



# First News First

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

*From the Pastor's Desk....*

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Dear First Church,

Fall at First Church kicked off with the Picnic on Sept 8th. Almost 80 people attended, enjoying food, games, and worship together on the green space. The weather was perfect and it was great to see many of our families gathering together. I shared a bit about what I'm really excited about this fall at First Church.

As we head towards fall, I am excited about...

1) Growing Together is a new all ages Sunday School offering on the 3rd Sunday of each month led by Katie Knorr and Lisa Aronson. This intergenerational time will include a lesson, activity and discussion together. On Sept 15th we had 15 people come and hope this becomes a time all ages can grow in faith together. Next one is Oct 20th in the Youth Lounge.

2) Worship has been a highlight this summer. Worship attendance has not seen a summer slump as we have averaged 228 people in-person worship, with 280 the week we did Blessing of the Backpacks! Online we average 158 people weekly watching the Traditional Service. Online worship is now the front door for churches, with many people worshipping online several weeks before coming in person (unless they are invited by a friend). I am excited we will start to stream live our 11 am service starting on Dec 1st. We look forward to sharing this worship as well and ways this will allow those traveling and guests to worship online in the contemporary style as well. I also love the Kids Message at 11 am, with regularly 5-8 kids coming up for a short message and Hershey Kiss.

3) This fall Oct 13-Nov 7 we will participate in a sermon series called Do Unto Others focusing on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:12. The sermon series will combine with a Kindness Campaign as we think intentionally about ways to bridge the divides in our community and talking about ways to vote for kindness overcoming polarization in our country through civility and respect. Watch the church bulletin for ways to engage in kindness events throughout this series.

As we move into fall I hope you will join us in the *Do Unto Others* series. Think about who you might invite to worship with us one of those weeks and ways you can spread kindness throughout our community.

On the journey together,

Pastor Mira



## Discipleship Opportunities

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:

- **Wednesday Men's Group | 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 8:00 p.m.**  
This group enjoys great fellowship while focusing on discussion-based Bible studies. Contact John Bowen or Bob Wertz, Jr. if interested in more information.
- **Men's Breakfast | September 5, 7:30 a.m.**  
An open invitation is extended to all men who want to gather for good food and light-hearted fellowship on the first Saturday of each month at Brother's Restaurant. (located at 705 Gettysburg Pike, Mechanicsburg, 17055). Please contact John Bowen or Bob Wertz, Jr. if you are interested in attending.
- **Next Step: New Members Class | Begins October 13, 9:45–10:45 a.m.**  
Ready to explore the foundations of our faith or become a First Church member? Join Pastor Mira in room 105 for this 5-week study to discover what it means to faithfully participate in the life of the church through your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Childcare is available. Contact Lisa Aronson at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com) or sign up on Church Center if planning to attend.
- **Sunday School Enrichment | Groups currently meeting, 9:45–10:45 a.m.**
  - **"One Another" with Faith in Everyday Life | Fellowship Hall | Sept 8 – Oct 27 th**  
A group for adults of all ages focused on fellowship and friendship/mutual support in and outside the classroom. Currently studying One Another: Choosing Each Other in a Politically Divided World. This study invites Christians to cultivate mindsets and habits to grow in faith. It isn't about changing political positions but learning to hold up others' beliefs and still be in relationship with one another. If interested, contact Jenell Paris at [jparis@messiah.edu](mailto:jparis@messiah.edu)
  - **Growing in Christ | B006**  
A welcoming group that enjoys digging deeper into the Scriptures, to seek the knowledge and wisdom to apply Scriptural truths in our everyday lives. The class generally consists of prayer, a video, and a group discussion. Drop in for a single class, or a specific study, or stay as long as you like! Lesson on the study of Genesis beginning September 8th. If interested, contact Marjorie Snyder at [57masnyder@gmail.com](mailto:57masnyder@gmail.com).
  - **Christian Fellowship | Room B003**  
A friendly, caring group, eager to apply God's Word to life's challenges. Currently studying 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* makes modern references to questions such as, why do we expect justice, why do we crave spirituality, why are we attracted to beauty, why are relationships are often so painful, and how will the world be made right. If interested, contact Wayde Leister at [waydeleister@outlook.com](mailto:waydeleister@outlook.com).

- o **Faithful Families | Room B005**

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. If interested, contact Bob and Tracy Wertz at [wertzfive@gmail.com](mailto:wertzfive@gmail.com).

- o **Helping Hands | Room B004**

A group of active seniors who focus on encouraging instructions for faithful living, and who enjoy fellowship activities together outside of class. Lessons follow the Adult Bible Study series. If interested, contact Bob Wertz, Sr. at [robert\\_wertz@plantsitelogistics.com](mailto:robert_wertz@plantsitelogistics.com).

- o **Guyer Class | Room 123**

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 Adult Bible Study series which includes daily devotions. If interested, contact Steve and Deb Noss at [sdppp@msn.com](mailto:sdppp@msn.com).

### **Congregation Conversations**

This fall we have three opportunities to understand and share together around the outcomes of the United Methodist General Conference. We hope you will join us for these church wide conversations surrounding General Conference actions, same gender weddings and LGBTQ+ concerns.

- **General Conference: What Happened?**

On Sept 22nd Rev. Dr. Gary Weaver and Pastor Mira shared 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. There is a link to the recording available for church members who were unable to attend in person. Contact Pastor Mira for the link ([pastormira@fumchurch.com](mailto:pastormira@fumchurch.com))

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

Pastor Mira and Rev. Larry Leland will share different theological perspectives on the same gender conversations in the sanctuary. 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.**

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](mailto:pastormira@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4611, ext. 103) with questions.

### **Mom Connection: Better Together | Monday, Oct 21. 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](http://fumchurch.com) or on the Church Center app, and contact Katie Knorr ([kidscount@fumchurch.com](mailto:kidscount@fumchurch.com)) with questions.

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

Children, youth, and adults are all invited to participate in this intergenerational fellowship and learning program. The 5-week fall session will run from October 16th to November 13th. The evening begins at 5:00 p.m. with prayer and a family-style dinner in Fellowship Hall, followed by a time of learning for all ages at 6:00 p.m. and concludes at 7:00 p.m. While we hope you can participate all five weeks, we recognize that some weeks may not be possible – please don't let that keep you from joining us for the weeks that you can! Study information and registrations can be found on Church Center and the church website [fumchurch.com](http://fumchurch.com) (Studies can be attended without participating in the dinner).



### **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 area.

### **Men's Retreat | Nov. 8-9**

Our men's retreat will be held at Mt. Asbury Retreat Center, which borders Pine Grove State Park in Newville, PA. Join us for fellowship, fun, food, and faith! The full event starts on Friday at 6 pm, includes Saturday breakfast and lunch, and concludes on Saturday at 4 pm. New for this year, a one-day option (includes lunch only) is also available on Saturday from 9 am to 4pm! The deadline for all registrations is October 20th and registration information can be found on Church Center (and paper forms are available outside the sanctuary entrances) Financial assistance is available upon request. Please contact John Bowen at [bowenhome720@gmail.com](mailto:bowenhome720@gmail.com) if you have any 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](http://zoemazi.org).



### **Bottle Cap Collection Ended!**

Thank you for your support in collecting Bottle Caps. 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 collects and recycles through Terracycle on behalf of the Penn-Cumberland Garden Club.

### **Coffee Ministry**

Do you love coffee and wish that we offered it more frequently on Sunday mornings? Contact Lisa Aronson at [uthrock@fumchurch](mailto:uthrock@fumchurch) if you would be interested in learning more about helping make this possible.



## From the Library

I just came in from watering my summer flowers, and there was that little nip in the air that wasn't there just a week ago. It's good -bye summer and here comes fall, though we Pennsylvanians know that maybe we will see a hint of summer again. But this is a perfect time to get your pumpkin spice latte ready, a cozy shawl, and, of course, a great book. As luck would have it, I have a few books to tell you about.

Denise Hunter has been a favorite in the library for twenty years, and she never disappoints. Her mixture of romance and down-to-earth scenarios make her books irresistible. Her latest stand alone novel, *Before We Were Us*, builds on the premise of memory loss. When Lauren Wentworth wakes up in the hospital after falling from a ladder, she has no memory of the last four months. What is she doing at a rustic resort instead of her big city dream job is her number one question. But even more mind boggling to her is that her number one nemesis, Jonah Landry is now her boyfriend. She decided to permanently forget the last four months and get on with her real life. But can Jonah just let go of her so easily? Get an extra shot of espresso in your latte; you will be up late finding that answer.

Another favorite in the library is Irene Hannon. Ms. Hannon writes both romance books and mysteries. Her latest book is the second in her series *Undaunted Courage*. Lindsey Barnes is the main character in *Over the Edge*. Though just recovering from a deadly trauma, she is also the sole witness in a high-profile murder case. But the murderer is set on not only pushing her to the edge, but also making her look like an unreliable witness. Sometimes only her certainty about what she saw is the only thing that keeps her going. Fortunately, she has found an ally in police detective Jack Tucker. At first, he wasn't sure about her, but after getting to know her better, Jack is sure that someone is targeting both her sanity and her life. You won't want to quit this page turner either until you find out just how this mystery can be solved without more bloodshed.

If neither of these books seems right for you, stop in the library and let our volunteer help you find just the right book. Our puzzle library is being rebuilt after the sale, so you might want to check out our new offerings.

See you in the library,

Pam, Deb, Marge, Sue, Annette, Mary, and Donna



*Praying Follower*



## 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](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or [717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611), ext. [112](tel:717-766-4611)).

*Passionate Worshipper*



**Rejoicing Spirits | Sunday, Oct. 27, 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.**



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

*Dedicated Missionary*



**Gleaning at Oak Grove Farms | Thursday, Oct. 10, 6 pm**

We're excited to partner with Oak Grove Farms to glean one more time in 2024! First Church's 'Glean Team' will meet in the Oak Grove parking lot. From there, we'll head into the fields to collect leftover produce to share with our neighbors receiving support at One80 Ministries' Friday Giveaway. Contact Janice Bowen ([wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4611, x112) to be added to our Glean Team communications.



**Isaiah 61 | Wednesday, Oct. 16, 6:30 p.m.**

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. First Church members help serve meals to the homeless in downtown Harrisburg on the third Wednesday of each month. To find out how to get involved, contact Tiffany Holland ([tholland1967@gmail.com](mailto:tholland1967@gmail.com)). Now that we are also preparing the food, in addition to serving, we are looking for more help. If you have an interest in serving or preparing food for our friends in Harrisburg or learn how you can volunteer, contact Tiffany Holland or Lori Hoffnagle ([l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com)).



*Relationship Builder*



**October Hospitality Tip**

Practice practicing hospitality! Wait, what does that mean? Hospitality is not something that we learn overnight .... instead we learn it through practice! Hospitality helps our discipleship to others grow because it requires letting go of our expectations and control. It requires putting aside our own agenda and allowing others into our space. It requires putting aside our needs and welcoming newcomers. Simply put, it is sacrificial. And, while it is not necessarily an easy command, God calls us to show radical hospitality. And by obeying His command, we are living out the Gospel! Christ gave Himself up for us and in the same way, we are called to give of ourselves and welcome others.



**Men's Breakfast | Saturday, Oct. 5, 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.

**Widows and Widowers Lunch | Tuesday, Oct. 8, 11:30 a.m.**

This month, the group will dine at the Cedar Cliff Diner. If you plan to attend, please contact Bonnie Guyer (717-766-0145). Transportation will be provided upon request.

**Third Friday Food Trucks | Oct. 18, 4:30-8 p.m.**

Join us for the last Third Friday Food Trucks for this season! This is a great opportunity to meet our neighbors in a fun and casual atmosphere. Each month, we welcome five to six gourmet food trucks that serve a variety of delicious and fun foods. This month, we welcome Mad Dash, Midnite Smokin BBQ, Audrey's Cup of Sunshine and Sarah's Creamery, along with special music on the patio by Jazz 4. The food trucks serve from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. Check our website and FB page for any updates. See you there!



### **Joy in the Morning | Monday, Oct. 21, 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](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4611, ext. 112).



### **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](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 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 Street, Mechanicsburg at 5:00 p.m. 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. If you would like to learn more about the event or would like to volunteer in any way, please contact Lori Hoffnagle ([l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com)). We will be serving chili and chicken corn soup in bread bowls for this meal!

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

First Church will once again be partnering with other community churches to cook and serve a meal for Broad Street Elementary families on Thursday, November 7 at 5:00 p.m. First Church will be providing the BBQ and volunteers. At this time, we are responsible for 60 pounds of BBQ using a simple recipe provided by the school. We plan to serve close to 300 for dinner. Help out by making a 5 lb. batch of BBQ or more for the families at Broad Street. Questions or if you can provide BBQ, please contact Lori Hoffnagle ([l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com)). Thanks for your support!

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

Join us on the Pickleball courts at Soldiers and Sailors Mechanicsburg Park! If the October weather is unfavorable (too cold, rainy), we will play in the church multi-purpose room. No experience is necessary. Paddles/balls will be available to borrow if you'd like to learn how to play! Contact Janice Bowen (717-766-4611, ext. 112 or [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com)) with questions or to be added to the Pickleball email list for updates and alerts.



### **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](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4611, ext. 112).

### **Health and Wellness Presentation | Nov. 10, 9:45-10:45 a.m.**

Back by popular request, please join us in the multi-purpose room to hear more from Bob Buhrig with Buhrig's Funeral Home. Bob will speak on what happens from the time of call to the funeral home after a death to time of service. He will also take time to respond to more of your questions.



### Flu Shots | Sunday, Oct. 27, 9-11 a.m.

We will offer flu shots provided by Sandy Leister, RN on October 27th. There's no need to preregister - simply stop by the welcome kiosk between 9-11 am on Sunday, October 27th. Anyone 18 or older is welcome to receive a vaccine. Some insurance plans will be accepted. Without insurance, the flu shot costs \$40 (cash or check, made out to VNA of Central PA). Please contact Janice Bowen ([717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611) x112 or [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com)) with questions. Accepted insurances: Medicare B; Medicare B and a secondary insurance; Medicare B and AARP; Medicare B and commercial (supplement); Railroad Medicare B; GHP; GHP Gold; Humana Gold; Humana Choice PPO.

### Final Mt. Asbury Senior Day | Dec. 4, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Mt. Asbury Retreat Center will host a final 'Senior Day' featuring their Christmas Banquet and gingerbread house making. Cost is \$21/person paid upon arrival at Mt. Asbury. If you have questions or would like to go, please contact Janice Bowen ([717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611) x112 or [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com)). The group leaves from the church parking lot and transportation is available!

*Generous Giver*



### Financial Report

Through August 31, 2024

67 % of year

General Fund

2024 budget \$ 925,398

Expected income YTD \$616,962 (67% of budget)

Actual income TD \$593,099 (64% of budget)

Actual expenses YTD \$608,617 (66% of budget)

August revenue of \$64,979 is about \$7,000 unfavorable to the average 4-week income we have budgeted. However, this year was better than last August when we had revenue of \$57,286, as the summer months are generally low. Year to date giving is about \$16,000 lower than last year's giving through the month of August. We expect to see a pickup in giving as our fall season brings more people back to regular attendance, supplemented with larger gatherings for the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.

Expenses for the month were \$66,777, about \$5000 less than our average monthly budget. YTD expenses are higher than income by nearly \$16,000, mostly due to utilities (\$9,000) and the early timing of the loan payments (\$3,000). Compared to last year, YTD expenses are almost identical 2024 vs 2023. The church debt for the parsonage is now down to \$40,637 and our Bell Tower loan was lowered to \$45,039.

As we head into the back-to-school and back to church time, we welcome you to continue or join us 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, your presence and your support through service and gifts to the mission of our First Church family.

### Share the Harvest

If you have extra flowers, fruits, or vegetables from your yard or garden this summer, we encourage you to share them with your church family and community! Whether you leave goodies or take some home with you, please check out the Share the Harvest display set-up on the counter space near the children's department or the shelf attached to the Little Free Pantry alongside the church parking lot. Contact Janice Bowen ([wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or [717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611) x112) with any questions.

## Scrip Program

Have you heard about First Church's 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](mailto: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 \$26.65.



## 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 are blessed to be able to offer this 'no barrier access point to food' to our neighbors. Questions about the Little Free Pantry, contact Lori Hoffnagle ([l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com)). Watch for the Reverse Advent Collection to happen in December!

## United Women in Faith Baked Good Giveaway | Nov. 3

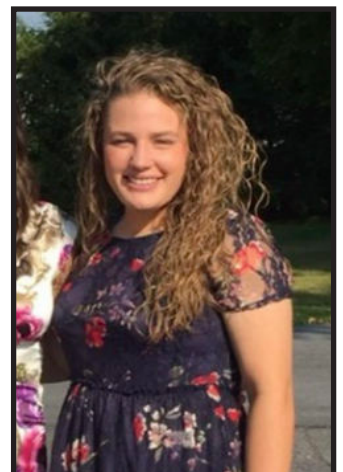
Support the United Women in Faith World Thank Offering with your sweet tooth! Stop by the table near the couches (close to the Children's Hallway) to pick up a tasty treat and make a donation to the World Thank Offering. "The World Thank Offering is an opportunity for individuals to respond to God's abundant grace in the midst of change. When we share our gifts and they are combined with the gifts of others, our contributions make possible the support of national and international work to meet the physical and social needs of women, children, and youth in your neighborhood and around the world." Visit us between worship services for a sweet treat and a chance to help women, children and youth. If you can donate a baked good, please bring to the display that morning, we'd love your support! Questions about United Women in Faith or the World Thank Offering, contact Lori Hoffnagle ([l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com)).

# Welcome!

On October 1st Kelsey Goll began as our Communications/Office Management position. She will work full time in the Church Office. Her role includes communications (website, bulletin, app, flyer designs, Sunday slides) and administrative tasks such as required reporting, calendar and building requests.

Kelsey attended First Church occasionally with Brian and Patti Vogl, her aunt and uncle. She graduated from Lock Haven University and has worked with students with behavioral challenges and more recently in a dental office administratively with patients. She feels called to this position with gifts of administration, attention to detail and collaborating with teams. Outside of the office she likes spending time with family and friends, and loves being an aunt! She likes sports, being outdoors and life with Tucker, her dog.

Please join us in welcoming Kelsey to First Church staff!



# Ring in the Year!

## Handbell News

As many of you already know, the Handbell Choir is planning to attend our 5th International Handbell Symposium in August 2026 – to be held in Scotland. If you are interested in going with us – be in touch! We are trying to be creative with many different ways you and our friends can help support our efforts. We thank you for your support last month at our 23rd annual Chicken BBQ. So what is in the works this month?

- **Tuesday, October 8th** – Come visit our food stand in the parking lot as you watch the Mechanicsburg Halloween Parade. We have hotdogs, soup, chili, mac 'n cheese, and other snacks and drinks.
- **Tuesday, October 15th** – We are going out to dinner at Hoss's in Mechanicsburg! Be sure to get a flyer to take with you as you dine. We will get a percentage of the sales. Thank you!
- **Saturday, October 26th , 1:00 pm** – One of our ringers is very creative and has offered to help us make some beautiful wreaths for the holidays. Every wreath will be different! The finished size is an 18" wreath. The price for each kit will be \$50. So – while the football games are happening, bring a friend and come enjoy an afternoon of fellowship – a little food – and a lot of fun as we make our wreathes together. Yes, there will be people to help us for those of us who are not "creative". This is for folks age 13 and up – or if you have a really creative kiddo, please plan to stay and help supervise! We would like a count for that day as slots are limited. You can register on church center, or by contacting Kathie Bittenbender. Below are a couple of pictures – but look at the displayed wreaths for a better view.



- **Saturday, November 16th, 9:00 am** – A family fun morning of making colorful wooden ornaments! Instructions and materials will be provided! Again, you can check out some of these ornaments that are on display at church.
- **Saturday, November 23** – We will be making pies again for the Holidays!

Thank you! We look forward to playing for worship services Sunday, October 27th and November 17th.

# First Church Mission Moments...



## Operation Christmas Child



Support Operation Christmas Child by filling a shoebox with gifts for the upcoming holiday season! Start by picking up the instructions and a shoebox at church (or use your own shoebox). You'll find these items on the display in the main entrance hallway. Next, fill your box with items suggested on the list (also available on the display). Finally, remember to bring your filled shoeboxes back to the church display in the main lobby **no later than November 24** (by 12:00PM). On that day, we'll load them in the truck after the 11:00 am worship service and send them off to the distribution center for delivery by Christmas!

What is the purpose of this mission project: "Through Operation Christmas Child, Samaritan's Purse is sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with millions of boys and girls in more than 100 countries each year. Many of these children have never before received a present or heard the true meaning of Christmas—until they open a gift-filled shoebox from a person like you." (Exert taken from Operation Christmas Child Website)

Did you know there are ways to make packing a shoebox simple?

- **Online virtual boxes:** Not everyone has the capacity or time to leave their house to gather items to fill a box. You can visit First Church's Online Box page and purchase and fill a box online for \$25. By accessing this option through this link, <https://sampur.se/4dk9DID>, your box will be counted as part of our personal collection goal.
- **The Shoebox Supply House** is a local non-profit that serves as a one-stop-shop location to purchase items for your shoe box. They are open for limited hours so make sure to check out their website before going to shop: <https://shooboxsupplyhouse.com/>. The Shoebox Supply House is located at 709 Marden Avenue, Shippensburg, PA.
- **Adopt a box!** Operation Christmas Child Boxes require a \$10 donation to get the boxes to their destination, but not everyone can contribute to that need when making a box. Money donations are always accepted on behalf of this campaign. (Memo: Operation Christmas Child).
- Consider also the opportunity to gather a group of friends and **volunteer at the processing center** in Baltimore, MD and see all the work that goes into assuring that boxes are ready to be sent to the children who will receive them. Learn about volunteering here: <https://www.occvolunteersignup.com/>



## Church Staff

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# Kindness Campaign 2024

## **Oct 1 | Nov 24 Operation Christmas Child Boxes**

Fill a shoebox with gifts for a kid this holiday season. Pick up instructions in Main Entry hallway. Boxes due by Nov 24th. Questions? Contact Lisa Aronson ([uthrock@fumchurch.com](mailto:uthrock@fumchurch.com))

## **Oct 19 10am-2pm | Streets of Treats**

Help run an activity for kids & adults at the FUMC table between 10am-12n or 12n-2pm during this downtown event. Need 2-3 per timeslot. Sign up in Church App, Service Opportunities or contact Lori Hoffnagle ([l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com)).

## **Oct 20 | Growing Together Class, 9:45-10:45 am**

Intergenerational Sunday School in the youth lounge. We will focus on living our lives as Good Samaritans and learn how to "fill others' buckets" based on Luke 10: 29-37. Contact: Katie Knorr ([kidscount@fumchurch.com](mailto:kidscount@fumchurch.com)) or Lisa Aronson ([uthrock@fumchurch.com](mailto:uthrock@fumchurch.com))

## **Oct 27 | Mission Central Kits (after worship)**

Help verify "Care Kits" from Mission Central to make sure each has all the supplies necessary to be sent to a person in need. Stop by for 5-10 minutes in the Multi-Purpose Room to help out Mission Central. Contact: Debbie & Don Karns ([deborahkarns1@gmail.com](mailto:deborahkarns1@gmail.com))

## **Oct 27 | Youth Kindness Activity, 6-8pm**

We will be making "Out of the Blue" college connection boxes for young adults at college this semester. Contact: Lisa Aronson ([uthrock@fumchurch.com](mailto:uthrock@fumchurch.com))

## **Nov 3 | Baked Good and Butterfly Give Away Day (between worships)**

Pick up a butterfly (made by Covered in Love) or baked good (supporting United Women in Faith) to share and bless someone else.

## **Nov 7 | Cooking & Caring for our Community: Broad Street Elem Community, 5-6pm**

We join other churches to bless 300 families at Broad Street Elem. FUMC needs to provide 60 pounds of barbeque; with each volunteer making 5 lb. batch of bbq (recipe provided).

To provide BBQ or help serve, see details in newsletter or contact Lori Hoffnagle ([l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com)).



# Happy Birthday

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

Jane Bonser.....October 1	Liz Nesmith.....November 4
Pam Weaver.....October 7	Mary Cain.....November 11
Peg Hassinger.....October 8	Paul Cain.....November 11
Bonnie Klinger.....October 14	Pat Bricker.....November 23
Kay Heiges.....October 18	Patricia Marr.....November 23
Jim Siemons.....October 20	Marlin Lehmer.....November 24
Carol Ann Moomaw...October 21	
Winslow Brown.....October 23	
Don Shover.....October 23	
Gail Leinhos.....October 28	



## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Leroy Weaver married 62 years on October 7, 1962.
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Martin Coover married 57 years on October 14, 1967.
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Harkins married 62 years on October 20, 1962.

**FIRST NEWS FIRST**  
EDITORS: Dawn Fisher

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