



# First Church NEWS

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## JANUARY WORSHIP

### Sunday, January 7

8:30 & 10:30 - Pastor Jon Priebe preaching

### Sunday, January 14

8:30 & 10:30 - Pastor Jon Priebe preaching

### Sunday, January 21

8:30 & 10:30 - Pastor Jon Priebe preaching

### Sunday, January 28

8:30 & 10:30 - Pastor Howard Pippin preaching

## RESTORING THE MASTERPIECE

*“You know what happens when a portrait that has been painted on a panel becomes obliterated through external stains. The artist does not throw away the panel, but the subject of the portrait has to come and sit for it again, and the likeness is re-drawn on the same material.” - Athanasius, On the Incarnation*

I remember working with Willa, our musician, to choose music during the Advent season of the first year I served a church. I was mostly familiar with the popular Christmas carols and songs so I was surprised by just how much Christmas music was in our hymnal. One of the songs she introduced me to that year was, “Love Came Down at Christmas.”

It’s still a favorite because, in addition to its beautiful melody, it conveys powerful truths of our Christian faith in simple lyrics. God came down, in Jesus, to begin the work of our salvation. What sign do we see of this? Love that transforms us.

One early Christian leader and writer, Athanasius of Alexandria, compared Jesus’s birth to the work of restoring great works of art. In his book, On the Incarnation, he likened the corruption of human nature through sin to the smudging of a great work of art. What happens when a great work of art needs cleansing and repair? Is it thrown away only to start trying to replicate the masterpiece again? Of course not! A great artist touches up the masterpiece.



One of the great miracles of Christmas is the restoration project of God’s masterpiece – *you and me* through Love! Though we were created after the image of God (Genesis 1:27), we chose love of self over the self-giving love of God and sinful actions over the good works that God has planned for us (Ephesians 2:10). But, God did NOT abandon us or throw us away. Instead, God began the work of undoing the harm we had done ourselves and others and making us anew (1 Corinthians 5:17-19). Through the birth, death, and resurrection of God’s son, Jesus Christ, the work of restoration has begun.

This Christmas, remember that no matter what you have done, no matter where you have found yourself, no matter how disappointed you may feel, God has not given up on you! You are a masterpiece by the greatest artist in the universe! Allow the restorative work of Christ to forgive you, heal you, and begin to restore again the goodness that God has instilled in you – the very image of the master artist’s son.

Blessings,

Jon



**Are you new to First Church?** Not new, but thinking about joining? We want to help you get connected through our Discipleship Pathway. Discovery, our first class, begins Sunday, January 14, at 9:30 a.m. in the parlor. It will be led by Pastor Jon. Come and discover who we are as a denomination and local church serving this community. For questions and sign-up, please see or contact Pastor Pippin.

**Stewardship Update - Thank you!** We are nearing our 2024 Stewardship Goals! So far we've received 242 pledges for \$519,000 toward our operating budget. We've already surpassed last year's pledge totals of 210 pledges and \$510,000. We are hoping to reach our goals of 260 pledges returned and \$560,000. If you haven't responded yet, call Nancy Yeager in the church office!

**2024 Altar Flowers...** We are taking orders for altar flowers in 2024. The cost is \$40 (please note the change) and the church takes care of the ordering and delivery. If you would like to reserve a date, contact Christy Meyers at cmeyers-fallsumc@gmail.com or Ext. 210.



The Winter Session of Children's Evening activities will begin on January 14. Music Rehearsals for Bells are at 4:00 p.m., Choirs at 4:30 p.m., dinner

at 5:15 p.m. and ROCK activities from 5:45 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

It is time to sign up to help with dinners again. We must have parents who help at each session. Dinner will be \$4.00 per child/parent again, to be collected at each session.



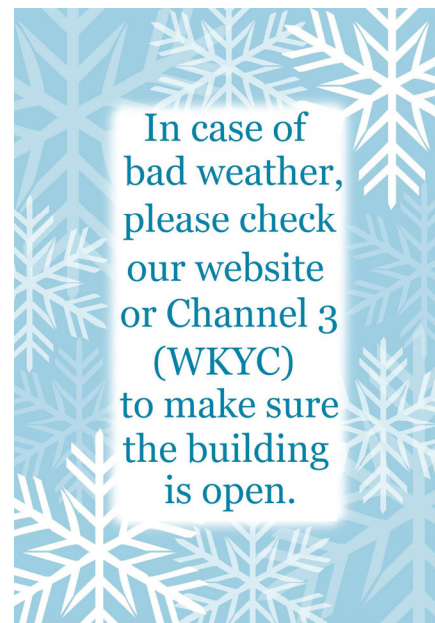
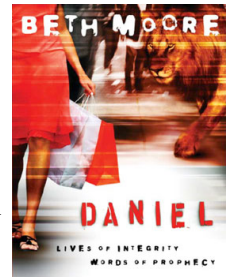
### MEN'S TIME OUT

All the men of the church and community are invited to gather on the

first Saturday of every month for some food, a time for discussion, and lots of fellowship! It runs from 8:30 to 9:30 in Asbury Hall and the next one will take place on **Saturday, January 6.**

### Daniel: Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy

This study by Beth Moore will be the next one offered by the Women's Bible Study. The prophet Daniel faced unbelievable pressures to compromise his faith, to live in a hostile culture, and to confront temptations and threats. Today, believers in Jesus Christ face many of the same trials. The first portion deals with that, while the second portion explores thrilling prophecies from the time of Daniel through the second coming of Christ. They meet on Tuesdays (7-9 pm) or Wednesdays (10 am-noon) beginning January 30/31. The cost is \$20. Please contact Kathy Kuzas by January 16 at 330-923-5241 x 212 to register.





**Acme Receipts...** The Acme Cashback program is moving along, so save your receipts dated August 1 - February 15! This is an easy way to help fund the projects that are done at Henderson Settlement in June.

**Hats, Gloves, Scarves Mission...** We have started our annual mission now that winter is here. We are asking for new or gently-used gloves/mittens/winter hats, scarves, or new socks. The donation table is located across from the church library. Items may be left there, or if the line is empty, please feel free to bag the items, then place them directly outside on the line.

## January Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Church closed	2 1:00 Alzheimer Support Group 7:00 Men's Group	3 9:30 Quilters 12:30 Al-Anon 6:30 Chancel Ringers	4 9:30 Prayer Group 7:00 Chancel Choir	5	6 8:30 Men's Time Out 9:00 Yoga 10:00 CODA
7 8:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	8	9 8:30 GN Lunch packing 1:00 Prayer Shawl 7:00 Men's Group 7:00 Spiritual Formation	10 9:00 Susannah Circle 9:30 Quilters 12:30 Al-Anon 6:30 Chancel Ringers 7:00 Men's Group	11 9:30 Prayer Group 7:00 Chancel Choir	12	13 9:00 Yoga 10:00 CODA
14 8:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Talk Points 10:30 Worship 4:00 ROCK 4:00 Youth/Choir	15 Church Closed 10:00 Food Packing 7:00 Trustees	16 7:00 Men's Group 7:00 PPR Comm.	17 9:30 Quilters 12:30 Al-Anon 6:30 Chancel Ringers 7:00 Men's Group 7:00 Food Packing	18 9:30 Prayer Group 7:00 Chancel Choir	19 10:00 Food Packing 1:00 Esther Circle	20 9:00 Yoga 10:00 CODA 11:30 1st Church Feeds
21 8:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 4:00 ROCK 4:00 Youth/Choir	22 7:00 Acts of Grace Circle	23 7:00 Men's Group	24 9:30 Quilters 12:30 Al-Anon 6:30 Chancel Ringers 7:00 Men's Group	25 9:30 Prayer Group 7:00 Chancel Choir	26 7:00 Art Series Dean Wagner Organ Concert	27 9:00 Yoga 10:00 CODA
28 8:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 4:00 ROCK 4:00 Youth/Choir	29	30 7:00 Men's Group 7:00 Women's Bible Study	31 9:30 Quilters 10:00 Women's Bible Study 12:30 Al-Anon 6:30 Chancel Ringers 7:00 Men's Group			

# First Church News

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Jon Priebe - Lead Minister x211; Howard Pippin - Associate Minister x217; Forrest Waller and Marvin Brown - Senior Ministers Emeriti; Dean Wagner - Director of Music Ministries/Organist x221; Jennifer Brooks - Director of Weekday Preschool x220; Tim Zuschin - Assistant Choir Director; Donna Curfman - Children's Ministry Coordinator x213; Kathy Kuzas x212; Christy Meyers x210; Nancy Yeager x216; Ann Kaiser; John Fox; Joe Demeter



*The Gift/Memorial Book* is located in the parlor and is open to **Ruth Stewart**.

*Our Sympathies to Vic and Evelyn Ing* and family on the death of their son, **Michael Ing**, on 11/24; **Kathie (Jack) Davis** and family on the

death of her father, **Robert Zimmerman**, on 11/25; the family of member **Bob Boyd** on his death on 11/25; **Ann (Terry) Lewis** and family on the death of her father, **Thomas Misiak**, on 12/2; **Dudley (Lori) Turner** and family on the death of his brother, **Darcy Turner**, on 12/17.

*Expressions of Thanks From Rose Darling...* It is with deepest gratitude that we at Flat Rock thank you for including Flat Rock in the ThankSinging concert. It was such a blessing to hear and sing those wonderful hymns of thanks and praise! The generous offerings will be put to good use immediately! Thank you! May God bless you all abundantly - as you have been a blessing!

Newsletter  
**DEADLINE**

The deadline for the February issue of the FCN is **Friday, January 19**. Please submit your articles to Kathy Kuzas at 330-923-5241 or [kkuzasfumccf@gmail.com](mailto:kkuzasfumccf@gmail.com).

