



First News First

Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors

From the Pastor's Desk.....

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Dear First Church,

The past two months have been a great time getting to meet many of you and hearing stories about your families and faith. I ate ice cream with our seniors, greeted many kids and families at VBS, worked with the Glean Team on the hottest day of the summer, experienced the yard sale and sat through rain delays at the Senators game together.

As we begin September, I'm excited to continued opportunities to spend time together and get to hear more stories of your faith and passion for serving in this community. I especially look forward to seeing you at our Church Picnic on Sept. 8, and as we begin our series of congregational conversations around the outcome of this year's United Methodist Church General Conference (see page 4 for more details on these events).

During worship this month, we'll look at Paul's letters to the church in Thessalonica. Paul first came to Thessalonica after he and some fellow believers were miraculously set free from prison and led a revival with the jailer and his family. For three short weeks, Paul preached to the Thessalonians in the city temple. He encouraged the Christian community there and fell in love with the new church who was starting to know Jesus and desired to share His love.

Word quickly spread about the people of this faith community and how they were sharing the good news of Jesus person to person. Although Paul had to continue traveling, he was deeply touched by this group of believers and wrote them two short letters to support their faith, encourage their witnessing about Jesus and inspire them to persevere even when things get tough.

Paul's words to the Thessalonian church are lessons that we also need to hear today. Throughout September, we will also have a daily Bible reading plan to accompany this series. I hope you will take time to dig into these 136 verses of Scripture to strengthen your faith, reflect on your life and see examples of how you can share the Gospel. I pray that generations from now, people will know the stories of Jesus because of how we worshipped and lived out our faith at First Church.

On the journey together,

Pastor Mira

KEEP CALM & CARRY ON

First and Second
Thessalonians



Whether you're just beginning to explore faith, growing as a disciple or becoming a fully devoted follower, there's 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:

September Sermon Series and Study: Keep Calm and Carry On

In the letters of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Paul addresses the core beliefs and practices of Christianity that we need to know to honor Jesus and impact the world. In 136 verses hear what really matters about faith in Jesus. Join us Sunday mornings as we dive into Paul's letters to the church in Thessalonica. Pick up a booklet outside the sanctuary or visit the Daily Bible Reading Plans section on our website to follow along throughout the week with Scripture readings and reflection questions.

Sunday School | Sundays, 9:45-10:45 a.m.

Fall classes kick off on Sept. 8! Classes cover a variety of topics and welcome new members anytime.

- **Faith in Everyday Life**

Location: Fellowship Hall

Leader: Jenell Paris (jparis@messiah.edu)

This group is for adults of all ages focused on fellowship and friendship and mutual support in and outside the classroom. Through the end of October, the class will walk through "One Another: Choosing Each Other in a Politically Divided World." This study invites Christians to cultivate mind sets and habits to grow in faith. It isn't about changing political positions, but learning to respect others' beliefs and still be in relationship despite differences.

- **Growing in Christ**

Location: Room B006

Leader: Marjorie Snyder (57masnyder@gmail.com)

This welcoming group enjoys digging deeper into the Scriptures to learn and apply God's truths in our everyday lives. The class generally consists of prayer, a video lesson and a group discussion. Drop in for a single class, or a specific study, or stay as long as you like! This fall, the class will study the book of Genesis.

- **Christian Fellowship**

Location: Room B003

Leader: Wayde Leister (waydeleister@outlook.com)

This friendly, caring class is eager to apply God's Word to life's challenges and is currently watching a video series on N.T. Wright's book *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*. Wright was asked to write a modern version of C.S. Lewis's book *Mere Christianity*, and *Simply Christian* addresses questions about why we expect justice, why we crave spirituality, why we're attracted to beauty, why relationships are often so painful, and how the world will be made right.

- **Faithful Families**

Location: Room B005

Leaders: Bob and Tracy Wertz (wertzfive@gmail.com)

Join 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.

- **Guyer Class**

Location: Room 123

Leaders: Deb and Steve Noss (sdppp@msn.com)

This class, comprised of a wonderful group of seniors who are young at heart, is taught by a variety of church leaders. Lessons follow the United Methodist Church Adult Bible Study series which includes daily devotions.

- **Helping Hands**

Location: Room B004

Leader: Bob Wertz, Sr. (robert_wertz@plantsitelogistics.com)

This group of active seniors focuses on encouraging instructions for faithful living and enjoys

fellowship activities together outside of class. Lessons follow the United Methodist Church Adult Bible Study series.

Deborah Circle | Tuesday, Sept. 10, 7 p.m.

All women are welcome to join this small group for a devotion and discussion. Deborah Circle meets on the second Tuesday of every other month in room 105. Sandy Walton will lead this month's devotion. Contact Sandy ([717-433-3687](tel:717-433-3687)) with questions.

Mom Connection: Better Together | Starts Monday, Sept. 16, 6-8 p.m.

This group connects moms of children newborns through high school age with other moms who are seeking friendship, support and encouragement along the parenting journey. The group meets monthly September through May. Meetings begin with dinner, followed by a theme-based topic designed to help develop connections and offer support, inspiration and resources for Christ-centered parenting. A suggested donation of \$5 per meeting or \$30 for the year helps cover the costs of program materials and dinner. Sign up now at fumchurch.com or on the Church Center app, and contact Katie Knorr (kidscount@fumchurch.com) with questions.



First Step Gathering | Sunday, Sept. 29, 9:45-10:45 a.m.

New to First Church or haven't been around for a while? Stop by room 105 to get to know Pastor Mira, our staff and other newcomers, and learn about opportunities to take your next step in faith at First Church. Find more details and let us know you're coming at fumchurch.com, on the Church Center app, or by contacting Lisa Aronson (adultministry@fumchurch.com).

Next Step Class | Starts Sunday, Oct. 13, 9:45-10:45 a.m.

Ready to be baptized, thinking about becoming a member of First Church, or just want to explore the foundations of our faith? Join us for a six-week study, led by Pastor Mira, to discover what it means to faithfully participate in the life of the church. This class meets in room 105 and child care is available. Sign up at fumchurch.com, on the Church Center app or by contacting Lisa Aronson (adultministry@fumchurch.com).

Wonderful Wednesday | Oct. 16-Nov. 13, 5-7 p.m.

Children, youth and adults are all invited to this intergenerational fellowship and learning program. The evening begins at 5 p.m. with prayer and a family-style dinner in Fellowship Hall, followed by a time of learning for all ages at 6 p.m. While we hope you can participate in all five weeks, we recognize that some weeks may not be possible – please don't let that keep you from joining us when you can! Additionally, studies can be attended without participating in dinners. Watch for study information and registration details on the Church Center app and fumchurch.com.



Wednesday Night Men's Group | Second and Fourth Wednesdays, 8 p.m.

This group enjoys great fellowship while focusing on discussion-based Bible studies. Contact John Bowen or Bob Wertz, Jr. for more information.

Church Conference | Thursday, Nov. 7, 6 p.m.

All are welcome to attend our annual church conference (led by District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Gary Weaver) for an update on church business from key First Church leaders. This year's conference will take place at Shiremanstown United Methodist Church (125 E. Main St., Camp Hill) with other United Methodist Churches in our Mechanicsburg cluster.

Men's Retreat | Nov. 8-9

Join us for fellowship, fun, food, and faith at Mt. Asbury Retreat Center in Newville. The retreat starts on Friday at 6 p.m., includes Saturday breakfast and lunch, and concludes on Saturday at 4 p.m. A one-day option is also available (9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday) and includes lunch. All participants must register by Sunday, Oct. 20. Financial assistance is available upon request. Contact John Bowen (bowenhome720@gmail.com or [717-686-6749](tel:717-686-6749)) with questions.

Women's Retreat | Jan. 24-26

Want to get away with God? The 2025 Women's Retreat will be held at Rhodes Grove. Registration information will be available soon!

Zoe Mazi | Mondays, 7:15-8:45 p.m.

Zoe Mazi (which means “Life Together”) is a ministry group that welcomes young adults (18+) from a variety of churches in the Mechanicsburg area. On the first and third Monday of each month, they meet at Strock’s Corn Crib for a large group gathering that features worship and teaching from a local speaker. On the second and fourth Mondays, they meet at the home of Zoe Mazi Executive Director Shannon Zimmerman for a time of small group discussion. Find more details and get connected at zoemazi.org.

Congregation Conversations

At our Administrative Board’s August meeting, several First Church leaders discussed recent changes in the United Methodist Church made at the 2024 General Conference regarding decisions required at the local church level. The Ad Board had conversation sharing experiences, feelings and perspectives with many different personal beliefs and preferences. Ultimately, the Ad Board discussed the need, and a plan, for church-wide conversations surrounding General Conference actions, same gender weddings and LGBTQ+ concerns. The goal of these conversations is to foster wider congregational discussions and understanding of these topics before any new policies would be put in place at First Church.

We invite all First Church members, friends and guests to join us in these events:

- **General Conference: What Happened? | Sunday, Sept. 22, 9:45-10:45 a.m.**

Multipurpose Room

Pastor Mira and Rev. Dr. Gary Weaver will share the major work and outcomes from General Conference, the international gathering that is the only body that can make polity and theological decisions for United Methodist Churches.

- **Same Gender Theology: Where I Stand | Sunday, Oct. 20, 3-4:30 p.m.**

Sanctuary

Pastor Mira and Rev. Larry Leland will share different theological perspectives on the same gender conversations. A time of sharing in small groups will be included using the guidelines of Holy Conversations.

- **Let’s Talk | Sunday, Nov. 10, 3-4 p.m. OR Wednesday, Nov. 20, 6-7 p.m.**

Sanctuary

Mirroring the NPR series, “This I Believe,” we will have conversations in small groups about personal beliefs, theology and experiences of LGBTQ+ welcome, marriage, and leadership in our local church.

We love and value each person at First Church and know we don’t always perfectly agree. We fully believe that our unity is in Christ, and we’re called to embody Jesus’ love in our interactions with others – including when we engage in challenging conversations and topics. We encourage you to join in these opportunities to share in respectful dialogue, compassionate listening and prayerful practices with one another. Without fear, and with the joy of the Lord, let’s carry out the work Jesus calls us to do – together. Please reach out to Pastor Mira (pastormira@fumchurch.com or 717-766-4611, ext. 103) with questions.

From the Library

As most of you know, I write the newsletter almost a month before it is published. So, I’m thanking you for supporting the book sale before it even happens. I’m confident in writing this because you’ve always supported us and enabled us to keep the best of Christian books on the shelf. I really can’t thank you enough! Having said that, let’s get right to what’s new on the shelf.

Several of you have told me that you don’t like to read a book if you have to wait for the next one in the series to be published months later. With that in mind, I want to tell you about a new author, Jennifer Delamere, and her trilogy, “Love Along the Wires,” are all on the shelf. Set in England during the late 1800s, each book centers on a young woman working as a telegraph operator. *Line by Line* starts the series with main character Alice McNeil, who has resolved to be unencumbered by love and marriage and to make her own path as a working woman. Enter Douglas Shaw, who is looking to marry into high society and remain just a friend to Alice. I’ll let you discover how that works out for them. *Crossed Lines* comes next with Emma Sutton, also a telegrapher, who falls in love with Chris-

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CHURCH LIBRARY**



topher, who works on the floor below and writes her love letters. Little does she know that Mitchell, Christopher's best friend, is the true author of the letters. Mitchell is also in love with Emma and writes from his heart. This will be a difficult triangle to work out. In the final book, *Holding the Line*, widowed telegraph operator Rose Finlay is determined to pursue a more independent life than what she had when she was married. But when a coworker, John Milburn, enters her life, and his niece falls prey to a rogue, Rose and John join forces to protect her. But, can they protect their hearts from each other?

In the spring, I reviewed *Double Take* by Lynette Eason and mentioned that it was highly recommended by our readers. I thought that the sequel wouldn't be released until October, but I was surprised to see that it will arrive in late August. *Target Acquired*, the second book in the "Lake City Heroes" series will be on the shelf by the time you read this. Kenzie King has earned her place as a tactical medic on a SWAT team, but not all of her teammates think she really earned it. So, she works longer and harder at her job to prove she belongs. Cole Garrison is also on the team, and would like to settle down and build a family. He is interested in Kenzie, but it seems that trouble always follows her. Since her arrival on the team, someone is ambushing other members and killing them one by one. All thoughts of romance are pushed aside to discover the culprit. But, will they survive to find out if they have a future?

If none of these books interest you, stop in the library and let our volunteer help you find just the right book.

See you in the library,
Pam, Mary, Deb, Annette, Marge, Sue and Donna

Praying Follower



See You at the Pole | Wednesday, Sept. 25

Student-led SYATP prayer events are happening around the globe! Visit syatp.com to learn about these events and how you can show your support.

Share Your Joys and Prayer Concerns

We want to pray with and for you! You can share your prayer requests on Sunday mornings during worship by filling out a green prayer card (located in the pews and at the prayer station under the balcony) and placing it in the offering basket or Janice Bowen's mailbox. You can also share your prayer requests and subscribe to our weekly prayer letter by contacting Janice directly (wecare@fumchurch.com or 717-766-4611, ext. 112).

Passionate Worshipper



Bible Sunday | Sunday, Sept. 15, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

At First Church, we believe in the importance of God's Word and want to equip believers of all ages to dive into Scripture in a relevant, accessible way. During worship on Bible Sunday, we provide new, age-appropriate Bibles to our four-year-olds, and kids in second, sixth, and ninth grade. If your child is interested in receiving a Bible (even if they can't attend worship on Bible Sunday), please contact Katie Knorr (kidscount@fumchurch.com). If you're an adult in need of a Bible, please contact Lisa Aronson (adultministry@fumchurch.com).



Rejoicing Spirits | Sunday, Sept. 22, 4 p.m.

First Church invites everyone to attend this "shush-free" worship experience that celebrates all expressions of worship and individuals of all abilities. This monthly service includes music, scripture, prayer and a brief message, along with refreshments and fellowship afterward.



FIRST CHURCH PRAISE RINGERS | MAY 5, 7 P.M



BRANDON RHODY
JULY 21, 3 P.M.



SARAH PUGH
OCT. 13, 3 P.M.



FIRST UMC MECHANICSBURG'S
2024 FREE
CONCERT
SERIES



HOLIDAY HARMONY | DEC. 8, 7 P.M.

Dedicated Missionary



Gleaning at Oak Grove Farms | Thursday, Sept. 12, 6 p.m.

We're excited to once again partner with Oak Grove Farms to glean crops. One Thursday of each month during the growing season (June-October), First Church's Glean Team will meet in the parking lot at Oak Grove Farms. Then, we'll head into the fields to collect leftover produce to share with our neighbors in need at One80 Ministries' Friday Giveaways. Contact Janice Bowen (wecare@fumchurch.com or [717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611), ext. 112) with questions.

Isaiah 61 Homeless Ministry | Wednesday, Sept. 18

Isaiah 61 Ministries serves the needs of the homeless in Dauphin County through a variety of services including a soup kitchen, clothing bank and life groups. First Church members help serve meals to the homeless in downtown Harrisburg on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30. Prior to serving, we also prepare the meal in the church kitchen. Contact Tiffany Holland (tholland1967@gmail.com) or Lori Hoffnagle (l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com) to learn more and get involved.

Feminine Hygiene Sewing Day | Saturday, Sept. 28, 8:30 a.m.

In many developing countries, women have to miss school and work and face cultural stigmas due to a lack of feminine hygiene products. This continues to trap women and their families into cycles of poverty, as well as poses health risks when they try to use alternatives to products, such as dirt or weeds. Join us in Fellowship Hall to support these women by making reusable products that will be distributed around the world by Mission Central. Even if you don't sew, there is fabric to cut and prepare. Find more details about this project on our website (fumchurch.com) or on the Church Center app, and contact Donna Nichols (djnichols43@hotmail.com) if you plan to attend.

United Women in Faith Annual Day | Saturday, Oct. 5, 10 a.m.

All women are invited to the Harrisburg District Annual Day at St. John's United Methodist Church in Hegins. This year's keynote speaker is Zina Speck and workshops will focus on "Living Vibrantly." Registration costs \$12 (includes lunch) and is due by Sept. 21. To learn more or register, contact Lori Hoffnagle (l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com).

United Women in Faith Baked Good Giveaway | Sunday, Nov. 3

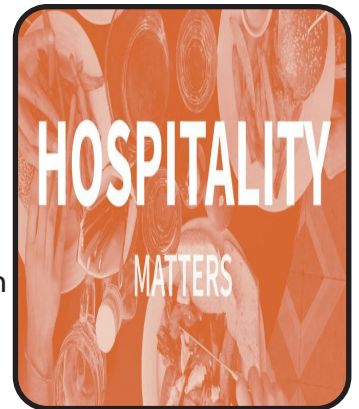
Support the United Women in Faith World Thank Offering with your sweet tooth! Stop by the table near the couches in the lobby (by the children's wing) between worship services to pick up a treat and donate to the World Thank Offering, which helps women, children and youth in need locally and globally. To donate a baked good, please bring it to the display that morning. If you have questions about United Women in Faith or the World Thank Offering, please contact Lori Hoffnagle (l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com).

Relationship Builder



September Hospitality Tip

Hospitality in any church is about creating a welcoming and friendly environment for members, guests and visitors. It's a way to honor God by obeying His command to "contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality" (Romans 12:13). But, hospitality is more than just friendliness. Friendly is surface level – hospitality is deeper. Hospitality is welcoming the stranger; entering into relationship, care and concern for one another; perhaps even sacrificing our comfort so that another may receive what is needed. As we think about our congregation, we need to ask ourselves, "Are we friendly?" Then, we need to ask, "Do we go further to nurture and foster friendships?" When someone new enters our doors, how will they feel based on our actions? In a world that seems increasingly inhospitable, we have the opportunity to show radical hospitality and to be a welcoming community as we offer hope, love and life to those around us!



Men's Breakfast | Saturday, Sept. 7, 7:30 a.m.

Join other First Church men for good food and light-hearted fellowship on the first Saturday of each month at Brothers Restaurant (705 Gettysburg Pike, Mechanicsburg). Please contact John Bowen or Bob Wertz, Jr. if you're interested in attending.

Church Picnic | Sunday, Sept. 8, 4-7 p.m.

Each fall, we look forward to reconnecting after the summer months at our annual Church Picnic. Join us in our Green Space and parking lot for a potluck dinner, followed by fellowship and worship. Please bring a lawn chair and a favorite side dish or dessert to share (hot dogs, hamburgers, iced tea and water will be provided).

Widows and Widowers Lunch | Tuesday, Sept. 10, 11:30 a.m.

This month, the group will dine at Trindle Family Restaurant. If you plan to attend, please contact Bonnie Guyer ([717-766-0145](tel:717-766-0145)). Transportation will be provided upon request.

Third Friday Food Trucks | Sept. 20, 4:30-8 p.m.

Each month, we welcome five to six gourmet food trucks that serve a variety of delicious foods. This event is a great opportunity to meet our neighbors in a fun, casual atmosphere. In September, we welcome That's What Cheese Said, Get Smok'd BBQ, 717 Tacos, Philly Cheesesteak Co., and Whistle Stop on Wheels. We'll also enjoy special music from Scott Hallman on our green space patio. We're always looking for help with set-up, clean-up and parking. Contact Lori Hoffnagle (l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com) to get involved.

Joy in the Morning | Monday, Sept. 23, 1 p.m.

If you live with chronic pain or ongoing health challenges, we invite you to join in sharing discussion and supportive friendship with this small group. We meet monthly on Monday afternoons at Bethany Village in the West Apartments common room. Janice Bowen facilitates, drawing upon readings and devotionals. For more information, contact Janice (wecare@fumchurch.com or [717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611), ext. 112).

Community Dinner | Sunday, Oct. 6, 5 p.m.

The next community dinner will be held at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (132 E. Main St., Mechanicsburg). This collaborative event with other local churches blesses the downtown community with a meal, music and a gift card drawing, free of charge. The concept comes from the book Welcome to Dinner, Church, which encourages churches to share a meal with their neighbors. To learn more or volunteer, please contact Lori Hoffnagle (l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com).



Cooking and Caring for Our Community at Broad Street Elementary | Nov. 7, 5 p.m.

First Church will once again partner with other local churches to cook and serve a meal for Broad Street Elementary families. First Church will provide volunteers and 60 pounds of BBQ. We plan to serve close to 300 for dinner. Please consider making a 5 pound batch of BBQ (using a simple recipe provided by the school) for families in our community. Contact Lori Hoffnagle (l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com) to get involved. Thanks for your support!

Pickleball in the Park | Tuesdays, 5-7 p.m.

Join us for some fun and games on the pickleball courts at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Park! No experience is necessary, and paddles and balls will be available to borrow. If the weather is unfavorable, we'll play in the church multipurpose room. Contact Janice Bowen ([717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611), ext. 112 or wecare@fumchurch.com) with questions or to be added to the email list for updates and alerts.

Greeting Cards to Share!

Want to send well wishes for a happy birthday or speedy recovery to a friend? Stop by our greeting card display in the lobby outside the multipurpose room and help yourself to a card! If you'd like a bigger supply of cards or ideas of church members who would appreciate receiving a card, please contact Janice Bowen (wecare@fumchurch.com or [717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611), ext. 112).

Visiting with Friends!

If you miss seeing your friends at church due to issues such as aging or driving limitations, Janice Bowen would like to hear from you! Janice is interested in taking people with her for visits so that friends can remain connected by visiting in person with one another. Whether you are feeling "stuck at home," no longer able to get out to church, or are simply missing your friends who can't get out as much, Janice would love to hear from you! Contact Janice for more information (wecare@fumchurch.com or [717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611), ext. 112).

Generous Giver



Financial Report

Through July 31, 2024

58% of year

General Fund	
2024 Budget	\$925,398
Expected Income – YTD	\$539,784 (58% of budget)
Actual Income – YTD	\$528,106 (57% of budget)
Actual expenses – YTD	\$542,040 (59% of budget)

After last month's \$10,000 favorable income the 4-week month of June, the month of July was \$66,091, about \$5,000 unfavorable. Expenses for the month were \$74,994, about \$3,000 more than our average monthly budget, due partly to higher utility costs. Year-to-date expenses are higher than income by nearly \$14,000, mostly due to utilities (\$9,000) and the early timing of the loan payments (\$4,000). The church debt for the parsonage is now down to \$40,637 and our bell tower loan was lowered to \$45,749. To sum up, we are now in a deficit of nearly \$14,000. The second half of the year with Christmas, generally brings a bump in donations. So, if we trend as usual, we should be able to make up the gap of

income versus spending.

As we head into the back-to-school and back to church time, we remain grateful for your support in our mission to open doors for all to know salvation through Jesus. We are grateful to all our congregation and guests who continue to support the work of First Church with your prayers, presence and support through service and gifts to the mission of our First Church family.

Bottle Cap Collection Ended

Thank you for your support in collecting bottle caps for First Church Youth! We are no longer in need of this collection and will be removing the collection space for this item. If you are still interested in collecting hard plastic bottle caps, the Rosemary House (120 S. Market St., Mechanicsburg) collects and recycles through Terracycle on behalf of the Penn-Cumberland Garden Club.

Community Aid Cart

Did you know that you can drop off your donations of clothing, shoes and accessories at the Community Aid Cart located just inside the main entrance door? First Church United Women in Faith receives proceeds from the cart, as well as the opportunity to apply for grants from Community Aid. Drop off your donations on Sunday mornings or during church office hours. In addition to the cart, you can drop off clothing or additional household items at any Community Aid store; when you share our church name and partner number (10113), we will receive credit for your donations. Contact Lori Hoffnagle (l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com) with any questions.

Share the Harvest

Looking to share extra flowers, fruits or vegetables from your garden? Check out the Share the Harvest display in the lobby gathering area outside the children's wing. Feel free to leave some produce to share with our congregation and community, or take some with you. You can also place extra food in the Little Free Pantry alongside our parking lot. Contact Janice Bowen (wecare@fumchurch.com or 717-766-4611, ext. 112) with questions.

Scrip Program

Scrip invites you to purchase gift cards from First Church for local and national retailers. When you do, the participating retailers give a portion of the proceeds to help fund ministries at First Church, including the handbell choir, the bell tower restoration, women's retreats, mission trips to Sierra Leone and more. Typically, you receive your gift cards one week after placing your order. Pick up an order sheet in the lobby gathering space next to the water fountains, and place your order today! If you have questions or want to access gift cards for additional retailers, contact Kathie Bittenbender (717-697-6257 or rbittenben@verizon.net).

Change for Water

Water is the foundation of our very lives. Yet, according to the United Nations, over 2 billion people lack access to clean, readily available drinking water. Help us to support well-digging efforts in Africa by dropping your loose change (or even paper bills) into the blue Change for Water bucket located in the lobby in front of the multipurpose room. Donations from August totaled \$14.



Little Free Pantry

Thanks so much for your support of the Little Free Pantry through your donations and monetary contributions. We are building up our supply to stock the pantry, but we still welcome your donations, which can be dropped off at the church office or at the alley entrance in the marked basket. We're blessed to offer this barrier-free access point to food to our neighbors. If you have questions about the Little Free Pantry, please contact Lori Hoffnagle (l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com).

YOUTH MISSION TRIP REFLECTION

Our mission trip to Dayton, Ohio, was a small step in the healing of a city. We worked through LeaderTreks, an organization that aims to instill leadership in the youth during the trip. While in Dayton, we worked on a house with No Longer Strangers, a nonprofit that helps immigrants moving to Dayton, specifically Congolese and Sudanese refugees.

These folks buy the cheapest house they can afford, even if they are dilapidated. Our goal was to give the house dignity, since we can't do major repairs. A lot of that involved painting the walls and baseboards, which went on all week. I worked with two of our adult leaders, Mark and Bob, to repair the a doorframe, which was barely holding the deadlock in place. We cut out and replaced the wood, as well as the baseboard, leading to a much sturdier door. We also installed a bug netting on the second floor balcony. These not only add value to the house, but also the lives of those who will live in it. These families have (and will have) plenty of chaos in their lives, but a suitable living space should not be part of that.

For me, this trip highlighted three special things about Christianity. The first is that everywhere needs help. No place on Earth is free from struggles and suffering. We can even see it in Mechanicsburg. Christians should be united to make the world a better place. Second, we are here to serve. Helping others is the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37-39), but service and volunteering are not big parts of modern society. We need to start that trend. If everyone helps each other a little bit, the world can be a terrific place. Finally, our church offers help. We were only able to go through the help and generosity of First Church, and there's no reason that someone can't go on a trip like this if they want to. To everyone who has supported us, thank you.

Wesley Paris, Student Participant



Third Friday FOOD TRUCKS



SEPT. 20 - OCT. 18

First Church Mission Moments...



Volunteers from First Church have been helping to serve food to those in need in downtown Harrisburg for many years now. But, did you know that First Church is now not only serving, but also funding and preparing the meal for our neighbors each month?

Isaiah 61, one of our partner ministries in Harrisburg, offers a hot meal, clothes, toiletries and prayer to the homeless. We focus on showing dignity and compassion to anyone we have the opportunity to serve. They are always very appreciative of our presence and willingness to serve, pray or just lend an ear.

First Church, along with dedicated volunteers, donate, prepare and serve a meal on the third Wednesday of each month. We're always amazed at how God provides so perfectly each month, but we also need your help. With our new role, we now have even more opportunities for you to be the hands and feet of Jesus! If you're not able to come and serve downtown, there is always a need for donated items and help preparing the food in the church kitchen.

Check out the display in the main hallway during September for a list of needs, as well as the menu and dates for the remainder of the year. During the cold winter months, shoes, socks, coats, blankets, tents and sleeping bags are at the top of the list.

Some of us, at times, have wondered about the life circumstances that led Isaiah 61 recipients to a life of homelessness. However, we know that it's not for us to worry about. We're simply called to show compassion. We know that God has abundant and unending love for each person who comes through the line, and for all members of the homeless community. Serving with Isaiah 61 is a truly humbling and rewarding experience, and it's a great honor to serve as God's hands in this way.

In Christ,
Tiffany Holland
First Church Member and Isaiah 61 Volunteer



News and Notes....

The First Church staff would like to thank Jennifer Myers for being such an integral and treasured member of the team for the past two years. She brought with her an abundance of knowledge, skill, kindness and a beautiful smile each day. Thank you for everything! We love you Jenn!! ❤️



Help us celebrate special birthdays for our church members turning 80 or older!

Sally Kauffman.....September 8	Jane Bonser.....October 1
Pat Sheely.....September 11	Pam Weaver.....October 7
George Carpenter.....September 18	Peg Hassinger.....October 8
Sue Shier.....September 18	Bonnie Klinger.....October 14
Joan Stokes.....September 19	Kay Heiges.....October 18
Marty Otto.....September 20	Jim Siemons.....October 20
Marley Ann Schmick.....September 21	Carol Ann Moomaw...October 21
Gary Klinger.....September 22	Winslow Brown.....October 23
Ralph Harkins.....September 25	Don Shover.....October 23
Curt Bonser.....September 26	Gail Leinhos.....October 28
Peggy Shenberger.....September 28	
Kaye Reynolds.....September 29	



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Bob Wertz Sr. married 61 years September 1, 1963.
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Ed Johnson married 60 years September 3, 1964.
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Darrell Sill married 57 years September 16, 1967.
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Frankie Carley married 51 years September 22, 1973.
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. George Snoke married 58 years September 24, 1966.
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Richard Schmick married 60 years September 26, 1964.

FIRST NEWS FIRST
EDITORS: Dawn Fisher
Jennifer Myers

The **deadline** for submitting articles
for the October 2024 issue is **Sept. 15**.
Early submissions always appreciated!