



First News First

Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors

From the Pastor's Desk.....

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On February 18th we begin the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday. Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays that leads up to Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. This represents the forty days Christ spent in the wilderness and drew closer to God as Jesus prepared to begin his ministry. For us, Lent is an invitation to draw closer to Christ.

Ash Wednesday asks us to pause to reflect and repent of our sins, remembering that we were created and are beloved by God who offers forgiveness when we ask. First Church will be joining together with other local UMCs that evening for worship, communion and receiving ashes.

The six Sundays of Lent at First Church, in worship we will explore some of Jesus' most difficult sayings that often leave us puzzled as we hear and try to live as Jesus commands. What does it mean to sell what you own, to hate your father and mother, or to be a slave? How do we balance universalism and particularism, understand threats of hell and that the devil is our father? What was Jesus trying to teach long ago? Are we to follow these lessons today, or just write off these scriptures as ancient customs?

During Lent we will offer a Sunday School class starting Feb 22 thru March 29th at 9:45 am for adults who want to dig more into these sayings.

For our daily growth in Lent, we invite you to read the daily Lenten journal with reflections by First Church members and staff. These brief reflections and prayers offer a time to pause in your day, grab a cup of coffee or tea, and spend a few moments with God in prayer and reflection.

As we prepare for Lent I pray you will make time each day to draw closer to Christ: to read the devotional, to join a study, to fast or add on something that brings you closer to Christ and join us in worship as we draw closer to Christ personally and as a church.

Praying for our journey ahead,

-Pastor Mira

Ash Wednesday Worship

Feb 18th 7pm

at Shiremanstown UMC (125 E Main St, Shiremanstown, PA)

Lent Study with Pastor Mira

Sundays Feb 22-March 29 9:45-10:45am

Room 105-Sign up online or in Main Lobby

Wednesdays Feb 25-April 1 6-7:30pm

Room 105 - Sign up online or in Main Lobby

Lenten Devotional

Available Feb 15th

In Main Lobby or online under Daily Bible Reading



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

Sunday School:

This is a wonderful opportunity to find consistency and accountability in your faith journey while studying God's Word. Here are the 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.

-February Study: Will begin a Lent-focused study

◆ **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 Wayne Leister at waydeleister@outlook.com.

◆ **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.

-Winter Study: Cokesbury's Adult Bible Study

Who is Jesus? Who are we? These lessons and Scriptures around the theme of "Light. Life. Salvation." will build up our faith and deepen our relationship with God as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

◆ **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.

-Winter Study: Cokesbury's Adult Bible Study

Who is Jesus? Who are we? These lessons and Scriptures around the theme of "Light. Life. Salvation." will build up our faith and deepen our relationship with God as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

Short-Term Class, Room 105

◆ **Sermon Study: "Difficult Words of Jesus" with Pastor Mira**

Join Pastor Mira in a 6-week study on Amy Jill Levine's book "The Difficult Words of Jesus". Offered during the Sundays of Lent: February 22nd - March 29th this book shows how Jesus' difficult teachings would have sounded to the people who first heard them, how they have been understood over time, and how we might interpret them in the context of the Gospel of love and reconciliation. Register on Church Center or at the Registration Table.

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. 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 or Jenell at 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:

- **Lent Devotions**

The First Church Lent Devotional Book will be available starting on February 8th. Please pick up a copy in the Main Lobby or download an electronic copy from the church website (under reading plans). Be encouraged by the words of others as we together walk towards the cross with Jesus this Lenten season.

- **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. Next Class: Feb 16, 6-8pm**

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-May. Meetings begin with dinner followed by a theme-based topic designed to help develop connections and offer support (spiritual, emotional, practical), inspiration, and resources for Christ-centered parenting. Suggested donation of \$5 per meeting to cover program materials and dinner (or a one-time suggested donation of \$30 for the full year). Mom Connection monthly gatherings begin Sept. 15 and last through May 18th. Sign up now at fumchurch.com or on Church Center. Contact Katie Knorr (kidscount@fumchurch.com) with questions.

- **Lent Sermon Series:**

If you would like to learn more about the material from the sermon series, consider reading the book *The Difficult Words of Jesus* by Amy Jill Levine. (Pastor Mira is offering a Sunday morning and Wednesday evening class for those looking to study and learn more about this material.)

- **Wednesday Evening Sermon Study: Feb. 25th – Apr. 1st, 6-7:30 P.M., Rm 105**

Join Pastor Mira in a 6-week study on Amy Jill Levine's book "*The Difficult Words of Jesus*" which will be offered each Wednesday of Lent. This book shows how Jesus' difficult teachings would have sounded to the people who first heard them, how they have been understood over time, and how we might interpret them in the context of the Gospel of love and reconciliation. Register on Church Center or at the Registration Table.

- **Wednesday Morning Study: Feb 18th – Mar 25th, Wednesdays 9-10AM**

Join others in conversation during the Lent season and prepare together for Easter by reading through the She Reads Truth/He Reads Truth 2026 Lent Study called Blessings. Register on Church Center or at the Registration desks. (Readings begin February 16th)

- **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 at 1:00 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 (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.

From the Library

Having written this newsletter for over twenty-five years, I often find it hard to find new ways to begin each month. But I will say I have never run out of new books with great plots, interesting characters, and settings that make me want to book a vacation there. Usually the February letter is about romance as this is the month of Valentines, but the library isn't getting many new romance books this month. On the other hand, many of our mysteries are romantic suspense novels and some of our historical fiction also falls into that category. Let me tell you about those.

In the historical romance category is a new author to the library, Liz Tolsma. Her book, *What I Left for You*, starts in Poland in 1939. As the Nazis invade Poland, Jewish lecturer Helena Kostyszak flees to the south taking her friends' infant daughter with her.

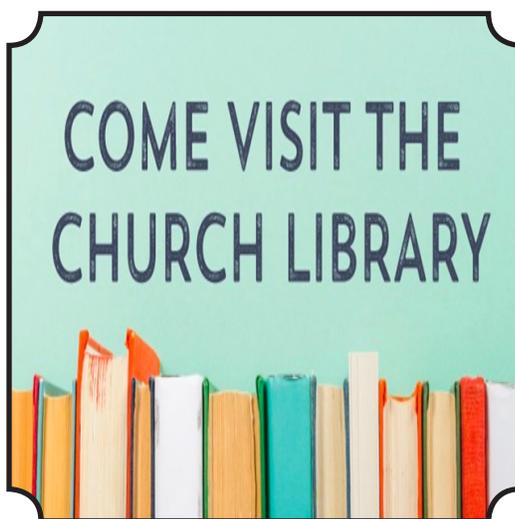
She doesn't know if she can save the baby or even herself, but she prays to God to help her. Then the book jumps to present day and McKenna Muir, a social worker, devastated by the death of one of her clients, decides to take a sabbatical in Poland and research her family. The two women's stories evolve side by side and seem to grow closer with each turn of the page. Especially interesting to me are the author's notes as she describes her research trip with her daughter finding the link to her own family. For those who are interested in World War II fiction, you won't want to miss this touching tale.

The library first came across the writings of Kate Angelo co-writing with Lynette Eason. Her current book written by herself is *Girl Lost*. Luna Rosati, pregnant at sixteen, decided it would be best for everyone if she gave her daughter up for adoption. Now a CIA counterintelligence officer, Luna would like to find the only blood relative she has-the teenage daughter she never met. Enter Special Agent Corbin King, who changed his name to distance himself from his convict father. Corbin is the father of Luna's daughter. When they begin the search for her, they encounter some things neither of them expected. A kidnapping, missing bodies, and even murder are just some of the obstacles to finding their daughter. But why? Who is willing to go to such lengths to keep her a secret? Ms. Angelo has written a story with so many twists and turns; it will keep you turning the pages long after your bedtime.

If neither of these books interests you, stop by the library and let our volunteer help you find just the right book for you. Also, our jigsaw puzzle collection is growing by the week, and I am sure you will find a great puzzle to entertain you on these cold winter nights.

See you in the library!

-Pam, Annette, Marge, Mary, Debra, Kathy, & Donna



Praying Follower



Prayer Room – Tower Room located off the back of room 216

We learn in scripture that Jesus often withdrew and found a quiet place to pray: “Early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and went out to a solitary place to pray (Mark 1:35).” A place where his focus could be on his Father. We have a new prayer room, and it’s a perfect place of quiet where you can sit with God. The prayer room will be available on Sunday mornings during the Sunday enrichment hour (9:45-10:45 AM). We welcome you to visit the space and use it for your place of prayer.

Joy in the Morning - A small group invitation, Monday February 9 th , 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 at 1 pm on a Monday afternoon at Bethany Village’s West Apartments Commons Room. Janice Bowen facilitates, drawing upon readings and devotionals. For more information, contact Janice wecare@fumchurch.com.



Visiting with Friends!

If you miss seeing a special friend at church, Janice Bowen would like to hear from you! Janice enjoys 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 at home. Either way, Janice would love to hear from you! 717-766-4611 x112 or wecare@fumchurch.com.

Greeting Cards to Share!

Looking for a birthday card or a way 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.

Passionate Worshipper



Ash Wednesday, February 18th

An Ash Wednesday service with fellow UM churches will be held at Shiremanstown UMC at 7:00 P.M.

Camp Sunday

Join us for Sunday morning worship services on February 15th to learn about the opportunities to support and participate in a variety of amazing camps offered by the Susquehanna UMC Camping and Retreat Ministry. The 2026 camp registration is currently open and the early bird deadline is May 1. Go to www.suscrm.org to learn more.

Camps Great!!!

Dedicated Missionary



Coffee Ministry

Coffee is available before the Sunday Enrichment hour (9:45) and the 11:00 Gathering Service. Coffee is located in the main lobby (near the mailboxes), and we hope you find it a welcoming space on Sunday mornings. Contact Lisa Aronson at Discipleship@fumchurch if you have any interest in helping support this expression of hospitality and being a part of the Coffee Ministry Team.

Relationship Builder



Men's Breakfast – February 7th & March 7th 7:30 a.m., Brothers Restaurant

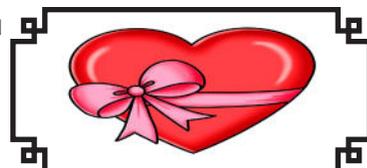
An open invitation is extended to all men who want to gather for good food and light-hearted fellowship on the first Saturday of each month (Brothers Restaurant is located at 705 Gettysburg Pike, Mechanicsburg, 17055). Please contact John Bowen or Bob Wertz, Jr. if you are interested in attending.

Women's Morning Meet-Up – February 14th & March 14th, 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.

Senior Solo's Valentine's Luncheon | Feb 10, 11:30 am

If you are missing your spouse this Valentine's Day, we would love to have you join us for lunch in the Hardwood Café (under the balcony) on Tuesday, February 10th at 11:30 am. Please reach out to Janice Bowen for more information (717-766-4611 x112 / wecare@fumchurch.com) or contact Bonnie Guyer to RSVP (717-766-0145).

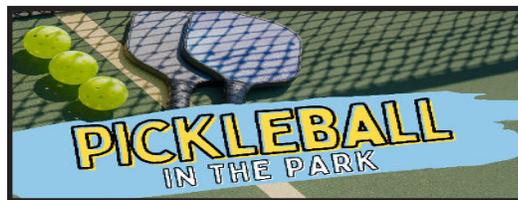


Wear Your Name Tag!

We encourage everyone to wear their name tags! Name tags help us connect and build relationships within our church family. Need a name tag? Contact the church office.

Pickleball! Tuesday 5-7 pm

Please join us for weekly Pickleball in the 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 at wecare@fumchurch.com with questions or to be added to the Pickleball email list for updates.



FUMC Volleyball! Wednesdays, 6 - 8 pm

If you enjoy volleyball, please reach out to Geri Nuss (717-802-1329) for more information about playing Wednesday evenings!



Finance Section

2025 End of Year

First Church, like many churches, experienced a more challenging year financially in 2025. Our General Fund is supported almost entirely through local giving/tithing, and we are blessed to have a congregation that gives generously in time and tithe. The General Fund supports the daily operational expenses of our church including: staff salaries and benefits, missions, programming costs, utilities and similar operating expenses, debt payments, and contributions to the Susquehanna Conference. Giving was lower than we had budgeted for at the beginning of the year. Fortunately many expense lines were also lower than budgeted, but overall the church ended the year with a deficit of \$30,325. While we have some short-term reserves that we can use to cover this deficit, that will nearly expend those reserves. Thank you to everyone who answered the call for extra giving in the month of December, it really did help us to shrink the deficit!

2026 Budget

Income: As mentioned, the General Fund is almost entirely supported locally through giving. We collect and tabulate the pledge cards and use them, along with historical giving figures and other estimating, to conservatively estimate what giving / revenue will be in 2026. Thank you to everyone who made a pledge to First Church in 2026 - of any amount - it greatly helps in budgeting. For 2026 we are estimating giving to be 812,000, which is 2% more in revenue than we received in 2025.

Expenses: Expenses are estimated by staff, program leaders, and the missions committee and staff parish relations committee. My thanks for the thoughtful work put in by these groups to inform expenses for 2026. We are estimating expenses of \$846,000.

Projected expenses being higher than estimated revenues means, if nothing changes, we would again face a deficit of up to \$35,000. We recognize that this is just the financial story of our church at the beginning of the year and that throughout the year revenues and expenses will evolve, hopefully positively for First Church.

Thank you for your gifts, your commitment to First Church in 2026, and for your faith in our prudent stewardship of these funds.

Cookie Walk Appreciation

A BIG "Thank You" to all those who made cookies for the youth's Cookie Walk. We not only were able to earn money for our summer mission trips and meet a lot of neighbors who came to get cookies, but we also had enough cookies to help support the other church cookie needs that arise during the holiday season. Thank you for your baking skills and generous help!

Penny Fund/Penny Bucket

Penny Bucket 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. Thank you!



Ringling in the News!

Hopefully you have ordered your pie from one of our bell ringers, on the order sheets in Sunday School classes or in the main Hallway, or online at church center! Pies are being made Saturday, February 7th. Pick up time is noon to 2pm that day! \$14 per pie. Thank you!

Look for a date for eating out later this month – we'll be returning to Hoss's, always a favorite!

There are only a few spaces left at the tables on our Trivia Night, Thursday, February 26th. If you meant to join us don't forget to register! Unfortunately, this is not an event you can just walk into.

Coming in March: March 15 – Are you hungry for fresh, direct from the factory that day, Krispy Kreme Donuts!? Order a dozen at a time – or share with a friend.

March 29 (Palm Sunday) we will have R&K Subs/Pretzel Sandwiches delivered.

These are always a hit! Be sure to get yours ordered!

Our rehearsals for the Symposium have started! We already know we like the piece from Australia, and we get to play stones in the piece from Great Britain! The piece from Hong Kong?..... eh (so far!) It will probably end up being our favorite!

We continue to have an Outreach group of bell ringers who are willing to be out and about during the day (or night) playing where they are needed. Let us know if you are interested!

Stained Glass Class



Torch

There are two stained glass windows of the torch at First Church. One is located on the 1st floor 7th window Frederick St entrance and the other is in Room 122 4 yr. old classroom 6th window

The torch symbol has several meanings in the life of the church. The first is that the torch symbolizes Jesus being taken into custody by the temple guard in the garden of Gethsemane.

¹ After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴ Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" ⁵ They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing

with them.⁶ When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground.⁷ Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go."⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus.¹¹ Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" (John 18:1-18)

The second meaning is as a symbol of personal passion for spreading the good news. As a child, I learned this song. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

First Church Mission Moments...



A ministry update from Josh & Megan Herring:

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you ... because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (Philippians 1:3,5). Paul's words to the church at Philippi stand true for us as we consider FUMC's investment in our work with DiscipleMakers over the past 5+ years.

Because of God's grace in Christ and because of your faithfulness in praying and giving to our work, college students across PA are becoming Christians, studying their Bibles, and committing their lives to membership in local churches.

Here are a few updates that showcase God's work on secular campuses in the area: Our ministry at Shippensburg University has over 150 students attending Bible study. At Gettysburg College, our student leaders are actively pursuing faith conversations with their non-Christian friends. And at a new campus in Harrisburg, God has provided more than 30 interested students after only one semester of work.

Ministry is not about numbers. If that were the case, we'd be consistently disappointed. Our Disciple-Makers ministry is about raising up disciple-making disciples of college students. Whether it's 10 or 10,000, we thank God for the opportunity to raise them up & send them out.

New Digs Ministry - A message from Ron Nichols

New Digs Ministry helps financially disadvantaged individuals and families who are in the process of rebuilding their lives by providing them with gently used furniture and household goods. We receive, store, and freely give away furniture, household goods, and linens that may be needed to "move in" to a client's new living quarters, with no cost to the client. Our clients are referred to us by many social services agen-

cies and churches in Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry Counties. Most clients have recently experienced a life changing event that finds them in a new dwelling without the most basic of items: beds and linens, living room furniture, kitchen table and chairs, and dishes, pots and pans. We regularly serve veterans, men and women starting a new life after prison confinement or drug rehabilitation, homeless men and women who have received placement in housing, and victims of domestic violence that have been safely relocated.

As a volunteer with New Digs Ministry I have been privileged to see the impact of our ministry as we provide the essential needs of our clients. There are often times where we experience moments that we call "God moments". This happens when we are preparing to tell a client that certain items they have requested are not available and a vehicle pulls in loaded with the certain items that were requested. We essentially unloaded items from the donor and load them right into the client's vehicle.

Being a volunteer with New Digs Ministry is a very rewarding experience. All personnel associated with the organization are volunteers, so it is like being part of a family that wants to help others.

New Digs Ministry is housed in the Mission Central Warehouse located at 5 Pleasant View Drive, Mechanicsburg. We are open from 9-12 on Wednesdays and the first and third Saturdays each month. Check out our website, www.newdigsministry.org, for additional information.

Please keep New Digs Ministry in mind if you have items to donate or you are looking for an opportunity to help others.

First Church Youth

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

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.)

F. Y. I.'s...

DisAbilities Ministries Received Grant Money

It has been a while since you have read an article from DisAbilities Ministries. We've updated our name from Access Ministries to DisAbilities Ministries. While our goal to provide access to worship and spiritual growth for all individuals remains, the name DisAbilities Ministries is easier for all to understand.

We are happy to share that in March 2025 Pastor Mira learned there was a grant opportunity from the Disability Ministries Committee of the UMC. It was the end of the application period, so we quickly identified areas within this ministry and within the building that grant money could help. We applied for a \$625 grant.

Our application was approved In October and in November we worked to complete all the final paperwork and forms. During December we moved forward with the following improvements:

**New Stand to hold Rejoicing Spirits Banners – This stand has been in use for several months and is much lighter and easier to move each month than the old patio umbrella stands. Our Rejoicers are even able to safely help move the banners.

**New carpet piece for the hallway ramp leading into the sanctuary by the elevator. This carpet sticks to the floor replacing a mat that was turning up at the edges. The tripping hazard was especially troublesome for some of our members using canes and walkers.

** Fourteen new shaker instruments (tambourines, bell shakers) were added for Rejoicing Spirits worship to replace broken ones.

**Two new LED lights were installed in the stairway from the Narthex to the basement area by the elevator. This is a needed update for everyone's safety.

**A Retractable Advertising Banner and stand were designed and purchased for use at church and community events.

**With funds remaining we were able to purchase a few sensory educational items for Little Friends Nursery School, including Touch and Feel Alphabet Flash Cards and Touch and Match Board.

DisAbilities Ministries is so thankful for Pastor Mira's leadership on this project as well as the help of other individuals who helped all the pieces come together. First Church has been blessed by this grant from the Disability Ministries Committee of the UMC. What a wonderful way to start off the New Year, knowing our ministry can help church and community members as well as care for our building.

-Karin McHale





Connecting through
CHURCH CENTER
 CHURCH CENTER TIPS, HELPS, AND HOW-TOS

First Church uses Church Center as a platform for sharing information, registrations for events, electronic giving, the church directory, and more. Church Center can be accessed on both desktops and mobile devices, and will prompt you to create an account to log in and to choose First Church as your church association.

Looking for a sign-up? In the Main Lobby is the Registration Table, where you can register for current studies, fundraisers, events, and more.



Save the Date – Future Church Opportunities

- The next **Growing Together** gathering will be a Stay-and-Play Game day on March 15th from 12:00-1:30.
- A **New Member and a Confirmation Class** will be offered after Easter. The classes will run April 12th – May 10th. Registration will open in March.
- We will be going to the **Senator’s Game** together as a church on June 7th for an afternoon game. Watch for ticket information and registration information in April.

How do I access the Church Center directory?

To access the directory, you have to request access and be granted permission. This is a safety measure that helps to assure the church directory is only available to those known by the church. The office can add and remove access to ensure your information is only available to those actively involved in First Church. You can choose what you do and do not wish to share on your profile.

Requesting Access Directions:

- Email the church office at office@fumchurch.com and ask to be given access.
- Include the email that you used to make your church center account.
- That email address will receive an email granting you permission.
- Click the button on the email to complete your access process.
- Make sure that you have made visible elements of your profile you wish to have others see in the directory (directions for that process can be found in the Dec/Jan Newsletter.)
- If you have any trouble, reach out to the church office.

Church Staff

Pastor:

Rev. Mira Hewlett
717-766-4611 ext. 103
pastormira@fumchurch.com

**Director of Office Management
and Communications:**

Kelsey Goll
717-766-4611, ext. 105
communications@fumchurch.com

Administration & Outreach

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"Thank you, First Church family for the support all of you have provided over the past 3 years while my mom's health significantly declined. Mabel Strock was called to her eternal home, September 10, 2025. She was faithful and fearless to the end. There were cards and flowers received, earnest prayers raised, and emails created on our behalf. Thank you. There were unspoken well wishes offered with lots of concerns and guidance spoken. Thank you. The stories of others who met the dreaded dementia diagnosis gave me HOPE. We were not alone through this journey. The visitations came at the right time when it was time to unload burdens. Thank you. First Church Staff is a blessing. Love lifted us." - Karen (Strock) Simmons



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



Joanna Ciampa.....February 6
Janie Stover.....February 6
Leon Bricker.....February 9
Joyce Parfet.....February 12
Dottie Zimmerman..February 26
Gerry Aumiller.....February 27
Ralph Haines.....February 28

Pat Gavlak.....March 9
Ben Miller.....March 12
Sara Meck.....March 15
Marge Robinson.....March 15
Gail Siemons.....March 15
Bob Wertz, Sr.....March 17
Evelyn Fennell.....March 25
Robert Erikson.....March 29
Buddy Miller.....March 29
Dave Scholl.....March 31



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Denny Kauffman married 66 years on February 14, 1960.
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Gary Betz married 52 years on February 16, 1974.
- ♥ Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Cook married 52 years on February 19, 1974.

FIRST NEWS FIRST
EDITORS: Kelsey Goll

The **deadline** for submitting articles
for the March 2026 issue is **Feb. 15**.
Early submissions always appreciated!