



First News First

From the Pastor's Desk.....

"Gentlemen, This is a Football"

This wonderful line is attributed to coach Vince Lombardi who was addressing a Green Bay Packers professional football team on a losing streak. He was telling the players it was time to get back to basic skills: tackle, block, throw or kick a ball, run away or toward. Execute the fundamentals first, and the rest will fall in place. It's a wonderful piece of advice that has been quoted or paraphrased by many coaches of all sorts of men's and women's, boys' and girls' sports.

I find myself quoting this line more today than ever in my ministry. There are generations of persons raised without contact (or even protected from contact) with the institutions of faith, synagogues and churches. The percentage of religious "nones" is almost a third of the population. Think of the last time you referenced a biblical story or image only to be met with a blank stare. In the church it feels like a right time to listen to coach Lombardi.

The most fundamental act for a Christian believer is so simple you could miss it. We are a people who talk to a Higher Power. We could be imagining the one to whom we are talking. There's a philosophical school of thought that goes back to a 19th century German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach that provides clever explanations why we fool ourselves into imagining "someone out there". Or, we could be really talking to "someone out there" because God is and because God "rewards those who seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

I invite you to join me in person or online this September as we explore Prayers from the Heart. We'll be looking at some "this is a football" texts from the Bible as we try to recover the raw experiences behind five fundamental types of prayers. Through the centuries the church has given them formal theological names like intercession and contrition, but before that reflective stage they are raw experiences. Won't you join me as we look at: Help! Please! Thanks! Sorry! and Wow!

Yours in the Journey,
Lew

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Discipleship Opportunities:

No matter whether you are just beginning to explore faith, growing as a disciple, or becoming a fully devoted follower, there is always something new to learn on our journey with Jesus. First Church is here to help by providing a variety of offerings for your next faithful step:

- **Wednesday Men's Group – 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 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.

- **Women's Morning Bible Study - Wednesday | 9:30-10:30a.m. | Hardwood Cafe**

Join Lisa Aronson and other women at the round tables in the green chair section of the sanctuary on Wednesday mornings beginning September 16th. Meeting for 10 weeks, we will read the book of Ephesians and use Lydia Brownback's workbook to further our study. This is a space for conversation, encouragement, and accountability as we grow together in God's Word. Come as often as you can — no pressure, just connection and study (the workbook can lend itself to solo study as well). Bring your Bible, your workbook, and a heart ready to grow. Sign up on Church Center or at the Registration Table. For questions, contact Lisa Aronson discipleship@fumchurch.com

- **Monthly Ladies Night | Third Mondays September-May | 6-8 p.m.**

Join us for our Monthly Ladies Night hosted by the Women's Ministry of First UMC (previously known as Mom Connection). Our goal for this ministry is to be a gathering of women from all stages of life. Women of all stages of life (single, mom (of...), empty nester, grandma, young adult, etc) are invited to a once a month evening of friendship, support, and guidance. We meet together for a meal, learning, conversation and prayer in the hopes of creating connections and cultivating community. Sign up on Church Center or contact Katie Knorr at kidscount@fumchurch.com or Lisa Aronson at discipleship@fumchurch.com for more information.

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

As summer comes to a close, our Sunday School classes will resume towards the end of August and kick off by September 20th! This is a wonderful opportunity to find consistency and accountability in your faith journey while studying God's Word. Here is 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.

Fall Study: Short Stories of Jesus by Amy-Jill Levine

This video study explores the parables of Jesus in the NT by taking readers back in time to understand how their original Jewish audience understood them. Levine reveals the parables' connections to first-century economic and agricultural life, social customs and morality, Jewish scriptures and Roman culture.

- **Christian Fellowship, Room B003**

A friendly and caring group of adults, eager to apply God's Word to life's challenges. The class explores Scripture and faith themes through book or video-based series. If interested, contact Wayde 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.

Fall Study: Cokesbury Adult Bible Study

This quarter's theme: "Faith and Faithfulness"

What does it truly mean to live by faith? And how do we remain faithful when life makes that difficult? This study explores the book of Hebrews and OT prophets and the relationship between faith and faithfulness, two foundational traits of the Christian life, and how together they shape the way we walk with God.

- **Guyer Class, Room 105 *NEW LOCATION**

This class, comprised of a wonderful group of seniors who are young at heart, is taught by a variety of church leaders and continues to meet during the summer months. Anyone looking for a class to attend is welcome here! This class will often join the combined offerings, but will notify the class when doing so. Class leaders: Steve and Deb Noss, sdppp@msn.com.

Fall Study: Cokesbury's Adult Bible Study

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- **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-- Starting October 6th

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 -Next meeting: September 1st

This circle meets every other month at church in room 105 at 7:00 PM and meets together off site for a meal on the opposite months. This circle has been studying women of the Bible.

- **Short-Term Class Offering: The Bible Simplified, Room 123**

This video-based series by Zac Windahl, led by Lisa Aronson, offers participants a chance to gain an overall understanding of the Bible. When read in chunks or maybe only read when listening at church, the Bible might seem daunting or confusing. Yet, this literary masterpiece is a gift from God and well worth exploring! This 8-week class, beginning on September 20th, will help you go from feeling lost in Scripture to making Scripture clear, accessible, and life-changing so you can gain confidence in your faith. Open to high school students and beyond. Sign up on Church Center or at the Registration Table. For questions, contact Lisa Aronson discipleship@fumchurch.com

Small Groups:

There are Small Groups that regularly meet during the year 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.

Current Small Group Offerings:

- **Faith in Everyday Life**

A group for adults of all ages focused on fellowship and friendship/mutual support in and outside the classroom. Contact: Amy at amyerno@gmail.com.

- **Faithful Families**

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. Contact: Bob and Tracy Wertz at wertzfive@gmail.com

Interested in starting a small group?

Reach out to Lisa Aronson at discipleship@fumchurch.com to discuss ideas and options for how to gather people together for intentional connection, support, and faith growth.



FROM THE LIBRARY....

"Before I tell you about all the great books coming into the library, I want to thank all of you for your support of the library book sale. Money from this sale keeps the best Christian books on the shelf all year long and makes us self-sufficient. We keep prices low so everyone can afford to shop at our sale. We had a great many puzzles and were able to keep some in the library so you have a selection to choose from right away! I will mention this sale couldn't have happened without our dedicated library volunteers, not to mention help from several of their family members. It is always a big project, but it gives us big rewards. THANK YOU!!!

Lynn Austin is an author we have not recently had in the library, but her latest book, The Lumber Baron's Wife, got such rave reviews, I couldn't resist. It is a dual story line, starting in the wilds of Michigan in 1873. Kate Abernathy is the lumber baron's wife and she confides in her new friend, Hannah Wagner, that her marriage is not what it seems to be. Shortly after that Kate goes missing and this mystery is never solved. Then the story moves to present day as Ashley Gilbert and her husband move to Michigan, where Ashley helps with work on the Abernathy mansion that is being turned into a museum. While working there, Ashley stumbles on the mystery of Kate Abernathy and how her friend Hannah tried to solve the mystery. She begins to relate to these two women, and she wants to solve the mystery. But is that really possible all these years later? I will let you find out. If you read this book, let me know if you would like to see more of Lynn Austin's books in the library.

If you would like something lighter to read on your porch during the last of summer's warm evenings, check out You'll Be Mine, by Rachel Hauck. Ben Carter is an international hotel manager, who has come back to Hearts Bend, Tennessee, not to stay, but just to sell his grandparents' inn. Though the inn holds a ton of sweet memories, including that special guest, Cami Jackson, he still plans to sell it and move on. Cami Jackson is now a real estate developer, and when she sees that the inn in Hearts Bend is on the market, she wants to buy it because of her special memories. And she sees that her first love Ben is now the owner. But her father, VP of the company, is totally against it. Can Ben and Cami go against the odds of finding each other again? Again, that's up to you to find out. Readers have mentioned it is the perfect summer read, so don't miss it.

If neither of these books appeals to you, stop in and let us help you find just the right book."

**See you in the library,
Debra, Marge, Mary, Pam, Annette, Kathy and Donna**



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 prayer room, and it's a perfect place of quiet where you can sit with God. The prayer room will be available as a quiet place you can sit with God on Sunday mornings during the Sunday enrichment hour (9:45 AM-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, September 21 at 1pm

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 1pm on a Monday afternoon at Bethany Village's West Apartments Commons Room. Janice Bowen facilitates, drawing upon readings and devotionals. For more info 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, missing your friends who are at home..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 and help yourself to a card! If you'd like a bigger supply or know of someone who may appreciate receiving a card, please contact Janice Bowen wecare@fumchurch.com.



See You at the Pole – Happening at Schools Everywhere!

Student-led SYATP prayer events are happening at schools around the globe on Wednesday, September 23rd. All students 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.



Bible Sunday | Sunday, Sept. 20, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

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

Home Communion

We offer home communion approximately every other month to anyone who may be unable to attend worship in-person to receive the Lord's Supper. If you would like to receive communion at home, or have someone to suggest for home communion, please contact Janice Bowen (717-766-4611 x 112 or wecare@fumchurch.com)

KidWorship WeeWorship begins September 20th | 11:00 am service

During the 11:00 worship service, kids 5th grade and under are invited to start out in worship with their family and stay through the KidsMoment, at which point, kids are invited to be escorted by their parents/guardians to the Kids Drop-Off Area outside of the small lobby. Infants-preschoolers will go to Wee Worship and students kindergarten-fifth grade are invited to go to KidWorship. Pick up your child after worship at the Kids Drop-Off Area. If you have any questions, please contact Katie Knorr at kidscount@fumchurch.com.

One Church Sunday and Church Picnic | Sunday, September 13th | 10:00 A.M.

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 to worship, 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 (however, you can share what you plan to bring in order to help assure variety). Food can be kept warm or chilled during the service. 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 the church office with any questions; we can't wait to see you there!



Isaiah 61 Homeless Ministry| How to Volunteer - Next Opportunity is Sept. 16

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 opportunities are Wednesday, Sept 16 at 6:30 p.m. To find out how to get involved, contact Tiffany Holland at tholland1967@gmail.com. We now have a simpler way to sign up for items, see the Time to Sign Up link on Church Center and the church website at fumchurch.com.



Gleaning 2026 | Meets at 6 pm in the Oak Grove Parking Lot (846 Fisher Rd., Mechanicsburg)

Remaining Opportunities: 9/17, 10/15

This growing season, we are excited to once more have the opportunity to glean locally in partnership with Oak Grove Farms! We will share the fresh produce with our local community at One80 Ministries, Keller Senior Living, and the 3 in-town Little Free Pantries. If you haven't gleaned with us before, please contact Janice Bowen at wecare@fumchurch.com to have your contact information added to the FUMC 2026 "Glean Team" list to receive additional information!

New this year.....come at 5 pm for picnic table fellowship, a chance to purchase ice cream before Oak Grove closes, and to share in a devotional from the book "Playing in the Dirt."

"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.

KidWorship and WeeWorship Volunteers Needed! | 11:00 service

We are looking for some people to help with KidsMinistry on Sunday mornings once a month during the 11:00 am service. We are looking for 2 volunteers to assist our preschool teachers and 1 volunteer to assist our K-5th grader teacher, each volunteer role takes place one Sunday a month with the ability to switch Sundays if a scheduling conflict arises. Volunteers will need to provide their clearances to the church. Please contact Katie Knorr at kidscount@fumchurch.com for more details.

Coffee Ministry

As we approach September and begin to offer consistent Sunday morning coffee, consider joining the team that helps make Sunday morning coffee possible. Sign up for the Sundays you are available; even just one weekend every several months can be a huge help! Sign up on Church Center or at <https://www.timetosignup.com/fumchurch/sheet/1363471>

2026 Allport-Bigler-Woodland Workcamp Recap

"I had the privilege once again this summer to serve in the Allport-Bigler-Woodland Workcamp in Clearfield County, PA from June 21st to June 26th. This was the fourteenth year for the Workcamp and, I believe, the twelfth year that I have been blessed to participate. This Workcamp was started back in 2012 to serve the elderly, homebound, and economically struggling members of these communities by providing a faithful witness for Jesus Christ while making home repairs, sprucing up properties, and working together with other local and traveling volunteers to share our gifts in Jesus name. It's kinda like a concentrated version of First Church's Backyard Ministries mission effort.

I assisted on four projects during this year's Workcamp. The first two days, I helped build a 48' X 10' roof structure over a walkway between two buildings of the Christian Servant Academy in Morrisdale. Monday brought a steady rainfall and we got soaked in the process but we persevered and made decent progress. Sunny skies on Tuesday allowed us to complete the structural framing. The actual metal roofing material did not arrive while we were at Workcamp, but I was told that two of the local participants finished the project once the material arrived. On Wednesday and Thursday, I helped

construct a 12' X 12' front porch at an individual's home in Woodland. We spent most of Wednesday digging six 36" deep holes for setting posts for the porch. Trying to dig holes in the shale and clay was difficult; trying to make sure the holes were spaced properly and making sure everything was plumb and square was a real challenge for us construction novices. The gentleman leading this project had to leave first thing Friday

morning, but we made great progress on Thursday before we called it a day. Once again, I was told that some of the local volunteers completed the porch project after we left town. On Friday, I helped install handrails at two separate houses in Morrisdale. The first homeowner was an 85-year old widow with limited mobility who really struggled in going up and down stairs. We installed one handrail to assist her in climbing up/down some very steep stairs between the first and second floors of her home, and we installed another shorter handrail at a set of stairs leading to her basement. The other homeowner was scheduled for foot surgery and needed handrails installed going up/down two sets of stairs from a side entry door/mudroom. Neither of these handrail projects was as complex as the roof structure or front porch projects I had worked on earlier in the week, but both were going to make a huge difference in the everyday lives of those homeowners.

During the week, those of us from out of town stayed at Lake Street UMC in Woodland in either the church building or the parsonage. A wonderful kitchen staff provided fabulous meals for the Workcamp participants, and we shared in morning and evening devotions each day. It was a blessed week, and I look forward to taking part in the 2027 Workcamp next June."

-Roger Walton, Church Member

Relationship Builder



Pickleball in the Park! Tuesday 5-7 pm

Join us on the Pickleball courts every Tuesday evening, either at Soldiers and Sailors Mechanicsburg Park or in the church gym, depending on the weather! No experience is necessary. Paddles/balls are available to borrow if you'd like to learn how to play! Contact Janice Bowen (717-766-4611, ext. 112 or wecare@fumchurch.com) with questions or to be added to the Pickleball list for weekly updates and alerts.

FUMC Volleyball | Wednesdays 6 - 8 pm

If you enjoy volleyball, please come on out to the church gym Wednesday evenings! Please contact Janice Bowen at wecare@fumchurch.com with questions or to be added to the list to receive volleyball communications.



Men's Breakfast | September 5th 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 in attending.

Women's Morning Meet-Up | September 12, 7:30 a.m., Down To Earth Café

While this group takes a hiatus in the summer, it's not too early to add the second Saturdays to your calendar. Restarting in September, join us for a warm cup of coffee and encouraging conversation. 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.

Upper Allen Fall Festival | Friday, September 25 | 4:00 to 9:00 pm

Come out to Winding Hill Park North and connect with our neighbors! First Church and other area churches are sponsoring some kid-friendly activities at the Upper Allen Township's Fall Festival on September 25. There will be live music, food trucks, craft vendors, inflatables, hayrides, petting zoo, and more! See details at: https://uatwp.org/fall_festival_2026/. Watch for the time to sign up to help at this family-friendly community event.



Community Dinner – September 27th, 5pm

Our next Community Dinner is scheduled for Sunday, September 27th at 5:00 p.m. at Buhrig's Gathering Place. 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 typically serve close to 100 neighbors and friends at these meals. If you would like to help set up, serve or be a table host, please contact Lori Hoffnagle at l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com. Watch for the time to sign up with more details.



Mechanicsburg Parade and Streets of Treats | October 13 & 17

We will once again be offering our parking lot and surrounding areas for neighbors to watch the **Mechanicsburg Halloween Parade on Tuesday, October 13**. Come out for a fun night and enjoy the parade!

The annual **Streets of Treats** will be held on **Saturday, October 17** in downtown Mechanicsburg from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. This is a free event that provides a safe and fun environment for daytime trick or treating. The Children's Department will have a table to hand out treats, watch for more information on how to help!



Save the Date: CROP Walk | October 18

The West Shore CROP Walk will be held on Sunday, October 18 at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Park in Mechanicsburg. Over \$42,000 was raised to care for the needy at the 2025 Mechanicsburg/West Shore CROP Hunger Walk! Since the first Mechanicsburg CROP Walk in 1971, this walk has raised an impressive \$727,740 to care for our needy local and global neighbors!

100% of donations collected will go to New Hope Ministries, Mechanicsburg Area Meals on Wheels and Church World Service. For more information on how to contribute or put together a team of walkers, visit the website at: <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/event/mechanicsburgpa>.



River Valley District (former Harrisburg District) Annual Day, October 24

The United Women in Faith River Valley District Annual Day will be held on Saturday, Oct 24 at Calvary United Methodist Church, 4700 Locust Lane, Harrisburg. All women are invited! If you would like to learn all about the missions of the UWF, this is a great opportunity. If you have questions, contact Lori Hoffnagle, President of First Church, United Women in Faith at l_hoffnagle@yahoo.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 and are extra helpful when welcoming in a new pastor. Need a name tag? Contact the church office.

Church Picnic | Sept. 13

Save the Date! Join us for our Church Picnic on September 13th! As summer winds down and fall begins, this is the perfect opportunity to reconnect with friends and family in our church community. Enjoy good food, yard games, worship, and fellowship. If able, please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Know what you are bringing? Not sure what to bring? Check out our sign-up sheet to share your plans and help others know what to bring. <https://www.timetosignup.com/fumchurch/sheet/1388758>
Thank you for helping to fill our picnic table!



Graduate Addresses

Help us gather addresses for our post-high school students. In an effort to send a fall care package to our college and post-high school students, Lisa Aronson is gathering addresses. Regardless of whether addresses are the same or changed from last semester, please email Lisa at discipleship@fumchurch.com with an accurate fall address. Join us at Growing Together in October when we will work together to assemble our college care boxes.

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

Church Conference- November 1st, 2026
Zeteo (Sn'L High School Event)- January 29-31, 2027
Womens Retreat- January 29-31, 2027

Generous Giver



2026 Budgeted Income \$811,683

2026 Budgeted Expenses \$846,822 (\$35,139 deficit / greater expenses than income)

Expected Income YTD \$473,482 (58% of budget)

Actual Income YTD \$503,694 (+4% over budget/expected)

Actual Expenses \$480,385 (-1% under budgeted/expected expenses)

Through the month of July the Church's general fund is still ahead in income than we had budgeted. Income in the summer is usually slightly lower as attendance dips, but automated giving and larger annual gifts have offset the smaller weekly giving. Thank you all for your continued giving to keep the mission of our Church alive! Expenses at this point in the year have caught up with the overall budget, but we still anticipate some savings in the second half of the year.

After a payment on principal, the interest-free parsonage loan balance is \$35,575. If you are feeling led toward a larger gift for our Stained Glass renewal project or want to direct a gift toward a specific mission, you can specify where the donation is to go. Please reach out to Brian Sanker, chair of the First Church Finance Committee, at sankerb@gmail.com or to Amy Erno, Director of Finance, at financedirector@fumchurch.com (or by calling the church office) if you need assistance. We can also answer some basic questions or help direct you for more information on legacy gifts related to wills and estate planning or how to direct charitable giving to First Church from retirement accounts. For questions on the stained glass renewal project timeline or other project questions please contact Jim Murdoch. Thank you for your continued support of First Church!

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – Go Green!

We are now recycling the following items to keep them from landfills!

---*Pens, Pencils, Colored Pencils, Crayons, Markers, Highlighters, Glue Sticks*---

No need to separate the items, just place in the marked bins at the Donation Station located near the Alley Entrance. Thanks for helping us to care for our environment!



Yard Sale Thanks!

Wow, what a great day for the Yard, Book and Bake Sale! We filled our outdoor spaces and had a nice offering of treasures at the inside yard sale and a tremendous selection of books and puzzles at the Library sale. The United Women of Faith Bake Sale and Little Friends Food Sale were both very successful. Thanks for all your donations, your baked goods and for supporting these ministries. The community looks forward to this event every year and we don't disappoint! We thank God for a wonderful sunny day also!

Annual Camp Fundraiser/Gala | Saturday, September 12, 2026, 4:00pm

For decades, the Susquehanna Conference Camp & Retreat Ministry has offered sacred outdoor spaces for rest, renewal, and life-changing experiences. In these inspiring, outdoor settings, young people encounter God deeply, forge lifelong friendships, and discover their true identity and belonging. For many of today's church leaders, camp was the pivotal place where their faith became real.

We're thrilled to continue this legacy of impact at our Annual Camp and Retreat Ministries Fundraising Gala. This event will celebrate the stories, relationships, and transformations that happen through camp, while also looking ahead to how we can strengthen and expand this ministry for the next generation.

We would love for you to join us for this evening as we welcome Jody Oats of Kaleidoscope who will share exciting plans and news regarding our Expansion Project. We will also honor beloved volunteers with our Campfire Awards from Wesley Forest and Camp Penn. Our meal will be catered by friend of camping, Strock Enterprises Inc.

See details and registration here: <https://suscrm.org/gala/>. The event will be held at Calvary UM Church, Harrisburg.

Share the Harvest

If you have extra flowers, fruits, or vegetables from your yard or garden this summer, we encourage you to share them with your church family and community! Whether you leave goodies or take some home with you, please look for 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 or 717-766-4611 x112) with any questions.



Penny Bucket/Change Bucket | You can make a change!

Since 2024 First Church has been collecting change to help provide clean water through the UMC Advance to areas in Africa. Change, and bills, are welcome to continue to care for existing wells and drill new wells for clean water in the Mulungwishi, South Congo area. The Penny Bucket/Change Bucket is in the Main Lobby. We thank Barb Strock, who as part of the Mission Team will care for this international mission project. Thank you for your continued support!

Little Free Pantry

Thanks so much for your continued support of the Little Free Pantry through your donations and monetary contributions. We are building up our supply to stock the pantry, but we still welcome your donations which can be dropped off at the church office or at the Alley Entrance in the marked basket. We are blessed to be able to offer this 'no barrier access point to food' to our neighbors. Questions about the Little Free Pantry, contact Lori Hoffnagle at l_hoffnagle@yahoo.com.





"Dear First Church,

Thank you so so much for giving financially to allow our kids the chance to go to camp this summer. Not only did they have a blast, but their hearts have grown closer to the Lord through their experience. Thank you!"

"Thank you soo soo much! It was so fun to be with my cabin! We had a great time! My favorite parts were swimming, eating sausage, and making pinecone buddies!"

"Thank you so much! Your gift has allowed me to connect with an amazing new community, and created lasting friendships. Camp has helped me see God in many new ways- nature, His word, camp staff, and especially YOU! Your gift has been an incredible blessing! Thank God for you!"

"Thank you so much for providing for me to go to camp this year. I really enjoyed all the activities and it helped me draw closer to the Lord. This was my first time staying at a camp and I loved it. Thank you for making it possible."



Ringing in the News!



Thank you to all who attended our [Symposium Presentation on Sunday, August 30th](#) during Sunday School hour in the MPR! We were so excited to share our experience about the symposium itself, the classes, seminars, and connections we made as representatives of both First UMC and our country.

Again thank you for all who donated to make this trip happen and we hope you enjoyed the presentation!



COMING UP IN SEPTEMBER...

Chicken BBQ – Save the Date! The Chicken BBQ is BACK!
Saturday, September 26th More details to come!



**Stay Tuned to hear more information about
our newly hired Bell Choir Director, Bekah Henry!**

STAINED GLASS CLASS

The spear and the crown of thorns stain glass windows at first church are located on the 1st floor 2nd window Frederick St Entrance and in Room 122 4yr classroom 1st window from the left.

The spear and the crown of thorns play a significant part in the crucifixion of our Savior Jesus Christ.

**“Spear and Crown
of Thorns”**



The thorn symbolizes, sin grief, sorrow and wickedness. Matthew, Mark and John include in their account of the crucifixion of Jesus that the Roman soldiers wove a crown of thorns and place onto Jesus's head. The soldier's purpose for the crown of thorns was to cause Jesus pain and ridicule his authority as king. 'And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee and mocked him, saying Hail, King of the Jews!' Matt. 27: 29 KJV) and also Mark (15: 17).

Jesus was crucified wearing that crown of thorns. Because the crucifixion occurred the day before the Passover feast, the legs of the two criminals were broken. When the soldiers went to break Jesus's legs, they found that he was already dead. To ensure that he was dead, the soldiers pierced his side with a spear. "

MISSION MOMENT:

TRASH PICK-UP TEAM



Eliza and the Trash Pick-Up Team are excited to get back out into the community! Thanks to all who helped last year. Our team is passionate about keeping our community clean and helping protect our water, animals, and people by picking up litter.

We will be planning another community clean-up project in the near future! We are currently working on the details and will share more information as soon as our next project is planned.

If you'd like to learn more or get involved with the Trash Pick-Up Team, please contact Krissy Marshall at kjmarsh1126@gmail.com. We look forward to getting out there and making a difference together!

FIRST CHURCH YOUTH

Stay Connected:

Text [fumyouthministry](tel:717-722-4800) to 717-722-4800 to be added to our text communications. Make sure to save the number as a contact to ensure you don't miss any messages.

To join the following text groups, please do the following:

- To join the [Youth Ministry Text](#) thread (students and/or parents of students 6th-12th grade), please text [fumyouthministry](tel:717-722-4800) to 717-722-4800 to be added to our text communications.

- To join the [Small Group Text](#) thread (our 2nd Sunday of the month gathering for students 4th -12th grade), please text [2ndSunday](#) to 717-722-4800 to be added to our text communications.
- To join the [Post-High School/College Text](#) thread (any student wishing to stay connected to church happenings/reunion events after high school), please text [whatsnext](#) to 717-722-4800 to be added to our text communications.
- To join the [Parents Only Text](#) thread (for parents of 6th-12th graders), please text [parents](#) to 717-722-4800 to be added to our text communications.

(If a message is being sent to multiply text threads, due to its relevance for each group, please know that you will only receive one message, not multiple for each group you are sign up under.)

If you wish to be manually added or removed from any list please reach out to Lisa Aronson at Discipleship@fumchurch.com

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 discipleship@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

Family Kick-off Sunday, September 20:

Come and hear more about what this group is and enjoy a night together as a family.

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-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)

Rainy Day Service Projects

Kid-friendly, anytime, anywhere at-home service bags are available in the Youth Ministry window well of the small lobby (along the wall with the water fountain). These bags provide simple at-home service projects. Develop a heart for service by engaging not just in events of service, but the simple projects that anyone can do. Return completed items to the basket on the window well, to Lisa Aronson, or to the main office.

First Church Service Shirts

Do you have a First Church service shirt? Contact Lisa Aronson at discipleship@fumchurch.com to order a shirt. The First Church Service Shirts are 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 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.



First Church uses Church Center as a platform for sharing information and registrations for events. Church Center can be accessed on both desktops and mobile devices, and will prompt you to create an account to log in. This platform can also be used for electronic giving, registrations, and to access our directory.

How do I add an emergency contact to my profile?

Caring for one another is one of the things that makes a church family special! In order to do that to the best of our ability, it is helpful to have an emergency contact listed in your Church Center profile. This is not a feature that is visible in the directory, but is only viewable by church staff. For many people, the church is an important part of their support system—especially during times of illness, hospitalization, or transition between care facilities. Having an emergency contact on file can help us know who to reach if an unexpected situation arises and allow us to communicate with the people closest to you when appropriate.

Adding an emergency contact is a simple way to help us care for you well. We hope that, should the need ever arise, we can be better prepared to stay connected, offer support, and walk alongside you and your family. Please take a moment to make sure your emergency contact information is up to date in Church Center.

To add an emergency contact to your profile:

- Choose "My Information and settings" near your name
- Choose "Personal and household information"
- Scroll down to "Emergency Contact Information" and choose "Edit"
- Add a name as well as the relation of the person in the "Name" field
- Add a phone number in the "Contact Info" field.
- Choose "Update" or "Save"
- If you have previously registered for an event that required an emergency contact, this information may already be visible in those fields, but can be edited as needed.

CHURCH STAFF:

Pastor:

Rev. Dr. Lew Parks
717-766-4611 ext. 103
pastorlew@fumchurch.com

Director of Office Management & Communications:

Kelsey Goll
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Director of Youth & Adult Discipleship:

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Director of Congregational Care:

Janice Bowen
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Director of Children and Family Ministry:

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Sounds of Worship Director:

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missflossie42@gmail.com

Youth Worship Director:

Allison Shield
allisonometz1@msn.com

Director of Little Friends Preschool:

Janet Rice
717-796-0723
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Amy Erno
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Timeless Connections:

Patti Vogl
717-319-7318
pvogl@timelessconnections.org

Organist/Accompanist:

Brandon Rhody

News and Notes....

"Dear Members of First Church,

*After 50 years as members of First Church, Don and I have felt the call to move closer to our grandchildren in Middletown, DE. We have truly loved our many years of Christian fellowship with each of you. We invite you to come visit us anytime at our new home. Our new contact information is: 107 Dawn Court, Middletown DE, 19709.
Debbie Cell: 717-645-3958 & Don Cell: 717-903-2452*

We pray blessings over First Church and are excited for the great things God is doing among you.

Blessings,

-Debbie and Don Karns"



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

Sally Kauffman.....September 8
Pat Sheely.....September 11
Judith Brown.....September 14
Joan Stokes.....September 19
Marty Otto.....September 20
Marley Ann Schmick....September 21
Gary Klinger.....September 22
Ralph Harkins.....September 25
Dr. Curt Bonser.....September 26



Jane Bonser.....October 1
Pam Weaver.....October 7
Bonnie Klinger.....October 14
Kay HeigesOctober 18
Jim Siemons.....October 20
Carol Ann Moomaw.....October 21
Don Shover.....October 23
Gail Leinhos.....October 28

Please Note:

If by chance we overlooked your special birthday as well, please notify the church office. Thank you!



- ♥ Mr. and Mrs. Bob Wertz Sr. married 63 years September 1, 1963.
- ♥ Mr. and Mrs. Ed Johnson married 62 years September 2, 1964.
- ♥ Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Sill married 59 years September 16, 1967.
- ♥ Mr. and Mrs. Frankie Carley married 53 years September 22, 1973.
- ♥ Mr. and Mrs. George Snoke married 60 years September 24, 1966.
- ♥ Mr. and Mrs. Richard Shmick married 62 years Septembr 26, 1964.

FIRST NEWS FIRST
EDITORS: Kelsey Goll

The deadline for submitting articles for the
OCTOBER 2026 issue is SEPTEMBER 15.
Early submissions always appreciated!