

# First News First

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

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



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As summer began, things felt heavy all around me. School was out and what was I going to do with my daughter every day while I tried to maintain normal office hours and meetings? The politics of the world is a mess. Every trip to the grocery store seems more expensive than the last. Then the massive wildfires and horrific flooding in Texas with daily reminders of children lost at camp consumed news and social media. Things felt heavy.

At staff we started talking about the fall sermon series and I started looking into books of the Bible we might dive into this fall. As I settled on Colossians, see more in the Worship article, the central question kept bugging me, how should we follow Jesus?

Driving to church one morning the song, Do Something by Matthew West played. Some of the lyrics include:

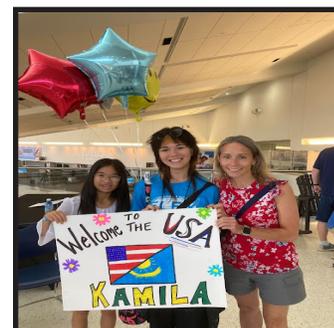
I woke up this morning  
Saw a world full of trouble now  
Thought, how'd we ever get so far down  
How's it ever gonna turn around  
So I turned my eyes to Heaven  
I thought, "God, why don't You do something?"....  
He said, "I did, I created you"  
If not us, then who  
If not me and you  
Right now, it's time for us to do something

Literally that same week I was contacted asking if we would be open to hosting a foreign exchange student as they had 300 students still without host families for 2025-2026 school year. It's all volunteer, we provide a bed and food while the student pays for their incidentals and supplies. When God nudges, I have learned to listen or I sometimes have been hit with a harder "nudge" later.

Fast forward to Aug 13th when we met Kamila at the Harrisburg airport. She had been flying for over 24 hours from Kazakhstan. She will be joining our family for the school year and be a 10th grader at Cumberland Valley High School. She comes from a family of five girls, so Grace (my daughter) says we will be calm. She loves hiking, crafting and wants to get to know our culture and country. So far, she has loved mac and cheese and jumping in waves at the beach. It's amazing and refreshing to see things we do and love through new eyes and learn about her culture too!

Thank you to First leadership here who were quickly on board with this idea. We also will continue to have a foster kid with us one weekend a month, so some Sundays my family will include two teenage and one almost-teenager girls in worship. It's nothing ever planned or imagined even three months ago but trust that this is a way I can "do something" and help my family, these girls, and our community build new friendships one person at a time -- trusting that what we are doing is helping us follow Jesus a bit wider and deeper this year than before.

--Pastor Mira





## Sunday Morning Enrichment | 9:45-10:45 | Sunday Mornings

### Sunday School:

As summer comes to a close, our Sunday School classes will be resuming towards the end of August and kicking off by September 14th! This is a wonderful opportunity to find consistency and accountability in your faith journey while studying God's Word. Here are a list of opportunities for enrichment during the Sunday School hour (9:45-10:45 AM). We look forward to growing together!

#### ◇ 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! If interested, contact Marjorie Snyder at [57masnyder@gmail.com](mailto:57masnyder@gmail.com).

##### **Fall Studies:**

- \* **The Book of Philemon:** A 3-week video-based series by Bryan Loritts that walks through the book of Philemon to see the apostle Paul's framework for reconciliation. How do we handle conflict as Christians? This question has plagued the church for centuries and continues to trip us up even today. Come learn what it takes to live in unity with other believers.
- \* **Tame Your Thoughts:** A 6 week video-based series by Max Lucado to help us renew our minds and break free from the negative patterns, and become a little more like Jesus every day. Come learn the tools to renew your mind and transform your life.

#### ◇ Christian Fellowship, Room B003

A friendly and caring group of adults, eager to apply God's Word to life's challenges. The class generally explores scripture and faith themes through book or video-based series. If interested, contact Wayde Leister at [waydeleister@outlook.com](mailto:waydeleister@outlook.com).

##### **Fall Study:**

- \* **Aftermath:** A three-week video-based series by Andy Stanley. In this series, Stanley explores the struggle the early believers faced against tradition in the wake of the resurrection. Jesus' resurrection launched a series of events that introduced the world to his new covenant and new hope. But old ways don't easily give way. Not then...not now.

#### ◇ 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. If interested, contact Bob Wertz, Sr., at [robert\\_wertz@plantsitelogistics.com](mailto:robert_wertz@plantsitelogistics.com).

##### **Fall Study:**

- \* **Cokesbury Adult Bible Study: "Struggle. Perseverance. Hope."**  
This study reacquaints us with Hebrew women whose faithfulness helped further God's plans; challenges us with Jeremiah's commitment; and offers us insights into living in love, faithfully imitating what is good, and praying with confidence.

#### ◇ 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).

### **Fall Study:**

#### **\* Cokesbury Adult Bible Study: “Struggle. Perseverance. Hope.”**

This study reacquaints us with Hebrew women whose faithfulness helped further God’s plans; challenges us with Jeremiah’s commitment; and offers us insights into living in love, faithfully imitating what is good, and praying with confidence.

#### **◇ Colossians: One Jesus, One People, Room 105**

This is a short-term 3-week class led by Lisa Aronson. This class will explore, alongside the September sermon series, the book of Colossians through a resource written by Jay Y Kim. Meeting September 14th, 21st, 28th during the Sunday Morning Enrichment hour.

#### **◇ Small Groups:**

There are also Small Groups that regularly meet during the Sunday School hour and strive to not only support each other through faith growth in a classroom space, but also through fellowship and connection as they navigate similar stages of life:

##### **\* Faithful Families**

Contact: Bob and Tracy Wertz at [wertzfive@gmail.com](mailto:wertzfive@gmail.com).

An active group of parents with college-aged and young adult children who study Scripture, encourage one another and celebrate life together in and out of the classroom.

##### **\* Faith in Everyday Life**

Contact: Amy at [amyerno@gmail.com](mailto:amyerno@gmail.com) or Jenell at [jparis@messiah.edu](mailto:jparis@messiah.edu).

A group for adults of all ages focused on fellowship and friendship/mutual support in and outside the classroom.

#### **◇ 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:

##### **\* 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 and on our church website, [fumchurch.com](http://fumchurch.com).

##### **\* Wednesday Men’s Group – 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, at 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.

##### **\* Mom Connection - Better Together- Starting Sept. 15, 6-8 p.m.**

Open to moms of kids infant-12th grade. We meet every third Monday, September through May. Family-style dinner included! Sign up on Church Center or contact Katie Knorr ([kidscount@fumchurch.com](mailto:kidscount@fumchurch.com)) with questions.

##### **\* Bible Sunday | Sunday, Sept. 21, 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](mailto:kidscount@fumchurch.com)). If you’re a teen or an adult in need of a Bible, please contact Lisa Aronson ([adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com)).

##### **\* Next Step’s New Member Class & Confirmation Class | October 5 – Nov 2 | 9:45-10:45**

Looking to be baptized? Ready to become a member of First Church? Just want to explore the foundations of our faith? Join us for a five-week Sunday morning study, “A Disciple’s Path.” Together with Pastor Mira, you’ll explore what it means to faithfully

participate in the life of the Church through your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Contact Pastor Mira at [pastormira@fumchurch.com](mailto:pastormira@fumchurch.com) with any questions.

**Confirmation Class:** If you are a student wishing to join as well, we will be offering a confirmation class at the same time, led by Lisa Aronson. Confirmation is best suited for those in 6th grade and older. (Older high school students can choose to attend the adult class if preferred.) There will be a spring Confirmation class offered too, if that season better suits your schedule.

\* **United Women in Faith Circle Groups:**

United Women in Faith Circle groups are small, local communities within the United Women in Faith organization, a mission-focused group for women within the United Methodist Church. These circles are where women gather for spiritual formation, mutual support, fellowship, mission education, and to take action on issues of justice at local and global levels.

• **Martha Circle** – Leader: Marley Ann Schmick

This circle meets in the church Fellowship Hall on the first Tuesday of the month (September meets on 2nd Tuesday) at 12:00 PM, and members rotate in helping to lead lessons.

• **Deborah Circle** – Leader: Sandy Walton

This circle meets every other month at church in room 105 at 7:00 PM (Sept 4, Nov 4, Jan 6, Mar 3, May 5) and meets together off-site for a meal on the opposite months. This circle has been studying women of the Bible.

\* **Wednesday Morning Women's Bible Study** – Wednesday 9:30-10:45 AM |Hardwood Cafe

Join other women at the round tables under the balcony as we explore together the books of 1st and 2nd Peter. Sign up on Church Center or at the Registration Table in the Main Lobby. Participants will need the workbook: 1-2 Peter: Living Hope in a Hard World by Lydia Brownback. Study begins on Wednesday, September 24th. Contact Lisa Aronson at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com) for more information.

## Worship in September

How Should We Follow Jesus? That's a question that was raised in ancient times and still today. During September in worship we will be exploring this question as we read through the New Testament book of Colossians together. Colossae was ethnically and religiously diverse, with believers struggling to follow Jesus in a pluralistic society. Sounds a bit like today, doesn't it? The apostle Paul wrote Colossians, to this young church hoping to confront a society of individualism and falsehoods spreading quickly. What's does it mean to follow Jesus and he can be the center of our lives.

**Sept 7 – Sept 26** we will have a weekly memory verse and daily readings from the Bible as we work our way through this short book of Colossians.

Also in worship on Sept 7 we have ONE worship service starting at 10 am with communion followed afterwards by the church picnic. See more details later in the newsletter.

**Sept 21st** we will celebrate Bible Sunday, giving Bibles to kids and youth at different stages in their lives so they can continue to grow in their faith. Be sure to attend worship this day to celebrate the kids of our church and encourage them in reading their Bibles.

### Week of Sept 7

Memory Verse: Colossians 1:19-20

Sept 8: Colossians 1:1-14

Sept 9: Colossians 1:15-23

Sept 10: Colossians 1:24-29

Sept 11: Colossians 2:1-5

Sept 12: Colossians 2:6-19

### **Week of Sept 14**

Memory Verse: Colossians 3:12

Sept 15: Colossians 2:20-23

Sept 16: Colossians 3: 1-4

Sept 17: Colossians 3:5-11

Sept 18: Colossians 3: 12-17

Sept 19: Colossians 3: 18-25

### **Week of Sept 21**

Memory Verse: Colossians 4:6

Sept 22: Colossians 4:1-4

Sept 23: Colossians 4:5-6

Sept 24: Colossians 4:7-9

Sept 25: Colossians 4:10-17

Sept 26: Colossians 4:18

### **From the Library**

I am definitely living in the past as I always think of September as back-to-school month, even though all my grandchildren start school in August. (Sigh, those were the good old days). And even though I think of this as back to school month mentally I don't want summer to end. So to extend summer a bit longer, I am eagerly awaiting a new book called *The Island Bookshop* – a heartwarming tale of family, love, forgiveness, and second chances. The book is by Roseanne White who usually writes historical fiction, and this contemporary novel is new for her. It is set in North Carolina's Outer Banks and even the cover looks like that area with its landmark lighthouse. Of course, fiction with books in the title always draws me right in, and it would be even more perfect if they mentioned there was a coffee bar inside, but I digress. Kennedy Marshall has a successful career in New York and fled the Outer Banks, escaping a love she can never have. Her sister is managing their grandmother's bookstore, but when she is injured, Kennedy is called home to help. Wes Armstrong feels unmoored after the death of his wife and unsure what the future holds for his family. And when the two meet again they wonder if they have the courage to rewrite their stories together, with so much baggage between them. I won't spoil the ending. Just let this book sweep you out to sea in September.

New to the library is Amy Lynn Green, and her latest book is *The Codebreaker's Daughter*. Dianah Kendall enters the Office of Strategic Services planning on a thrilling espionage career in Europe during World War II. Instead she finds herself in an office trying to break codes. Even more astonishing is that she discovers her mother was a codebreaker during World War I which was definitely astounding for that period of time. When her mother Lillian is called back to help with the work, mother and daughter find themselves faced with a threat to D-day that they must stop. You won't be able to put this book down—get that coffee perking. And if you love history like I do, know that this book is inspired by true stories of codebreakers and OSS Agents.

Last but not least, I just found out that Jan Karon has book fifteen, *My Beloved*, coming out in October. Ms. Karon had not published a book since 2017 and I and all her other faithful readers were sad she was finished with the Mitford series. Due to limited space, the library doesn't have the series that started in 1994, but if you need to catch up they are at the public library. I will review this book in the next news-



letter and I hope, like me, you are excited to return to Mitford.

Thanks to everyone who donated books and/or purchased some books at the yard sale.

Check out new purchases with the yard sale money!

See you in the library!

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

## Praying Follower



### Joy in the Morning - A small group invitation, Monday September 29th @ 1 pm

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's West Apartments Commons Room. Janice Bowen facilitates, drawing upon readings and devotionals.. For more info.,information, contact Janice ([717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611) x112 or [wecare@fum-church.com](mailto:wecare@fum-church.com))



### 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 find yourself 'stuck at home,' no longer able to get out to church or you are able to get to church, but you are missing your friends who are 'stuck at home.' Either way, Janice would love to hear from you! [717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611) x112 or [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com).

## Passionate Worshipper



### Rejoicing Spirits | Sept. 28, 4 p.m.

First Church invites everyone to attend this inclusive praise and 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.

### Gleaning 2025!

This growing season, we are excited to have the opportunity to once again glean locally in partnership with Oak Grove Farms! We will share the fresh produce with the individuals and families receiving support locally from One80 Ministries. If you haven't gleaned with us before, please contact Janice Bowen at [wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or [717-766-4611](tel:717-766-4611) x112 to have your name/contact information added to the FUMC 2025 'Glean Team' to receive additional information!



### Gleaning 4 – Thursday, September 4th – 6 pm (meet at Oak Grove Farms parking lot)

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God" ~Leviticus 19:9-10.

## One Church Sunday | Sunday, Sept. 7 at 10:00 AM

*One Church, One Table, One Joyful Day Together*

Join us for a special combined worship service as we come together--**all generations, one church, gathered around one table**-- to mark the end of summer and step into the rhythms of fall. This service is all about unity -- across all ages, worship styles, and backgrounds-- **as we gather around one table to share in Communion** and then continue that spirit of togetherness with a meal at our **annual church picnic**.

Following worship, all are invited to the **annual church picnic!** We'll provide **hot dogs and hamburgers**, and ask that you **bring a side dish or dessert to share**. No need for sign ups. Food can be kept warm or chilled during the service. Please call church office with any questions.

Come dressed for a day of connection and celebration--no need for traditional church attire. In fact, this is the perfect day to give your **Hawaiian shirts one last hurrah** before summer ends!

While **indoor seating is available**, you're invited to **bring a bag chair or picnic blanket** and enjoy yard games and fellowship outdoors.

Let's gather-- **one church, one table, and have one joyful day together!**

Call church office with any questions, we can't wait to see you there!

*Dedicated Missionary*



### **Isaiah 61 Homeless Ministry**

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 prepare and serve meals to the homeless in downtown Harrisburg on the third Wednesday of each month. The next volunteer opportunity is Wednesday, September 17 at 6:30 p.m. To find out how to get involved, contact Tiffany Holland at [tholland1967@gmail.com](mailto:tholland1967@gmail.com).

### **United Women in Faith Annual Day, November 15**

All women are invited to the Harrisburg District Annual Day on Saturday, November 15 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm at Wesley United Methodist Church, Marysville. The program will feature a panel discussion with representatives from Peace Promise, She's Somebody's Daughter, Greenlight Operation and Hope, Love, Inspire (organizations that raise awareness of trafficking and exploitation). The afternoon workshops will be a simulation activity and a testimony from a woman with lived experience regarding recovery and after care. The fee will be \$12 and includes a lunch with a Southwest theme, taco bar, beans, and rice with faux margaritas! Questions or registration information, contact Lori Hoffnagle at [l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com).

### **Greeting Cards to Share!**

Looking for a birthday card or wanting to send 'get well' wishes to a friend? Stop by the 'Card Ministry' display in the lobby outside the multipurpose room and help yourself to a card! If you'd like a bigger supply of cards or suggestions of who may appreciate receiving a card, please contact Janice Bowen ([wecare@fumchurch.com](mailto:wecare@fumchurch.com) or 717-766-4611, ext. 112)

## Why We Serve

Have you ever considered serving on the Hospitality Team? Katie Dang shares why serving as an Attendance Greeter has been a meaningful experience for her:

One of the greatest joys in my church life has been serving as an Attendance Greeter on First Church's Welcoming Team at the 11 a.m. Service. (That's me, with the iPad in one hand, a hot cocoa or latte in the other, at the podium on some Sundays!) What started as a simple way to volunteer has become one of the richest sources of connection and belonging for me. Each Sunday, I get to meet new people, learn names, and share smiles—and over time, those small interactions have grown into real relationships. Greeting has helped me feel woven into the heart of our church family, not just as an attendee, but as someone with a purpose. I love being part of the "first impression" team, showing visitors the warmth and joy that drew me here in the first place. Even more, I know my children are watching me serve, and I hope they see how meaningful it is to give back. If you're looking for a fun, rewarding way to connect more deeply, the Welcoming Team is an amazing place to start!

If you are interested in serving as a Greeter please reach out to Katie Dang (11:00 service) or Judi Budenbaum (8:30 service)

## First Church Service Shirts

Designed to unite and identify us as we serve together in our community. Whether you're volunteering at an outreach event, helping with church ministries, or participating in a mission project, these shirts are a simple and powerful way to represent First Church with love and purpose. Wearing a service shirt not only helps others recognize who we are, but it also shows that we're working together as the hands and feet of Christ. Shirts are available for purchase now — order yours today and wear it proudly the next time you serve! Shirts are available for \$10.00 (\$5.00 for children and youth) and can be ordered at the registration table or on Church Center. Checks made out to FUMC, t-shirt in the memo, and given attention of Lisa Aronson.

**The first order of shirts will be ready for pick-up in the Main Lobby on September 7, at the church picnic.** Learn about the new UM Vision that will be on the back of our service T-Shirts.

## See You at the Pole – Happening at Schools Everywhere!

Student-led SYATP prayer events are happening at schools around the globe on Wednesday, September 24th. All are encouraged to attend school events. Go to <https://syatp.com/> for more details or to learn how to organize an event at your school.

## Adult Mission Trip

In October a team of 9 people from First UMC will head to Plymouth, North Carolina to work with Rebuilding Carolina. Rebuilding Carolina started as part of the disaster response of the Eastern North Carolina United Methodist Conference and has grown now into it's own non-profit serving families and communities in four counties in eastern North Carolina. They work with families impacted by storm damage, accessibility issues, and safety concerns with many of their residents who are elderly and disabled.

While our work is yet to be assigned, the team will likely be helping with flooring, painting, drywall, and outside steps. Pastor Mira has worked with this group for six mission trips and found their organization to be exceptional directing teams on sites and also the reputations in the local communities.

Serving on a mission team is an opportunity to move outside our comfort zones, taking the skills we have and because of our faith helping others. Please be in prayer for our team and the homeowners we serve along with in North Carolina.



### **Share the Harvest**

If you have extra flowers, fruits, or vegetables from your yard or garden, 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.....as well as 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 x112) with any questions.

### **Solo Seniors Fellowship**

The Solo Seniors Fellowship will dine at the Perkins restaurant on Tuesday, September 9th at 11:30 a.m. If you plan on attending, please call Bonnie Guyer at 717-755-0145. Transportation will be provided as requested.

### **Friday Food Trucks at First!**

Our last Food Truck event will be held on Friday, September 19. We welcome the following trucks: *Grappling Crab*, *Midnite Smokin BBQ*, *Diesel and Dough (pizza)*, *J&D Cheesesteaks*, *Aloha Snow (shaved Ice)* and *Nour Coffee Truck*. We be hosting a Fun and Fit Fair in the multipurpose room in partnership with Sadler Health in Mechanicsburg. Sadler Health Center is a federally qualified health center serving Cumberland and Perry counties, providing comprehensive community-based primary care, dental care and behavioral health services with a team of qualified professionals who can help you reach your healthiest life.



The food trucks are a great way to meet our neighbors in a fun and casual atmosphere. We look forward to offering these events to our church family and our community. The food trucks serve from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. We can always use volunteers to help with parking, set up or tear down. Please contact Lori Hoffnagle at [l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com) to volunteer or learn more. Hope to see you there!

### **Community Dinner, September 28, 2025**

The fall community dinner will be held on Sunday, September 28 at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church on Main Street 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 idea comes from the book 'Welcome to Dinner, Church,' which encourages churches to share a meal with their neighbors. We serve close to 100 neighbors and friends at these meals. If you would like to help set up, serve or provide a food item, please contact Lori Hoffnagle at [l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com). Thanks for your support!

### **50 Days of Hope**

Pastor Layne Lebo from Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church is organizing a special event on Saturday, October 4 for cancer survivors and their families. Pastor Layne has been on his own cancer journey found the book '50 Days of Hope' incredibly helpful and has met and invited the author, Lynn Eib, to come and speak. This book offers hope and encouragement for those going through cancer and their families. The seminar is free, but registration is encouraged, to be able to plan appropriately. You can sign up through the link or call the McBic office at 717-697-0682 or contact Janice Bowen.

See the link here: <https://mcbic.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3039206> or visit their website at <https://www.mcbic.org/>.

### **Mechanicsburg Parade and Streets of Treats**

We will once again be offering our parking lot and surrounding areas for neighbors to watch the Mechanicsburg Halloween Parade on Tuesday, October 14. Come out for a fun night and enjoy the parade! The annual Streets of Treats will be held on Saturday, October 18 in downtown Mechanicsburg, a free and

low-cost event that provides a safe and fun environment for trick or treating. The Children's Department will have a table to hand out treats, watch for more information on how to help!

### **Deborah Circle | Tuesday, Sept. 9, 7pm**

We will be meeting on Tuesday, September 9 at 7:00 pm in the hardwood cafe (green chair area with tables). New members are welcome. We meet every other month at the church. We do several service projects (e.g., food basket for local family at Thanksgiving and Easter, meal for Isaiah 61) throughout the year. We have been learning about unknown women of the Bible. On September 9th, Sandy Walton will be the facilitator talking about Esther and Vashti. Hope to see you there. Our next meeting will be Nov 4 at 7:00 pm. Any questions please call/text Sandy Walton at [717-433-3687](tel:717-433-3687).

### **Men's Breakfast – September 6th and October 4th, 7:30 a.m., Brothers Restaurant**

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 (Brothers Restaurant is located at 705 Gettysburg Pike, Mechanicsburg, 17055). Please contact John Bowen or Bob Wertz, Jr. if you are interested in attending.

### **Women's Morning Meet-Up – September 13th and October 11th, 7:30 a.m., Down To Earth Café**

Start your morning with a warm cup of coffee and great company. Order food or a drink, or just grab a seat and connect with other women of faith, share stories, and find support in a welcoming atmosphere. Down to Earth Café is located at 100 Legacy Park Dr. Suite 108, Mechanicsburg, 17055

### **Coffee is Brewing:**

In September, after a break for the summer, we will again offer coffee weekly on Sunday mornings. Coffee will be in the main lobby from 9:20-11:15. Come grab a cup of coffee or tea and spend some time catching up with friends. If you would be interested in being a part of our Coffee Team that helps make this possible, reach out to Lisa Aronson at [adultministry@fumchurch.com](mailto:adultministry@fumchurch.com).

### **Wear Your Name Tag!**

We encourage everyone to wear their name tags! Name tags help us connect and build relationships within our church family. If you are joining us for One Church Sunday and the church picnic, wear your name tag—wearing your name tag will make it easier to meet new friends and strengthen our community! Need a name tag? Contact the church office.

### **Save the Dates:**

As you are planning your schedule for this fall/next school year, please keep in mind these dates:

Church Conference/Rise Against Hunger Event – November 2nd, 4:00-7:00

Sleep Out for the Homeless – November 21-22, 2025

Women's Retreat – January 23-25, 2026

### **Looking for a sign-up?**

In the Main Lobby is the Registration Table, where you can register for current studies, fundraisers, events, and more.



*Generous Giver*



### **Financial Report**

Through July 31, 2025

General Fund

## 2025 Budget \$869,000

Expected Income YTD \$	\$506,888 (58.3% of year complete)
Actual Income YTD \$	\$450,531 (51.8% of budget)
Actual Expenses	\$482,357 (55.5% of budget)

The financial report for July continues to show revenues falling short relative to expectations as we move through the summer months. Some of this can be attributed to summer and vacations but we are also mindful that even after setting a smaller budget and accounting for some changeover in membership, we are still behind where we should be. Fortunately, expenses continue to be less than expected for this point in the year.

Our Parsonage loan currently stands at \$38,386.99 and the Bell Tower Loan principal balance is \$31,002.83. We thank those who continue to give in service of our debt.

We thank you for your continued generosity and prayers in support of First Church. As summer fades away we are looking toward the start of the school year and the renewal of routines.

### **Little Free Pantry**

The Little Free Pantry continues to bless our neighbors! Most needed items are canned goods, such as soups, pasta sauce, fruit, vegetables, canned chicken and tuna. You can bring your donations to the container at the alley entrance or to the church office. The pantry is filled every day and emptied out every day, so we appreciate anything you can contribute to this 'no barrier access point to food' to our neighbors. Questions about the Little Free Pantry, contact Lori Hoffnagle at [l\\_hoffnagle@yahoo.com](mailto:l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com).

### **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 June, July and August combined was \$71.97. We extend a HUGE THANK YOU to all who gave! We are grateful for your donations!

### **Camp Fancy Gala – Save the Date, September 13**

Everyone who values the power of Camp and Retreat experiences to change lives, this invitation is for you! Come for an evening of inspiration, fun, and generosity. Camp Fancy means you can choose your attire from prom night outfits to outdoor gear just be sure to have one part of your outfit that is "fancy" as part of the celebration. The event will be held at the Conference Center at Central Penn College, 600 College Hill Road, Summerdale on Saturday, September 13, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. The honoree for this year is Rev. Beth Jones. Read more about her camping ministry at <https://suscrm.org/gala/>.

The event features a catered meal, special music, auction items and the chance to honor Beth, as we raise needed funds for Camp & Retreat Ministry. Information about tickets, sponsorships and donations can be found on the camping website here: <https://suscrm.org/gala/>. If you have any questions about Camp Fancy, how to volunteer, make a donation or contribute an auction item, contact Steve Noss at [sdppp@msn.com](mailto:sdppp@msn.com). Thanks for your support of Camp and Retreat Ministry!

### **Youth Ministry at First Church**

Are you a student between 4th and 12th grade? Check out the format for our Youth Ministry here at First Church and consider plugging in and joining us when you can. We would love to see you at our gatherings. For more information contact Lisa Aronson [uthrock@fumchurch.com](mailto:uthrock@fumchurch.com)

#### **4G YOUTH GROUPS | 6:00-8:00 | 6th-12th Grade**

- **1st Sunday:** Large group Gathering - starts in the youth lounge or gym and begins with a casual time to hang out, play games, and eat snacks. Afterwards, we dig into God's word

and listen to a lesson. Our time of learning is a space to ask questions, have discussions, and support you in your spiritual growth.

- **3rd Sunday:** Large Group Gather and Dinner - similar to the 1st Sunday, with the addition that we will begin our youth group time with a meal in the Fellowship Hall.

#### **STUDENT SMALL GROUPS** | 6:00-7:30 | 4th-12th Grade

- **2nd Sundays:** A chance for small group interaction with Students of Similar Ages. This Space is intended to allow for conversation, questions, and age-appropriate faith topics.
  - Grades 4th - Grade 7th -- Meets at First Church in the gym
  - Grades 8th-12th -- Meets at First Church in the youth lounge

#### **SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES** | 6:00-8:00 | 6th -12th Grade

- **4th Sunday:** Events will vary and may be at First Church or offsite. Some service opportunities will be open to our younger students (4th & 5th graders), but that will be communicated in the information provided.

**SPECIAL EVENTS** - See Youth Information Page or the Youth Ministry Event page on Church Center for dates, times, and event information. \*Special events may alter the pattern of Sundays.

#### **What does the 4G mean?**

It is our statement of purpose for the youth ministry. While we want Youth Group to be a fun place where you can spend time with your friends, we want to make sure that we GATHER together to GROW as we GAIN from God's Word and learn to GIVE back to God in how we live and treat others. (It is also handy to have a 2-letter way of referencing Youth Group for when a text message only allows a certain number of characters.)

## *Ringling in the News!*

A busy Fall is ahead for our FUM Praise Ringers. Besides starting to play in church again on September 21st, we will ring at the Calvary Church in Dillsburg on September 28. This is the year we are again looking forward to attending an International Handbell Symposium to be held next summer in Aberdeen, Scotland. This will be our 5th Symposium! Forgive us, but we will be putting on a big fundraising effort to help get all of us there – as well as all of our bells, chimes, foam, mallets, stands and music. We are not attempting to take our tables!

On Saturday, September 27, we will be having our 25th annual Chicken BBQ! See any bell choir member for a ticket or sign-up at the fundraising table in the narthex. Dinners include a half chicken, baked potato, roll, and applesauce.. We also have a terrific Bake Sale that day!

We will be kicking off our "Send a Bell to Scotland" campaign this month. This is similar to our Youth Mission team's "Send a Youth..." We have 60 bells and 48 chimes to get over the pond. As always – we so very much appreciate our church family's support! Happy Fall, everyone!

# Stained Glass Class



There are three “white lily” stain glass windows at First Church. The first one is located on the first floor and is the third window as you come into Sunday School auditorium from the alley entrance. The second one is also on the first floor the seventh window coming into from the alley entrance. The third one is in room 122, 4 year old classroom the 2nd window from the left as you enter the room.

The white lily is one of the most specifically mentioned flowers in the Bible. The lily grows in the remote regions of Israel but does not fit into the biblical text as growing in the valleys, brambles and pastures. The lilies of the field are attractive flowers which burst forth in the spring and are known for their fertility and their beauty. They depict images of love but also fragility transience and sudden decay after moments of splendor.

These are two specific references to lilies in the Bible.

In Song of Solomon, 2:1-2 -

<sup>1</sup> I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. <sup>2</sup> As a lily among brambles, so is my love among maidens.

This verse has been interpreted as the bride (the church) pursuing the bridegroom (Jesus).

Jesus talks about the fragileness of lilies and how God will take care of us in Matthew 6:28-23 (NRSV).

<sup>28</sup> And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

I remember a chorus that I sang as a child and youth:

Everybody ought to know,  
Everybody ought to know,  
Everybody ought to know who Jesus is.  
He’s the Lily of the valley, He’s the bright and morning star  
He’s the fairest of ten thousand  
Everybody ought to know.

## *First Church Mission Moments...*

“Hello! My name is Eliza. I am very passionate about trash pick-up. I need there to be no trash in the world. So, do not litter because it is bad for the world; it is bad for the water; it is bad for the people; it is bad for the animals. We are going to be making a trash pick-up team. What we’ll be doing in the team is we will go to places that need litter to be picked up, and we will pick it up. We will have gloves and trash bags. We just need to pick up the litter!”

Our next project will be cleaning up after the homecoming game in Mechanicsburg. We will provide further details soon. If you’d like to learn more, please contact Krissy Marshall at [kjmarsh1126@gmail.com](mailto:kjmarsh1126@gmail.com). Thank you!

## News and Notes....

As the Summer Camp season winds to a close, we as Camp Coordinators would like to extend to you our thanks and appreciation for making this year's camping season memorable and successful. It seems like only yesterday when we had Camp Sunday in February to kick off the year with the camping theme: "Building authentic connections in Christ, community, and creation."

So, we would like to thank Parents, Campers, Volunteers, Prayer Partners, Financial Backers and You for supporting this vital program!

Your Sisters and Brother in Christ,  
Amy Ortiz, Deb Noss and Steve Noss



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



<b>Sally Kauffman.....September 8</b>	<b>Jane Bonser.....October 1</b>
<b>Pat Sheely.....September 11</b>	<b>Pam Weaver.....October 7</b>
<b>Judith Brown.....September 14</b>	<b>Peg Hassinger.....October 8</b>
<b>Joan Stokes.....September 19</b>	<b>Bonnie Klinger.....October 14</b>
<b>Marty Otto.....September 20</b>	<b>Kay Heiges.....October 18</b>
<b>Marley Ann Schmick.....September 21</b>	<b>Jim Siemons.....October 20</b>
<b>Gary Klinger.....September 22</b>	<b>Carol Ann Moomaw...October 21</b>
<b>Curt Bonser.....September 26</b>	<b>Winslow Brown.....October 23</b>
	<b>Don Shover.....October 23</b>
	<b>Gail Leinhos.....October 28</b>



- ♥ **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: Kelsey Goll

The **deadline** for submitting articles  
for the October 2025 issue is **Sept 15**.  
Early submissions always appreciated!