDonald, the only man she ever loved, to follow her career. But when her colleague is killed, Grace is shaken and returns to London to find out if Ian has forgotten her. Ian has not forgotten the woman that left him right before their wedding, the woman he gave up his dreams of Olympic gold for, the woman that put her career before him! Sadly, Ian has become a bitter cynical man. Grace wants to find forgiveness and grace from him. In this second book **London Tides**, Grace is going to need more strength than she thought she could have and the help of her heavenly Father.

But enough of London, back to the Isle of Skye, in the third and final book, **Under Scottish Stars**. In this book, I was expecting another brother to be the central character, but instead it is their widowed sister, Serena MacDonald Stewart. After the death of her husband, Serena wants to concentrate more on her children, and her brothers think the Isle of Skye and overseeing their new guest house would be the perfect location for her. When she needs a manager, incredibly attractive Malcolm Blake applies for the job. But he has his own baggage. He has left his home, girlfriend, and career to return to Scotland to raise his late sister's teenage daughter, and he is not too happy with the arrangement. As they work together, sparks begin to fly and not all of them romantic. See how long it takes the author to bring them around.

This trilogy has been rated high on Amazon, because of the very vivid descriptions of Scotland with the lush Isle of Skye as the focus and because the books are very romantic. Don't miss this "travel" experience. Plus all three are on the library shelf—no waiting for the next installment. Hope to see you soon!  
~ 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](http://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](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) to share requests and to sign up for this once-a-week list.



## New Sermon Series — "Through the Wilderness"

How often do you hear that these are unprecedented times? Of course, like all broad statements of that kind, this is both true and untrue. It is true that most of us haven't lived with a pandemic. Add to that the natural disasters and the political and racial unrest, and we are in a time unlike anything we've experienced before. Except we have. We've been here before. We call it wilderness.

Wandering through the wilderness is a difficult journey at the best of times. Other times, it can seem impossible. In this series we will look to our ancestors in the book of Exodus to help us find our way through the wilderness of this time. The stories of those who trusted and obeyed God long ago can guide us through the challenges and opportunities we face today. Find the sermons for this series with the Bible Reading Plan on page 7.

## NEW! The Gathering — Outdoor Worship

A new outdoor worship experience, the Gathering, is set to begin this fall each Sunday evening beginning September 13! This time of praise and worship will run from 6:00 – 6:45 pm in the church parking lot and is designed to be a casual, "come as you are" experience for all ages. Rest assured in the knowledge that all appropriate safety measures will be observed, including:

- Physical distancing at least 6 feet apart (unless you are with members of your family/daily social circle).
- Mask wearing any time physical distancing is difficult or as you are walking around (masks will not be required once you are seated).
- Children will remain with their parents (and a fun activity will be provided!)
- Greeters will be on hand to welcome all, take attendance and assist with spacing.
- Singing will be allowed in this outdoor venue! (proper physical distancing required)
- A clean restroom will be made available for anyone in need.



So dress for the weather (but we will move inside in the event of a storm), bring your mask, bring your lawn chair and plan to arrive a little early (to allow for physical distancing while finding your spot). We can't wait to share in this relaxing, Spirit-filled time of togetherness! Questions? Contact Lisa Aronson at [uthrock@fumchurch.com](mailto:uthrock@fumchurch.com).

## Livestream Team — New Ministry

Livestream worship is underway! This new group forming has 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](mailto: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](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4611 x112 for more information.

## Dedicated Missionary



### 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](mailto: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](mailto:outreach@fumchurch.com) to share opportunities and to sign up.

## Relationship Builder



### Hospitality Tip

As we have slowly started to come back to church, in person, things look very different. We are wearing masks and sitting in "strange" seats as we get a different perspective. We are not singing, nor showing the usual ways to be hospitable, but we are learning how to show kindness and hospitality in many other ways. We are being greeted by new faces when we enter, we are helping people find new seats, and we are learning to SMILE through our masks. We continue to check on friends and if you know someone who needs an extra smile or helping hand, reach out to them and show them God's love. Hopefully we can all be together again, very soon.

### Joy in the Morning - On Zoom!

If you live with ongoing health challenges, we invite you to join us for discussion and friendship in our spiritually-grounded support group! We meet on designated Mondays, every 3-4 weeks from 3:30-4:30 on Zoom. Terry Ketrow and Janice Bowen co-facilitate, drawing upon readings from the book, With the Dawn Rejoicing. For more information, contact Janice Bowen at 717-766-4611 x112 or [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com).

### First Walkers are on the Move!

A new outdoor walking group, **First Walkers**, is forming for those who want some exercise and fellowship with other First Church members. An informational gathering will take place on Thursday, **August 27** at 8:30 a.m. in the church parking lot. All walking abilities and ages welcome, but the plan is to walk for 45 minutes to one hour. No need to sign up, just show up! Karen Simmons will be leading the group. If you have questions, you can contact Karen at 717-766-8421 or Lori Hoffnagle at [outreach@fumchurch.com](mailto:outreach@fumchurch.com). According to the website, [AmericaWalks.org](http://AmericaWalks.org), there are many benefits to walking, such as: **Walking** is good for your mind, **Walking** in green space can improve your sleep, **Walking** can help stem the effects of arthritis and Participating in **walking groups** can improve health. Let's get walking!

### Food Trucks Return September 18!

First Church is pleased to announce that the Third Friday Food Trucks will be returning Friday, September 18! 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 and wear a face covering if unable to physical distance from others. Mark your calendar now for the last Food Truck date on Friday, October 16. Please like our Facebook page at First United Methodist Church of Mechanicsburg, Pa. for updates and future events.

### “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](mailto:outreach@fumchurch.com).





## FINANCIAL REPORT

Through July 31, 2020 — 58% of year

### General Fund

2020 budget	\$ 955,098	
Projected giving	\$ 557,108	58%
Actual giving	\$ 528,096	55%
Actual expenses	\$ 512,651	54%

Our YTD 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. We are grateful to be holding “in-person” services with the appropriate safeguards in place according to guidelines. We are also continuing our Sunday services online. In July, giving continues to run behind an average weekly budget by \$2 - \$3 thousand per week. We appreciate all the support for our church during this difficult time and are thankful for those who have been able to continue in prayer and financial support of our ministry. Until we gather again, we hope you will consider mailing your contributions to the church office or utilizing electronic giving via the church website. Please be sure to visit the church website for regular updates and online services.

### Mechanicsburg Bucks Initiative

First Church is pleased to contribute to the newly formed Mechanicsburg ‘Bucks’ program which supports individuals, families and businesses in need. Individuals and families in need will be identified by local organizations. Funds will then be distributed to those families in the form of paper “bucks” to spend at a list of participating local businesses. Participating businesses will then work with the Downtown Mechanicsburg Partnership, which will serve as a “clearinghouse” for the program, and exchange the “bucks” for real money. The money the partnership receives will be donated from local organizations, churches and businesses. Participating businesses will also be asked to give 10-20% discounts to those using the Mechanicsburg Bucks so the money stretches farther. (Cumberlink.com, August 12, 2020).

### Yard, Book and Bake Sale Thanks!

Thanks to everyone who donated, purchased, baked and helped at the annual Yard, Book and Bake Sale to benefit missions and the Youth! The sale was a huge success with the youth making close to \$1,400 and the Bake Sale bringing in over \$444, praise God! Any leftover items went to Operation Wildcat which supports families in the Mechanicsburg School District. Thanks again!

### Large Cans Needed for Flowers

We are in search of large juice cans for delivering altar flowers. If you have any cans to donate, please bring them to the church office on a weekday morning (Mon-Thurs.) or drop them off at Janice Bowen's porch anytime. Thank you! Questions? Contact Janice Bowen at [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4611 x112

### Ways to Give

There are several ways that you can continue to give in support of 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](mailto:office@fumchurch.com) to sign-up or receive more information
- Use the “Donate” button on the church website, [www.fumchurch.com](http://www.fumchurch.com)
- Download the “GivePlus” app and search for First United Methodist Church

Questions? Contact Ellen Hill at [office@fumchurch.com](mailto:office@fumchurch.com).

# THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

## BIBLE READING PLAN

### **Sunday, August 30**

Monday, August 31

Tuesday, September 1

Wednesday, September 2

Thursday, September 3

Friday, September 4

Saturday, September 5

### ***“Love Conquers All”***

Psalm 149

Romans 13:8-10

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 18:15-20

Exodus 12:1-14

Rest and Reflect

### **Sunday, September 6**

Monday, September 7

Tuesday, September 8

Wednesday, September 9

Thursday, September 10

Friday, September 11

Saturday, September 12

### ***“Never Forget”* (Holy Communion)**

Romans 14:1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

Exodus 14:19-31

Exodus 15:1-11

Exodus 15:12-21

Rest and Reflect

### **Sunday, September 13**

Monday, September 14

Tuesday, September 15

Wednesday, September 16

Thursday, September 17

Friday, September 18

Saturday, September 19

### ***“Into the Sea”***

Psalm 105:1-6

Psalm 105:37-45

Philippians 1:21-30

Matthew 20:1-16

Exodus 16:2-15

Rest and Reflect

### **Sunday, September 20**

Monday, September 21

Tuesday, September 22

Wednesday, September 23

Thursday, September 24

Friday, September 25

Saturday, September 26

### ***“What Is It?”***

Psalm 78:1-11

Psalm 78:12-16

Philippians 2:1-13

Matthew 21:23-32

Exodus 17:1-7

Rest and Reflect

### **Sunday, September 27**

Monday, September 28

Tuesday, September 29

Wednesday, September 30

Thursday, October 1

Friday, October 2

Saturday, October 3

### ***“Strike the Rock”***

Psalm 19

Philippians 3:1-14

Matthew 21:33-46

Exodus 20:1-11

Exodus 20:12-20

Rest and Reflect

### **Sunday, October 4**

### ***“Always in Awe”***



To Our Beloved FUMC Camp & Retreat Families and Supporters,

The Susquehanna Conference's Camp & Retreat Ministry Board made the decision to suspend all summer camp and retreat programming through September 1, 2020.

**Good news! The Fall Retreat season has now started!**

We trust deeply in the growth and possibilities that have and will emerge as we move forward. We know God is making a way for us through this time.

**Please pray and ask how you can participate in camp or a camp-like experience.**

Let's covenant together to go on a hike or a walk and take time off from everything and go somewhere near where you live and immerse ourselves in beauty. Let's take the time to walk slow miles or some steps with God and diminish every other distraction. Take time to truly walk with God and listen to His words about our hearts, lives and futures and the future of camp. This "holy time" will cement the community together and launch us into the remainder of the camp year in very unexpected and profound ways. It's amazing what setting aside one simple day to walk with God can do.

**We hope that you will share your experiences with us!**

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

There will be opportunities for generosity in financial giving as part of the "Camp Comeback Campaign". Your generosity can be the way God provides "*streams in the wilderness*."

**Donate through the conference website - <http://www.susumcamps.org/>.**

Please let us know if you have any registration questions or need financial assistance.

Let us know if you plan on attending a retreat so as to provide a prayer partner.

With Hope and in Christ's Service,

*The FUMC Camping & Retreat Ministry Team*

**Questions? Contact:** Deb Noss ([sdppp@msn.com](mailto:sdppp@msn.com)) or Amy Ortiz ([amy.ogden7@gmail.com](mailto:amy.ogden7@gmail.com))





### You are an answer to a prayer!

What an unprecedented time this is! But through it all, we have remained open, committed to our mission of ensuring that people have their basic needs met, especially in times like this. Since the pandemic began in mid-March, we have:



Helped over 1,700 people from 650 families who had never visited us before, distributed more than \$110,000 for emergency housing assistance and welcomed more than 280 new volunteers! What a blessing! Thank you for your continued support of our neighbors in need.



It's soon back to school time! We are providing school supplies to our guests in need. Please visit our website to find out how you can support our efforts.

**Do you know someone who needs help because of COVID-19?** Maybe someone who cannot find a job, is having a hard time keeping up with their expenses like rent or utility payments, or has been impacted in other ways from the health crisis? If they live in our service area, please let them know that New Hope is here to help! Share our contact information with them today - thank you!

#### Wish List:

- Canned vegetables & fruits
- Canned meats & peanut butter
- Toilet paper
- Personal care items

#### Volunteer with us!

Give us a call, or visit our website, to see how you can volunteer with our New Hope family!

[www.nhm-pa.org](http://www.nhm-pa.org)

## Church News and Notes

### Love & sympathy...

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  
 to Bonnie Jeona and family in the death of Bonnie's granddaughter-in-law, Liza  
 to Murph and Lela Zimmerman in the death of Murph's aunt, Dolores Williams  
 to Anna Harris and family in the death of Anna's grandmother, Virginia Kirby, on August 6th  
 to the Hutter and Bahn families in the death of Paul Bahn, Jr. on August 15th  
 to the friends and family of Janet Fertenbaugh who passed away on August 22nd



### Special Birthdays

Emma Whitcomb .....	September 8th	Peggy Shenberger .....	September 28th
Pat Sheely.....	September 11th	Peg Hassinger .....	October 8th
Kenneth Nelson.....	September 13th	Skip Hutter.....	October 13th
George Rehfuss .....	September 16th	Carol Ann Moomaw .....	October 21st
George Carpenter .....	September 18th	Winslow Brown .....	October 23rd
Joan E. Stokes .....	September 19th	Don Shover .....	October 23rd
Ralph Harkins .....	September 25th	J. Paul Strock .....	October 31st

### Special Anniversaries

- ♥ Bob & Judy Wertz married 57 years on September 1st
- ♥ Ed & Gina Johnson married 56 years on September 3rd
- ♥ Darrell & Barbara Sill married 53 years on September 16th
- ♥ George & Mary Beth Snoke married 54 years on September 24th
- ♥ Richard & Marley Ann Schmick married 56 years on September 26th
- ♥ J. Paul & Lorraine Strock married 67 years on September 27th



<p><i>FIRST NEWS FIRST</i>  <b>Editor:</b> Ellen Hill</p>	<p>The <b>deadline</b> for submitting articles                  for the <b>October 2020</b> issue is  <b>September 15th</b></p>	<p><b>Early submissions <u>always</u>                  appreciated!</b></p>
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