



# First News First

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

## “It Wouldn’t Be Christmas Without...”

How would you complete that sentence?

For me, there are several things that come to mind....

*It wouldn't be Christmas for me without the decorations.* Every year we pull out boxes from the closet and decorate our home. There's one box that's filled with ornaments that we've collected over the years. Some of them are gifts from family members and friends. Others we've gotten from places we've visited. A few of the most precious ornaments are ones our daughters made by hand when they were very small. Each decoration has special memories attached to it. Decorating is a special part of this season.

*It wouldn't be Christmas for me without certain kinds of Christmas food.* One of our family traditions is getting together and bake cookies. We have special cookies that we make every year. And then, our youth have a Christmas cookie walk and we get to sample a couple of boxes of cookies made by many of you in our church family. Then of course, there are other special foods that, for me, it just wouldn't be Christmas without.

*It wouldn't be Christmas for me without the Christmas worship services.* I have to confess that last year, when COVID-19 cases were spiking and we had to make the difficult decision to go on-line with our services, I wasn't sure Christmas would feel quite the same. But thanks to the creative efforts of our gifted worship teams, we still had special worship experiences online. This year, I'm excited we can celebrate Advent and Christmas in person as well as online. It's not Christmas for me until we get to Christmas Eve and we sing, “Silent Night,” and we see the sanctuary all aglow in candlelight. This is my seventh year celebrating Christmas Eve with you, and I never get tired of it!

I'm sure there are many other things you could add. It wouldn't be Christmas without certain kinds of things in our lives. It's what makes Christmas so special. Of course, it wouldn't be Christmas without the Christmas story. The Christmas story is the story of Mary and Joseph and the baby born in a manger. It's also the story of others whose lives were powerfully touched by the Holy Spirit at the Savior's birth. Though it's the old, old story, we need to hear it in fresh and new ways.

As I prepare to celebrate Christmas this year, I've been praying a prayer from a favorite Christmas carol. I hope you will pray it with me:

*O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray.  
Cast out our sin and enter in,  
Be born in us today.*

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

My hope and prayer, as we celebrate the holy Child of Bethlehem, is that we won't just be remembering an event that happened 2000 years ago, but that he'll be born in us today.

May the peace of Christ dwell in your heart!

Pastor Denny

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## Adult Discipleship

No matter whether you are just beginning to explore faith, growing as a disciple or becoming a fully devoted follower, there is always something new to learn on our journey with Jesus. 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](http://fumchurch.com).
- **First Step Gathering and Next Step New Member Class:** Are you interested in taking a first step toward a deeper relationship with Jesus and with others at First Church? Or maybe you are ready to take your next faithful step by exploring church membership? If the answer to either of these questions is “yes”, contact Tina Eaton at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com). She will add your name to the list to receive information about our upcoming First Step Gathering or Next Step New Member Class, which will be held again in the late winter. Meanwhile, enjoy worship, Bible reading, connecting with others and check out a Sunday morning enrichment class or Bible study that suits your schedule and interests!
- **Steps Beyond:** As you learn and grow, consider these next steps on your path to becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus... new participants are encouraged to join at any time!
  - o **Sunday School Enrichment** — If you are looking to add a time to learn, grow and enjoy fellowship with others to your Sunday morning routine either before or after worship, here is a list of opportunities for all ages. All Sunday school enrichment groups meet at 9:45 a.m.
    - ◆ **Faith in Everyday Life**  
**Target:** 30-50something  
**Location:** Room 207  
**Contact:** Jenell Paris at [jparis@messiah.edu](mailto:jparis@messiah.edu)  
 This small group enjoys being out in our community, and focuses on fellowship and friendship/mutual support. Class members share in leading reflections and discussions based on Scripture.
    - ◆ **Growing in Christ**  
**Target:** Adults all ages/stages of faith  
**Location:** Hybrid Class, meets on Zoom and in-person in room 105  
**Contact:** Tina Eaton at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com)  
 Currently studying the Gospel of Mark through December 19, then will resume on January 9 with a Bible study written by pastor Timothy Keller entitled *Gospel in Life*. Come to explore how living the Gospel in everyday life changes your heart and changes your community.
    - ◆ **Christian Fellowship**  
**Target:** Adults all ages/stages of faith  
**Location:** Room B003  
**Contact:** Wayde Leister at [waydeleister@outlook.com](mailto:waydeleister@outlook.com)  
 A friendly, caring group, eager to apply God’s Word to life’s challenges. Enjoys short-term Bible studies that challenge and inspire.
    - ◆ **Faithful Families**  
**Target:** Parents  
**Location:** Room B005  
**Contact:** Bob and Tracy Wertz at [wertzfive@gmail.com](mailto:wertzfive@gmail.com)  
 An active group of parents with older school-aged and young adult children who study Scripture, encourage one another, and celebrate life together in and out of the classroom.

◆ **Helping Hands**

**Target:** Primarily 60+

**Location:** Room B004

**Contact:** Bob Wertz, Sr. at [robert\\_wertz@plantsitelogistics.com](mailto:robert_wertz@plantsitelogistics.com)

A group of active seniors who focus on studies which provide encouragement and instruction on faithful living, and who enjoy fellowship activities together outside of class.

◆ **Guyer Class**

**Target:** Primarily 70+

**Location:** Room 123

**Contact:** Tina Eaton at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com)

This lecture-based class, taught by a variety of pastors and church leaders, is comprised of a group of elders in the church who use the United Methodist quarterly adult Bible lessons.

○ **Mid-Week ReFuel** — Current mid-week learning and fellowship opportunities for adults include:

- ◆ **MOPS** – Connects moms with young children to a community of women who meet to laugh, support and embrace the journey together. Meets once a month from 6:00 to 8:15 p.m. on Wednesday evenings at the church. Meetings begin with fellowship over dinner, followed by a speaker/discussion time and end with a devotion/prayer. The next MOPS meeting will be on December 15. Additional outings with kids are also scheduled all through the year! Contact Tina Eaton at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com) for more details and to register today!
- ◆ **Bible Studies** — New opportunities for Bible study will begin both in January and at the start of Lent in March. Keep an eye out for more details in weekly bulletins and the January newsletter.

## From the Library

I don't know about you, but on this 65<sup>o</sup> day in November I am not thinking about Christmas! But of course, with the mail the way it is, I should probably send out my Christmas cards this week. With the uncertainty at the grocery store over prices and supply, I should probably bake my cookies this week. And with the uncertainty of the supply of certain gifts and the debate whether the mailman can bring it on time, I should probably shop! And I should get this newsletter written, because I am uncertain if I will have time to write it later between all my other tasks. BUT with all the uncertainty in the world, I know for sure Christmas will come and the message of Christ's birth and his life of love will be the same as it has been for thousands of years. And you can be sure of one more tiny little thing, you can get some really good Christian books from our library this month and every month. Let me tell you about a few new ones.

Melody Carlson always write a Christmas novella and this year it has arrived like clockwork once again. **Christmas in the Alps** is set in present-day France. Simone Winthrop discovers a tantalizing letter from her great-grandmother that suggests Simone is an heir to a family treasure. No mention of what the treasure is or where it might be, Simone still jets off to France to see if there is a treasure. On that long flight she meets the charming Kyle Larsson who is on his way to become an apprentice clockmaker. I know you will be as surprised as I was to discover that Simone's family owns a clock factory, where of course, the two meet once again. Enjoy this sweet romance while dreaming of the French Alps. It will be a quick read between batches of cookies!

While usually December's newsletter is as light and frothy as your hot chocolate, I can't stop myself from mentioning that this week I received four mystery books that I know you will want to read even if you must put off shopping or letter writing. I don't have room to review each of them so I will only mention two by a new author to our library, Kathy Harris. **Deadly Commitment** and **Deadly Connection** are currently on the shelf and ready for you. *The Deadly Secrets series* is set in Nashville, and it is filled not only with southern charm, but a lot of big city twists. Danielle Kemp has the feeling that someone is watching her. Could the homeless man outside her building be stalking her? Then she discovers some disturbing facts about her fiancé that seem more threatening than being stalked. Switch to black coffee so you finish this all-in-one evening. In **Deadly Connections**, Hannah Cassidy fends off a would-be abductor, only to see him grab

another woman in the same parking lot. Fortunately, TBI Special Agent Jake Matheson is just parking in the lot when he hears screaming. Together the two of them try to figure out the connection between Cassidy and her abductor before he finds her again. Reviews have been good for this series, and it mentions that the heroines are feisty gals who also have a sense of humor. I hope you enjoy this new author.

Stop by the library before early service or during the Sunday School hour to check out our many Christmas books or the latest in Christian fiction. One of our dedicated volunteers will help you find just the right book!

Merry Christmas,  
~ Pam and Donna

## Praying Follower



### Joy to the World- Daily Readings for Advent

As you decorate, wrap gifts and prepare for Christmas celebrations, don't forget to take time during Advent to *prepare your heart* through reading scripture and reflecting in prayer! Experience joy in your spiritual journey as you focus on the Word to sweeten your time with God this December, keeping candy and gifts in their proper place and adoring Jesus above all!

You can simply use the scriptures below in your daily personal reflection and prayer time, but we encourage you to enrich the experience by reading the devotional book that goes with this reading plan! Pick up your free copy (written by John Piper, pastor, founder and teacher of [DesiringGod.org](http://DesiringGod.org) and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary) at one of our welcome stations as you come in to worship on Sunday. If you are not worshiping with us in-person, simply contact Tina Eaton at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com) to receive a copy of this very special book!

In addition, you are invited to follow us on Instagram (@fumchurch) for daily scripture reminders and personal reflections recorded by the staff and other church leaders. Find all our Advent events and activities at <https://fumchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/MostWonderfulTime2021.pdf>.

December 1	Luke 1:16-17	Prepare the Way
December 2	Luke 1:46-55	Mary's Magnificent God
December 3	Luke 1:68-71	The Long-Awaited Visitation
December 4	Luke 2:1-5	For God's Little People
December 5	Luke 2:6-7	No Detour from Calvary
December 6	Luke 2:12-14	Peace to Those with Whom He's Pleased
December 7	Matthew 2:1-2	Messiah for the Magi
December 8	Matthew 2:2	Bethlehem's Supernatural Star
December 9	Matthew 2:3	Two Kinds of Opposition to Jesus
December 10	Matthew 2:10-11	Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh
December 11	Hebrews 2:14-15	Why Jesus Came
December 12	Hebrews 8:1-2	Replacing the Shadows
December 13	Hebrews 8:1-2	The Final Reality is Here
December 14	Hebrews 8:6	Making it Real for His People
December 15	John 10:10	Life and Death at Christmas
December 16	Philippians 2:9-11	God's Most Successful Setback
December 17	Jeremiah 31:31	The Greatest Salvation Imaginable
December 18	John 17:18	The Christmas Model for Missions

December 19	Hebrews 2:14-15	Christmas is for Freedom
December 20	1 John 3:8	Christmas Solidarity
December 21	John 18:37	The Birth of the Ancient of Days
December 22	John 20:30-31	That You May Believe
December 23	Romans 5:10-11	God's Indescribable Gift
December 24	1 John 3:7-8	The Son of God Appeared
December 25	1 John 3:7-8	Three Christmas Presents

### 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.

## Passionate Worshipper



### Advent-Christmas Sermon Series — “It Wouldn’t Be Christmas Without...”

We hope that you will join us each Sunday morning for worship! Our Foundation Service begins at 8:30 a.m. and our Gathering service begins at 11:00 a.m.

- **November 28:** “It Wouldn’t Be Christmas Without... Family” (Matthew 1:2-3a, 12:46-50); *Holy Communion*
- **December 5:** “It Wouldn’t Be Christmas Without...Hope” (Luke 1:5-25)
- **December 12:** “It Wouldn’t Be Christmas Without... Joseph” (Matthew 1:18-25)
- **December 19:** “It Wouldn’t Be Christmas Without...A Miracle” (Luke 1:26-38)
- **December 24:** Christmas Eve
  - **5:00 p.m.:** Family Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
  - **10:00 p.m.:** Traditional Candlelight Service with Holy Communion
- **December 26:** “It Wouldn’t Be Christmas Without...The Mess” (Matthew 2:1-13)



### Service of Remembrance and Hope – Sunday, December 5 at 4:00 pm

If you are grieving this holiday season... missing your loved ones, experiencing loss and isolation... please join us for worship and reflection to remember and honor the memory of cherished family and friends at our Service of Remembrance and Hope. For those desiring in-person worship, we will gather in the church sanctuary on December 5 at 4:00 p.m. The service will be recorded and available afterward for viewing from home. Contact Janice Bowen at [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4611 x112 for more information.

### Spotify Playlist

On the first Wednesday of each month, we 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>



### **First Church Accepting Applications for Director of Children and Family Ministry**

First United Methodist Church, Mechanicsburg is seeking a full-time Director of Children and Family Ministry. This person will be responsible for the overall vision and implementation of the faith development of children (birth through 5<sup>th</sup> grade), in partnership with their families. Education related to children and/or family ministry, or applicable experience is required. To view the full job description, visit the church website at [fumchurch.com](http://fumchurch.com) or <https://fumchurch.com/director-of-children-and-family-ministry/>. Please submit resumes to [office@fumchurch.com](mailto:office@fumchurch.com) or to Ellen Hill, Office Manager, at 135 W. Simpson Street, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055.

### **Isaiah 61 Returns 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, December 15 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 at [tholland1967@gmail.com](mailto:tholland1967@gmail.com).

### **New Digs Ministry**

Most of you know about Mission Central but are you aware of New Digs Ministry located within the Mission Central warehouse? New Digs accepts donations of gently used furniture and household items. New Digs is run by volunteers and is a non profit organization that helps people in need to furnish a home. There is always a need for household items (or cash), but during Covid the warehouse was shut down at times and now the shelves are a bit bare. Starting over is never easy but New Digs can help in many ways. New Digs hours are: Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 12noon and the first and third Saturday of each month 9 a.m. to 12noon. You can find more information at <https://newdigsministry.org/>.

### **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 October totaled \$19.25. 100% of your donations will be used to provide training and dig wells for schools and communities in need.

### **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.

### **Christmas Caroling 2021**

By definition, caroling means "to sing in a joyful manner!" Join us for Christmas festivity and outdoor worship with joyful carol singing in the First Church parking lot on Sunday, December 12 at 4:00 p.m! (In the event of poor weather, we will gather in the sanctuary.)

**Interested in more Christmas caroling?** If your family or small group is interested in 'front door' Christmas caroling to some of our members at home, we will have suggested lists of caroling routes and music sheets available in the multi-purpose room for pick-up after the outdoor Christmas caroling gathering on December 12! You are encouraged to take your list and go on the 12th following the outdoor carol-sing,

or find another day/time that suits your group! For additional information, please contact Janice Bowen at [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4611 x112.

### Send Christmas Greetings!

We encourage you to reach out to one another this holiday season by sending Christmas card greetings! Please help yourself to a supply of Christmas cards found at the *Sharing Table* by the church mailboxes. A suggested list of church members at home who may appreciate receiving cards is also available at the *Sharing Table*.

## Relationship Builder



### Extravagant Hospitality

Nametags are back! What better way to show hospitality to others than to wear our nametags at church? Few people know everyone in the church and many of us likely have trouble remembering names. Nametags allow us to fellowship more personally with others by calling them by name. Nametags invite conversation! Nametags save embarrassment ~ haven't most of us called someone by the wrong name, only to realize it later? Wearing our nametags makes guests feel more comfortable, as guests should never be the ones who have to ask our names. Asking a guest their name conveys to them that we want to know them! Wearing our nametags ~ a seemingly SMALL gesture ~ is actually a HUGE way to promote fellowship with one another and to welcome guests. Please **make every effort to wear your nametag at church**. If you do not have one or have misplaced yours, please contact Tina Eaton at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com) and she will provide one for you!

### Trinity's Closet on Main, December 11

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, **December 11**. 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](mailto:trinityburgoutreach@gmail.com).

### Widows/Widowers Fellowship

The widows/widowers fellowship will dine at Leeds on Tuesday, December 14 at 11:30 a.m. If you plan on attending and/or would like to carpool (leaving the church no later than 11:00 a.m. that day), please contact Bonnie Guyer at 717-766-0145.

### It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

Mt. Asbury is excited to announce the Second Annual Drive-Thru Christmas Light Show! Experience the story of the Birth of Jesus in a unique way! Bring your family, youth group, friends, and neighbors to enjoy thousands of lights as you drive  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile through the main site and forest of Mount Asbury Retreat Center. See the angels as they talk to Mary, Joseph and Shepherds. Follow the Star to the Manger. No registration necessary. The event starts Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, November 26 to December 19 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. They are asking for a \$10 per car donation. Follow the Facebook page for event news and updates here: <https://www.facebook.com/MountAsburyChristmasLightShow>. This is a great family activity, just load everyone up in the car and bring a little extra cash for hot chocolate and cookies that will be available at the entrance!

Mt. Asbury is looking for **volunteers** to help make this an incredible experience! See the Time to Sign Up with open dates and more information <https://www.timetosignup.com/kidscount/sheet/1319971/>. Patti Herring is on the planning committee this year and would love to see groups from First Church show their support!

### The River Journey Women’s Retreat, February 5, 2022

The women's ministry team is excited to offer this One-Day Women's Retreat at Mt. Asbury Retreat Center, 1310 Centerville Road, Newville on Saturday, February 5, 2022. The River Journey retreat will be based on the book by local authors, Tara Hartley and Robin Holman Loy. We are delighted to have both of them leading this retreat! Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. with the first session starting at 9:00 a.m. There will be time for learning, prayer, worship and fellowship as we enjoy both lunch and dinner together. See the registration form in this newsletter or you can sign up through the Google form [here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeQhNZyoMDIAtQwd-LDj5O4cTjY-jqY2C3BsuRv1TpDb5ezEA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeQhNZyoMDIAtQwd-LDj5O4cTjY-jqY2C3BsuRv1TpDb5ezEA/viewform). Deadline to register is January 22, 2022.

*The River Journey 'Navigating the Way with Jesus'* book can be purchased before the retreat. Contact Tina Eaton at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com) to order it at a discount! Any and all women are invited, you don't need to be a member of First Church to attend. Any questions, contact Patti Herring at [familyzeke@verizon.net](mailto:familyzeke@verizon.net). We look forward to taking this journey together!

*Generous Giver*



### FINANCIAL REPORT

Through October 31, 2021 — 83% of year

General Fund — October giving:

Actual giving in the month of October	\$75,046
Average month per 2021 budget	\$75,416

General Fund — Year-to-date

2021 budget	\$ 905,000	
Expected income	\$ 754,166	(83% of budget)
Actual giving	\$ 781,930	(86% of budget)
Actual expenses	\$ 727,672	(70% of budget)

Our year-to-date financial position continues to be blessed by the faithfulness of our Lord through the gifts of our congregation and friends. October was a 5 week month and giving was a bit short of our budgeted average but we remain in line with our financial plans for this year. Thank you again for keeping First Church in your prayers and thoughts as we go through this extraordinary time.

Our expenses remain in good shape as we continue to offer online services, in addition to opening up more and more through this unusual time. We are excited to see the Christmas season approach and all that we can celebrate with our ministry in this time of year. If you have not already done so, please help us plan for 2022 by submitting your 2022 “Commitment” card to the church office, which is available in the church office or the church website, [fumchurch.com](http://fumchurch.com). God is good!

### Giving Back is Easy This Year!

After the success of last year, you can support New Hope Ministries Christmas Blessing Express through the church's Scrip Fundraising Program! Check off the \$25 amount for Wal-Mart or Target on the form (pick up the form outside the multipurpose room or find it here). Return to the church office, the Scrip Return box (located on the wall near couches) or Kathie Bittenbender, 292 Founders Way, Mechanicsburg, 17050. We will deliver the gift cards to New Hope Ministries for local families. Deadline to contribute to Christmas Blessing Express is December 5, 2021.

### The Cookie Walk is Back!

After taking a year off, the ever popular Cookie Walk is back! The Cookie Walk will be held on Saturday, **December 11** from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. or until the cookies sell out! The price will be the same,



\$12.00 for a filled box or 2 for \$20.00. New procedures will be in place to ensure the safety of selecting the cookies. This includes physical distancing and servers will be masked and gloved and will assist in packaging your selected cookies. Proceeds from the Cookie Walk benefit Youth Mission Trips. Thanks for your support of this sweet fundraiser! Questions, contact Lynn Rapp at [minion.youth17@gmail.com](mailto:minion.youth17@gmail.com) or Lisa Aronson at [uthrock@fumchurch.com](mailto:uthrock@fumchurch.com)

### 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 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](mailto: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/>.

### Endowment Fund— “The Gift That Keeps Growing”

I recently found in our Endowment Files a card that was included in a December church bulletin from many years ago. The card revealed a lot of truths and I thought it would be something for each of us to think about during this holiday season.

*“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:20-21)*

Can you name three Christmas presents that you received last year? If not, you are not alone. The gift giving season is upon us. This Christmas, why not give a gift that will continue to give will into the future! Gifts to the First Church Endowment Fund last forever. That’s because contributions to it are never spent. They are invested to generate income for future use. You can support the Endowment Fund with a cash contribution now, or planned gift (e.g., bequest in a will) to be made in the future. All gifts are tax deductible.”

Any member of the Endowment Committee are happy to answer any questions concerning the Endowment Fund. Committee members include: Bob Wertz, Sr., Pastor Denny, Ken Rapp, Katie Hammaker, Barry Eaton, Judi Buddenbaum, Rick Herring, Mark Rouch, Pam Murdoch, Patti Vogl.

### Women’s Ministry & SCRIP!

Need a gift idea? Use the SCRIP gift card program and benefit the FUMC Women’s Ministry at the same time! For the months of December and January, proceeds from specific gift card purchases will benefit the 2022 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 end of the hallway (to the right) of the main building entrance. Any questions, contact Patti Herring at [familyzeke@verizon.net](mailto:familyzeke@verizon.net).

### 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 this fall or would like to make a financial donation to the pantry, please contact Lori Hoffnagle at [outreach@fumchurch.com](mailto:outreach@fumchurch.com).



### December Bible Reading Plan

Wednesday, December 1      Philippians 1:3-11  
Thursday, December 2      Luke 3:1-6  
Friday, December 3      Luke 1:5-25  
Saturday, December 4      Rest and Reflect

***Sunday, December 5***      ***"It Wouldn't Be Christmas Without...Hope"***

Monday, December 6      Zephaniah 3:14-20  
Tuesday, December 7      Isaiah 12:2-6  
Wednesday, December 8      Philippians 4:4-7  
Thursday, December 9      Luke 3:7-18  
Friday, December 10      Matthew 1:18-25  
Saturday, December 11      Rest and Reflect

***Sunday, December 12***      ***"It Wouldn't Be Christmas Without...Joseph"***

Monday, December 13      Micah 5:2-5a  
Tuesday, December 14      Luke 1:46b-55  
Wednesday, December 15      Hebrews 10:5-10  
Thursday, December 16      Luke 1:5-25  
Friday, December 17      Luke 1:39-45  
Saturday, December 18      Rest and Reflect

***Sunday, December 19***      ***"It Wouldn't Be Christmas Without...A Miracle"***

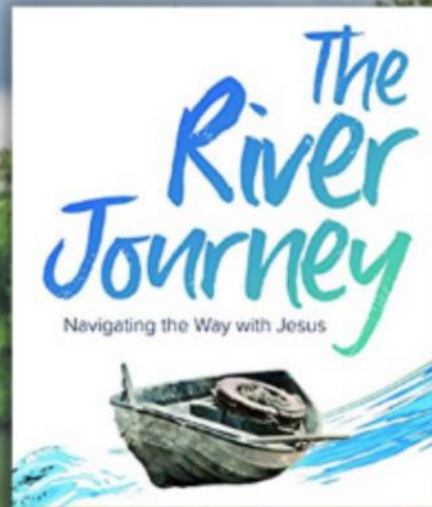
Monday, December 20      Isaiah 9:2-7  
Tuesday, December 21      Psalm 96  
Wednesday, December 22      Titus 2:11-14  
Thursday, December 23      Luke 2:1-20

***Friday, December 24***      ***Christmas Eve - "It Wouldn't Be Christmas Without...Jesus"***

Saturday, December 25      Christmas Day

***Sunday, December 26***      ***"It Wouldn't Be Christmas Without...The Mess"***

Monday, December 27      Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
Tuesday, December 28      Psalm 8  
Wednesday, December 29      Revelation 21:1-6a  
Thursday, December 30      Matthew 25:31-46  
Friday, December 31      New Year's Eve



# The River Journey Women's Retreat, February 5, 2022

The women's ministry team is excited to offer this One-Day Women's Retreat at Mt. Asbury Retreat Center, 1310 Centerville Road, Newville on Saturday, February 5, 2022

The River Journey retreat will be based on the book by local authors, Tara Hartley and Robin Holman Loy who will be leading this retreat. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. with the first session starting at 9:00 a.m. There will be time for learning, prayer, worship and fellowship as we enjoy both lunch and dinner together.

*The River Journey 'Navigating the Way with Jesus'* book can be purchased before the retreat. Contact Tina Eaton at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com) to order it at a discount!

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Please return registration with payment (payable to FUMC)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

(Please indicate if you need any special options for lunch - gluten free, dairy free or Vegetarian.) \_\_\_\_\_

Send payment to Patti Herring, 613 Lavina Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 **OR**, you can pay via the church website at [fumchurch.com](http://fumchurch.com) and may email the form to [familyzeke@verizon.net](mailto:familyzeke@verizon.net).

Check enclosed for \$25  Payment of \$25 made via website

**Register soon, space is limited! Deadline to register is 1/22/22.**

**Questions**, contact Patti Herring at [familyzeke@verizon.net](mailto:familyzeke@verizon.net)

# Church News and Notes

## Our love & sympathy...

to the family and friends of Victor Norris, who passed away on October 19

to the family and friends of Morris Barr, who passed away on November 4

## A note of thanks...

Just a note of thanks to everyone who provided us with food, sent cards, came to visit and prayed for us. I am finally coming to the end of this long journey and it is so good to be getting back to normal.

~ *Judi and Larry Buddenbaum*

Dear First Church Family, We want to thank you for the flowers, cards, prayers, and phone calls during my ankle surgery and recent hospitalization. Our church family is awesome.

~ *Roy and Ginnie Miller*



## Special Birthdays

Joyce Woods.....	December 1	Pat Hutter .....	January 3
Jo Nye.....	December 13	Dick Reed.....	January 15
Dolores Shell .....	December 13	Leroy Weaver.....	January 15
Darlis Aumiller.....	December 21	Leta Rohlmeier.....	January 23
Joan Mains.....	December 23	Don Coldren.....	January 24
Elaine O'Hara.....	December 26	Dot Souder .....	January 27
Sandy Coover .....	December 28	Margaret Baker.....	January 30

## Special Anniversaries

- ♥ Roy & Ginnie Miller married 54 years on December 9
- ♥ Douglas & Harriet Steuart married 54 years on December 16
- ♥ Joe & Carol Moomaw married 55 years on December 24



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