



Tidings of Joy

The Newsletter of the First United Methodist Church of Decatur, Alabama

November 30, 2016

“Thoughts on the Closing of a Sister Congregation”

Several people have asked me how we as a church should respond to the news about Ninth Street United Methodist Church’s decision to sell their church building and property and enter into a merger with St. Luke UMC on Danville Road. A few caveats were left out of the newspaper article. Although the congregational vote was held in November, the leadership of Ninth Street has been in conversation with our District Superintendent, Kelly Clem, Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, and Conference Director of New Church Development Richard Hunter for several months. They, along with St. Luke and Austinville United Methodist congregations, are studying the most effective way to carry out the mission of the United Methodist Church in the face of a variety of issues they face, including a significant downward trend in membership, the difficulty of attracting new members, deferred maintenance on aging facilities, debt on newer construction, and declining participation in the church.

In a series of meetings with conference officials, the concept of Ninth Street merging with St. Luke and adopting a new name reflecting a new identity was introduced. The congregations had several months to explore this and other alternatives. The Ninth Street congregation held a church conference over which the district superintendent presided and voted to sell their building and property and pursue the merger. The amount received from the sale reverts to the United Methodist Church to be used for advancing the mission of our denomination in this district. I do not know the details but I am confident that a significant portion will be available to invest in the new congregation formed by the merger of Ninth Street and St. Luke. This does not answer all of our questions, but it does place in a United Methodist framework what the decision to close a church and sell its property means. The conference facilitated the decision-making process but the local church ultimately made the decision.

Our response as a church to these events starts with an appreciation for the life and ministry of Ninth Street United Methodist Church. For over a hundred years, the members of Ninth Street have been our brothers and sisters serving this community and the world in mission. They have reached into and served parts of the population of Decatur that they were better suited to reach than any other church. I know some of their passion for missions because I sit on the Board of the Society of St. Andrew, a gleaned ministry that feeds hungry people. I learned that Ninth Street has annually supported the Society of St. Andrew more than any other congregation of any denomination in our region. And that is just one

of the many missions the church supported. We give thanks for the life and ministry of Ninth Street United Methodist Church and we express our support of them in making a very difficult decision to close the church and pursue a merger with St. Luke.

I have been asked whether we as a church should invite members of Ninth Street to join us at First United Methodist Church. I would love for us to welcome all people God sends our way. However, out of respect for the difficult but sacred process the members of Ninth Street have undertaken, let’s honor the decision they have made and give time for the Holy Spirit to birth a new congregation with the people St. Luke. In God’s good time, the people themselves will discern whether or not they will be a part of the new congregation or find a new church home. I encourage you to be hospitable and inviting to any who are seeking a new church home. Hospitality requires us to be open to new ideas people bring from the church experience they have had in other places. Hospitality also requires being willing to be part of a hospitality team of people who do not mind being late for Sunday school or occasionally missing it altogether because you are there to meet guests and to help them find their way around.

The best question I have heard in this discussion so far is, “Are we prepared to receive new people into our church?” To answer that question positively, please contact **Shannon Booth** and **Norman Roby**, the 2017 chair of the evangelism committee, and tell them you want to serve one Sunday a month as a Greeter. That will go far to answer the question of whether or not we are prepared to receive new people.

Yours in Christ,
Hughey

Church Prayer List Nov. 30th Edition

- Family of Vivian Stone upon her death**
- Loena Boling - Decatur Morgan Hospital, 5th Floor #1 w/ Atrial Fibrillation (heart out of rhythm)**
- Lou Underwood - Decatur Morgan Hospital, Room 479, symptoms similar to a TIA**
- Sandra Adams - surgery for broken hip**
- Eleanor Claire Norman**
- Susan Floyd - hip surgery**
- Sandy Callahan - heart ablation scheduled for Dec. 5th at Crestwood hospital**
- Linda Foster**
- Clyde Sasser**
- Katherine Johnson**
- Ed Kirby**
- Tornado Victims**

Please fill out a prayer card found in the pew pockets or email your prayer requests to aquinn@decaturfumc.org for publication in the next newsletter.

End of the Year Gardening

The late frost allowed us to continue gathering vegetables from the summer garden until the week of Thanksgiving. Among the last items in our summer crop was a bushel of sweet potatoes. We'll allow them to cure for a month in storage and deliver them to one of our agencies just in time for Christmas. In all, we have harvested, weighed, and recorded 1,404 pounds so far. The freezing temperatures on Saturday and Sunday, November 19 and 20, ended the season for all our summer vegetables except for a couple cold hardy herbs. In the fall garden that thrives in cool weather, we still have more lettuce, kale, onions, carrots, and a few collards to harvest so the total garden yield will grow before the end of the year.



On November 29, garden volunteers showed up with sheers, hedge clippers, and loppers to chop the summer plants into ground mulch for the winter. Instead of pulling plants up by the roots and sending them to the landfill, we chopped them up in four to six inch pieces and let them lie where they fell to form ground mulch to help retain water and reduce erosion and add organic matter to make the soil more fertile for our spring planting. So much of The Urban Acre is in hibernation for a short while but getting much needed rest and rejuvenating for an even more productive 2nd year of blessing members of our community and our church in the process. Thank you for all the encouragement, support, and interest you have given to make our first year of working in God's garden a rewarding experience.



Summer Garden in Hibernation 11/29/2016



Fall Garden Still Producing 11/29/2016

Salvation Army

When you see the red kettles and friendly folks ringing the bells, take a closer look for a familiar face from FUMC. It could be someone from UMM, or a Seekers Class member, or our youth group, or a Salvation Army Advisory Board member giving their time for a worthy cause. Our mission emphasis for the month of December is the Salvation Army. Please stop and check out the bulletin board leading down to the Fellowship Hall; place donations in the blue bin underneath marked *Salvation Army*. Captain Mark Gilliam said they have a great need for warm socks. As the weather turns colder more people will need help and housing at the Center of Hope.

SUGGESTED DONATIONS

Socks
Paper towels
Cleaning supplies
Non perishable food items
Motel-size toiletries



Continued Blessings,
FUMC Advisory Board Members

Austinville Backpack Ministry

Dear Church Family,
December is here and this is the month we pack the Xerox boxes for our Backpack Buddies to have over the Christmas Holidays.



Suggested food items are:

Pop Tarts, Small Cereal Boxes, Canned Pasta, Ramen Noodles, Boxed Mac & Cheese, Snack Crackers, Granola Bars, Fruit Snacks, Boxed Fruit (Raisins), Small Fruit Cups, Pudding Cups, and Dessert Bars

We have a blue barrel in the hallway to the Fellowship Hall to receive your contributions.

Thank you again for your generosity and faithfulness to this ministry! This will help make Christmas merry for these children.

Sincerely, **Jan Dean**

Dr. Ron Martoia on Tuesday, December 6

The staff and lay leadership of Decatur First United Methodist Church have a great opportunity to hear and work with Dr. Ron Martoia on Tuesday, December 6. Ron specializes in leadership transformation. As a transformational architect, he has leveraged church staffs and congregations in 12 different countries to envision and implement dynamic new ministries that connect with 21st century culture. Ron is aware of the work we have done together to adopt a new purpose statement. He is excited about helping us decide on changes we will make and steps we will take *to disciple our church to cultivate a legacy of Gospel-inspired servant leadership*. On December 6, Ron's day with us will culminate with a 6:00 dinner meeting with the Administrative Board in the Fellowship Hall. Our dinner will be catered by Olive Garden. Come prepared to pay \$8 a person. Spouses of Board members are welcome to attend with you. Feel free to attend even if you aren't an Administrative Board member. We need a count for dinner so please email Alyson at aquinn@decaturfumc.org or call her during office hours to confirm your attendance. Also, please let her know if you will need childcare.

First Church Children's Ministry

Alexia Claborn, Director of Children's Ministry
256-606-8646

Christmas Parade

Monday, December 5 – Decatur Jaycees Christmas Parade – There is rain in the forecast as of the printing date of this *Tidings*. They will make a decision Monday morning at the latest. If it is postponed due to weather, the parade will be held on Monday, December 12. The float will be in place no later than 5:00. Anyone riding or walking with our float needs to be with the float by 5:30. The parade begins at 6:00 p.m. We would like for those riding the float to wear red, green, or white, so they will match the elf hats. For more details please see Mission Moments, Shannon Booth, and Director of Outreach.



Christmas Pageant & Covered Dish Church Family Christmas Dinner

- **Wednesday, December 14th at 5:30 p.m.**

Please join us as we celebrate the true meaning of Christmas! The church will provide meat, bread and beverages. Please bring a side to share. We will ask specific families to provide dessert.



Sunday Morning Volunteers

Volunteers for Sunday, Dec. 4

Sunday School

Pre-school – Room #215 Leigh Ann Blankenship
Jessica Mitchell

K-2nd – Room #207 Jami Buckner/assistant – Lesley Heidecker

3rd-5th Grade - Room #306 Betty Ann Mitchum
assistant – Vicki Dukes

Children's Church

8:45 Service Teacher- Alexia Claborn,
Assistant- Jessica Mitchell

11:00 Service Teacher-Alexia Claborn,
Assistant- Anna Oletti

Volunteers for Sunday, Dec. 11

Sunday School

Pre-school – Room #215 Leigh Ann Blankenship
Jessica Mitchell

K-2nd – Room #207 Carrie Hart
assistant – Ronnie Dukes

3rd-5th Grade- Room #306 Betty Ann Mitchum
assistant – Alexia Claborn

Children's Church

8:45 Service Teacher- Alexia Claborn;
Assistant- Jim King

11:00 Service Teacher-Alexia Claborn,
Assistant- Carrie Hart



Upcoming Important Dates

- **Monday, Dec. 5** - Decatur Christmas Parade
6:00- 8:00 p.m. Please be at the float by 5:30 if you plan to ride in the float.
- **Wednesday, Dec. 14** - 5:30 p.m. - Church Christmas Pageant and Pot Luck Dinner



Acolyte Information

Dec. 4:

8:45 a.m. - Bristol Rayne Teal

11:00 a.m. - Christopher Reavis & Beau Claborn
Crucifer - Garret Buckner

Dec. 11:

8:45 a.m. - Bristol Rayne Teal & Mary Elizabeth Booth

11:00 a.m. - Lydia Matthews & Hunter Claborn

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for Sunday School Teachers / Assistants, Children's Church Teachers / Assistants and First Fellowship Volunteers. Please contact Alexia if you are able to volunteer in any of these areas. The best way to contact me is by email, text or call at the following: aclaborn@decaturfumc.org and cell 256-606-8646.



Fireside at the Mitchum home

On Sunday, Dec. 4th, our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade Sunday School Classes will have a Sunday School "Get together" at the home of **Betty Ann** and **Don Mitchum** from 5-7:00 p.m. Hope to see our 3rd – 5th graders there!



First Grace Child Development Center



Thank you to all of the families who made our Thanksgiving lunch even more special!



First Grace Dates

- Our First Grace Christmas program will be Tuesday, December 13th at 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. 
- First Grace pancake breakfast with Santa will be Friday, December 16th at 8:00.

Church and Community

Discipleship

In the coming weeks, look on the bulletin board outside the Fellowship Hall for details about next semester's First Fellowship classes being offered. There will be sign-up sheets and information about teachers and books. 

UMW/ UMM

On Monday, December 12 at 10:00 a.m., the United Methodist Women Circles will be making Christmas cookie trays for our shut in members. All women are invited to bring a plate of home-made or store bought cookies to add to the trays. We will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall. 

College On Monday, December 19, the college students/ former youth from FUMC, who are in town, are invited to Christmas lunch at The Brick starting at 11:30. Bring money and an appetite as we fellowship and eat with each other. 

Christmas Meal for Hilltoppers

The Hilltoppers Christmas luncheon will be Thursday, December 15 at 11:00 a.m. in the church Fellowship Hall. The cost will be \$6 and we ask that you pay in advance to help with the cost of the food. **Sandy Callahan** will be preparing the meal. The sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board along with an envelope for your checks made out to the church. The menu will be Ham, Green Beans, Hashbrown Casserole, Pink Arctic Frozen Salad, Rolls, Coconut Cake

Hartselle FUMC Offers Memory Cafe

Memory Cafe is an informal coffee break connecting those within early stages of memory loss and their caregivers - for conversation, activities, and refreshments. It is on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. at the Hartselle FUMC Student Center. Please call 256-733-6952 for more details. This is for individuals with early to moderate Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia and their Care Partners. Please call the week before to make a reservation. You will find a friendly, relaxed atmosphere for building relationships and sharing the journey.

Youth Dates

Sunday, December 4

10:00 Sunday School
6:00 Pizza Dinner
6:30-7:30 UMYF- prepare parade float and decorate 3rd floor for Christmas

Monday, December 5

7:45am Junior High Prayer Breakfast at Bojangles (rides provided to OPMS)
5:30 Decatur Parade

Wednesday, December 7

5:00-8:00 Ring the Salvation Army Bell at Old Navy

Thursday, December 8

7:30am Senior High prayer breakfast at Chick Fil A

Sunday, December 11

10:00 Sunday School
6:00-8:00 Youth Christmas party 3rd floor

Wednesday, December 14

5:30 FUMC Christmas program and covered dish dinner

Thursday, December 15

7:30am Senior High prayer breakfast at Chick Fil A



Senior High New York/ Washington Citizenship Seminar, July 2017

It's time to sign up for the NY/ DC trip! This trip happens once every four years for our high school students. During the trip we will study the topic of poverty and homelessness in each city by visiting sites, hearing speakers, and having discussions. There will also be time built in for sightseeing and free time as a group. I do not know the total cost of the trip because we don't have flights booked or hotel rooms in NYC. Once we know the number going, we can start securing these pricier things. The trip will be no more than \$1,600 per person. Fundraiser and attendance money will be backed out of the total. **A \$200 deposit to secure your spot, so we can start lining up flights and hotels, is due by December 2.**

Youth Christmas Party

Join us on the Youth third floor for our annual Christmas party on December 11 from 6 - 8:00 p.m. Bring what you normally would have spent on a dirty Santa gift (around \$10) and donate it to our Compassion International child, Jimmy de Jesus! THEN, find something from home (DO NOT PURCHASE ANYTHING) to regift in our dirty Santa game! We'll also have dinner, so be looking for a sign-up sheet!



Salvation Army Bell Ringing

The youth will be ringing the bell on Wednesday, December 7 from 5:00-8:00 outside Old Navy. Youth can come and go as needed during our three hour window. Church members are encouraged to come donate money in our kettle or stop by and help ring! Don't forget to bring money for Starbucks to help keep warm!



Mission Moments

Shannon Booth, Director of Outreach

What an exciting season this is! We have so many wonderful activities planned and so many opportunities to reach out to our community! Please make a note of these dates and details so you can be prepared to participate.



Sunday, December 4 - Parade Float Work Session – We will meet at 6:00 p.m. to prepare our float for the Decatur Jaycees Christmas Parade.

Monday, December 5 – Decatur Jaycees Christmas Parade – There is rain in the forecast as of the printing date of the *Tidings*. They will make a decision Monday morning at the latest. If it is postponed due to weather, the parade will be held on Monday, December 12. The float will be in place no later than 5:00. Anyone riding or walking with our float needs to be with the float by 5:30. The parade begins at 6:00 p.m. The theme this year is from the movie “Elf.” Our float will depict the Candy Cane Forest that Buddy travels through. Buddy the Elf will even be on our float! We have elf hats for those riding the float, and there will be even more room than last year since our float has grown! We would like for those riding the float to wear red, green, or white, so they will match the elf hats.

Saturday, December 10, from 3:00-8:00. - Festival of the Nativities and Tour of Homes – Our church will serve as the headquarters for the Historic Tour of Homes, and we will have our Festival of the Nativities at that time also. Please turn in your forms for your Nativities as soon as possible so that we can prepare adequate space. We will receive nativity sets on Thursday, December 8, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. and on Friday, December 9, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.. Nativities can be picked up Sunday, December 11, after Noon.



Reverse Nativity Kits are available in the Fellowship Hall. It includes a weekly devotional and an item for each week of Advent. These items will be given to the teachers at Austinville Elementary School after school resumes in January. The kits are due back to the church on Sunday, January 8.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, December 4

3:00 - 4:30 p.m. - Christmas Pageant Rehearsal
5:00 - 7:00 p.m. - Kids gather at Fireside at Mitchum home
6:00 Youth Pizza Dinner
6:30-7:30 UMYF- prepare parade float and decorate 3rd floor for Christmas

Monday, December 5

7:45am Junior High Prayer Breakfast at Bojangles (rides provided to OPMS)
10:00 a.m. - UMW Cookie Trays, Fellowship Hall
5:30 Decatur Christmas Parade

Tuesday, December 6

11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. - Ron Martoia On Purpose Event (Courtyard Conf. Room, Minister's Conf. Room, Fellowship Hall)
5:00 p.m. - Finance Meeting, Room 351

Wednesday, December 7

5:00 - 6:00 p.m. - Christmas Pageant Rehearsal
5:00-8:00 Ring the Salvation Army Bell at Old Navy
6:00 p.m. - Chancel Choir Practice

Thursday, December 8

6:30 a.m., UMM Bible Study, Minister's Conf. Room
7:30am Senior High prayer breakfast at Chick Fil A
7:30 a.m., UMM Breakfast, City Café

Saturday, December 10, from 3:00-8:00. - Festival of the Nativities and Tour of Homes



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Melissa Wiley, Housekeeper

Sandy Callahan, Food Manager

Wayne Keller, Accompanist

Ruth Moyers, Organist

Upcoming Worship Services

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

"Discipling our church to cultivate a legacy of Gospel-inspired servant leadership"

MISSION STATEMENT:

"Making Disciples of Jesus Christ who become servant leaders for the transformation of our church, our homes, our city, state, nation, and world."

Sunday, Dec. 4, Rev. Hughey Reynolds, preaching

8:45 and 11:00 a.m. 2nd Sunday of Advent

"The Earth Shall Be Filled with the Knowledge of the Lord"

Isaiah 11: 1- 10

Sunday, Dec. 11, Rev. Hughey Reynolds, preaching

8:45 and 11:00 a.m. 3rd Sunday of Advent

"The Exaltation of the Lowly"

Luke 1: 46 - 55

Scheduled To Serve Dec. 4

Acolytes:

8:45 a.m.-Bristol Rayne Teal

11:00 a.m. - Christopher Reavis & Beau Claborn

Crucifer - Garret Buckner

Ushers:

8:45 a.m.-Ronnie Dukes, Mike Boozer,

Michael Boozer, Jolly McKenzie

11:00 a.m.-Mark Maloney, Greg Clemons,

Ken Chandler, Judson Davis, Charles Taylor

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