



# First Church NEWS

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## A NOTE FROM PASTOR JON

### WORSHIP

#### Sunday, January 30

Pastor Mike Ward preaching  
8:30 am - Epworth Choir  
11 am - Chancel Choir

#### Sunday, February 6

Pastor Jon Priebe preaching  
8:30 am - Epworth Choir  
11 am - Chancel Choir

Nursery/Preschool at 9:45 & 11 am

Galatians 6:9 - *So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up or quit.*

With a new year always comes the hope of new possibilities and opportunities. 2022 brings all this usual promise given what a long season we have gone through since March 2020. Making sense of our lives and family decisions over this season has not been easy for any of us. We have lost loved ones from the virus and lost opportunities and milestones and many of us are anxious, frustrated, and exhausted. We are all tired of the stop-and-start, uncertain path, progress, and hopeful end of these changes we've all had to make.

And yet, I remain thankful that we have had ways to remain connected when the risk is greatest through ZOOM Sunday schools and online worship and drive-by gatherings. I am thankful for our large sanctuary

where some of us can gather using social distancing protocols and pray that we will soon all be able to gather. I am thankful that God has given us the resilience to make it this far, clinging to God in hope and faith and love and pray that God would grant each of us the endurance to finish the course. I am thankful for the patience and understanding with one another that God has given to us and pray that we would be filled afresh with the grace of Jesus.

However, we have not quite yet reached the end of what can be done through caution, patience, and love. There is yet some journey to complete where we will need safety protocols, working together, willingness to defer to the needs of others and particularly the most vulnerable, good medical care and viral treatments, vaccines, masks, patience when we are frustrated or disagree, and the love of God to fill us to overflowing.



We must not grow weary in doing what is right and good for ourselves, our families, and our neighbors. We must not let go of God's hand as we are guided through these last legs of the pandemic.

Philippians 1:6 - *I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.*

Blessings,  
Jon

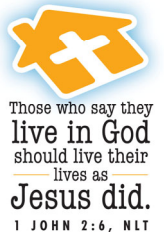


**GOAL:** Living a Sacramental Life

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:16-20 (NRSV)*

**ACTION:** The first Sunday after Epiphany at the end of the Christmas season each year, is Baptism of the Lord Sunday. It is always one of the first Sundays of the new year, and is a way great to focus our life and our year. In baptism, we are made to be new creatures in Christ. We are no longer our old self, but made new through the death and resurrection of Christ. What a wonderful reminder for the new year, to live into the new life that we have received. But we often get so busy that it's easy to fall into our old life and old habits. It is interesting that in the scripture above, Jesus calls us to go into the world and make disciples, but it doesn't stop at baptizing. Jesus continued on to include "teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded." This is key for us, and a great way to start out the new year.

In the United Methodist Church, we practice two sacraments, Baptism and Communion, in accordance with the commands of Jesus. But Jesus showed us a full life and how to live, which included many more things than just the two sacraments. Sometimes we refer to objects or practices that inspire us to devotion and the presence of God as *sacramentals*. If we reflect on the life of Jesus, we are reminded of His response to His parents to Him being the temple, "Where else would I be?", as one of those examples of how we are to live our life. We also see in Jesus a life lived in prayer and a life where grace abounds. It reminds me of Brother Lawrence and his book "The Practice of the Presence of God." This short book-- in our church library and online, and takes only a quick hour or so to read-- is the closest I have seen of someone living a totally sacramental life, a life of worship. I offer up this book as a great place to start if you want to explore what a sacramental life of worship might look like.



**JOURNAL REFLECTION:** What meaning do the sacraments have in my life? What is easy for me in living a life following Jesus? What makes it hard for me to live a life of worship and sacramental living?



**Hats, Gloves & Mittens...** Winter has definitely arrived, and there are people in our community that do not have winter hats or gloves/mittens. Please consider donating winter hats/gloves/mittens, or new socks to help those that are in need. Donated items may be dropped off on the missions table located outside the church library. IF you would like to place the items on the line near the corner of Portage Trail & 3rd Street, please place the items in ziplock baggies & put one of the mission cards (located on the missions table) in the bag.

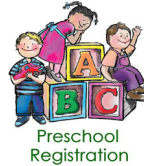
**Blessing Box...** Our blessing box continues to live up to its name by helping those in our own community with needed items. We are in need of the following items: personal hygiene items (toothpaste, soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, etc. Dry goods, ramen noodles, canned soups, granola bars, all continue to be needed. Please do not donate items in glass jars/ bottles, as the cold can cause the glass to shatter and possibly hurt someone. The donation table is located outside the church library, or you may place the items in the box yourself.

As of now, we are still continuing our pause of all in-person children's activities for the month of January. Sunday school, however, is being held online at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, and if you have not received the link and would like to, please contact Donna Curfman.

Children's worship during the morning service and the evening music rehearsals and ROCK activities are not being held. There is child care for children up to age 3 for those who attend the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday.

**Wesley Youth Mission Trip...** Our 4th to 6th grade mission trip will be Presidents' Day weekend, February 18-20. Due to the rise of the omicron strain of COVID, we are looking at our mission trip being local events, with events hopefully on Friday night, Saturday and Sunday, with some things being virtual and some things in person if we are able to do so safely. We may need to change things as we get closer to the date and details and cost will be available soon.

**Weekday Christian Preschool...** The preschool will begin registering for the 2022-2023 school year on Friday, January 14. Classes are on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, mornings and afternoons, for children aged 3 (by Sept. 30 and potty trained) to 5 as well as a Tuesday/Thursday Enrichment class for 4 and 5 year olds. There is also an all day option. To register or for more information please contact director Jennifer Brooks at 330-923-5243 or [jbrooks-fallsumc@gmail.com](mailto:jbrooks-fallsumc@gmail.com).



**Pledge Cards...** If you have not yet turned in your 2022 pledge card, please do so by either dropping it off in the drop box in the breezeway, or bring it to Sunday morning worship. The pledges allow us to continue to do kingdom work here on Earth by funding the upkeep of the physical building, funding mission projects and outreach, spiritual formation & growth, worship, along with our numerous choral and musical programs, and much more. If you are unable to stop by church to drop your pledge card off, please call our Financial Officer, Nancy Yeager at (330) 923- 5241, ext. 216, and she can take your pledge information over the phone!



**Adult Discipleship Classes...** We will start our new adult discipleship classes the first week of February. The "Ministry By Strength" class will begin on Sunday, February 6, at 5:45 pm, with our plan at this time to meet in person. Please go to the church website, or call the church office and sign up. The cost is \$20 for your top 5 strengths or \$49 to get all 35. We will also start a "Disciple Like Jesus" class that week either in person or on Zoom. If you are interested in the class, please contact Pastor Karol with your preference. We are targeting Sunday at either 4 or 5:45 pm if that works for folks.

Stay tuned for the start date of our Financial Peace University Class a little later in the year. We hope you will be able to join us for one of our classes. For anyone interested in joining the church in the near future, both our "Ministry by Strength" and "Disciple Like Jesus" classes are part of our membership pathway.

**Open M Donations...** Leading into the holidays many of you participated in the Open M Giving Tree, or by providing funds for turkeys for Open M to distribute. Through your generosity we donated \$2,350.00, which related to approximately 156 turkeys (at \$15.00/ turkey). Our goal for the giving tree was to provide for 75 children. Your generous donations totaled \$3,935.00, or enough for 78 children. Thank you for your generosity, and for helping to make the holidays bright for many local families!



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Jon Priebe - Lead Minister x211; Mike Ward - Associate Minister x217; Forrest Waller and Marvin Brown - Senior Ministers Emeriti; Dean Wagner - Director of Music Ministries/Organist x221; Karol Lewis - Director of Spiritual Formation x218; Jennifer Brooks - Director of Weekday Preschool x220; Jen McKenna - Youth Ministries Coordinator; Tim Zuschin - Assistant Choir Director; Donna Curfman - Children's Ministry Coordinator x219; Kathy Kuzas x212; Christy Meyers x210; Nancy Yeager x216; Ann Kaiser; John Fox; Joe Demeter; Alicia Stone; Kathy Just



*The Gift/Memorial Book* is located in the parlor and is open to **Robert Ferguson**.

**Our Sympathies** to **Leslie Frank** and family on the death of her mother, **Char Robertson**, on 1/9; to **Sue and Bob Boltz** and family on the death of her mother, **Betty Mutchler**, on 1/13; to **Kendra Jozsa** and family on the death of her husband, **Frank Jozsa**, on 1/18.

### **Thank you Expressions: From Tori Bailey...**

Dear Church family, I wanted to thank you for the Reid and Roberta Montgomery Scholarship. It was a big help to me as I began my studies this fall at Kent State University. Thank you for all of the support the church has shown me throughout the years. **From the Bailey family...** Dear Church family, we wanted to thank you for all of the prayers, cards, messages, and support you have provided to our family following the recent loss of our mom and grandmother, Kathy Townsend. You have truly been a blessing to our family during this difficult time.

All I really need  
to know I learned in  
Sunday School



NewsLetter  
**DEADLINE**

The deadline for the next FCN is **Friday, February 4**. Please submit your articles to Kathy Kuzas at [kkuzasfumccf@gmail.com](mailto:kkuzasfumccf@gmail.com).