



First News First

Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors

From the Pastor's Desk.....

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I love the season of Lent, not because of the themes of repentance, confession and fasting (I struggle with all those too), but because it is a great annual reminder that I need to refocus my life on Christ.

My mom grew up in the Reformed Christian tradition and I remember growing up we always had fish on Fridays and had to give up sweets during Lent. As a kid I thought fish was gross and slimy, and no sweets at home meant I got them from friends at lunch during school, although we did delight in the tradition of Shrove Tuesday fasnachts.

The practice of meatless Fridays is a Catholic tradition, that dates back to John Chrysostom who instructed early Christians to not consume meat the entire 40 days of Lent. It was Pope Benedict XIV that called for fasting from meat on Fridays in 1741.

The practice of fasting, giving up luxuries is to imitate Christ's sacrifice during the forty days he spent in wilderness. The forty days of Christ's wilderness is why Lent is forty days, plus the Sundays. Sundays are seen as "little Easters," remembering each Sunday we join in worship to celebrate Christ's love and resurrection with the promise of eternal life. On those days many will break fasts giving thanks for all God's provisions promised in heaven. Others, recognizing Jesus didn't leave the wilderness on those days, continue their fasts.

Today many Catholics and some Protestants continue both of these traditions as ways to simplify life and draw closer to God.

In recent decades instead of going meatless or fasting, some Christians add on practices such as journaling, daily devotions, or joining a class or Bible study. This connects to Jesus' wilderness time that about how he drew closer to God while in the wilderness.

The question of Lent, whether you are giving up or adding something, is how are you drawing closer to Christ? Lent is a time to examine our hearts and lives, repenting of areas and ways we have not lived like Christ, seek God's forgiveness, and draw closer to God just as Jesus showed us when he spent time in the wilderness.

May Lent be a season that helps you refocus your life on Christ as we move towards the celebration of Easter morning and understand with new power the words, Hallelujah Christ is Risen!

On this journey with you,
Pastor Mira

Sidebar:
Palm Sunday Worship: March 29th 8:30 & 11 services
Passion Play: April 2nd at 7pm in Sanctuary
Easter Sunday: April 5th 6:40am Sunrise Service, 8:30 & 11 services



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.

March Study: The Final Days: A Lenten Journey Through the Gospels - This 6-week video-based series by Matt Rawle explores how each Gospel offers a different lens through which we understand Jesus' Passion. "One portrait reveals Jesus to be in control, while another emphasizes his suffering. In one story Jesus offers hope to the thief on the cross, and in another, Jesus only receives derision. These different perspectives aren't a reason to dismiss the Gospels; rather they reveal an abundant, diverse, and complementary picture of God's work in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus."

◇ **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: robert_wertz@plantsitelogistics.com.

Spring Study: Cokesbury's Adult Bible Study

This quarter's theme: Lament. Confession. Rebirth

This spring, our Bible lessons follow the theme "Exclusion and Embrace," and encourage us to consider what we need to let go of and what we need to take on as followers of Jesus.

◇ **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.

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◇ **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**

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: March 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

I know many of you enjoyed January's sermon series on the book of Esther, but would you like to know more about the life of Esther and her contemporaries? The library has the first two books in the historical fiction series Queen Esther's Court by Tessa Afshar. In the first book, "The Queen's Cook", we meet Roxannah, a talented cook who is desperate to support her family. She approaches Adin, the royal physician, and asks him to help her find employment in the queen's kitchen. The kitchen staff reminds me of the corporate world with cliques, backstabbing, and a struggle to rise in the kitchen staffing levels. Roxannah's steadfast loyalty to the queen and her work ethic earns her the friendship of the queen. Not surprisingly in a household of more than one woman and each vying for the king's favor, another wife, Amestris, is plotting against Esther. But how can Roxannah with the help of Adin, stop this plot when they don't even know who Amestris's fellow conspirators are

The Royal Artisan, book two in the series, features Sazana, a Jewish woman who creates exquisite pottery for her master Lord Haman. But when Haman discovers she is Jewish, he forces her into indentured servitude. After Haman's downfall, Esther restores her to her former place as a creator of beautiful art. But Haman's sons are not happy with either of these women, and they begin to plot against them both. Esther sends her trusted servant Jadon, to watch over Sazana and try to root out the danger. Little does Queen Esther know that Sazana was jilted by Jadon several years earlier. Will they be able to put the past behind them and work together? I will let you find out.

In keeping with the recent weather of snow and more snow, I thought you might like to read some really chilling adventures during an avalanche, hoping you would feel it's not too bad here. Whiteout has two novellas in one book written by Lynette Eason and Dani Pettrey. Buried in the Shadows by Ms. Pettrey starts on a happy note as Cassandra Paker arrives at her best friend's wedding while hoping she has left her stalker behind. Sheriff Joel Brunswick is also part of the wedding party, which may make things awkward as she left him at the altar when she realized she was in danger. Now an avalanche has stranded the wedding party and everyone else at a remote ski lodge—including her stalker.

In Snowbound Secrets by Lynette Eason, Dr Maya Sullivan is taking a break from planning a retreat for military veterans. Her relaxing snow lodge break goes sideways as an avalanche strands her with several others at a Colorado ski lodge. A happy reunion with Gideon, an old high school crush, makes Maya think the situation is not so bad. But when odd things start happening to her, she realizes someone is targeting her and being stranded could be deadly. Both of these novellas are filled with twists and turns, but are short enough to leave you with plenty of time to shovel snow in between each book.

I hope you have filled these cold nights with some of the library's many jigsaw puzzles and books every Sunday to get you through this weather!!!

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 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 March 9th , 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.



Health and Wellness Presentation – Save the Date! April 12th, 9:45 a.m.

Please join us in the multi-purpose room during the Sunday School hour for the next Health and Wellness presentation titled: 'Resources for Caregivers of Loved Ones with Dementia: A Panel Presentation.' The panel will consist of Sandy Leister, RN; John Bowen, MSW; and both Serenity Hoch and Marina Bardsley from Artis Senior Living. Each will share thoughts and ideas about support and resources for caregivers from their individual experience and expertise. The panel will happily receive questions from those in attendance.

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, missing your friends who are at home..Janice would love to hear from you! [717-766-4611](tel: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 or know of who may appreciate receiving a card, please contact Janice Bowen wecare@fumchurch.com.

Passionate Worshipper



Passion Play - April 2, 2026 - 6:30 pm

For over thirty years, First Church has performed a Passion Play where children, youth, and adults share the story of Jesus leading up to his death and resurrection. The Passion Play will take the audience on the journey with Jesus from Palm Sunday to Easter. There's no need to pre-register for this free, all-ages event. Be sure to invite friends and family!

Good Friday Prayer Walk, Friday, April 3

The annual Community Good Friday Prayer Walk will be held on Friday, April 3 starting at 11:00 a.m. Led by local pastors, prayer walkers will start at one of the prayer sites and then cover the surrounding area in prayer. Participants are then invited to join together at noon at Mechanicsburg First Church of God on the square (28 East Main Street) for closing prayer and worship. All are welcome! The starting prayer sites are: Mechanicsburg Area Senior High, First United Methodist Church, St. Mark Lutheran Church, Town Square Green Space and Turning Point Church. Watch for more details and updates on our website and on Church Center. If you have any questions about the Good Friday Prayer Walk, please contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com. Looking forward to praying for our community with you! 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Dedicated Missionary



Isaiah 61 Homeless Ministry | Next Volunteer Opportunity is Wed. March 18, 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. Specifically, 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 at tholland1967@gmail.com.

Relationship Builder



Men's Breakfast – March 7th & April 7th at 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.

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

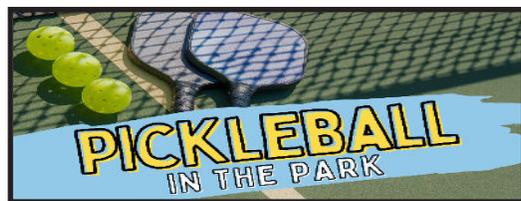
Christian Fellowship Sunday School Class Peanut Butter Egg Fundraiser

It is that time of year again when the Christian Fellowship Class makes those ultra delicious peanut butter eggs. Orders are being taken for peanut butter eggs. The cost is \$10.00 for a bag of 6 eggs. Order your eggs by signing up on the sign-up sheets in the narthex, by texting Sandy Walton at 717-433-3687 or by emailing Sandy at swalton54@comcast.net. Eggs will be ready for pick up in Fellowship Hall on Saturday, March 21, between 11am- 1pm, and on Sunday, March 22, after first service and after Sunday school. Please place your orders by March 15th. By the way, last year we had several people who are not members of our class join in on egg making day. It is a fun morning with some work thrown in. A great way to learn how to make candy and an early tasting of these yummy eggs. We will be in the kitchen starting at 7:30 and working until we are done. You can roll eggs, dip eggs, or package eggs for a little time or all morning. We break for a potluck lunch, and you are welcome to join us. Hope to see you there. Thank you in advance for your support.

The Senior Solo's Fellowship will dine at Snappers Restaurant on Tuesday, March 10th at 11:30 a.m. If you plan on attending, please call Bonnie Guyer at (717) 766-0145. Transportation can be provided upon request.

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](tel:717-802-1329)) for more information about playing Wednesday evenings!



General Fund

2026 Budget	\$811,683
Expected Income YTD	\$67,640 (8.3% of budget)
Actual Income YTD	\$55,604 (6.9% of budget)
Actual Expenses	\$69,929 (8.3% of budget)

Sundays in January were extremely cold and snowy, which dampened attendance in worship and also dampened giving in January. We hope to see giving catch-up somewhat in February and March. We also know that our members give differently, some automatically, some in lump sums, so we are not concerned yet about the budget. Expenses are in-line with budgetary projections for January overall, with some areas like missions not expending much at this point in the year, while maintenance costs like snow removal, fuel, and utilities are running over projections for the beginning of the year. Our Parsonage loan currently stands at \$38,386.99 and the Bell Tower Loan principal balance is \$27,163.83. We thank those who continue to give in service of our debt. We thank everyone for their continued commitment and support of First Church through gifts of all sizes and through the many other ways that we as a faith community come together and worship.

Easter Sunday Breakfast – Following the Easter Sunrise Service at the Mechanicsburg Cemetery at 6:40 A.M. we will have a breakfast in the fellowship hall. If you plan to come and are able to bring a dish, we would love that! Sign up here tsu.me/easter26 to help us know what types of foods are coming/find suggestions of what to bring. If you don't come to the Sunrise service, you are still welcome to our breakfast!

Cooking and Caring for our Community at Broad Street Elementary, March 19, 2026

First Church will once again be partnering with other community churches to cook and serve a meal for Broad Street Elementary families on Thursday, March 19 at 5:00 p.m. First Church will be providing the BBQ and volunteers. First Church is responsible for 70 pounds of BBQ (the amount is increased due to more people attending the meal) using a simple recipe provided by the school (see below). We plan to serve over 300 for dinner and provide take-home meals to families unable to attend. Please consider 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 at l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com.

- 5 lbs. Ground Beef (80% lean or higher)
- 1/2 cup White Vinegar
- 1/2 cup Brown Sugar
- 3 and 3/4 cups Ketchup
- 1/4 cup Mustard
- Cook beef, drain fat, mix in other ingredients & heat thoroughly.



Penny Fund/Penny Bucket

For years, Marilyn Seig cared for "The Penny Bucket" at First Church that collected change to help provide clean water in South Congo through the UMC Advance. Funds keep existing wells working and drill new wells so clean water is within walking distance of every person in the Mulungwishi, South Congo area. Since 2004, \$15,744 has been collected for clean water in several areas in Africa. The Penny Bucket is in the Main Lobby for any size donations. Thank you!

Ringling in the News!

As we enter the month of March, the Praise Ringers would again like to thank you for supporting us in our last several fundraising events. We saw many of you at Texas Roadhouse the end of January! We also hope you are enjoying your cherry and apple pies! We made 230 pies on February 7th! And what fun we had at our Trivia Night Feb. 26th! Thank you Brian Sanker for being our Trivia Host!

This month we will again be dining at **Hoss's on Tuesday, March 3rd**. Look for a flyer on the "Fundraising" table. Or ask for one electronically! Something new! We are taking orders for **Krispy Kreme donuts**! Orders must be in quickly – by March 9th! **Delivery will be Sunday, March 15th** – direct that morning from the factory in Maryland! YUM! As is our custom, we are again taking orders for **R&K Subs** to be **delivered on Palm Sunday, March 29**. Orders will be due Sunday, March 22. As always, you may order from a bell ringer or use the order sheet on bell table in the main hallway.

As Spring arrives we are in full "ring" – practicing for the Symposium, practicing for the **Central PA Handbell Festival** to be held April 18 in Lancaster, playing at various churches and Senior Living Facilities, and in **Concert on April 19th at the historic Union Church downtown at 3pm on April 19th**.

Future Dates for your calendars: April 11 – annual Spaghetti Dinner (note date change!)
April 14 – Panera Bread Dining Out
May 3 – our annual Spring Concert - Kathie looking back!

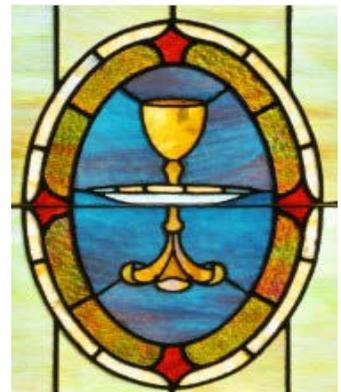
Stained Glass Class

The Chalice and Plate

The Chalice and Plate stain glass window is located on the 1st Floor, 3rd window from the Frederick St. entrance of First Church. The Chalice and Plate helps to tell about the Passion of Jesus Christ. All four Gospels describe the Lord's Supper or Communion (Matthew 26: 20-29, Mark 14:17-25 Luke 22: 14-30 and John 13: 1-30). Luke's account of the Lord's Supper follows:

14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said,

"Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. 22 For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this. (Luke 22:14-23 NRSV).



The chalice in the window represents the blood of Christ shed for the forgiveness of sins. The cup made of gold or silver is used to hold the consecrated wine for the Lord's Supper (Eucharist). The word chalice comes from the Latin word calix meaning "a cup." The chalice should have a wide base usually in the shape of a hexagon or octagon, to prevent it from easily tipping over. The stem of the chalice should have a knob, so the priest may easily handle it. The plate represents the body of Jesus given for us.

First Church Mission Moments...

REGISTER FOR SUMMER CAMP!

BUILDING AUTHENTIC CONNECTIONS TO CHRIST, COMMUNITY, AND CREATION.

SPECIAL OFFERS:

- Early Bird Discount** - Save \$25 if you register on or before **May 1**.
- Sibling Discount** - Register the one at full price, and additional siblings receive a \$25 discount.
- Invite-a-Friend Gift** - Invite a friend who has never been to camp and receive \$50 off the cost of camp after they register.
- Financial Assistance** - First Church will pay **half** of your camp fees!

TO LEARN ABOUT:

- Financial assistance for campers
- Details on discounts
- What to expect at camp
- Becoming a prayer partner
- Volunteering as a camp dean, nurse or counselor
- Working at camp
- Campsite workdays

CONTACT OUR FIRST CHURCH CAMP COORDINATORS!

DEB NOSS: SDPPP@MSN.COM
AMY ORTIZ: MATTANDAMYORTIZ@GMAIL.COM

Visit suscrm.org to register and see a complete list of 2026 camps!

Registration for our 2026 camp and retreat events is now open!

Families can check out the programs offered at Wesley Forest and Camp Penn by visiting the website at suscrm.org or check out the registration table in main lobby for more info!

Those who register by May 1st will receive \$25 off on select events!

FIRST CHURCH YOUTH

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.)

Confirmation Retreat – Did you recently get confirmed or are you planning on participating in the spring confirmation class? Mark your calendars to a conference-wide Confirmation Retreat. This one-day retreat held at Wesley Forest on April 18th will join you with other confirmands around the state, engage in confirmation-related topics, and give you time to meet our Bishop. Please register on Church Center to participate and for more information.

College Scholarships- Forms are available in the Church office or you can ask for an electronic copy to be emailed to you.

Summer Missions: Information about our summer plans can be found on Church Center. Please register by March 15th if planning to participate.

Easter Sunrise Service – If you are planning to attend the 6:40 A.M. service and can help with reading, communion, or prayer, please reach out to Lisa Aronson and tell her of your interest. The youth band is also leading worship and would love your help.

2026 First Church Concert Series



The Worship Arts Ministry is pleased to announce the schedule for the 2026 First Church Concert Series! All concert and events open to the public to celebrate the joy of music, as we feature various performers and musicians. All concerts are free, though donations are accepted. This year's concerts include:

- **“Together in Praise”** - A Benefit Concert – Oliver Paris, French Horn | Sunday, March 22, 3 p.m.
- **Praise Ringers in Concert** – FUMC Handbell Choir | Sunday, May 3, 7 p.m.
- **An Acoustic Evening of Worship** – Christy Holliday & Jesse King | Sunday, Sept. 20, time TBD
- **“Holiday Harmony”** – First Church Music Ensembles | Sunday, Dec. 6, 7 p.m.

Together in Praise: A Benefit Concert – Oliver Paris, French Horn
First Church Sanctuary | Sunday, March 22, 3 p.m.

From classical pieces to hymn collaborations and solo pieces, Oliver Paris will present “Together in Praise”, a French Horn benefit for Messiah University’s International Concert Choir Tour.

A First Church member and sophomore music education student at Messiah University, Oliver Paris has been playing French Horn for 11 years. He has studied under Dr. Mike Harcrow, and is a member of Messiah’s Wind Ensemble, Orchestra, Brass Choir, Horn Choir, and the Grantham Brass project. Additionally, he has had extensive experience in his high school years, including a two-time All-State Band participant and the Harrisburg Youth Orchestra.

Please join us for an afternoon of brass music!

A light reception will follow the concert in the MPR.



Soupy Saturday Storytime

On the last day of January in sub-freezing temperatures, a First Church crew of helpers gathered in the church kitchen to make a batch of soup and muffins while staving-off winter’s chill with the warmth of friendship, steaming soup pots, and hot ovens! Thanks to a generous supply of donated ingredients, we had an abundance of chicken, broth, veggies, seasonings...and the makings for so many muffins we had to search-out more muffin tins! Helpers learned how to run the dishwasher to prepare the jars while the soup and muffin makers got busy. Two hours later, we had several mason jars filled with steaming soup (thanks to special soup funnels that making the jar-filling so much easier!) Bags were filled with soup, muffins, the latest newsletter and a joyfully colorful placemat created by our Squares and Prayers quilters. While some remained at the church to clean-up, others took off in a variety of directions and destinations to share soup! Wondering how long ago we started this tradition of Soupy Saturday, a search through a planning folder found evidence dating back to 2013!





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.

How do I find information about my giving?

Whether you are a regular giver, looking to give once, or need a giving statement, Church Center is the place to go! When in Church Center (website or in the app):

- Click on your profile (a circular image with your picture or initials).
- Click on "My giving."

Under "my giving," you will be able to manage your recurring donation, see your current pledge, and see your giving statements by clicking on the phrase that references what you are looking to do. (On the web version there is an option column on the left hand side).

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

-Growing Together | March 15, 12-1:30p.m.

The next Growing Together gathering will be a Stay-and-Play Game day. Join us for lunch and a time of enjoying each other's company and playing table games. Bring your favorite board game if you have one. Please sign up at the Registration Table or on Church Center.

-New Member and a Confirmation Class will be offered after Easter. The classes will run April 12th-May 10 during the Sunday School hour (9:45-10:45am). Registration opens in March.

-Ladies Paint Night | April 17 6:30-8:30 p.m. (all skills welcome , 18+)

Join us for a fun evening, as we learn to paint a beautiful spring picture on canvas. Step by step instructions provided by Kayla from the Fredricksen Library. We will meet in Fellowship Hall for snacks and painting. The fee is just \$15 and includes all materials, instructions and snacks. Registration open on Church Center. Class is limited to 20. Questions, contact Lori Hoffnagle at outreach@fumchurch.com.

-Senators Game | June 7th

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.

-Battle-Ball Tournament and Worship Night at Camp Hill UMC on April 26th.

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Happy Birthday

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



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

Robert Meck.....April 2
Dee Farr.....April 3
Darlene Wilkinson....April 17
Gina Johnson.....April 24
Janet Baker.....April 25
Grace Brandt.....April 25
Richard Schmick.....April 26
Larry Buddenbaum.....April 26



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



♥ Mr. & Mrs. Jean Siemons married 62 years on March 21, 1964.

FIRST NEWS FIRST
EDITORS: Kelsey Goll

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