



First News First

Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors

From Pastor Denny's Desk...

“Let the Children Come”

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110 years ago, when our ancestors at First Church designed our church sanctuary, ministry with children and their families was obviously a high priority. Of all the dozens of scenes from Scripture they might have chosen for the two large stained glass windows, they chose a scene that is found in three of the New Testament Gospels. In all three accounts, parents are bringing their children to Jesus. The disciples speak sternly to them, but Jesus says,

Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs. (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16)

60 years ago, as more and more children and families crowded into the building for Sunday School, our ancestors once again expressed their strong commitment to bringing children to Jesus. In 1962, our educational building was constructed. In the decades that followed, classrooms were crowded with children on Sunday mornings and throughout the week.

25 years ago, as still more children and families came, yet another building project provided additional space. Many of you came into the life of First Church because of our strong commitment to ministry with children and families. In addition to Sunday School, you have been involved in the Crib/Toddler Room, Wee Worship and Kid Worship, Wonderful Wednesday, the Passion Play, Vacation Bible School, Night in Bethlehem, Little Friends Preschool, and so much more.

I celebrate your longstanding commitment to, “Let the children come.” That’s why I’m especially excited, as we move into this new season, to welcome our new Director of Children and Family Ministries, Katie Knorr. Katie is from Bloomsburg, PA. The daughter and granddaughter of United Methodist pastors, Katie has been involved in church her whole life. After graduating from Bloomsburg University with a B.S. in Education, Katie taught Elementary School before she was called to full-time Children’s Ministry and joined the staff of Camp Hill UMC. Recently, as Camp Hill did some staff restructuring, Katie applied for our position here.

With Katie’s experience, her creativity, and her warm, caring spirit, she is a great addition to our church’s ministry. Her love for Jesus and children shines through. Katie is already busy getting to know children and their families and planning creative ways to connect them to Jesus and our church family.

Please join me in welcoming Katie! And, join me in prayer that the beginning of her ministry will be a time for our entire church family to renew our commitment to, “Let the children come.” So much has changed since, 1911, 1962, 1997, and even 2020, but the need for our children to know Jesus and to connect with a loving church family like ours is as important today as it was then!

Ministry to Children and Families Is Still Our Priority,
Pastor Denny



Adult Discipleship

Have you taken the time to assess where you are in your journey with Jesus? Maybe you are just beginning to explore faith or you are growing into a more mature disciple? Maybe you are becoming a fully devoted follower? No matter what, 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: Lent Prayer Challenge for Children, Youth and Adults;** 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, join us for **Draw the Circle**, a congregation-wide prayer experience this Lenten season (March 2 - April 17). There are many ways for children, youth, and adults to participate:
 - ◊ **Pick up your free copy of the book, “Draw the Circle: a 40-Day Prayer Challenge,” at church beginning Feb. 27.** (Donations are being accepted toward the books in the church office.)
 - ◊ **Worship with us** (either in person or online) beginning on Ash Wednesday (March 2), and on Sunday mornings through Easter (April 17) to deepen your experience through the “Draw the Circle” sermon series.
 - ◊ Share **your prayers and stories** throughout this experience at church on our Prayer & Vision board (located under the balcony in the sanctuary) or online by following our Instagram page [@fumchurch](https://www.instagram.com/fumchurch).
 - ◊ Gather with a **“check-in” partner or join a small group** to meet weekly (including some virtual meeting options) and watch the videos, engage in discussion, pray, and encourage one another. Groups are meeting on Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays beginning the week of March 6. [CLICK HERE](#) to register your participation in one of the following:
 - * **Sunday morning groups**, beginning March 6: Faith in Everyday Life (Room 207), Christian Fellowship Group (Room B003), Faithful Families Group (Room B005), Growing in Christ Group (both in-person Room 105 and on Zoom), and the New Member Group (Fellowship Hall). These groups meet from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. on Sundays.
 - * **Monday Joy in the Morning Group**, beginning March 7: With Janice Bowen, 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. on Zoom.
 - * **Wednesday Groups – The Midweek ReFuel**
 - ◆ **NEW!! Wednesday evening program for all ages**, beginning March 9: Includes children, youth and adults. Meets from 6:00 to 6:45 p.m. Optional: Bring your own dinner and enjoy fellowship time beginning at 5:15 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.
 - ◆ **Wednesday evening study with Pastor Denny**, beginning March 9: 6:45 to 8:00 p.m. in Room B003.
 - ◆ **Wednesday evening men’s group**, beginning March 9: With Barry Eaton/John Bowen, 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Zoom (or outside at Barry’s home, weather permitting).
 - ◆ **Wednesday lunch & learn for women**, beginning March 9: With Tina Eaton, noon to 1:00 p.m., in person under the balcony in the sanctuary.

- * **Check-in Partners** - No time for a group? Sign up to be matched with a “check-in” partner and meet in person or on Zoom (if you already have a check-in partner, please let Tina Eaton know).
- * **Independent Study** - No time to check in with a partner? Sign up to participate independently and receive the videos to watch on your own. Need more accountability? Follow up on Instagram @fumchurch and participate in the online discussion.

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

o **Additional Bible Study Opportunities**

- ◇ **Monday Men’s Bible Study** – Led by Ken Guise, meets on Monday evenings at 6:45 pm on Zoom. Currently working on “The Key to Living by Faith”, a study of the book of Hebrews. Contact Ken Guise at guiseken100@gmail.com for more details, the Zoom link and a study guide (\$9.00, scholarships available).
- ◇ **Thursday Bible Study** – Led by Juanita Guise, meets Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm on Zoom. Currently studying “Free from Bondage God’s Way”, an in depth study of Galatians and Ephesians. Contact Juanita at kguise@comcast.net for more details, the Zoom link and a study guide (\$9.00, scholarships available).
- ◇ **Study Gateway** – Don’t have time to meet in a group right now, but want to stay in the Word with a guided study that you can do on your own? 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

I usually talk about November and December being the whirlwind time of my life with too much going on and no time to think or to get everything done. But here I am on Valentine’s Day realizing I haven’t written the library article for the church newsletter. So I have pre-warned you this article might be brief, disorganized, making no sense, or all of the above. Thankfully, Pam has my back so at least my grammar will be okay. The February article was all about romance, so in March I want to go in the high adrenaline direction.

Author Natalie Walters was suggested to me by my sister who reads as much as I do. Since I always take my big sister’s advice, I ordered the first of Ms. Walters’ books in her *SNAP series*, titled **Lights Out**. In a contemporary world where spies and counter terrorism are everyday words, Brynn Taylor is a CIA Analyst who has developed a program to help foster cooperation with foreign intelligence agencies. But now one of the members of this new interagency group, an Egyptian spy, is missing. Jack Hudson who has been working for the Strategic Neutralization and Protection Agency (SNAP) is tasked to find this missing spy. Unfortunately, Jack and Brynn have some bad history together, and they are unsure if they can even work together no matter what the stakes are. And this is not an easy assignment. Kidnapping, explosions, murder, poisonings are thrown in their way at every turn. The terrorists’ goal is to cause a digital blackout that will blind the US military and throw the whole world into chaos. Of course, Brynn and Jack find a way to work together—but I will let you find out how they work that out. If you enjoy this new author, her second book in this series, **Fatal Code**, will be out in May. And if you like this author, please let me know as I try to order what you like.

An all-time favorite author in the library is Lynette Eason and her latest series is titled *Extreme Measures*. Book one is **Life Flight** and it has plenty of adrenaline. Penny Carlton is an EMS helicopter pilot who is used to high stress situations, but when she is forced to land on a mountain in a raging storm with a critical patient, it takes stress to a whole new level. And if all that is not enough, there is a serial killer on the loose. Fortunately, she is able to survive with FBI Special Agent Holt Satterfield’s help. But even after they are over the mountain event, Penny is still under attack and Holt discovers he didn’t get his man the first time. I think you will enjoy this romantic suspense novel as Amazon readers gave it fantastic reviews. Brew some extra espresso and plan to stay up late to find the way through all the twists and turns that this novel provides.

As always, if neither of these books is right for you, stop by the library and let us help you find the perfect book.

See you in the library.

~ Pam and Donna

Praying Follower



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

Do you pray as often and as bravely as you want to? Are you looking to strengthen your relationship with God and experience a deeper, more intentional prayer life? **Draw the Circle** will teach you all about a new, life-changing way to pray.

After the release of Mark Batterson’s original book, **The Circle Maker**, thousands of readers shared true stories of miraculous and inspiring answers to prayer! **Draw the Circle** shares these inspiring testimonies and combines them with scripture and daily prayer prompts designed to stir you to pray like never before. Through this devotional book, along with the companion study and sermon series, you will learn:

- The life-changing power of intentional prayer
- Why prayer is such a crucial aspect of your relationship with God
- How to start applying the principles of *The Circle Maker* in your everyday life
- How to stay humble, patient, and focused as you start your 40-day journey
- Build a prayer habit that will support your faith for a lifetime

See the article in the Lifelong Learner section of this newsletter for more details on how to get a book and join a group. If you have questions, contact Tina Eaton at adultministry@fumchurch.com.

Save the Date: Good Friday Prayer Walk, April 15

We are planning a community Good Friday Prayer Walk on Friday, April 15. More details coming soon!

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



Ash Wednesday Service, Wednesday, March 2

Join us for worship in honor of Ash Wednesday on Wednesday, March 2 at 7:00 p.m. The service will be in-person in our church sanctuary and livestreamed on our website at fumchurch.com and [Facebook Page](#). Ash Wednesday is the day when Christians gather to begin and prepare spiritually for the 40 days of Lent, leading up to Easter. It is traditional for Christians to have ashes placed on their forehead by clergy members in observance of this special day. We will safely administer the ashes, in adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols. If you prefer to worship with us online, you can search for instructional videos on how to prepare your own ashes on YouTube.

Disability Awareness Sunday

DisAbility Awareness Sunday is scheduled for Sunday, April 24th. Did you know the United Methodist Book of Discipline requires a Sunday to observe DisAbility Awareness Sunday? Join us for morning worship at 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m., or during the 4 p.m. Rejoicing Spirits service as we praise God that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Sound & Media Upgrades Updates

The sound system upgrades began installation in late January, and we continue to remain on schedule! Volunteers have been meeting on Fridays to assist with equipment installation and wiring—this plan will allow the new upgrades to be tested during the Gathering service, while we temporarily remaining on the existing system for the Foundation service.

Our outlined plan also allows for the worship band to soon begin practicing using personal "in-ear monitors", with the goal of improved hearing while reducing stage volume, clutter and feedback. The sound team will also begin training on the new sound board during our 11 a.m. Gathering services.

To achieve better sound and smoother live worship during both Foundation and Gathering services, we'll soon be reviewing our wireless mics to resolve dropout issues, as well as installation of new microphones and presentation computers.

We continue to be thankful to God for His abundance of provisions, and remain prayerful during this project. If you are interested in learning more and/or training with us, please reach out to Sarah Pugh at worship@fumchurch.com, or Jason Kichline at jkichline@gmail.com.



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, March 16** 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



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 January totaled **\$43.70**. 100% of your donations will be used to provide training and dig wells for schools and communities in need.

United Methodist Women, MissionU

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>.

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



Extravagant Hospitality

Our church welcoming ministry is more important now than it’s ever been! As we have seen the cases of the Omicron variant decline in February and as we head into Lent in March, we anticipate seeing more church members return after a long absence. It is important for us to help them feel comfortable returning to an environment that is a little different from when they left. We are also seeing more new guests – young people, families and older adults! During the quarantine, some new residents moved into our community and have not had an opportunity to check out churches, but are ready now. Because some of these guests have not been in a church for a long time, it is important for us to help them feel comfortable – this will help them decide if it’s “worth” the risk and effort to return. Let’s all do our part to be a welcoming and friendly church!

Covered in Love Knitting Group

The Covered in Love Knitting Group will return to in person meetings beginning Wednesday, March 2 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 ljbuddenbaum@verizon.net.

Widows and Widowers Fellowship

The Widows and Widowers fellowship group will dine at Café Magnolia on Tuesday, March 8 at 11:30 a.m. If you plan on attending, please call Binnie Guyer at [717-766-0145](tel:717-766-0145).

Trinity’s Closet on Main, March 12, 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, March 12**. They are asking for donations of winter jackets or new socks and underwear for the upcoming winter season. 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!

Community Fitness Program Opportunities

As we await the extended daylight and warmth of spring, FUMC's Health and Wellness Team would like to share some indoor and virtual options with you for community fitness programs you can participate in from the comfort of home or just a short drive away! Check out the local resources below!

- Fitness for "Boomers!" Are you interested in exercising with other people but not ready to return to the gym? For help finding a Zoom fitness class that suits your schedule and fitness level, please email Margaret Paredes at sneakersmargaret@gmail.com or give her a call at 717-350-6807.
- Mechanicsburg Parks and Recreation – Winter/Spring 2022: https://issuu.com/mrec/docs/website_brochure
- Messiah Lifeways – virtual classes: <https://www.messiahlifeways.org/virtualfitness/>
- Messiah Lifeways – in person classes: <https://www.messiahlifeways.org/lifestyle/wellness/>
- Fleet Feet, Mechanicsburg – running and training programs: www.FleetFeet.com
- The Penn State Extension **LIFT** program (**Lifelong Improvements through Fitness Together**) will be offered at Shepherdstown United Methodist Church, 1934 S. York Street, Mechanicsburg, for a Spring Session. The 8-week class runs every Monday and Wednesday, March 21 to May 11, 2022, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. The fee to participate is \$60. (Some insurance programs may offer discounts) Please refer to this website to learn more about the program and how to register: <https://extension.psu.edu/lift>

Generous Giver



FINANCIAL REPORT

Through January 31, 2022 8 % of year

General Fund

2022 budget	\$ 925,985	
Expected income	\$ 77,165	(8% of budget)
Actual income	\$ 87,232	(9 % of budget)
Actual expenses	\$ 68,016	(7 % of budget)

Thank you again for your continued support of our mission and ministry as we come into a New Year. We are excited to see what the good Lord has prepared for us in 2022 and look forward to having you join us as we serve the King together.

Endowment Fund Grants Enhance Church Ministries

First Church was blessed to have nearly \$24,000 in proceeds from its Endowment Fund to invest in church ministries last year! Endowment grants were provided to the following groups in 2021:

- **Little Friends Nursery School** - \$10,000 in assistance. The school continues to provide a valuable learning and growing experience for young children but suffered decreased enrollment during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Squares & Prayers** - \$1,000 for quilting supplies. Group members made several quilts to donate for use by hospice patients.
- **Covered in Love** - \$200 for knitting supplies for projects to benefit the community.
- **Trustees** - \$5,000 for emergency masonry work on the small tower of our building to stop damage from water leakage.

- **Furniture for Youth Lounge** - \$2,000 to purchase new furniture for the 4G youth meeting room.
- **Community Green Space** - \$ 2,500 seed grant (pre-approved to be spent in 2022) to repurpose a portion of the church parking lot as an outdoor meeting space for use by church members and the public.
- In addition, a portion of the Endowment proceeds was designated to the **Stain Glass Window Restoration Fund** per the donor's wishes.

The Endowment Fund of First United Methodist Church was created more than a decade ago. All donations to it remain with the fund in perpetuity. As the fund grows, the annual proceeds generated are reinvested into current church ministries. Members can support the Endowment Fund with a deferred gift, such as a bequest in a will or a life insurance policy naming First Church as the beneficiary. Cash and stock transfer gifts also are accepted for those who wish to provide support now. If you would like to learn more about the Endowment Fund, please see Pastor Denny Keller or Bob Wertz, Sr., Endowment Committee Chairperson.

Watch for the 2021 Endowment Fund Annual Report this spring!

Preschool Substitutes Needed

Little Friends Preschool is looking for classroom substitutes. Substitutes work for 2.5 hours and are compensated at \$30 per day. Clearances, Covid-19 vaccination, and masks required when working with the children. If you are interested in this position, please contact Jemma Church, Preschool Director at lfns@fumchurch.com or 717-796-0723. Little Friends is a non-profit, Christian-based preschool that offers classes for children from 2 years and 7 months to pre-kindergarten. All students receive quality instruction led by caring teachers in a safe, nurturing environment. Little Friends is a ministry of First Church. Visit their website at: <https://www.littlefriendspreschool.org/>.

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

Thank You, Lori!

On Sunday, February 13, we announced that Lori Hoffnagle, our Director of Outreach, will retire effective February 28. Lori joined our church staff in March, 2017. Over the past five years she has helped our congregation extend its reach into the community in many ways. In addition to working with our Missions Committee, Lori has been instrumental in starting the Little Free Pantry, inviting and organizing the third Friday Food Trucks, and coordinating numerous other programs for serving our neighbors in downtown Mechanicsburg. Lori's involvement with local missions, local government and business leaders, and neighboring churches and schools has opened the way for new opportunities to serve our neighbors.

In addition to her leadership in community outreach, Lori has faithfully communicated church events and service opportunities in print and online. She has worked with her team to connect us to online worship services and has regularly communicated important information via our church website, constant contact, and social media. Lori has played an important role in connecting with our congregation and community virtually, even when the pandemic prevented us from meeting in person.

While Lori is retiring from our church staff, she and Jeff will continue to be active in our church, just as they have been for the past 35 years. Lori will continue her involvement with United Methodist Women,

the Food Trucks, the Little Free Pantry and Community Aid Box, along with other community outreach opportunities.

Our Staff-Parish Relations Committee is working with staff and others involved in outreach and communications to assess our next steps in these important areas of our ministry.

Children and Family Ministry

Katie Knorr (Miss Katie) is so excited to be here at First UMC as the Director of Children and Family Ministry and is already having a great time getting to know the kids and families of this church! For up-to-date information about what's happening in the church for kids and families and to see what's coming up, check our page <https://tinyurl.com/fumchurchkids>.

Youth Ministry — Seeking to be Confirmed?

What is confirmation?: "United Methodists use the term "confirmation" to mark the first time a baptized Christian publicly "confirms" their intention to live the vows of the baptismal and membership covenant and so becomes a professing member of the local congregation and The United Methodist Church."

What does that mean?: It means that when you were baptized someone made vows on your behalf to raise you in the Christian faith. To be confirmed is to acknowledge on your own behalf, and in the presence of others, that you desire to live according to those vows, to profess your faith in Jesus, and participate as a membership of the church. It's your chance to say "yes" to the faith that you were baptized into.

What if I wasn't baptized?: If you aren't yet baptized, both a baptism and confirmation can happen at the same time since you don't need someone to make the vows for you.

I was baptized when I was an older kid: If you were baptized at an age or in a church where you made a personal proclamation of faith, then that was a baptism and confirmation wrapped up as one (that may be why some of your friends of other Christian churches don't have a confirmation program). But even still, you could join us in the process of confirmation as a means of becoming a member of the First Church community.

I was confirmed but honestly it didn't make sense then: Baptisms and confirmations only need to occur once BUT there are times in our lives where we wish to re-affirm our faith and the commitment we have made.

If you are a student (6th-12th grade) who wants to be confirmed, wishes to become an official member of First Church, or is at a place of re-affirmation, let Lisa Aronson know! We will determine the best process for preparing for confirmation/membership/re-affirmation based on the student population currently seeking such commitment. PLEASE email Lisa Aronson at uthrock@fumchurch.com by MARCH 1st if interested.

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.

(Envelope #1 = \$1.00, Envelope #150 = \$150.00) Let us know what envelope you are taking, make the donation, and we will connect back with you to share more about our team, the trip, and ways you can be praying. We want to share this experience with you and our envelope challenge is one such way. We have envelopes 1-150 (and a few extra). Our hope is to get donors for all our envelopes. So whether you can donate a \$1 or \$150, check out our Envelope Challenge website to learn more and claim your envelope: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/cu/hE8vgkd/EnvelopeChallenge> (We will also have an in-person version of the envelopes for those who prefer to donate while at church). Please feel free to share our link with others who might want to help.



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.

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

- 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?

Please come to **CAMP SUNDAY** – Tentatively Scheduled for March 27th during the Sunday School Hour!

Those who attend will learn more about camp and have time to ask questions. Camp is a unique place where we can encounter God. *Be on the lookout for more details about this fun day!*

All are welcome.

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).



March Bible Reading Plan

Tuesday, March 1
Wednesday, March 2
Thursday, March 3
Friday, March 4
Saturday, March 5

Matthew 6:1-6
Matthew 6:16-21
Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Luke 4:1-13
Rest and Reflect

Ash Wednesday

Sunday, March 6
Monday, March 7
Tuesday, March 8
Wednesday, March 9
Thursday, March 10
Friday, March 11
Saturday, March 12

Draw the Circle Part 1
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Psalm 27
Philippians 3:12-16
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-35
Rest and Reflect

Sunday, March 13
Monday, March 14
Tuesday, March 15
Wednesday, March 16
Thursday, March 17
Friday, March 18
Saturday, March 19

Draw the Circle Part 2
Isaiah 55:1-9
Psalm 63:1-8
1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9
Luke 13:10-17
Rest and Reflect

Sunday, March 20
Monday, March 21
Tuesday, March 22
Wednesday, March 23
Thursday, March 24
Friday, March 25
Saturday, March 26

Draw the Circle Part 3
Joshua 5:9-12
Psalm 32
2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Luke 15:1-11a
Luke 15:11b-32
Rest and Reflect

Sunday, March 27
Monday, March 28
Tuesday, March 29
Wednesday, March 30
Thursday, March 31

Draw the Circle Part 4
Isaiah 43:16-21
Psalm 126
Philippians 3:4b-14
John 12:1-8

Church News and Notes

Our love & sympathy...

to the Ometz family and friends in the passing of Derrick Ometz on February 20

Thank you...

Thank you to everyone who participated in Soupy Saturday: Home Edition 2022! The church freezer is now stocked with an amazing variety of delicious soups! Thank you so much for your kindness in sharing your time and cooking gifts with others one bowl of soup at a time! ~ *Janice Bowen*



Special Birthdays

Pat Gavlak.....	March 9	Robert Meck	April 2
Ben Miller.....	March 12	Marilyn Seig	April 2
Sara Meck.....	March 15	Dolores Farr.....	April 3
Marge Robinson.....	March 15	Linda Hall.....	April 9
Gail Siemons.....	March 15	Alberta Knause	April 15
Bob Wertz.....	March 17	Darlene Wilkinson.....	April 17
Mabel Strock.....	March 28	Tom Mullikin.....	April 23
Bob Erikson	March 29	Janet Baker	April 25
Buddy Miller.....	March 29	Janet Baker	April 25
Dave Scholl.....	March 31	Grace Brandt.....	April 25

Special Anniversaries

- ♥ Jim and Gail Siemons married 58 years on March 21, 1964



FIRST NEWS FIRST

Editor: Ellen Hill

The **deadline** for submitting articles for the **April 2022** issue is **March 15**

Early submissions always appreciated!