



Tidings of Joy

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

July 13, 2016

“One Hundred and Twenty Days of Prayer” A Note From Our Pastor

Last Sunday I preached on Amos’ vision of the plumb line in which Israel was found tilting and ready to fall (Amos 7:7-17). Amos names behaviors that are “plumb wrong.” It was wrong for Israel’s rich to tread on the poor and the king to turn a blind eye. It was wrong for the priest Amaziah to permit pagan religious practices to corrupt the worship of God in the temple at Bethel. For their defiant disobedience, Israel would be destroyed.

Events in our nation during the past week produced behaviors that are plumb wrong. The shooting deaths of two black men by white policemen in Saint Paul, MN and Baton Rouge, LA followed by the sniper attack in which a black man killed five and wounded seven white policemen in Dallas, TX were plumb wrong. Here is how I concluded my sermon.

We can expect more violence in our nation until good people speak up and drown out the loud voices fomenting fear and hatred that feed the violence. There have been times when I have reacted to angry words born of fear with anger, which only escalated emotions in me and in the other person. Whether or not I am right, responding to anger with anger places both of us on the precipice of violence. I have gotten it wrong before. I want to tell you about a time I got it right. The man in my office had come in angry many times, and we both went away angrier. But this time, I was more prepared. I had behind me a several month’s long discipline of praying and reading the Bible for an hour every day at 5:00 a.m. So when he told me he planned to have me moved, I did not react. I said, “I have been praying about the same thing. Will you covenant with me to pray that God will move me when it is time?” He was stunned. After a pregnant pause, he said, “I will do that,” and he left the room shaking his head. For the next two years we had a cordial and cooperative relationship. He grew as a disciple and a leader and so did I.

We will differ with each other over issues. There is nothing wrong with that. What is wrong is belittling those with whom we differ. That leads to broken relationships, which breed suspicion, then fear, then hatred, then violence. That is plumb wrong. Our raw

emotions will carry us down that path every time unless they are tempered by the peace of God we gain in daily communion with God as we pray and read scripture with open hearts.

There are 120 days left before the presidential election. This political campaign has already brought out a lot of raw emotions and meanness. Today, I want us to covenant with each other to spend an hour a day praying and reading scripture for the next 120 days. If you will do that, email me, text me, or use one of the prayer cards and leave it at the communion rail today with these words on it, “I will pray and read the Bible for an hour every day for the next 120 days.” ...It will be a sign of hope that we are no longer headed toward destruction but toward the Lord God our Savior who gives life and peace.

Here is a follow-up report. A total of 36 people so far have committed to pray and read scripture for one hour every day through November 8, 2016. You can join them. The practice is already reshaping daily routines. I believe it will reshape us within so our words and actions will reflect those of Jesus. “Christ in us, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

Hughey

Patrick’s Musical Notes

If you have ever considered becoming a part of our worship team and chancel choir, now is the time to do it. While the kids are out of school, and it’s simply too hot to work outside, what else could you possibly want to do? There is no better way to give back to the Lord than to sing his praises.

The Worship Team meets on Mondays at 6:00 p.m. and the Chancel Choir meets on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. If you have any questions regarding how to join please contact me at patrick@decaturfumc.org.

Thank you!

Patrick McCormick

Advanced Notice: 6th Annual Homer Christopher Memorial Fish Fry



The First Church United Methodist Men invite you to this year's fish fry on **Wednesday, August 17**, starting at 5:30 PM. The traditional menu will be served. Tickets will again be \$10 per person or \$28 for a family with minor children. Everyone admitted including children will need a ticket. Tickets will soon be available at the church on Sundays, in the church office weekdays, in most adult Sunday School Classes, and from active UMM members. Proceeds go to UMM outreach activities. **Put this date on your calendar** and plan to enjoy the good food, good fellowship, and good memories of First Church Christian Servant Homer Christopher.

Mission Moments

So often we tend to make Christianity so difficult. The intricate nuances of different theological perspectives can often be the first thing that many see when they look at Christianity as a whole. Jesus always seems to simplify and complicate things at the same time. When he was asked what the greatest commandment is, He said that it was to Love God with all that you are and Love your neighbor like you love yourself. He later defines "neighbor" by telling a story about an outcast who loved his neighbor in just that way. The Parable of the Good Samaritan is so familiar in our society that it has even been used to name a law that protects people who seek to help others in certain circumstances; yet putting this into practice is not always easy.



On the first Wednesday of each month when First Fellowship begins we will offer on-site mission activities. These will be times to put into practice our charge to love our neighbor. We will assemble birthing kits for the Disaster Relief Warehouse and other activities that will make a real difference in the life of those that we reach. Our first mission activity will be on Wednesday, September 7, following dinner. Be on the lookout for information about these upcoming projects.

I do need your help for these projects. We will collect new, unused, gender neutral flannel receiving blankets for the birthing kits. We will also collect plastic grocery bags for another project. Look for a bin or basket near the mission bulletin board in the hallway that leads to the fellowship hall.

Shannon Booth

Prayer List July 13th Edition

Youth Mission Trip to Orlando, July 17-23

Winnie Reed

Gene Goodger

Family of Elise Denton - Elise died Sunday in a fatal hit-and-run in Smyrna, TN. Elise is the daughter of Margaret Denton, a longtime co-worker of Sandy Reynolds.

Carol McBroom

Death of the father of the sister-in-law of Beth Green

Lily Sherrill, Mission Trip to Uganda

Lauren, Nick, and Jake Owens

David Thompson, Jr. - travels in Rio de Janeiro

Kayleigh McClendon - brain tumor

Our Country

120 days of prayer (see Hughey's article on front page)

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.

14th Annual Caddell Alzheimer's Conference

Presented by:
The Mental Health
Association in Morgan County
Tuesday, July 26, 2016
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
1101 6th Ave. NE, Decatur

For more information, please call
256-353-1160

Online registration at
www.mhainmc.net

Summer Events for FUMC Make reservations NOW on the bulletin board outside the Fellowship Hall!

Make plans to join us for a lot of FUN this summer at FUMC!

- **Yoga classes** in room 250 (2nd floor new building) will be led by Mollie Erickson (Meredith Matthew's sister) from 6-7:15 on Tuesday nights, June 28- July 26. The cost is \$5 per person, per class.
- **Wreath Making Class**- Doug Maze will be leading a group and showing how to make a wreath on July 21 at 6:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Each participant will leave with a wreath! Prior to the class, you will need to meet at Hobby Lobby on Saturday, July 16 at 1:00 or Monday, July 18 at 6:00 to buy your own supplies.

“Mid-Year Finance Update”

First Church members and friends have made generous offerings so far this year to our three giving priorities: the 2016 Ministry Budget, the "Answering God's Call" building fund campaign, and the Faith Promise mission outreach program. Half way through the year finances are sound, thanks to the stewardship efforts of all who contribute to the Lord's work through our beloved church.

2016 Ministry Budget Operations: Towards a prudent **\$807,103** budget, offerings to date are **\$451,406**. Offerings exceed expenses and are running \$30,800 ahead of last year at this time. For the fifth year in a row your church is operating within budget guidelines with no deficit and a small reserve. Nevertheless, we have a long way to go to finish 2016 with all obligations and opportunities met. *Thank you for your consideration of all pledged and non-pledged offerings to our highest giving priority.*

Building/Capital Fund Operations: First Church continues with a large debt stemming from the \$4.4 million (plus interest) 2006-2008 building/renovation program. Reducing that debt is our church's second most important financial goal. Beginning with the "First Fruits" offering in December 2014, "Answering God's Challenge" offerings through July have allowed principal reduction payments for twenty consecutive months and reduced your church's debt to under \$1.3 million. Building/Capital Fund offerings year to date are **\$114,827**. Remember that all offerings to the separate Building/Capital Fund are used only for interest payments and principal reduction. *Thank you for your consideration of all pledged and non-pledged offerings to your church's debt reduction.*

Faith Promise Operations: Through the GIC/Faith Promise, First Church has returned to its historic emphasis on missions. Your church is now among the leading North Alabama Conference congregations in missions giving. Offerings year to date of \$40,301 to Faith Promise continue to be robust towards an increased 2016 Faith Promise budget of **\$106,600**. All groups to which First Church committed mission support have received their second quarter allocation. You will note that frequent appeals for this and that cause have been replaced by the once a year Faith Promise campaign. **Note:** Our missions commitment includes \$7,000 in the Ministry Budget, about \$25,000 through the benevolence portion of our Conference Apportionments, and the Faith Promise budget, or a total of about \$138,000 in outreach giving to approved local, area, national, and global mission causes. *Thank you for your consideration of all pledged and non-pledged Faith Promise offerings.*

Other Finances: In 2013 your church returned to an annual, professional, external accounting engagement with a local CPA firm. The 2015 accounting engagement has been completed, and 2015 church financial statements will be submitted to North Alabama Conference authorities. This accounting engagement meets all requirements of the North Alabama Conference and *The Discipline of the United Methodist Church*.

In early 2014 First Grace Child Development Center had fewer than 40 children enrolled and faced serious financial difficulties. Since then, through the hard work of First Grace staff and First Grace board leadership, enrollment has increased to over 100 and the center has good cash reserves in place.

Your Finance Committee appreciates the work of our staff and lay leadership in crafting a prudent budget, paying close attention to spending, and emphasizing integrity, accountability, and open communications in finance matters. We also appreciate the members and friends who month in month out assign priority to Ministry Budget, debt reduction, and Faith Promise giving to promote the Lord's work through this great church.

Respectfully,

Your Finance Committee

John Pylant Chair



Children's Ministry

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

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.



Upcoming Important Dates

July 27th - 5:00 p.m., Children's Ministry Committee Meeting, Courtyard Conf. Room

Aug. 7th- Blessing of the backpacks 11:00 service

Aug. 24th- First Fellowship Begins



Acolyte Information

July 17th

8:45 Bristol Rayne Teal

11:00 Miller Roberts & Davis Roberts

July 24th

8:45 Bristol Rayne Teal

11:00 John Benton Claborn

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Volunteers for Sunday, July 17

Sunday School

Pre-school - Leigh Ann Blankenship

Assistant - Lydia Matthews

K-5th Grade - Meredith Matthews

Assistant- Lise Greene

(Combined classes will meet in the K-2nd Sunday School Room #207)

Children's Church

8:45 Service Teacher- Vickie Earwood

Assistant- Mary Ila Ward

11:00 Service Teacher- Barbara Ashwander

Assistant- Lydia Matthews

Volunteers for Sunday, July 24

Sunday School

Pre-school - Leigh Ann Blankenship, Jessica Mitchell

K-5th Grade - Stephen Claborn / Assistant- Tom Earley

(Combined classes will meet in the K-2nd Sunday School Room #207)

Children's Church

8:45 Service Teacher- Alexia Claborn, Assistant- TBA

11:00 Service Teacher- Alexia Claborn, Assistant- TBA

Donuts with Dad

We had a lot of fun on Father's Day! We celebrated with Donuts with Dad!



Youth Dates

Sunday, July 17- Saturday, July 23- Youth Mission Trip to Orlando



Sunday, July 17

No Youth Sunday School or TRIBES

Sunday, July 24

10:00 Sunday School

5:30 TRIBES at Libby Neill's pool

Wednesday, July 27

6:00pm Discovery Training

Friday, July 29- Sunday, July 31-

Discovery Weekend

Buy a Brick from the Youth!

The youth will be selling engraved bricks for the Courtyard entrance by the Columbarium. Each brick is \$75 and profits will go towards youth missions and outreach. Order forms are located throughout the church and from the church office. Please contact Beth with any questions. You can give order forms and check to any youth!

Summer Lunch Bunch

The youth group will meet on select Thursdays throughout the summer to go to lunch (bring your own money) and return to the church for a time of prayer and devotion. We'll leave the church at 12:00 and parents can pick up at 1:30. **Aug. 4- Moe's BBQ**

Summer Mission Trip

Please pray for our mission trip team in Orlando as we serve the children and families at Give Kids the World helping grant Make A Wish Trips.



Mohammad Abdullahpour

Colwell Bibb

Mike Boozer

Gabe Brown

Landess Brown

Garret Buckner

Tegwen Buckner

Beau Claborn

Hunter Claborn

Mitch Davidson

Davis Earley

Lisa Earley

Nelson Earley

Sara Catherine Floyd

Susan Floyd

Zachary Floyd

Natalie Frith

Beth Green

Jonathan Green

Anna Carpenter Harris

Mary Kate Hillis

Elizabeth Hunt

Emily Hunt

Mary Jones

Ann Wilson Lazenby

Hannah Lazenby

Leigh Lazenby

Stephen Mayfield

Trenton Milligan

Jane Hollis Poovey

Chris Reavis

Katelyn Riant

Katherine Scott

Mary Ella Scott

Paxton Tidwell

Laura Leigh Vought

MaryLocke Wise



Join us for TRIBES! It's not too late!

TRIBES is a recreational outdoor program inspired by "SURVIVOR" where teams compete in weekly challenges to earn points throughout the summer. We will have four TRIBES made up of Jr. and Sr. high youth, one adult male captain and one adult team mom. There will be a total of two challenges each week. Challenges involve everyone, so everyone's gifts are needed!

July 24 @ Libby Neill's Pool- Pool Tubes & Synchronized Swimming

**In case of rain, TRIBES will be held at FUMC in the Fellowship Hall.*

Check the youth Facebook Page or Instagram for location changes and what your TRIBE may need to bring each week! www.facebook.com/DecaturFUMCYouth https://www.instagram.com/ignite_fumc/

Save the Date! Register NOW!

The youth will have Discovery Weekend **July 29-31, 2016!** Please register by July 10 so we can make sure to have enough supplies. This year's theme is "Discover God's Gifts: Baptism, Communion & Prayer." This weekend is for all youth who have completed 5th-12th grades. The Senior High will help lead the 43 hour spiritual formation weekend for the Junior High at FUMC.



The Prayer Service, for the entire church, will be Saturday night, July 30 at 8:00 p.m. We hope everyone will be here to support our youth and their families!

Discovery invites the **entire church family** to live out its Baptismal covenant of surrounding these children with a community of love and forgiveness so they may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal. We invite you to join us as we all discover what God has in store for us through the Discovery weekend!

DISCOVERY WEEKEND

Upcoming Events

July 17- July 23- Youth Mission Trip to Orlando

7/17 - No Youth Sunday School or TRIBES

7/17 - 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. - Seekers Class Party, Fellowship Hall

7/18, 10:30 a.m., First Grace Summer Program goes to Decatur Public Library

7/18, 6:00 p.m., Worship Team Practice

7/18, 6:00 p.m., "The Armor of God" Women's Bible Study, Minister's Conference Room

7/19, 9:30 a.m., First Grace Summer Program goes to Delano Park & Splash Pad

7/19, 10:00 a.m., Women's Bible Study, Courtyard Conf. Room

7/19, 6:00 p.m., Yoga with Mollie, Children's Choir Room, New 2nd Floor, Room 250

7/20, 8:15 a.m., First Grace Summer Program goes to Birmingham Zoo

7/20, 5:00 p.m., Worship Planning Team, Courtyard Conf. Room

7/20, 6:00 p.m., Chancel Choir Practice

7/21, 7:30 a.m., UMM Breakfast, City Café

7/21, 12:30 p.m., First Grace Summer Program goes to Funland Skate Castle

7/21, 6:00 p.m., Wreath Making with Doug, Fellowship Hall



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Shannon Booth, Director of Outreach, shannon@decaturfumc.org

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

First Grace Director, vacant, firstgrace@decaturfumc.org

Upcoming Worship Services

VISION STATEMENT:

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

Sunday, July 17, Rev. Hughey Reynolds, preaching
8:45 and 11:00 a.m. "When God Is Silent" Amos 8: 1-12

Sunday, July 24, Rev. Hughey Reynolds, preaching
8:45 and 11:00 a.m. "Praying Small and Receiving Big"
Luke 11: 1-13

Scheduled To Serve July 17

Acolytes:

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

Ushers:

8:45 a.m. - Steve Armstrong, Keith Earwood,
Sage Copeland and Norman Roby
11:00 a.m. - Larry Weaver, Sam Houston,
Jimmy Ray Smith

GIC Meeting

Rescheduled until Tuesday, July 26 at 5:00 p.m.
Minister's Conf. Room, New 3rd FL.

Find Us On Social Media

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