

“Time for a Change”

A church is no healthier than its pastor. As wonderful as our church is, who reading this does not see and feel that we as a church are not as healthy and vibrant as God wants us to be? I say this based not only on the obvious numbers - attendance as well as financial support of the ministry budget and membership growth - but also on the impact of our church to make Decatur a healthier place. One way to assess impact is by asking, “If Decatur First were to close, who besides our active members would miss it?”

After 19 months as your pastor, I have come to see I am a reason this church is not as vibrant as God wants us to be. You need a changed pastor. Read that sentence carefully. I did not say you need to change pastors, but a changed pastor.

**You need a changed pastor.
Read that sentence carefully.**

How have I reached this conclusion? I have been troubled over the decline in the average number of worship services committed church members attend. In my early days of ministry (1970s), many committed members attended Sunday school and worship on Sunday morning, Bible study and worship on Sunday evening, and prayer meeting on Wednesday evening, up to 5 hours a week or 260 hours a year. This was time for the church to disciple its members. Today, Gallup and Barna research tells us the average number of times committed church members attend is 1.8 Sundays a month, as little as 21.6 hours a year. That’s 12% of the time the church once had to disciple its members.

I have been in a funk about this and largely blamed it on the affluent lifestyles of church members. Well, honestly, I share that affluent lifestyle and have many of the same competing attractions as you do, including family members, a house, and a farm in places far off from Decatur. I like to be there on weekends just as much as you like to go where you go. Only, my weekends start Thursday night and end Saturday night and most of your weekends start Friday night and end Sunday night. We have different off days and you do on your off days the same things I do on mine. Maybe this is pointing toward starting Thursday evening worship, but that is a topic for another discussion.

Actually, a structural or time change is not enough. You need a changed pastor. During my first year here, I was too busy to be a part of any accountability group for my personal and professional growth. In 2016, I attended a once-a-month accountability group with peers in Birmingham. I will continue that. In January, the SPRC and Finance Committee arranged funding to bring **Ron Martoia** for four full days over the next eight months to work with me, my staff, and ministry team leaders on personal and professional growth and on leadership for a church culture change. This week, our District Superintendent **Kelly Clem** invited me to join a monthly accountability group with pastors seeking to lead our churches to growth in these challenging times. Participating in these groups will require me to read at least two books a month, pray with my peers and staff, and invite them to critique and encourage me in ministry. Yep, I can feel a change coming. I have heard it’s contagious.

In Christ,

Hughey

United Methodist Men's Breakfast

The next UMM monthly breakfast is Sunday, **February 12**, starting at 7:30 a.m. in the Wesley Fellowship Hall. All men who are members or friends of First Church are invited. As a Valentine's Day gesture, men are encouraged to invite their wives or a guest for the February breakfast.



Our special speaker this month is our own **Debbie Heard**, former long term First Church staff member, past Executive Director of the Morgan-Lawrence American Red Cross, and currently Executive Director of Hospice of the Valley. Debbie always does a fine job in any presentation and brings a wealth of spiritual insight and community spirit to her comments.

Each person who attends including guests are asked to contribute \$5 to defray the cost of our meal. We hope to see you on February 12.

Phil Corazarri UMM President



UMW Meeting News

Please join us for the UMW General Meeting on Monday, February 6 at 10:00 a.m. in the Wesley Fellowship Hall, followed by lunch. The program will be **Ron Thompson** from the United Methodist Disaster Relief Warehouse. A UMW Board Meeting will be held before the General Meeting at 9:00 a.m. in the Bride's Room.



On February 13th, the Tidwell Circle will be meeting at Riverside Assisted Living center in the Activity Room at 10:00 a.m. On February 14th, the Lydia Circle will be meeting at Jane Ann Ford's house at 10:00 a.m.

Hilltoppers The Hilltoppers February trip is a Mystery Trip! We will leave FUMC at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 16. After our mystery destination and lunch together, we will return to the church around 1:00. You will need to bring money for lunch (around \$10), \$3 for our destination and \$1 for fuel.

2017 Gardening Classes

First United Methodist Church will host two gardening classes on Saturday, February 4 and Saturday, February 25 from 9:00 until 11:00 a.m. in the Wesley Fellowship Hall. The Morgan County Cooperative Extension service will provide the instruction. On February 4, **Allyson Shabel** and **Mike Reeves** will cover a variety of topics including starting seeds indoors, plant selection, crop rotation, watering, and soil fertility. On February 25, **Hunter McBrayer** will speak on garden insects, disease, and integrated pest management for organic gardening. There is no cost for participants. Call the church office at 256-355-0277 to reserve a seat and materials.



First Fellowship Resumed Wednesday, Jan. 11

First Fellowship is our Wednesday night ministry. Dinner is served from 5:00-6:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Children's ministries start at 5:30 and youth ministries start at 6:00. We have several Adult Small Group options for this semester! Please consider signing up for one of the following classes being offered:

- **Sermon on the Mount** led by Charles Boling
- **A Survey of Christian Ethics** led by Hughey Reynolds
- **Soul Keeping** led by Donna McAnnally
- **Growing Kids God's Way** (parenting for preschool- preteen) led by John and Stefanie Underwood
- **The Wired Word** led by Ronnie Dukes, Charles Taylor, Jim Ridgeway, and others
- **War Room (Study for Young Ladies)** led by Weety Vickery and Sandy Reynolds
- **The Shack, Revisited** led by Marilyn Sykes (one class, date TBD)

Wednesday Night Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to help in the kitchen this winter. We will help with tea, desserts, children's option and salad prep on Tuesday or Wednesday during the day, serving and clean up on Wednesday nights. Please contact Beth Green (256-355-0277) or Deb Graham (281-757-5272). We can use you if you can help on a weekly basis, once a month, or only one time!



Church Prayer List Feb. 1 Edition

Alice Ackley, broken hip surgery, Decatur Morgan Hospital Room 485 then to Rehab

Sympathy - Please keep Ronnie and Vicki Dukes and their daughter Meg Tanner and family in your prayers as they mourn the loss of Ronnie's nephew, Peyton Dukes. He is the son of Ronnie's brother Jeff and his wife Ann.

Mary Archibald, moving to Pennsylvania to be closer to son

Linda Foster

Diane Summerlin, foot surgery recovery

Clyde Sasser

Katherine Johnson

Ed Kirby

Our Nation

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.

First Church Children's Ministry

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



Please join us!

**4th Annual Birthday Bag Celebration
Wednesday, February 22 during First Fellowship**

Birthday Cake will be served!



**To benefit families through
Committee on Church Cooperation (CCC)**

Neighborhood Christian Center (NCC) Austinville Elem. Backpacks

We are asking our church families to help make other's lives a little happier by collecting the following items. This year our Children will assemble the bags so please bring the items in a grocery bag and we will do the rest!

- **Cake mix**
- **Can of frosting**
- **Candles**
- **Party napkins (a package with a minimum of 8)**
- **Party cake plates (a package with a minimum of 8)**
- **Party table cloth**
- **Party Cups (8)**

Please drop the items off for the bags to Alexia's office, or outside the Fellowship Hall in the green tubs. We will need them by Feb. 22nd. Our goal is to make 70 bags to provide an instant birthday celebration for children/youth/adults who sometimes don't know where their next meal will come from. If you have any questions please contact Alexia Claborn, 256-606-8646.

Save the Date

Feb. 8th - 4:00 p.m. - Children's Ministry Committee Meeting, Courtyard Conf. Room

Wed., Feb. 22nd - Birthday Bags at First Fellowship

Sunday, April 9th -Easter Egg Hunt

June 19th -22nd - VBS

In February, for the Global Impact Celebration, our children will be involved in helping to pack the Backpack bags for Austinville Elementary. They will also help with packing Birthday Bags to benefit local children's ministries. Watch for more information to come!

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Volunteers for Sunday, Feb. 5

Sunday School

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

**K - 2nd - Room #207 Jami Buckner
Assistant - TBA**

**3rd-5th - Room #306 Betty Ann Mitchum
Assistant-Alexia Claborn**

Children's Church

**8:45 Service Teacher- Alexia Claborn
Assistant- Katie Caldwell**

**11:00 Service Teacher-Alexia Claborn
Assistant- TBA & Hunter Claborn**

Volunteers for Sunday, Feb. 12

Sunday School

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

**K - 2nd - Room #207 Carrie Hart
Assistant - Dell Ward**

**3rd - 5th Grade - Room #306 Betty Ann Mitchum
Assistant -Glenda Pentecost**

Children's Church

**8:45 Service Teacher- Alexia Claborn
Assistant- Vickie Earwood**

**11:00 Service Teacher-Alexia Claborn
Assistant- Davia Newman**

Acolyte Information

| | 8:45 SERVICE | 11:00 SERVICE |
|---------|---|--|
| Feb. 5 | Bristol Rayne Teal, Mary Elizabeth Booth | Christopher Reavis & Beau Claborn Crucifer- Garret Buckner |
| Feb. 12 | Bristol Rayne Teal, Mary Elizabeth Booth | LuLu Underwood & John Benton Claborn |

Children's First Fellowship

*First Fellowship Resumed Jan. 11th
Elementary*

5:30 -Elementary Choir 6:00-7:00- Bible Story and Lesson

Pre- School

6:00- Pre-School Choir 6:20-7:00 -Bible Story and Lesson

Mission Moments

Shannon Booth, Director of Outreach and Evangelism
256-221-0348

Seasons of Love: A Season to Give

If you have walked the aisles of your favorite retailer, maybe all of the Valentine's Day Decorations and goodies have brought our Seasons of Love missions emphasis to your mind. We have several opportunities for you to learn about how our Faith Promise pledges make an impact around the globe and right here in Decatur.



If you are not active in a Sunday School class or small group and are interested in hearing from one of our missionaries at a dinner, please let me know, and I'll help you find a place to connect. On Sunday, February 12, during worship we will have an update from Refuge of Grace. I am looking forward to hearing how the ladies are doing and what is new in their ministry. I am also looking forward to hearing from Davidson Adams, a friend of the Nigerian Partnership, which we also support through Faith Promise. He will be with us during worship on Sunday, February 19.

Seasons of Love



Our fourth and fifth grade students are participating in different mission activities each Wednesday after our First Fellowship meal. This has been a fun and exciting time for me, since my son is in this group. They love putting their faith into action, and I believe that these evenings have taught all of us that kingdom work can be fun. We have baked cookies for the Kairos ministries, assembled the remainder of the Reverse Advent Calendars, and made cards for veterans at the Veteran's Home in Huntsville.

On Saturday, February 18, our church is hosting a mission opportunity sponsored by all three Rotary Clubs in Decatur. We will work from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. packaging food for international aid through the Stop Hunger Now program. Bring two non-perishable food items to support the Barrels of Love Drive sponsored by local industries, and bring a heart ready to serve. Together with the Rotarians we will package 17,064 meals. You can sign up online and view a video about the event at <http://events.stophungernow.org/RotaryofDecatur2017>. I recommend watching the video so that you can get an idea of what the event will look like.

I'm looking forward to sharing this Season of Love with all of you!



Teachers receive our baskets from our "Reverse Advent Calendars"



Children bake cookies for Kairos ministries.

Youth Dates

Saturday, February 4
3:00 Rub Boston Butts

Sunday, February 5-
8:00-10:00 Youth at Big Bob Gibson (Danville Rd.)
9:00-11:00 Youth at FUMC
10:00-12:00 Youth at Big Bob Gibson
11:00-1:00 Youth at FUMC
5:00 Super Bowl Party at Lydia Matthew's house

Monday, February 6
7:45-8:15am Jr High Prayer Breakfast at Bojangles'. Rides provided to OPMS.

Wednesday, February 8
5:00 First Fellowship Dinner
6:00 Youth Bible Study

Thursday, February 9
7:30 Sr High Prayer Breakfast at Chick Fil A

Friday, February 10- Saturday, February 11-
4:00pm Confirmation Retreat at Camp McDowell


Sunday, February 12
10:00 Sunday School
6:00 Brown Bag Supper
6:30-7:30 UMYF

Wednesday, February 15
5:00 First Fellowship Dinner
6:00 Youth Bible Study



Thursday, February 16
7:30 Sr High Prayer Breakfast at Chick Fil A




Boston Butt Sunday

If you ordered a Boston Butt, these will be ready to pick up from the church kitchen around 10:00 a.m. Sunday, February 5. Please have your order picked up by 12:30 p.m. We do not have extra butts if you did not pre order. Thanks. 


2017 Super Bowl Party

The youth will meet at **Lydia Matthews' house** (2206 Fleetwood) on Sunday night, Feb. 5 at 5:00 p.m. for the Super Bowl game. Each youth is asked to bring a snack/appetizer to share. We'll have pizza, drinks and leftover Boston Butt! Come join the fun as you cheer on your favorite team or socialize with the group! 


Armor of God Study for Youth

Starting February 26, the youth will be studying *The Armor of God* at the home of **Miranda and Ed Nichols** on Sunday nights. Stay tuned for more details at youth events and in the Tidings! 

College

Beth will be visiting our students at the University of Alabama on Thursday, February 9th. If you would like to make homemade cookies to send to the students, please let Beth know! Visits to Auburn University and Troy University will be in March. 

Hartselle FUMC Offers Memory Café 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 256-773-6952 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.

8th Annual "Soup for Souls" Fundraiser benefits The Neighborhood Christian Center's Children & Youth Programs

Location: Sykes Place on Bank 726 Bank Street

Date & Time: Thursday, March 2nd, 5:30-7:30 PM

Silent Auction for a variety of art items by local artists

Tickets for the Soup for Souls event are \$30. Tickets purchased in advance (by February 25th) are guaranteed a hand painted soup bowl at the event. Those who buy their ticket at the door will receive a hand painted soup bowl on a first come first serve basis. If they would like to paint their own bowl for the event, they can come to the Neighborhood Christian Center to paint a bowl (by February 25th) that they will use at the event. **Please call or email the Neighborhood Christian Center for more information 256-351-7633 or 256-616-3144 or email decaturncc1994@gmail.com** This year we would like the funds generated to be designated for new & current curriculum within our Education and Discipleship Programs. Thank you for your faithful support.



Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 4 - 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. - Gardening class in Fellowship Hall (see page 2 for details)
Saturday, February 4 3:00 Rub Boston Butts, Kitchen
Sunday, February 5
8:00-10:00 Youth at Big Bob Gibson (Danville Rd.)
9:00-11:00 Youth at FUMC
10:00-12:00 Youth at Big Bob Gibson
11:00-1:00 Youth at FUMC
5:00 Super Bowl Party at Lydia Matthew's house

Monday, February 6, 7:45-8:15am Jr High Prayer Breakfast at Bojangles'. Rides provided to OPMS

2/6, 9:00 a.m., UMW Board Meeting, Bride's Room

2/6, 10:00 a.m., UMW General Meeting, Fellowship Hall

2/6, 5:30 p.m., Finance Committee Meeting, Room 351

Tuesday, Feb. 7, 10:00 a.m., Women's Bible Study, Courtyard Conf. Room

2/7, 5:15 p.m., Administrative Board Meeting, Minister's Conf. Room

2/7, 6:00 p.m., Council on Ministries Meeting, Minister's Conf. Room

Wednesday, Feb. 8, 4:00 p.m., Children's Ministry Committee Meeting, Courtyard Conf. Room

Wednesday, Feb. 8, 5:00 p.m., First Fellowship Meal and Classes, Fellowship Hall and Sunday School Rooms

Feb. 8, 6:30 p.m., Chancel Choir Practice

Feb. 9, 6:30 a.m., UMM Bible Study, Minister's Conf. Room

Feb. 9, 7:30 a.m., UMM Breakfast, City Café

Feb. 9, 7:30am Sr. High prayer breakfast @ Chick Fil A

Feb. 9, 6:00 p.m., Worship Team Practice

Feb. 10 & 11, Confirmation Retreat at Camp McDowell



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Charlie Elliott, Custodian
Melissa Wiley, Housekeeper

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, Feb. 5

8:45 and 11:00 a.m. Rev. Hughey Reynolds, preaching "EXPECTING MORE OF YOURSELF"

Matthew 5: 13-20

Sunday, Feb. 12

8:45 and 11:00 a.m. Rev. Hughey Reynolds, preaching "WORK IT OUT"

Matthew 5: 21-37

Scheduled To Serve Feb. 5

Acolytes:

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

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

Crucifer- Garret Buckner

Ushers:

8:45 a.m.-Norman Roby, Mike and Michael Boozer, Jolly McKenzie

11:00 a.m.-Mark Maloney, Greg Clemons, Ken Chandler, Judson Davis, Charles Taylor

First Fellowship Resumed Wednesday, Jan. 11

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