



*First News First*

December 2019

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

### **"Repeat the Sounding Joy"**

I love singing the old, familiar Christmas carols. I love singing them in worship as soon as the first candle of Advent is lit and to keep on singing them all the way into the next year. The highlight of the whole season for many of us is the Christmas Eve Services. When the light of candles illumines the dark sanctuary and we sing, "Silent Night, Holy Night," it's amazing! Then the blessing is given and the candles are extinguished and the lights are turned on, but, as you and I know, the service isn't over yet. The celebration of Christmas Eve isn't over until the music swells and we lift our voices to sing, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come."

2019 marks the 300th anniversary of "Joy to the World." In worship this Advent and Christmas Season we're going to focus on the theme of joy, using Scripture and this old-familiar carol. Interestingly, when Isaac Watts wrote the words in 1719, he was not intending to write a Christmas carol. "Joy to the World" never mentions the birth of Jesus or the manger. There is nothing in it about Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph, shepherds, magi, a bright star or angelic choirs. The lyrics were originally penned by Watts for a collection of poems based on some of the Old Testament psalms.

The inspiration for "Joy to the World" was Psalm 98:4-9, which envisions all of creation and everyone on earth breaking forth in joyous song and singing praises when the Lord comes in final victory. For example, in verses 8-9a the psalmist declares,

*Let all the rivers clap their hands;  
let the mountains rejoice out loud  
altogether before the Lord  
because he is coming to establish justice on the earth!*

In verse 2 of his poem, Watts proclaims,

*Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

Nearly 130 years later, in 1848, composer Lowell Mason set the words of Watts' poem to music, using an arrangement from Handel's "Messiah." Since then, generations of Christians have joined their voices in the cold December darkness to "repeat the sounding joy." We find true joy in the birth of the Lord Jesus, and in the promise of his Second Coming. This is the good news this world so badly needs. The Savior reigns!

I can't wait to worship with you every Sunday this December and on Christmas Eve. I look forward to singing the old carols and the new songs of Christmas, as we "repeat the sounding joy." We are a people of joy, and we witness to the whole world as we sing, "Joy to the World, the Lord is come!"

Rejoicing in the Lord with you, always!

Pastor Denny



## Bible Reading Plan

Finish off the year STRONG by reading your Bible daily using our Bible reading plan for Advent! Filled with the Christmas narrative, you will delight as you discover connections from the Old Testament to the Gospel stories. Pick up your copy of the reading plan today in the Welcome Center at the Advent display. Need a Bible? You can also pick one up at the display. Large-print versions are available.

## From the Library

On this crisp November night, I find it hard to believe I am writing about Christmas. So I put on some Christmas music and started looking at the new Christmas books I want to tell you about—now I am stoked—I wonder how Ron would feel about putting up the tree later. On that note I better get back to the books. I have long been a fan of Rachel Hauck, and her novella *The Wedding Dress Christmas: (Small Town Romance)* is the perfect cap to her *Wedding Trilogy*. (It can easily be read as a standalone book). It combines the charm of Christmas, small towns, and country music. JoJo Castle has come home to Hearts Bend, Tennessee after her adventure in the big city came crashing down around her. Back home and working with her cousin in the Wedding shop is all JoJo aspires to even when her high school crush and now country super star, Buck Matthews comes back into town. Buck has cancelled his European tour so he can be at his mother's side while she is battling cancer. Buck has had no time for family or friends during his rise to fame, but during this down time in his hometown, Buck begins to reevaluate his life goals. JoJo has felt the flames of long forgotten love coming to life, but she and Buck have different paths and ideas. Could there really be a chance for love between two such different people? Reviewers have given this novella raving reviews and it is the perfect size for this busy time of year. New to our library, *The Women of Christmas* is a short reflective read for Christmas. Ms. Higgs encourages us to put aside the wrapping paper, the endless shopping, and all the other trivialities that we call Christmas and experience the season afresh with Elizabeth, Mary, and Anna. You might remember that I used to dress in costume to tell Mary's story in first person. Though it was based in scripture, part of it was my feelings as a woman and what she might have felt. Ms. Higgs takes it deeper using scripture to show the wonder of these three biblical women as they prepare the world, their families, and themselves for the Savior. With each verse of scripture, God's gift is revealed, and the remarkable journey of these women is vividly described. Before you are sucked into the Christmas vortex, refresh your spirit with this insightful read. Another book you won't want to miss this Christmas season is Max Lucado's *Because of Bethlehem*. I am sure many of you have used one of Lucado's books for a Bible study at some time—he has been a prolific author and pastor for 30 years. Having read the first quarter of the book at the time of writing this, I can tell you he has made me laugh out loud and shed some tears. The theme of this Christmas book is "God knows what it's like to be human". You can share any problem, question or even angry thought and He understands it all. The baby whose story starts in the cradle and climaxes at the cross knows you. This is a book that will cause you to think deeper and to inspire you long after the decorations are put away. With humor and insight, Lucado's book is a down-to-earth approach to Christmas. Included in the book are a devotional guide and also a guide to recommended readings if you are struggling with fear, weariness, or grief—just to name a few topics. Though I recommend this book in December, truthfully you could enjoy it any time. The library has several other new Christmas books you won't want to miss. Stop by the library and let us help you find just the right Christmas read!!

Merry Christmas,  
Donna and Pam

## Advent Studies

We have three new studies being offered for all ages during Advent and all are invited to come for fellowship and learning during this special season!

### *The Redemption of Scrooge*

Based on the Charles Dickens story, *A Christmas Carol*, this study explores the world of Ebenezer

Scrooge, Tiny Tim, and the Cratchits from a Christian faith perspective. Along the way we will meet the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come, and learn about living with and for others in a world blessed by Jesus. This study will be held in Fellowship Hall during the Sunday School hour from 9:30 – 10:30 am. The first session starts on Sunday, December 8 and will continue through Sunday, December 29. Each session will include a short video and discussion in small table groups. There is no need to register. See the Welcome Center display for more information. If you have questions contact Tina Eaton at 717-766-4611 or email her at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com).

### ***Light of the World***

Author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the story of the birth of Jesus. Join her as she traces through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi. These stories open conversations around connections of the Gospel stories to the Old Testament, the role of women in first-century Jewish culture, the importance of Mary's visitation, the star of Bethlehem and much more! This study will be held in room B006 during the Sunday School hour from 9:30 – 10:30 am. The first session starts on Sunday, December 8 and will continue through Sunday, December 29. Each session will include a short video and group discussion. There is no need to register. See the Welcome Center display for more information. If you have questions contact Tina Eaton at 717-766-4611 or email her at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com).

### ***Let Heaven and Nature Sing***

This will be a mid-day "Lunch & Learn" with Pastor John. Based on our Advent sermon series, participants will enjoy studying together, followed by a "dutch treat" lunch out at CC's Family Restaurant. Look in the December bulletins for more details.

## ***Praying Follower***



### **Moms in Prayer**

Did you know that we have several First Church women engaged in praying with a **Moms in Prayer** group? What a blessing is it to join other mothers and grandmothers in lifting our children in prayer! If you are interested in joining them, here's what you need to know:

- **Monday Night Group:** Prays for children at any age/stage of life. Meets here at First Church from 7:00 – 8:00 pm in the Prayer Room (2nd floor elevator landing). Contact Deb Noss for information.
- **Thursday Morning Group:** Prays for students at the Kindergarten Academy, Northside Elementary, Elmwood Elementary and Mechanicsburg Middle School. In-home meeting in Shiremanstown from 8:00 – 9:00 am. Contact Anna Harris for more information.
- **Tuesday Morning Group:** Prays for College/Career children. In-home meeting in Mechanicsburg begins at 8:15 am. Contact Nadine Ogden for more information.
- **Wednesday Morning Grandmothers Group:** Prays for grandchildren. In-home meeting in Enola begins at 8:45 am. Contact Nadine Ogden for more information.

All mothers and grandmothers are invited and no prayer experience is required. What is prayed in the group stays in the group, so don't worry – your prayer requests will remain private within the group.

### **A Few More Students Need Adopting!**

Going off to college is a big step and can be a little intimidating. Show your love and support by adopting a college student! When you adopt, you are promising to pray, send notes of encouragement and send small care packages throughout the year. The focus of the adoption process is to cover the student in prayer and encouragement. If you have a desire to support our students while they are away at college, please contact Lynn Rapp at [minion.youth17@gmail.com](mailto:minion.youth17@gmail.com). "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6

## Passionate Worshipper



### Worship

Sunday Morning Worship Services

8:15 am Foundation Service

10:45 am Convergent Service

Sunday School 9:30 am



**The 4th Sunday at 4:00...** an interactive and inclusive ministry for those with developmental disAbilities, their families, friends and care givers.

## Advent & Christmas Services and Event Schedule

### December 1 1st Sunday in Advent

Worship, Holy Communion 8:15 & 10:45 am

Service of Remembrance and Hope 7 pm

### December 8 2nd Sunday in Advent

Worship 8:15 am & 10:45 am

Night in Bethlehem 4:00 & 5:15 pm

### December 14

Marketplace of Miracles/Cookie Walk

10:00 am - 1:00 pm in the multipurpose room

### December 15 3rd Sunday in Advent

Worship 8:15 am & 10:45 am

Christmas Caroling 5:30 pm

### December 19 Little Friend's Nursery School Christmas Program 9:15 am

### December 22 4th Sunday in Advent

Worship 8:15 am & 10:45 am



### Christmas Eve Worship Services

**5 pm ~ Family Service ~** Designed for families of all ages, but especially sensitive to families with young children. Join Pastor Denny by the fireplace and hear the story of our Savior's birth. Service will conclude with candle lighting.

**8 pm ~ Service of Christmas Eve Simplicity ~** Designed as a quiet, prayerful service for individuals and families. Simplicity marks this service with instrumental music, Communion, Prayer Time and a brief candle lighting service.

**11 pm ~ Festival Service of Light and Wonder ~** Includes Holy Communion, lessons and carols, music by our choirs, and candle-lighting.

### Service of Remembrance and Hope

If you are grieving this holiday season....missing your loved ones, experiencing loss of any kind....please join us for a quiet Sunday evening service on December 1st at 7pm. During this time we will gather to remember and honor the memory of cherished family and friends. Contact Janice Bowen (717-766-4611 x112 or [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com)) for more information.

### Night in Bethlehem, December 8

Travel to ancient Bethlehem to experience what it was like the night Jesus was born! Visit the interactive Marketplace to experience the sights, sounds and tastes of Bethlehem on Sunday, December 8 starting at 5:15 p.m. There will be a preview for special needs guests from 4:00 to 4:45 p.m. No registration required. A Mission Meal will be provided by the Youth in Fellowship Hall. Proceeds benefit Youth Mission trips. All ages welcome, but especially designed for children and families. For more information

or if you want to volunteer to help with the event, email Dawn Fisher or Anna Harris at [kidscount@fumchurch.com](mailto:kidscount@fumchurch.com). Or, you can visit the Time To Sign up sheet, <https://www.timetosignup.com/kidscount/>. We look forward to seeing you there!

### Christmas Caroling

Calling Christmas Carolers of all ages! We invite you to meet at the 'Hardwood Café' (round table area under the balcony of the sanctuary) on Sunday, December 15th at 5:30 p.m. to join a group for sharing Christmas carols with members of our homebound community! No singing experience or talent necessary, just a desire to have fun and spread Christmas cheer! Treat yourself to cookies and hot cocoa around the Christmas tree upon your return to the church. Questions? Janice Bowen – 717-766-4611 x112 or [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com)

### New Sermon Series – “Let Heaven and Nature Sing”

Join us during Advent for a new sermon series, "Heaven and Nature Sing". This series is based on the beloved Christmas classic, "Joy to the World", which is turning 300 years old this year! Composer Isaac Watts received Divine inspiration from Psalm 98, calling us to sing a "new song" in celebration of the coming of the Lord into the world. Come to discover the depths of JOY we proclaim whenever we sing these ancient words. As we "receive our King," we find joy in the midst of suffering, the work of justice and the presence of compassion - a message the world so desperately needs.

December 1	First Sunday of Advent	"Prepare Him Room: Hopeful Joy"
December 8	Second Sunday of Advent	"Repeat the Sounding Joy: Loving Joy"
December 15	Third Sunday of Advent	"Make the Blessings Known: Unabashed Joy"
December 22	Fourth Sunday of Advent	"Make the Nations Prove: Peaceful Joy"
December 24	Christmas Eve	"The Lord Is Come: Incarnate Joy"
December 29	First Sunday after Christmas	"Wonders of His Love: Compassionate Joy"

### Poinsettia Orders

Poinsettias will be placed in the Sanctuary on December 15 and 22. You have the option of purchasing a poinsettia for **\$7.50** or giving a monetary gift in memory/honor of your loved one. Gift donations will be forwarded to the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Please complete the form indicating the number of "plants" or "gifts" and place it in the offering plate or send it to Ellen Hill in the church office by **December 8**. Plants may be taken after any Christmas Eve Service that you attend. *If you order a poinsettia, please be sure to pick it up. Plants not claimed by December 31 will be disposed of. If you are not planning on taking your poinsettia please consider a monetary gift instead.*

#### POINSETTIA OR GIFT ORDER FORM

Please indicate below, in the correct section, the number of plants and/or gifts that you are giving and who they are being given in memory/honor of.

1. Number of plants \_\_\_\_\_ **Circle whichever is appropriate:** In Memory of / In Honor of

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of Gifts \_\_\_\_\_ **Circle whichever is appropriate:** In Memory of / In Honor of

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Placed by: \_\_\_\_\_



## Acolyte Information

Did you know that acolytes have a very important job? The word acolyte comes from the Greek word *akolouthos*, meaning follower, a helper or assistant and they have been part of the church in one form or another for nearly 2,000 years. Did you ever wonder why the acolyte lights candles at the beginning of each service and carries it out at the end? “Jesus said: ‘I am the light of the world’” (John 8:12). Light in the form of a flame is carried into the church sanctuary to symbolize the entrance of Christ’s light into the place of worship. At the end of the service, the light is carried out into the world to show that Jesus Christ is for all people everywhere. Would you like to help carry on this important tradition of the church? Please contact Gavin Smith at [KarenSLP925@gmail.com](mailto:KarenSLP925@gmail.com) or 717-579-2557 for more information.

## Ring in the News

We have two dates for you to mark on your calendars this month. We will be in concert at the United Church of the Brethren in Heidlersburg on Sunday, December 15 at 6 pm, and then we return to the Fredericksen Library in Camp Hill Monday, December 16th at 7 pm. This is our 15th year to be in concert at the library where we share the “stage” with a harpist. It’s always a fun night – come early to get a seat! We love seeing people we know in the audience! Merry Christmas everyone!



**Joy.** That’s a word we’re going to be hearing, singing, and using often this Advent season. Our Advent sermon series is going to dive us right into joy, and celebrating the 300th anniversary of the beloved carol “Joy to the World”.



Recently, I’ve had folks ask me about the meaning behind the freshly-inked tattoo on my left forearm. So, for those curious, here’s the formal answer: “Res miranda” is Latin text deriving from the Christmas carol “There Is No Rose of Such Virtue”—it translates to “wonderful thing”, “marvelous thing”, “mysterious thing”, etc. The words are placed in the shape of a cross with a star of Bethlehem to its left.

And for the deeper, more simplified meaning? Joy. A reminder to myself to never lose joy in worshipping our God; to never lose that wonderment of Christ— true man, yet very God; to be joyful in my serving for His kingdom.

And as we approach another busy Advent and Christmas season, I invite you to continue to discover joy in worship as you feel called.

**Director of Worship Arts** — Sarah Pugh – [worship@fumchurch.com](mailto:worship@fumchurch.com)

**Handbell Choir** – Mondays 6:30-8p in the choir room — Kathie Bittenbender - [rbittenben@verizon.net](mailto:rbittenben@verizon.net)

**Sanctuary Choir** – Wednesdays 8-9p in the sanctuary — Sarah Pugh – [worship@fumchurch.com](mailto:worship@fumchurch.com)

**Sounds of Worship** – Thursdays, 7-8p in the choir room — Flossie Ryder - [florencewryder@yahoo.com](mailto:florencewryder@yahoo.com)

**Worship Band** – Thursdays 6:30-7:45p in the sanctuary — Allison Ometz & Trace Morgan

**Youth Band** – Sundays 5:00p in the sanctuary — Allison Ometz

**Accompanist/Organist** — Caleb Flick, Karen Philip

## Dedicated Missionary



### Monthly Mission Opportunities:

**Mission Meeting** ~ The Missions Committee invites you to join in mission work! Next Missions Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 7 at 7:00 p.m. If you are planning to go on a short-term mission trip, please feel free to complete the application for financial assistance found on our website at [fumchurch.com](http://fumchurch.com), under the Missions tab. Questions, contact Lori Hoffnagle at [outreach@fumchurch.com](mailto:outreach@fumchurch.com).

**Isaiah 61 Ministries** ~ 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, **December 18 at 6:30 p.m.** A carpool leaves from First Church at 6:00 p.m. for those who are interested. To volunteer, contact Tiffany Holland at [tholland1967@gmail.com](mailto:tholland1967@gmail.com).

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

This past month 3,665 “pennies” (\$36.65) were contributed to the Well Drilling Fund for Sierra Leone. Thank you to everyone!! Every penny helps so keep dropping your loose change into the **Change for Water** Bucket. 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. ***You can even throw in “paper” change ~ they’re the best!!***

### **Special Presentation - Cru**

All are invited to a special **Cru mission presentation** on December 1 from 9:30 - 10:30 am in the multipurpose room! Come to hear from Matt and LeeAnn Herring, Jenna Mengle and Graham Bowen regarding their overseas mission and their work to connect people to Jesus at West Chester, Eastern and Cheyney Universities. Questions? Contact Tina Eaton at 717-766-4611 or email her at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com).

### **Two OCC Mission Trips Planned!**

The Missions Team invites you to a one-day trip to the OCC (Operation Christmas Child) Processing Center in Baltimore/Washington. We will travel from the church to the processing center and be given a brief training (15 to 20 minutes) and then be assigned to a station to process shoe boxes. This year, we are going on two different days! Tuesday, **December 3** and Thursday, **December 5**. You can choose the date that works best for you. **Details:** Leave the church parking lot at 7:00 am, carpool in vans to the Processing Center, wear comfortable shoes (as we will be standing on concrete), bring a packed lunch, dinner will be on the way home. We are limiting these trips to 10 people, first come, first served. There is no cost for the trip. (Must be at least 13 years of age). **December 3, contact Sue Brady at 717-512-2980. December 5, contact David Mengle at 717-319-8582.**

### **Upcoming VIM Mission Trip**

Next VIM Trip: January 14 to 23, 2020: Costa Rica. Cost is \$1,600, type of work is construction. Contact Ron Lucas at [ronkar1976@comcast.net](mailto:ronkar1976@comcast.net).

*What is United Methodist Volunteers in Mission?* UMVIM exists to promote, encourage and enable Christians to exemplify “Christian Love in Action” through short-term mission service locally, nationally and internationally. *How long has UMVIM been in existence?* The UMVIM movement began in 1976 and is organized by jurisdiction. The General Board of Global Ministries networks with the jurisdictional UMVIM offices, which in turn, coordinate with annual conference offices. *What is the ministry of UMVIM?* UMVIM teams work together to fulfill ongoing missional needs domestically and abroad usually serving for several days to several weeks. Their work includes construction and renewing of mission facilities, teaching, witnessing, conducting medical clinics, holding Bible studies or Bible School, and serving in disaster relieve and recovery efforts around the world. For more details: visit the website at [susmb.org](http://susmb.org), **Contact Michelle Schwartzman, Susquehanna Conference Director of Volunteers in Mission, [vim@susumc.org](mailto:vim@susumc.org) 717-766-7441 ext. 3105.**

### **From the Sierra Leone Team**

We have updated our Sierra Leone mission table in the tower hallway and invite you to come to see what is new. We are currently gathering painting supplies to fill a large suitcase to take over with us in March 2020. We are looking forward to painting alongside our brothers and sisters in Taiama to make their church beautiful once again. Not only does this paint make it look nice, but the protection of the paint also helps protect it from their 6 months of rain during their “winter” season. Also, we still have a few “Together in Taiama 2020” t-shirts left. The sign up form is in the Welcome Desk binder, or ask a team member for one.

## Relationship Builder



### Hospitality Tip

Let's let our hospitality "light" shine brightly in December! Christmas events and celebrations bring many more visitors through our doors ~ Service of Remembrance and Hope, Night in Bethlehem, Marketplace of Miracles, Christmas Eve ~ just to name a few. Remember to wear your name tags (shout out to those who do so regularly!), as this is very helpful to our visitors! The Hospitality Committee is making a special request ..... if parking in the Keller Street side of the parking lot, PLEASE park directly next to the light poles, rather than leave those spots open. This will allow visitors to have access to parking spots which are easier to negotiate in that lot (a "behind the scenes" type of hospitality)!

### Senior Fellowship

All senior members are invited to enjoy a casual time of fellowship and light refreshments in the 'Hardwood Café' just beyond the church library on Tuesday, December 17th from 1-3 p.m. Students from Northern Middle School's 'Giving Choir' will join us for a festive celebration of music and Christmas carols! Please contact Janice Bowen (717-766-4611 x112 or [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com)) for more information.

### Card Carousel

As we move into the late fall and Advent seasons, let's continue to focus on our value to be relationship builders. How, you ask? Here's one simple step you can take... Is there someone you know in our church family that you have been praying for? Is there someone who is sick, recovering after a stay in the hospital or is just missing from worship on Sunday mornings? Send them a card! Just visit our card carousel (graciously donated to us from ASMA Gifts), pick out a card and mail it off with your caring thoughts! You can find the card carousel at the Welcome Center display... check it out today!

### BEYOND Suffering

**BEYOND Suffering**, a groundbreaking course created to transform the way we view God's plan for disability and suffering, will be held at First Church beginning the week of January 13. This 8-week course is designed to fully equip participants for ministry with the disability community, and has been designed by the Christian Institute on Disability and Join & Friends. Lisa Wickenheiser, M.Ed., founder of Full House Ministry, will be our teacher, and will coordinate a trip to the "Finding the Forgotten" exhibit in Mountville, PA as a part of this course. Cost is just \$35. Please keep your eye out for more details, and contact Tina Eaton at 717-766-4611 or email her at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com) if you have questions or would like to participate in this study.

### Great Night Out

Mark your calendars... **Mark Cable** is returning to First Church for a Great Night Out on Friday evening, March 13, 2020! Fellowship Hall will be transformed into a café for the evening, and ALL adults (not just couples) are invited to come for 2 hours of fun as we relax and enjoy a time of fellowship filled with great stories and songs (and of course... those tasty desserts!) Keep your eye out for more details as the time gets closer.

### Veterans Honor Wall

First Church needs your help in honoring our Veterans! We are looking for information to complete our First Church Honor Wall (located at the Frederick Street entrance). During the next few months, we are asking for all past and present Veterans to visit the display outside the multipurpose room and enter the following information in our ledger: Name, Dates of Service, and Branch of Military. Feel free to complete the information for a family member. Thank you for helping us to give our Veterans the honor they so deserve! If you have questions or have a Veteran picture to share, please contact Janice Bowen at [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4166, ext. 112.

### New supportive group forming in 2020!

If you struggle with ongoing health challenges, we invite you to join us for a spiritually-grounded monthly gathering beginning Monday, January 13th. This early evening group will focus on sharing and encouraging one another to live with greater hope and peace while navigating health issues. (Terry



Ketrow and Janice Bowen, Co-facilitators) For more information, please contact Janice at 717-766-4611 x 112 or WeCare@fumchurch.com

## Clearance Updates Required

As per state law and our churches Safe Sanctuary requirements, clearances for those 18 years of age and older who serve alongside children and youth MUST be updated every 5 years. Because a bulk of First Church partners in ministry (those serving in any capacity within the children and youth departments) updated their clearances at the same time, most are approaching their 5 year renewal with the start of 2020. Therefore, it is very likely your clearances need to be updated. This includes Child Abuse Clearance, PA Police Background Check, FBI fingerprinting or notarized affidavit, and your Safe Sanctuary training. To begin the process please verify with Dawn Fisher or Anna Harris as to when your 5 year renewal must be completed. On January 12 and 19 after services and during the Sunday school hour there will be opportunities to get your affidavit notarized. Notaries will be available for those that qualify for a signed affidavit instead of FBI fingerprinting. (Affidavit are available for only those who are non-paid staff and who have lived consecutively in the state of Pennsylvania for at least 10 years. Out of state college is not an exception). We will provide the notary form, just come with a valid form of ID to the main lobby on either January 12 or 19. Watch your email for an invitation to participate in a Safe Sanctuary training. Training has moved to an online platform and links are issued per person (please do not share the link for the training). Complete the remaining clearances on-line by following the instructions located under the "Safe Sanctuary" tab of the Children's Ministry page at fumchurch.com

**Link:** <https://fumchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/SafeSanctuaries2019.pdf>



## Generous Giver

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Through October 31, 2019 83 % of year

General Fund 2019 budget	\$ 970,000	Please pray for the mission of our church to open doors for our community, and to welcome newcomers to the Love of Christ through the ministry of First Church. Your prayers and gifts are needed and appreciated.
Actual income	\$ 769,444	
Projected income	\$ 808,333	
Actual expenses	\$ 739,001	

### The Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund is permanent. All gifts remain in the principal of the fund in perpetuity. The principal is held in a responsible investment, and the earnings are harvested each year to support the mission of the church in spreading the Good News proclaimed by Jesus Christ. Creative giving, giving from one's accumulated resources provides a unique opportunity to spiritually mature through our financial generosity in providing the needed resources for the present and future ministries of the church.

How can I support the Endowment Fund? The first thing we must do is pray - a prayer of thanksgiving, and for the faithful use of all God has provided.

Once you are ready to share of your resources, there are many ways to give:

- Direct contributions
- Life insurance policy
- Tangible assets/property
- Bequest in a will
- Gift annuities
- Gifts in memory/honor of loved ones
- Stocks and bonds

(Specific dollar amounts, a property, a percentage, residue/remaining amount after family considerations, and gifting of equities/stocks and bonds. These can be changed at any time.) Who can help me in planning a gift to the Endowment Fund? Contributions can be made to the Endowment Fund at any time.

For more information about the Endowment Fund, talk to the pastors of First Church (717-766-4611) or Bob Wertz, Sr, Endowment Committee Chair (717-448-0752) at any time. Once you are ready to initiate a gift, you may want to seek professional advice from an accountant, attorney, bank representative or financial advisor to create the most beneficial giving strategy for you. *Thank you for considering a gift to the Endowment Fund, and for your continued and faithful prayers.*

### **Women's Retreat and the SCRIP Program**

Need a gift idea? Think of the SCRIP gift card program and benefit the Women's Retreat! For the months of December and January, proceeds from specific gift card purchases will benefit the 2020 Women's Retreat. The gift cards include: Applebee's, Carrabba's/Outback Steakhouse, Cracker Barrel, Dunkin Donuts, Olive Garden/Red Lobster/Longhorn Steakhouse, Panera Bread, Red Robin, Subway, Texas Roadhouse, and TGI Friday's. The SCRIP box and order forms are located near the coffee prep area (Main entrance hallway, turn right, immediate left on the wall, near the stairwell). Any questions, contact Patti Herring at familyzeke@verizon.net. Thanks for supporting the Women's Retreat!

### **Save the Date**

Mark your calendar for January 18, for the second annual Feminine Hygiene Sewing date. More information in the January newsletter, but contact Donna Nichols at djnichols43@hotmail.com, if you need more information sooner.

### **Neighborhood Center Tree**

Just a reminder that gifts for the Neighborhood Center are due by December 8th. There is a bin for unwrapped gifts beside the tree in the first floor education wing.

### **New Hope Ministries Christmas Blessings Express**

It is hard to believe that it is the time of the year when we are starting to plan for the upcoming holiday season. The basic "life needs" provided to the guests of New Hope Ministries depend on the support of friends like you here at First Church. Last year was the eighth "Christmas Blessings Express" where guests were able to shop for the whole family. You cannot imagine the difference you have made in the families lives by your willingness to help make their Christmas a special one, full of wonderful memories. You will now find a small Christmas tree in the Narthex with ornaments on it...pick an ornament, and return the gift to the box next to the tree. The children, youth and adults who are guests at New Hope Ministries will be so appreciative. If you have any questions, please contact Debbie or Don Karns at 717-697-1253.

### **Day of Pampering**

Day of Pampering is scheduled for Saturday, February 29, 2020 here at First Church. That answers the what, when and where. Why do we do Day of Pampering? The answer is simple. We LOVE our Lord. "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matt. 25:40). God has led us to share His love with a group of women caregivers who give their love every single day in ways we may not understand. Being a caregiver is a never-ending task. Day of Pampering provides a respite time for these women to step away, renew their spirits, and make new connections. How can you help? Please add Day of Pampering to your prayer list. Pray for the planning and preparations. Pray that community providers and volunteers will commit their time and talents to help with this special day. Pray for the women who will attend this event. How can you be involved? Consider if you can be the hands of Jesus delivering love to this special group of women. We need help in many areas including moving furniture, decorating, packing gift bags, painting nails, helping with hand waxing, and so much more. What can you do right now? Share the name and email address of any woman you know that is the caregiver for a loved one. Guests of Day of Pampering are invited and must be confirmed for attendance. We would love to add new names to our list. Please contact Karin McHale, 717-379-8329 or karinmch@comcast.net, to sign up, ask questions, share a provider name or share a guest name.

# Women's Ministry

Any and all women are invited to participate in upcoming events and activities. This page gives you an overview of all the ways to connect. More information can be conveniently found in other parts of the newsletter or feel free to contact the person involved with the event. The Women's Ministry Facebook page has been created! Look for it on our FB page titled "First Church Women's Ministry" and feel free to join!

## United Methodist Women

### DEBORAH CIRCLE

Sandy Walton ~ swalton54@comcast.net  
Meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month

### MARTHA CIRCLE

Marley Ann Schmick ~ marleyannrichard@gmail.com  
Meets the 1st Tuesday of the month

### RUTH CIRCLE

Joan Mains ~ mains.joan@yahoo.com  
Meets the 1st Wednesday of the month at Hoss's in Mechanicsburg

### COVERED IN LOVE

Sandy Bennetch ~ dsebennetch@comcast.net  
Meets Wednesday mornings, 9:30 to 11:30 in Fellowship Hall

### SQUARES AND PRAYERS

Nancy Eddy ~ naeddy3@aol.com  
Meets Mondays, 9-11 am in Fellowship Hall

### KNIT@NITE ~ ALL LEVELS OF KNITTERS WELCOME

Mary Helm ~ mthelm4@yahoo.com  
Meets the 3rd Thursday at 6:30 pm in the Tower Meeting Room

## Other Opportunities to Connect

### DAY OF PAMPERING

**February 29, 2020**

Karin McHale ~ karinmch@comcast.net

### LADIES' SEPTEMBER TEA

Janice Bowen ~ wecare@fumchurch.com

### MOMS IN PRAYER

Deb Noss ~ sdppp@msn.com  
Mondays at 7:00 pm in the Prayer Room

### MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)

**December 13 (9:15am)**

Tina Eaton ~ adultministry@fumchurch.com

### WOMEN'S RETREAT

**February 7 to 9, 2020:** Mt. Asbury Retreat Center  
Patti Herring ~ familyzeke@verizon.net

### ZUMBA Gold (low impact dance/aerobic exercise)

Multipurpose Room

Tuesday at 1:00p.m. ~

Mary Stine: freddlz@comcast.net

Thursday at 1:00 p.m. ~

Lisa Lynch: lisaloveszumba@gmail.com

Pay as you go!

## Upcoming Events:

**December 14:** Marketplace of Miracles and Cookie Walk, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. **Start thinking of the type of cookies you want to donate to the Cookie Walk!**

The **Annual Marketplace of Miracles and Cookie Walk** is Saturday, December 14 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We are excited that Women at Risk, Change Purse, Ten Thousand Villages, She's Somebody's Daughter and Trades of Hope will be joining us this year. These organizations raise awareness and support victims of human trafficking and promote Fair Trade. Come shop for a cause! The extremely popular **Cookie Walk** promises a variety of homemade cookies, just in time for Christmas! Shoppers can choose from over 30 different types of cookies, including peanut and gluten free. Boxes will be provided. All proceeds benefit youth mission trips. Come early for the best selection!

**Registration is now open for our annual Women's Retreat** to be held February 7 to 9, 2020 at Mt. Asbury Retreat Center, Newville. This year's theme is Becoming a Woman of Excellence which will be led by church members. All women are invited for a time of fellowship, faith and fun, set in a beautiful retreat center with hotel-like accommodations. The registration form can be found in the newsletter, at the Display Table outside the multipurpose room, at the Women's Display Window and on the church website. Scholarships are available upon request. For more information, contact Patti Herring at 717-796-9721 or familyzeke@verizon.net



# Becoming a Woman of Excellence

2020 Women's Retreat

Feb. 7 to 9, 2020

Mt. Asbury Retreat Center, Newville

*Join us for a weekend filled with fellowship, fun, food and faith!  
Program starts on Friday evening and concludes on Sunday before  
noon. Hotel-like accommodations and 4 meals included!*

Please make checks payable to **FUMC** with 'women's retreat' in the memo section. Registrations may be mailed to Patti Herring at 613 Lavina Drive, Mechanicsburg 17055 or can be placed in the SCRIP Box (near coffee prep area). Please do not place checks in her mailbox. Questions, contact Patti Herring at 717-795-9721 or email at familyzeke@verizon.net. Details will be sent in an email closer to the retreat date.



**Return this portion with your payment please.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies or diet restrictions \_\_\_\_\_

Medications \_\_\_\_\_

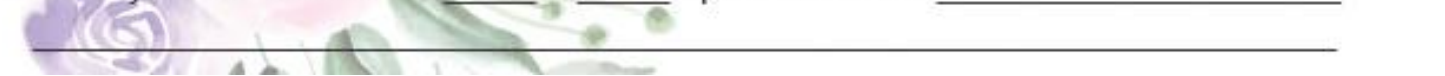
Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Early Bird Registration by 12/31/2019 is \$135.** After that date, fee will be \$140. Fees include 2 night stay (3 to a room) and 4 meals. Handicapped accessible rooms. **All registrations due by 1/19/2020.** *Financial assistance available upon request.*

\_\_\_\_\_ \$135 Early Bird payment enclosed (due by 12/31/19)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$140 Payment enclosed (if paying after 12/31/19)

Is this your first retreat? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Special Concerns \_\_\_\_\_

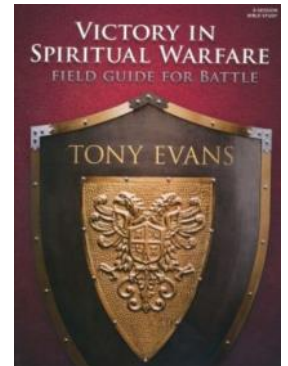




# MEN'S MINISTRY

## Men's Small Group Video Series

We are now watching and discussing "Victory in Spiritual Warfare" by Dr. Tony Evans. The viewing and meetings are at the Eaton home on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. December dates are 12/4 and 12/18, from 8-9:30pm. Contact Barry Eaton (theeaton5@verizon.net) or John Bowen (bowenhome720@gmail.com) if you have questions or would like more information.



## Men's Retreat

Think back on your life up to this point and remember how many men have played a role in teaching you something that has helped you become better at something. If you are as fortunate as we have been, there were many names you can recall. And how about those you have mentored along the way and taught something they appreciated, no matter how trivial or significant? The theme for this year's men's retreat will focus on the role each of us plays as leaders even when we don't consider ourselves to be one. With the guidance of Kevin Witt, presently the Director of Camp/Retreat and Discipleship Ministries for the Susquehanna Conference Camp Director, we will discover how we are already influencing those around us and how we can develop those skills by seeking others who may be just ahead of us on the journey. We are very pleased to offer this timely subject since it fits with whatever stage of life you may find yourself in this year. Join us at Wesley Forest the weekend of March 6-8, 2020 to enjoy good fellowship, food, and programming that will greatly enhance your overall social, spiritual, and emotional health. The small investment of registration fee will come back to you in great returns that will continue to serve you the rest of your days. If you have plans that make it difficult to join us for the entire weekend, don't let that deter you from coming - this year we are offering a Saturday-only option for a reduced rate. Look for information outside the multipurpose room during the month of December for early bird rates. Contact Barry Eaton or John Bowen (email addresses listed under the video announcement above) with any questions or a desire to be a part of this annual tradition.



## Men's Breakfast

An open invitation is extended to any and all men who want to gather for good food and light-hearted fellowship on the first Saturday morning of each month. Please come join us at Brother's Restaurant, located at 705 Gettysburg Pike in Mechanicsburg. Our next gathering will be on **Saturday, December 7 at 7:30 am.** We usually sit over to the right and in the back. Hope to see you there!

## Tool Pool

A directory for any hand or power tools that you may need to borrow for one-time use. Contact Don Karns at dekarms0107@gmail.com.



## Church News and Notes

### Love & sympathy...

to the Peck family in the death of Gladys Peck, on November 3rd.

to the Eakin family in the death of Jeanne Eakin-Miller's brother, Jim Eakin, on November 5th.

### Special Thanks...

*The handbell choirs thank you for your pie orders. We hope they help(ed) with your desserts over the holidays.*

*Dear pastors, staff and members of FUMC - My thanks for the prayers, visits, cards, meals and good wishes during and following my recent back surgery. Also for the beautiful flowers from the altar that were delivered to me. ~ Sincerely, Carol Ann Moomaw*

*We would like to thank the church for their cards, calls, visits, and delicious dinners. We greatly appreciated everything! God Bless! ~ Kay and Marlin Simmons*

*Don and I want to thank our friends here at First Church for the outpouring of love and sympathy upon the passing of my dear mother Barbara Evans. Thank you again. ~ Don and Debbie Karns*

*The Sierra Leone Mission Team would like to say a big THANK YOU to all the people that donated to our Baked Goods Offering in October as well as your purchases of Scrips to benefit our trip. You went above and beyond, as always, and for that we humbly thank you.*

### Special Birthdays

Joyce Woods.....December 1

Jo Nye.....December 13

Helen Ritter.....December 13

Dolores Shell.....December 13

Mary Buechel.....December 17

Darlis Aumiller.....December 21

Joan Mains.....December 23

Elaine O'Hara .....December 26

Sandy Coover.....December 28

Pat Hutter.....January 3

Richard Reed.....January 15

Leta Rohlmeier.....January 23

Dorothy Souder.....January 27

Margaret Baker.....January 30

### Special Anniversaries

- ♥ Roy & Ginnie Miller married 52 years on December 9
- ♥ Joe & Carol Moomaw married 54 years on December 24



*FIRST NEWS FIRST*

Editor: Ellen Hill

The **deadline** for submitting articles  
for the **January 2020** issue is  
**December 15**

**Early submissions always  
appreciated!**