



Tidings of Joy

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

July 15, 2015

A Note from Our Pastor

“May I Have Your Attention?”

I had access to great libraries in college and seminary. When I graduated, I wondered where I would get enough information to prepare a decent sermon. I bought many reference books and wore out the bindings doing research for sermons. I still have most of these sources of information on shelves that line my study walls.

While I was accumulating hard copy sources of information, Bill Gates (Microsoft), Steve Jobs (Apple), Larry Page and Sergey Brin (Google) and friends were building major information highways that we access through the hardware and software they created for the internet. The world-wide web has catapulted us into an information age that makes my previous trouble and expense to acquire information appear to be a waste of money and storage space. A farm analogy would be that I was still using walk-behind horse-drawn implements that plow one row at a time while equipment manufacturers offered tractors and implements that cover multiple rows in one swath guided by GPS technology with no human on board. The preferred choice seems obvious: abandon the old and embrace the new in the name of efficiency and volume.

My problem is no longer information access but information excess. Now, I get so much information that very little of it catches my attention. I would argue that the greatest communication problem we have in the church is not the lack of information circulated but our failure to catch the attention of the recipient of that communication. Our minds become calloused to withstand the deluge of information that passes through them. Only communication

that is profound and that rings true to our experience and resonates with our hearts gets through to us.

I sat in an audience of nine-hundred at Samford University to hear Wendell Berry. He read his short story titled “Sold.” It was about Beulah Gibbs and her late husband Grover. They acquired, lived on, built up, and reared a family on a small Kentucky farm. After Grover died and Beulah’s health failed, she sold the farm at auction. Mr. Big Rocks outbid a local farmer that Beulah hoped would get the farm. Mr. Big Rocks brought in bulldozers and leveled everything to begin strip mining. The audience sat spellbound for the better part of an hour. He had our undivided attention.

Mr. Berry does not own a computer or a cell phone. He is a farmer who still plows with a horse. What he writes catches my attention and that of millions of readers today. He reads a lot but he manages the sources of information that come to him so he is not exposed to mounds of distracting information. That frees him to pay close attention to the people around him and the details of their lives. When he portrays traits and expressions of his characters, they are traits and expressions he has observed in real people that he has taken the time to know. People interest him. As a result, his writing rings true to life and makes a deep connection with readers. He commands attention because people matter enough to command his.

I want to be a pastor like that. I want us to be a church like that.

Yours in Christ,

Hughey hreynolds@decaturfumc.org

Dear First United Methodist Church Decatur Family,

I am writing this letter to let you all know that I have accepted another position in Baton Rouge, LA at St. John UMC as their Children and Youth Director. I want you all to know that I have enjoyed working with you and have been so happy with what we have been able to do together. I know that the children’s program here at FUMC will grow and be rich because of everyone.

I am sorry and will miss the children and adults who have worked so hard to make the program be full of the spirit and I know it will continue. My new position is a combined position and I feel that I will be able to work to create an integrated program from birth to college unifying the children’s/youth experience.

Gene and I have made wonderful friends here in Decatur and I have loved being with the church and the children. Even though it has only been two years, it has been a delight to watch all the children grow and learn about God and His love for them. We will miss them and all of you and hope to visit sometime in the future just to see how they are doing.

We will continue to pray for FUMC. Please know that the good of the church is paramount in my thoughts. I really think that Pastor Hughey will be a wonderful asset and a great support for the children’s ministry here. I am thankful to you all and I am sad that I am leaving but I know God has a plan for me and FUMC.

God Bless,
Lorri McGuire

* **Everyone is invited to a Farewell Party** *
* **for Lorri on July 26th from 9:30-10:30.** *
* **Breakfast refreshments will be served** *
* **as the congregation joins the children** *
* **to say goodbye and thank her for her** *
* **time in ministry at FUMC.** *

Sympathy

We are sharing sympathy with **Pat Carl** and family as we mourn the death of **Joe Carl** who passed away on July 14. The Celebration of Life service will be here at First Church on Wed., July 22 at 2:00 p.m. with a reception following in the Fellowship Hall. This family remains in our prayers.

We are sharing sympathy with **Stephen Crowell (Debby)** on the recent death of his mother **Bernice Crowell**. The funeral was in Philadelphia, PA.

Please remember **Tilden** and **Gloria Dillard** as they mourn the loss of son **Clark Dillard**. He passed away on July 1 and his funeral was at Roselawn Chapel on July 5.

Mark Your Calendar:

Fifth Annual Homer Christopher Fish Fry

On Wednesday, **August 12**, the United Methodist Men will sponsor the annual fish fry in memory of long term First Church servant **Homer Christopher**. Serving starts at 5:30 p.m. in the Wesley Fellowship Hall.



Tickets are \$10 and are available from active UMM members, weekdays in the church office, Sundays in the main corridor between the sanctuary and fellowship hall, and in most adult Sunday School classes.

The popular menu is fried catfish (or chicken tenders), Cole Slaw, French Fries, hushpuppies, dessert, and soft drinks or iced tea. A nursery for young children will be provided. Homer will be remembered and his family recognized. Proceeds from the fish fry support UMM outreach activities. Donations to the UMM beyond or instead of ticket purchases are appreciated.

We hope to see you there on August 12.
Your First United Methodist Men

Find Us On Social Media

“Like” us on Facebook to get up to date information about our church, meetings, changes, prayer requests, photos and more!
www.facebook.com/DecaturFirstUMC

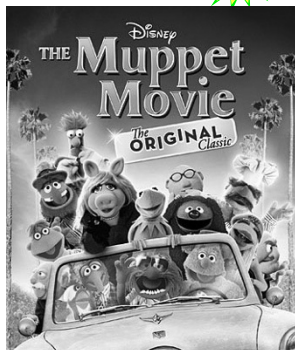
If you have not seen our updated website, please visit
www.decaturfumc.org to see the exciting updates.

Family Movie Night, July 28



Bring your dinner (or eat before you come) and join us in the fellowship hall for “The Muppet Movie” on July 28 at 6:30 p.m.

Popcorn and drinks will be provided. Feel free to bring a blanket to sit on or use the chairs provided. Friends are always welcome!



Our Stewardship of Presences

Attendance Numbers Sunday, July 5, 2015:

Total Count for 8:45 a.m. = 98

Total Count for 11:00am = 88

Point Mallard Chapel Service = No Chapel - Holiday

Total Count for July 5 = 186

Sunday School July 5

Children 5 + 3 adults

Youth 1

Adults 99

Today Sunday School July 5 = 108

Attendance Numbers Sunday, July 12, 2015:

Total Count for 8:45 a.m. = 132

Total Count for 11:00am = 146

Point Mallard Chapel Service = 10

Total Count for July 12 = 288

Sunday School July 12

Children 9 + 5 adults

Youth 5 + 1 adult

Adults 111

Today Sunday School July 12 = 131

Our Stewardship of Resources

Ministry Budget

Received YTD

\$450,390.57

Capital Fund

73,683.69

Needed YTD

467,346.02

Given This Week

13,234.09

2,288.00

Needed Weekly

16,115.38

First Grace News

First Grace will be offering “after school” care pick-up. The charge is \$50 per child. We will be picking up from Walter Jackson and Eastwood Elementary School. The children will get a snack, do their homework, and have free play. They will need to be picked up by 6:00 p.m. at First Grace.



Also, we are still in need of plastic grocery bags.

Thank you to everyone who has already donated!

Patrick’s Musical Notes

Calling one and ALL - NOW is the best time ever to join the choir and worship team!

I would like to invite and encourage everyone to give the choir and worship team a try. My dream is to have twenty-five members on a consistent basis during the Fall of 2015. With your willingness and faithfulness, I am certain that my dream will become your dream and turn into a reality.



God Bless,

Patrick McCormick

Midyear Finance Update

The work of the Lord through First Church is funded primarily through the operating budget. At midyear your church's **Ministry Budget is sound** with offerings at fifty percent of the \$838,000 budget. Income exceeds expenses slightly, so the church is "in the black" and spending below budget. There are six long months to go with many obligations and opportunities, so we need all First Church members and friends to continue this good record in coming months. *Thank you for your consideration of pledged and unpledged offerings to the Ministry Budget so First Church can have another successful financial year.*

Progress on debt reduction continues. Starting with the First Fruits offering in December, First Church debt has been reduced by \$166,825 through the new "Answering God's Challenge" three year campaign. In the last three years your church's debt has gone down \$671,856 and stands now at \$1,532,491. We hope to be under \$1.5 million by year's end. Reducing and eventually eliminating this debt is your church's second highest financial priority. We again emphasize that beginning in 2012 all offerings to this cause flow to a separate bank account earmarked solely to paying interest and principal. *Thank you for your consideration of pledged and unpledged giving to our Building/Capital Fund.*

Despite a tight budget and a large debt, **First Church through the GIC/Faith Promise** continues a remarkable restatement of your church's historic mission outreach to others. This year's Faith Promise budget is \$93,000 drawn from second mile pledges and a small carryover from last year's Faith Promise giving. Offerings midyear are \$46,326. Your Missions Committee approves each quarter disbursement as cash on hand allows to local, area, national, and global causes suggested by the congregation and approved by the Administrative Board. You will note that frequent appeals for extra giving have been replaced by the GIC/Faith Promise approach. *Thank you for your consideration of second mile pledged and unpledged support to Faith Promise.*

For your information, First Church returned in 2013 and for 2012 to an annual, external, professional engagement with a CPA firm (a.k.a. "audit"). The 2014 engagement was recently completed with copies to our pastoral and lay leadership and our district superintendent. North Alabama Conference guidelines and requirements of *The Discipline of the United Methodist Church* are met by these annual engagements.

Stewardship involves your resources but also your talent, your witness, and your presence. We hope to see you in church at every opportunity.

Respectfully,

Your Finance Committee

David E. Scott CPA, Chair



Children's Sunday School Teaching Opportunity!

Do you want to have some summer fun teaching? We will be learning about Moses, Gideon, Hannah and Samuel throughout the summer! Lessons and material are provided and Leadership in worship is also provided!

Men and women are needed to teach and assist!

Please see Lorri McGuire or Carrie Hart if you are willing to lend a hand. We will have three classes who need teachers: Preschool class (3yr-4yrs), Kindergarten – 2nd grade, and 3rd – 5th grades.



Sunday, August 9th

8:45 & 11:00

Worship Service

Blessing of the Backpacks & 9:45 a.m. Promotion Sunday!

What a great way to begin the new school year!

First, we will be blessing the children's backpacks at both worship services. We invite the children to bring their backpacks with them to worship and during worship they will be called forward to receive a blessing and a special tag to place on their backpacks. This tag will remind them each day that God is with them and FUMC is praying for them.

Secondly, during the Sunday School hour at 9:45 a.m. on the morning of August 9, there will be a breakfast in the Fellowship hall for the children and teachers to start the new school year off right. Children will be promoted into their new Sunday School Class. They will eat with their new teachers and classmates before going up to their Sunday School classrooms! We hope you will all come and invite a friend!



Children's Water Fun!

Sunday, July 26th from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

The children's team will be hosting a water fun time for children here on Sunday, July 26th. Our afternoon (weather permitting) will have fun activities involving water balloon fights, water relays, water gun sharp shooting, and more!



"Shine"

Children's Ministry

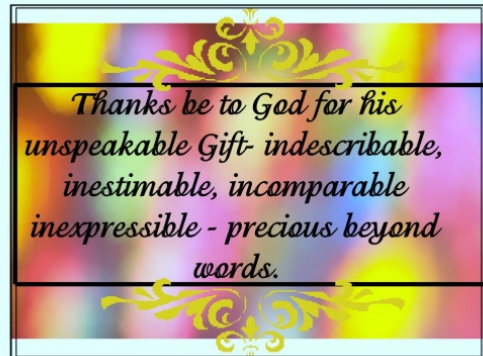
Wednesday Evenings

Begins August 19th!

We need Adult and Youth Helpers

Please contact Carrie Hart:

carrglenn@aol.com



Thanks be to God for his unspeakable Gift- indescribable, inestimable, incomparable inexpressible - precious beyond words.

Children's Team Meeting

Wednesday, August 12th

4:00 p.m.

Courtyard Conference Room

Youth Dates Coming Up...

Saturday, July 18- Friday, July 24

Jamaica Mission Trip

Sunday, July 19- 10:00 Sunday School

Sunday, July 26

10:00 Sunday School

6:00-8:00 Tribes @ Molly Neill's Pool

Wednesday, July 29

6:00 Discovery Team Meeting

Thursday, July 30

12:00-1:30 Jr High Lunch Bunch at Mellow Mushroom

Friday, July 31- Sunday, Aug. 2- Discovery Weekend



Pray for our Jamaica Team

Saturday, July 18- Friday, July 24

Jamaica Mission Trip

Mohammad Abdullahpour

Landess Brown

Louise Brown

Steve Brown

Web Brown

Mitch Davidson

Kathy Duncan

Selby Duncan

Sara Catherine Floyd

Susan Floyd

Natalie Frith

Beth Green

Mary Kate Hillis

Elizabeth Hunt

Emily Hunt

Karen Place

Chris Reavis

Katelyn Riant

Mary Ella Scott

Gena Tolleson

Mary Ashley Tolleson

Morgan Tolleson

Jack Underwood



TRIBES

Scores as of July 14:

Green Tribe- 60

Blue Tribe- 63

Yellow Tribe- 64

Orange Tribe- 53



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 may be athletic, intellectual, artistic or creative so everyone's gifts are needed!

July 26 @ pool (TBA)- Pool Tubes & Synchronized Swimming

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

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

Jr. High Lunch Bunch

The Junior High (entering 6th-8th grades) 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.

July 30- Mellow Mushroom

Discovery Team Training

The final Discovery training (adults and senior high) will be on the youth floor at 6:00 on Wednesday night, July 29 to preview talks, go over schedules, work on plans, ask questions and pray for the weekend. Make plans to join us as we plan the best weekend ever!

Save the Date!

Youth will have Discovery Weekend **July 31 - August 2**. This year's theme is "Discover God's Love Through Scripture." 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, August 1st at 7:00 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

Communion in August

Due to the Discovery Weekend Worship on August 2 at the 11:00 service, we will be having communion on August 9 at both worship services. We hope you will be present for both of these special worship opportunities.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Jamaica Mission Trip
Saturday, July 18- Friday, July 24**

**Point Mallard Prayer Chapel Service
Sunday, July 19 at 8:45 a.m.**

**No UMYF
Sunday, July 19**

**Zumba Class, Fellowship Hall
Monday, July 20 from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.**

**Worship Team Practice
Monday, July 20 at 6:00 p.m.**

**Women's Bible Study, Courtyard Conf. Room
Tuesday, July 21 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Zumba Class, Fellowship Hall
Wednesday, July 22 from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.**

**Chancel Choir Practice
Wednesday, July 22 at 6:00 p.m.**

**UMM Breakfast, City Café
Thursday, July 23 at 7:30 a.m.**

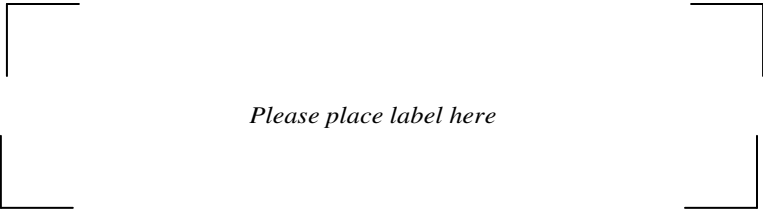
**Water Day for Children
(see insert for details)
Sunday, July 26 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.**



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Laura Vines, First Grace Director, firstgrace@decaturfumc.org Melissa Wiley, Housekeeper
Lorri McGuire, Director of Children & Family, lmcguire@decaturfumc.org Sandy Callahan, Food Manager
Wayne Keller, Accompanist

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**

8:45 and 11:00 a.m.

**July 19 - Dr. Hughey Reynolds, preaching
"And the Walls Came Tumbling Down" Ephesians 2: 11-22**

**July 26 - Dr. Hughey Reynolds, preaching
"Enough for Everyone" John 6: 1-21**

Scheduled To Serve July 19

Acolytes:

8:45 a.m. - No Acolyte Scheduled

11:00 a.m. - Nelson Earley

Greeters:

8:45 - Fay Copeland, Billy & Diane Hudson

11:00 - Annelle & LaVerne Dollahite, Stephania Baggs, Gail Baggs

Ushers:

8:45 - Jolly McKenzie, Michael Boozer, Mike Boozer and Jimmy Sykes

11:00 - Lawrence Ford, Jim Norman, Larry Weaver, Sam Houston, Jimmy Ray Smith

**WORSHIP AT POINT MALLARD
CHAPEL - Led by our UM Men
Began May 31 & will continue
through August 23 - 8:45 a.m.
Help us spread the word!**

Option Available for E-Newsletter

If you would rather receive this newsletter via e-mail, please send an e-mail to Alyson at aquinn@decaturfumc.org indicating this preference. You will help us save paper and postage. We have over 110 subscribers so far!