



# First Church NEWS

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## A NOTE FROM PASTOR JON

In May 2022, a new Methodist denomination was formed called the Global Methodist Church. This past year, about 11 churches from our conference (out of nearly 700 churches) opted to leave the United Methodist Church to join this new denomination, along with 3 of our approximately 500 active clergy. Other churches and clergy may choose to leave in the coming years, but I wanted to be clear about what has happened so far.

Just one month after this Africa University, a United Methodist institution of Higher Education, also made news as they recognized the graduation and achievements of 712 students from 18 African countries who have completed undergraduate and graduate programs in education, nursing, STEM, and public health. Many of these students are women who would have difficulty completing these programs without the presence of Africa University and the new women's dorm that we (and the other churches of the East Ohio conference) helped provide. You can read more about Africa University's graduation here: <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/africa-university-celebrates-its-28th-commencement>

In light of the start of the new denomination, I'm reiterating that I am committed to leading the church to remain United Methodist during this time. The good work of Jesus Christ through the United Methodist Church, like what we've been able to make possible through Africa University, is too important to me. *Based on what is being proposed by conservatives and progressives on this issue, local congregations will never have to vote about this issue so long as they intend to remain United Methodist.* For some of the reasons why I'm leading us this way, I'm sharing again with you an article that I wrote for you back in February 2019 about this possible church separation over how we engage in ministry with and to LGBTQ persons. [Feel free to email or call me anytime if you have any questions about this.](#)

*First Church welcomes any and all persons as God's beloved children regardless of race, age, nationality, sexual orientation, background, etc. We have hosted an LGBTQ fellowship group and sexual orientation does not preclude a person in any other way from participating in the life of our church. This presents a tension for some, because though all persons are of sacred worth to God – "God loves us and there's nothing we can do about it" – still a young person growing up in our church who is LGBTQ is welcomed up until they would desire to be married or be called by God to licensed or ordained ministry in the church.*

*I want to repeat, all persons, regardless, are welcome at First Church and are invited into the life of following Jesus here. I grieve the division that rankles our global church over how we define marriage, sin, and how we welcome LGBTQ persons in our church. I also grieve the harm that is done as we continue to hold some persons of faith from being fully included in the life of the church. At times when discussions are happening on this issue, I feel like I am hearing the two mothers arguing to divide the baby in King Solomon's court.*

*I must say that I am the person I am today, the maturing follower of Jesus Christ, because of the things that are at stake in this debate in our church:*

*First, my relationship with God. We must do all that we can to allow any and all access to God's redeeming love (cf. Acts 15:19).*

*Second, I love the Bible. I love reading it, studying it, teaching, it, and attempting to live in obedience to its teachings. But I am mindful that some things were written for a particular context, like Paul's instructions about women keeping silent in church, the requirement that restrooms be located a certain distance away from the worship space in Deuteronomy 23, and the prohibitions against pork – (aren't we glad that Christianity is the only Abrahamic religion that allows BACON!). Some things in the Bible aren't meant to be applied forever but are best understood and interpreted within the community of faith. If you have more questions about this, come talk to me anytime.*

*Last, I am the person I am because participating in my Church has always forced me to be in relationships with people with whom I disagree. I have had Sunday school teachers, pastors, professors, and friends who were conservatives, moderates, liberals, Europeans, Americans, Asians, and Africans. This has made me a better human, a better Christian, and I want to raise my children in an environment like I was raised: to love God, to love Scripture, and to be surrounded both by people who are like us and who are different. I long to see the United Methodist Church, and First Church in the Falls, continue to be a place like this and I will continue to fight, love, and serve you and God to that end.*



**Accessibility Improvements...** In the past few years the Trustee and Access Committees have recommended and completed projects which have made our building more accessible to everyone. Those projects have included:

- ◆ Updating the elevator
- ◆ Installing a chair lift
- ◆ Elevating the drain and access into the church from the driveway by St. John's.
- ◆ Flattening the door threshold by the St. John's entrance to make it wheelchair accessible.
- ◆ New sidewalks around the building.
- ◆ Windows in the breezeway doors for more visibility.
- ◆ Pew cutouts in the sanctuary.
- ◆ Installation of the automatic door opener for the breezeway entrance.

**Financial Peace...** Have you ever done your taxes, looked down at the number in the income box and wondered where it all went? Ever felt like there wasn't enough money to do all the important things you know you should be doing with it or wonder how to even do the important things in the first place? Ever been in a situation where you wanted to



give to a good cause but didn't because you were trying to keep up with your

own bills? If so, the church is sponsoring another iteration of Financial Peace University and offering it again at a reduced price of \$75 per family with a \$25 rebate if you come to all ten classes. Classes will be from 4:00-6:00 PM starting on the second Sunday of September and going through November 20<sup>th</sup> excluding Halloween weekend. Childcare is available. For more information please contact Mark Rogalski at [MarkKRogalski@gmail.com](mailto:MarkKRogalski@gmail.com) or at (330) 419-4085.

**Leader Trainings Coming in August...** As we move into fall and gear up for a new year, we will have Leader training sessions for all of those who are participate in our various ministries including those serving or leading on ministry teams, committees, and those teaching in various ministries. The first will be on Sunday, August 14, from 10:30 am to noon which will include all ushers, greeters, welcome center folks, those who serve on the Finance, Missions, Access, PPR, Trustees and in any other ministries/committees of the church that don't involve teaching ministries. This is an important time for us to gather to support and learn together how to live out our calling as leaders of the church. On Sunday, August 21, from 10:30 am to noon we will have a training for all those who will be serving in the teaching ministries of our church. We will then follow that with a safe sanctuary training for those who need to take or retake it. Growing as leaders is essential to our living into our call as a leader in the church. Questions? Please contact Pastor Karol.

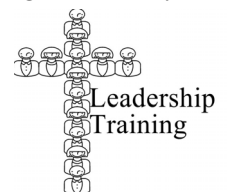


We are looking for a few people who would like to be buddies for a couple of the children in our kids' minis-

tries. They need someone to provide some one on one attention as they move through our activities. We will train those who are able to help and pair you up with a young disciple whom you can help on their faith journey. Please contact Pastor Karol if you would be able to help in this crucial ministry of our church.



**Adult Discipleship Classes for the Fall...** We will again offer *Disciple Like Jesus* and *Ministry By Strengths* classes in the fall, both of which are part of our journey to membership, if you are considering that in the future. These classes are also integral for those who are wanting to be involved in the leadership of our churches. The 6 week *Ministry By Strengths* class will begin on Sunday, September 11, from 5:45 to 7 pm with a new class then beginning on Sunday, October 23 from 4 to 5:15 pm. We will also have a 6 week *Disciple Like Jesus* class starting Sunday, September 11, from 9:30 to 10:45 am and then again starting Sunday, October 23, from 5:45 to 7 pm. We hope you will join us as we grow together as disciples this year. You may sign up for any class as of August 1. For more information, please call Pastor Karol.





### Reality Of Christ for Kids!

The Fall ROCK program is being developed now, and after a planning meeting with parents, teachers and others involved, we chose to

make some changes to our schedule. Starting on Rally Day Sunday, September 11, 2022, evenings will begin with Children's Bells and Choirs from 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. every week, and twice a month the ROCK rotation will follow from 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. There will be no dinner served. The All Hallows's Eve and Advent Christmas programs will be held on additional Sundays.

Wesley Outings will resume on weeks where there is no ROCK rotation.

Complete details with dates will be available soon.

### Last Call for Wesley Camp (4th to 6th graders)

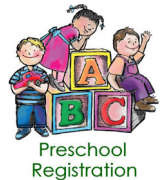
The deadline for registering for Wesley camp is July 25 as we have to submit our numbers to the camp then. The cost is \$150 and as always, friends are welcome to join us. We will be heading to Camp Inspiration Hills on Friday, August 5, at 10:30 am by the church bus. We will be returning to the church Sunday, August 7, in the late afternoon. We will be growing as disciples through games, campfires, swimming, crafts, cooking, prayer labyrinth and more. Join us for a wonderful weekend to ready ourselves to start school for the fall.



Epworth had a fantastic time at summer camp during the last week of June, complete with night games, a cook-out and bonfire, Brown Bag Broadway, candle walk, and lots of music! The youth are now starting to plan for the fall. We are looking to have a fall overnigher, a kick-off bash, mission trips, and more! If you would like to receive more information or have a youth entering 7th-12th grade, you can sign up for updates by emailing Jen McKenna @ [epworthyouth2@gmail.com](mailto:epworthyouth2@gmail.com).

### Weekday Christian Preschool...

The preschool is still taking registrations for the 2022-2023 school year. 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 [jbrooksfallsumc@gmail.com](mailto:jbrooksfallsumc@gmail.com) or 330-923-5242.

**Confirmation Classes...** Here at First Church, Confirmation is a two-year process of spiritual exploration and Christian education. The goal is to equip our young people with what they need to say "Yes" to God and take responsibility for their relationship with Christ. Confirmation takes place during Sunday School time for our 7th and 8th graders. If your child is entering 7th grade in the fall and you'd like them to begin the Confirmation journey, contact Jen McKenna at [epworthyouth2@gmail.com](mailto:epworthyouth2@gmail.com). Entering a later grade and didn't go through Confirmation? Let us know and the Confirmation team will help you find the right placement for your young person!



### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES!



- Jake Davis** University of Akron School of Law
- Macy Jesson** University of Cincinnati
- Lewlie Sawyer** University of Akron
- Megan Sawyer** University of Akron

- Juris Doctor
- Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and in Psychology
- Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering
- Bachelor of Arts in Speech and Hearing Sciences with a minor in Digital Photography

# First Church News

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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 **Phillip Hamilton**.

*Our Sympathies* to **Tom Wal-**

**termire and Doug (Jean) Flinn** and family on the death of their wife and sister, member **Shirley Waltermire**, on 6/9; to **Dorothy and Michael (Terri) Light** and family on the death of their son and brother, **Paul Light**, on 6/16.



**Sundays at 9:30 a.m.**

**July 17** - Pastor Jon Priebe preaching

**July 24** - Pastor Mike Ward preaching

**July 31** - Pastor Mike Ward preaching

Child care for infants through preschoolers

The next First Friday will take place on August 5 at 5 p.m. Join us at Kelsey Creek Pavilion at Water Works



Park for a meal, fellowship, and Game Night! The church will provide hot dogs and buns so bring a dish to share, a beverage, tableware, and your favorite game!

The deadline for the next FCN is **Friday, July 29**. Please submit your articles to Kathy Kuzas at [kku-zasfumccf@gmail.com](mailto:kku-zasfumccf@gmail.com).

**Heart4theCity...** Can you help our United Methodist local mission church again? You have been very generous in the past and we thank you for all your donations for Heart4theCity. Our next drive is to bring in **new packaged under garments for children thru adults**. We will keep this collection going thru the summer (June- August). The collection bin is located near the church office, next to the library. Drop off anytime. Thanks!

