



Tidings of Joy

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

April 20, 2016

“Some Specifics about the General Conference of the UMC” A Note From Our Pastor

In less than a month, a thousand voting delegates from United Methodist annual conferences in the USA and around the world will gather in Portland, Oregon for our denomination’s quadrennial General Conference. The conference will enact legislation for the 2016 edition of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. The *Book of Discipline* sets the course for mission and ministry in every United Methodist congregation for the next four years. It is the United Methodist rule book.

I have heard people marvel over and praise *The Book of Discipline* after reading it for the first time. I have heard others criticize its complexity. Many say the *Book of Discipline* is out of touch with the local congregation. The General Conference that writes the legislation recorded in the *Book of Discipline* is comprised by an equal number of clergy and lay delegates who worship and serve in local United Methodist congregations each week. They are elected by their respective annual conferences. Their task is to create legislation that reflects Biblical teachings in relation to current reality. To the extent that they succeed in this task, the result will be the best guidance the church can get from human beings who represent over seven million United Methodists from over 32,000 congregations in the U.S. alone. There are 4.4 million additional United Methodists from the Central Conferences in Europe, Asia, and Africa who also send voting delegates to the General Conference.

Even if the General Conference succeeds in making decisions that reflect Biblical teachings in relation to current reality, the results will be criticized. Our church has grown in diversity in recent years, even while traditional United Methodist congregations declined in membership or closed. The North Alabama Conference has four clergy and four lay delegates. There was a time when North Alabama had 20 of the 1,000 delegates. Since the number of delegates a conference gets is set by the total church membership in that conference, and our numbers have decreased while the numbers for Africa and Asia have increased, we have fewer seats

at the table and they have more. Our delegates must network and negotiate with those from other regions for our views to be represented. By prayer and compromise everyone has some wins and everyone has some losses.

The media will focus on the United Methodist Church’s position on homosexuality and the policies of the church related to it. Are United Methodist pastors allowed to perform same sex marriage ceremonies and may our churches host them? This debate started over 40 years ago and each General Conference has maintained that God loves homosexuals no less than heterosexuals, while stating that homosexuality as a lifestyle is incompatible with Christian teachings. The difference this year is the current reality of U.S. Law legalizing same sex marriage. Are there biblical, theological, ethical, medical, sociological, and practical reasons to uphold our positions or to change them?

I tell you this so you will not be surprised when you hear reports on what United Methodists are doing in Portland. Whenever we come together as a church, we come in our brokenness, embracing the ideals of the Kingdom of God. This combination of human frailty and Kingdom perfection is the Church of Jesus Christ. I expect many good things from this General Conference as a result of prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Let us hope and pray knowing that in all things God works for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Hughey

Hilltoppers

The May Hilltoppers trip will be to Camp Sumatanga with the United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women. We’ll leave FUMC at 8:30 a.m. and return around 3:00. We’ll tour the camp and enjoy lunch together on campus. Lunch will be \$9 per person and a donation for fuel will be collected. Sign-up sheets will be on the bulletin board and available at the UMM and UMW meetings.

Sympathy **Ray Albert**, 97, passed away on April 6. Services were held at First Church in the Sanctuary and Columbarium on April 16 with Dr. Hughey Reynolds officiating. Our prayers remain with the family.

Ushers Needed for 11:00 a.m. Service

If you attend the 11:00 a.m. service and are not currently ushering and would be willing to help us, please let the church office know or **Ken Chandler** know by email at kchandler1943@gmail.com.

First Grace Child Development Center News

- Thank you for all of your donations for the yard sale. We will accept donations in the Fellowship Hall until Thursday, April 21 at 6:00 p.m. **The Yard Sale will be in the church Fellowship Hall from Friday, April 22 from 7:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. to Saturday, April 23 from 7:00 a.m. - Noon.**
- Graduation for our 4K will be Thursday, May 19th at 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary and our Graduation Sunday will be Sunday, May 22nd at the 8:45 AM Service.
- **Summer Day Camp items needed:** If you would like to donate new or used items for our school age summer day camp, please contact Laura at 256-302-6114.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Flag Football set | Water Balloons |
| T-Ball set | Big Floor Puzzles |
| Hula Hoops | Barbies |
| Jump Ropes | Board Games |
| Small bean bags | Marvel Super Hero Figurines |



We want to welcome our new **Assistant Director at First Grace, Elaine Hawthorne!**

We are thrilled to have Elaine in her new position as Assistant Director. She is not a stranger to First Grace or Decatur FUMC, but please help us welcome her in her new roll!



Hawthorne

First Grace Director Laura Vines was recently chosen to participate in the Alabama Leadership Initiative in Montgomery, AL.

She attended a conference in Montgomery on April 14-15 to meet other honorees and to participate in a wide variety of seminars. They explored issues in education, economic development, politics, and government with leading experts. We are proud to have Laura represent our church and First Grace at Leadership Alabama and we are thrilled that she was chosen for such an honor!



Vines

Habitat for Humanity Faith Build 2016

Decatur FUMC's day to serve at the build site is Saturday, April 30. The work day begins at 8:00 a.m., and it will end around 2:00 p.m. We will be working on finishing siding on the back of the house, installing the porch and ceiling, inside beam siding, and vinyl and brick pocket trim. We also need volunteers to provide a light lunch for the people working (approx. 20).

Email Shannon Booth at Shannon@decaturfumc.org if you are interested in signing up. You must be 16 years old to work on the construction site. The address is 323 Denver Place SW. Construction began March 31.

Feel free to stop by and see what it looks like when five area churches work together to build a home for a single mom and her daughter.

Summer Events Planned for FUMC

The Discipleship Team has been busy planning a fun, spirit filled summer for FUMC. There will be Bible Study groups, yoga classes, Bible Journaling, wreath making, painting, cooking, movies and more! Stay tuned for additional information, a calendar and registration information.



First Quarter Finance Update

We praise God for members and friends who take their vows of loyalty to the Lord's work seriously and provide faithful financial support to our beloved church month in and month out. **Our first priority is to undergird our Ministry Budget and meet all program and maintenance needs in full and on time and do so within available offerings.** Our \$807,100 Ministry Budget is among the most prudent in modern times. At first quarter's end we have received slightly more in income than we have spent, so your church is in the black one fourth of the way through the year. However, *there is a long way to go.* Thank you for all pledged and unpledged offerings to your church's Ministry Budget.

Our second priority is to pay down debt from the 2006-2008 building/renovation program, a program from which we all benefit every time we enter First Church. Because of generous giving to this cause our debt has been reduced every month during the last sixteen months coinciding with our "Answering God's Challenge" campaign. During those months we have reduced the principal by over one third of a million dollars and will be under \$1.3 million by year's end. Thank you for considering all pledged and unpledged giving to help your church become debt free. Rest assured that all capital gifts are deposited in a separate bank account and used exclusively to pay interest and principal.

Your church's commitment to missions as recently as 2013 was \$6,000 through our Ministry Budget and about \$25,000 through the benevolences part of our Conference Apportionments. Our Global Impact Celebration (GIC) and Faith Promise efforts have increased our congregation's mission outreach eighteen fold. Based on pledges, the new Faith Promise budget is \$106,600. Total commitment to missions through Faith Promise, our Ministry Budget and the benevolences part of our Conference Apportionments this year will be about \$138,000. **Our third financial priority is to continue our success in making First Church a leading Acts 1:8 church** in the conference through pledged and unpledged giving to Faith Promise. You will note that with Faith Promise we have eliminated frequent appeals for offerings to this or that special cause.

As of March 31 your church remains in sound financial shape, your church's budget is slightly in the black, debt is being reduced, and missions outreach is at historic heights. Nevertheless, to have another successful year we need your consideration for all possible pledged and unpledged offerings to your church's Ministry Budget, to your church's debt reduction, and to your church's mission outreach. Thank you.

Your Finance Committee,

John Pylant Chair



Children's Ministry

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



VBS Training for VBS Volunteers
Sunday, May 1st starting at 1:00 p.m.
This will be followed by Safe Sanctuaries training at 2:00 p.m.
(for those who still need it).
VBS Decoration Work Day will be May 1 from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

VBS 2016 June 13th – 16th

It is time to register for Vacation Bible School. Please find the VBS registration table in the hallway near the Fellowship Hall. You can order your VBS T-shirt (SEE RIGHT) and Music CD as well.

VBS Decoration Work Days- please join us in Room 209 May 1st & 15th

We are also looking for items to help with VBS. If you have any of these items, we would certainly appreciate it:

- appliance boxes
- news papers
- old or new pool noodles (we will paint these so they will not be returned)
- Two liter soda bottles (empty please)
- headlamps (we will return them if you will please label them)



Upcoming Important Dates:

- April 27 - 4:00 - Children's Ministry Committee Meeting
- May 1 - 1:00 p.m. - VBS training
- 2:00 p.m. - Safe Sanctuary training
- 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. - VBS Decoration Work Day
- May 5th - Muffins for Mom Sunday School
- May 15th - VBS Decoration Work Day 2:00-4:00pm
- May 22nd - End of School Year Party 12:15 after church
- June 5th-12th -VBS decorating days times to be announced
- June 13th- 16th - VBS
- June 19th- Donuts with Dad Sunday School

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Volunteers for Sunday, April 24

Sunday School

- Pre-school - Leigh Ann Blankenship / Jessica Mitchell
- K-2nd Grade - Lise Green / Assistant-Margaret Dunivant
- 3rd-5th Grade - Molly Ferrell / Assistant-TBA

Children's Church

- 8:45 Teacher- Alexia Claborn / Assistant- TBA
- 11:00 Teacher-Beth Green/Assistant- Hunter Claborn

Volunteers for Sunday, May 1

Sunday School

- Pre-school - Leigh Ann Blankenship / Jessica Mitchell
- K-2nd Grade - Lindsey Faulkner / Assistant-Gail Herren
- 3rd-5th Grade - Ginny Pylant / Assistant-TBA

Children's Church

- 8:45 Teacher- Alexia Claborn / Assistant- Jim Greene
- 11:00 Service Teacher- Betty Ann Mitchum, Barbara Ashwander, Assistant - Davia Newman

Acolyte Information

Date	8:45 Service	11:00 Service
April 24	Mary Elizabeth Booth Bristol Rayne Teal	Miller Roberts, Davis Roberts
May 1	Susan Floyd Bristol Rayne Teal	LuLu Underwood, Mary Bibb Pylant Crucifer - John Benton Claborn
May 8	Mary Elizabeth Booth Bristol Rayne Teal	Mary Emma Harper, Mattie Fite
May 15	Bristol Rayne Teal	Lydia Matthews, Hunter Claborn

Youth Dates

Sunday, April 24

10:00 Sunday School
5:00 Confirmation
6:00 Brown Bag Supper
6:30 UMYF with the Kids

Monday, April 25

7:45am Jr High prayer
breakfast at Bojangle's
(Rides provided to OPMS)

Wednesday, April 27

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

Sunday, May 1

10:00 Sunday School
6:00 Brown Bag Supper
6:30 UMYF Game Night

Wednesday, May 4

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



College

It's almost time for graduation! If you have a student in your family graduating from college this semester, please let Beth know so we can honor this achievement in our newsletter! You can call, (256) 355-0277 or email Beth@deaturfumc.org. Thank you.



Youth Confirmation

- **April 24, May 1, and May 8-** Classes at 5:00 on the youth Fl.
- **May 11 at 5:30-** Confirmation Dinner in the Fellowship Hall
- **May 15-** Confirmation Sunday during 11:00 worship



Please pray for our youth, and their mentors, who are participating in Confirmation this spring:

- Sara Caitlin Dees and Barbara Ashwander
- Mary Elizabeth Booth and Stefanie Underwood
- Lydia Matthews and Alexia Claborn
- Aiden Garriss and Patrick McCormick
- Hunter Claborn and Michael Boozer
- Thomas Lee and John Underwood
- Zachary Floyd and Ken Chandler

Senior Class of 2016

Don't forget these important dates in May as we celebrate this important achievement in your lives!



May 8- 10:00 Senior Class photo on the Sanctuary Steps

May 8- Senior Information due to Beth- full name, post graduate plans, high school resume, Sr. photo

May 11- Senior Breakfast RSVP

May 22- 9:45am Senior Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall;
11:00am Senior Recognition in worship

UMYF

United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF) occurs on Sunday nights. If school is out on a Monday, we will not have UMYF the Sunday night before. We meet on the youth floor (third floor, enter the building on the alley side) at 6:00.

Bring your own dinner (fast food or from home) and eat with the group until 6:30 when we'll start our programming. We'll rotate between different activities that may include games, outings, worship, programs and missions! We typically end at 7:30.

- April 24- UMYF with Children's Ministry
- May 1- Game Night
- May 8- Destination Unknown
- May 15- End of the Year Fishing Party @ the Armstrongs' Pond



Mountain Mania 15K and 5K

5:30 a.m. - Registration

7:00 a.m. - 15K starts

Mountain
Mania 15K and 5K



June 4, 2016

Burningtree Country Club
Decatur, Alabama

Upcoming Events

First Grace Yard Sale, April 22-23, Fellowship Hall
4/24, 5:00 p.m., Confirmation Class
4/24, 6:00 Youth Brown Bag; 6:30 UMYF with the Kids
4/25, 7:45am Jr High prayer breakfast at Bojangle's
(Rides provided to OPMS)
4/25, Worship Team Practice, 6:00 p.m.
4/26, Women's Bible Study, 10:00, Minister's Conf. Rm
4/26, 6:00 p.m., Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development, Minister's Conference Room
4/27, 7:30am Sr. High prayer breakfast at Chick Fil A
4/27, 4:00 - Children's Ministry Committee Meeting
4/27, 6:30 p.m., Chancel Choir Practice
4/28, 7:30 a.m., UMM Breakfast, City Café
4/30, Decatur FUMC's day to serve at the build site is Saturday, April 30. The work day begins at 8:00 a.m., and it will end around 2:00. See page two for details.

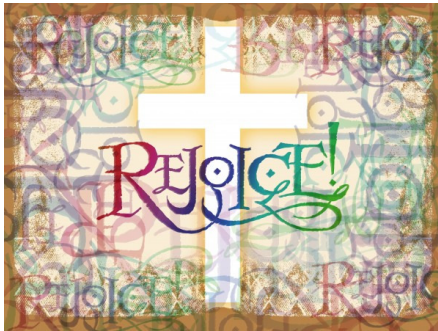


805 CANAL STREET N.E.
DECATUR, AL 35601
PHONE (256) 355-0277
FAX (256) 355-2241
www.decaturfumc.org

U.S. Postage Paid
Non-Profit Org.
Decatur, AL
35601

Permit No. 226

Please place label here



Dr. Hughey Reynolds, Senior Minister, hreynolds@decaturfumc.org
Patrick McCormick, Director of Worship, patrick@decaturfumc.org
Beth C. Green, Minister of Discipleship, beth@decaturfumc.org
Cindy McCulloch, Finance Secretary, cmcculloch@decaturfumc.org
Alyson Quinn, Church Secretary, aquinn@decaturfumc.org
Alexia Claborn, Director of Children's Ministry, aclaborn@decaturfumc.org
Shannon Booth, Director of Outreach, shannon@decaturfumc.org

Charlie Elliott, Custodian
Melissa Wiley, Housekeeper
Sandy Callahan, Food Manager
Wayne Keller, Accompanist
Ruth Moyers, Organist

Upcoming Worship Services

(8:45 & 11:00 AM)

VISION STATEMENT:

Growing in Christ, Sharing God's Love through...
Inspiring Worship, Empowering Ministries
Equipping Persons for Ministry, Promoting Well-Being

Sunday, April 24, Rev. Hughey Reynolds, preaching
8:45 and 11:00 a.m. "When God Dwells With Us"
Psalm 148; Revelation 21:1-6

Sunday, May 1, Rev. Wylheme Ragland, preaching
8:45 and 11:00 a.m. "Rejoice, You Have Another Gift
From Jesus!" John 14:23-29

Scheduled To Serve April 24

Acolytes:

8:45 a.m. - Bristol Rayne Teal, Mary Elizabeth Booth
11:00 a.m. - Miller Roberts, Davis Roberts

Ushers:

8:45 a.m. - Bert Phippen, Dennis Altice, Sammy Dean
and Bob McAnnally
11:00 a.m. - Ricky Clay, Jeff Earley, Ronald Matthews,
J. Robert Fite, Phil Corazzari

Find Us On Social Media

"Like" us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/DecaturFirstUMC

First Fellowship Season Is Over

April 13 was the last First Fellowship of the season.