

“Plans for an Alternative Style Worship Service”

In July of 2017, Decatur First UMC entered a three month trial period of offering only one morning worship service at 10:00 instead of the two we have had for about 20 years. After three months, attendance numbers were essentially the same as they had been during the same period in 2016 when we offered two services. We decided to continue offering



only one service until the end of 2017 and have a Worship Revision Task Force explore the feasibility of starting an alternative style worship service.

The Task Force met and made two recommendations to the Worship Planning Team: 1. To involve the target audience for an alternative service, age groups now underrepresented in our current worship service, in shaping and designing the service, and 2. to build the service around the interests and talents of those in the church and our networks of friends. When Tommy Davis joined our staff as our Music Director and Worship Leader, he shared that in other churches he had led traditional worship and a range of styles of more contemporary and less formal services and was willing to do that here. This moved us far ahead in having and building on the interest and talent of those in the church to start an alternative style service.

Two more factors make us ready to launch a second, alternative style morning worship service. One is our promise to seriously explore the feasibility of offering an alternative style service that is a “fit” for DFUMC. We must try it on to determine the fit. The second factor is that attendance numbers in the one worship service have not held up as they did the first three months. Our average worship attendance from January through June of 2017, when we offered two morning services, was 239. Our average worship attendance from January through June of 2018, when we offered only one service, was 215. That is a 10% decline in worship attendance.

We can view this downward trend as a problem or see in it a ripe opportunity. I urge you to see where we are and where we can go through the lenses of Isaiah 43:9 where the Lord says, *Look! I'm doing a new thing; now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it? I'm making a way in the desert, paths in the wilderness.* In the days of Isaiah, God told the exiles who saw little hope of returning to Israel that He was making a way they had not imagined before. God is doing the same thing for us if we will trust and follow Him.

Our target date and time for launching the first alternative style service (we've not yet named the style) is Sunday, September 9 at 11:15 a.m. The service is projected to last 45 minutes and conclude at 12:00. It will consist of praise and worship music accompanied by guitars (and other instruments our volunteer praise band can play), prayer, and preaching. I will preach in both services most Sundays in the initial stages of developing this service. Our Discipleship Pastor Patrick Finley will preach on occasion along with the gifted retired clergy who are a part of our congregation.

Regardless of your preferred worship style, God is laying on the hearts of some of you reading this article a desire to reach members of our community who are not drawn to our traditional worship service. You want to give them the opportunity to worship God in ways that speak to them and to hear God's Word related to the challenges and issues they face in their everyday living. If that describes you and you are willing to help with any aspect of this service, from sound support to computer generated graphics to set ups to greeting or childcare, I invite you to meet following worship at 11:15 this Sunday, July 15 in the parlor adjacent to our sanctuary. The meeting will end by noon. We will build our organization and together plan how we will get where God is leading us, to be the Church of Jesus Christ in and for this century to reach the world around us with the Gospel.

Yours in Christ,

Hughey

First Church Children's Ministry

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

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Summer Sunday School

This summer, we will combine our children's Sunday School Classes. They will meet in Room #209 and they will dig deeper into the lessons learned at VBS. The children's committee is very excited to keep the excitement and wonder that VBS provides through the summer!!

Volunteers for Sunday, July 15

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Room #209 Diane Summerlin / Assistant-Alexia Claborn

Children's Church

10:00 Service Teachers- Alexia Claborn & Jen Winkler

Volunteers for Sunday, July 22

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Room #209 Mary Ila Ward / Assistant-Alexia Claborn

Children's Church

10:00 Service Teachers- Bailey Copeland & Beth Green

Blessing of the Backpacks

On Sunday, Aug. 12, we will have the Blessing of the Backpacks during church service. Please have your child bring their backpack to church that morning. They will wear them for the service and bring them to the front of the sanctuary to have them blessed. What a way to start off the school year!



Acolyte Schedule

July 15th - Miller Roberts & Davis Roberts
July 22nd - LuLu Underwood & Carter Green

Dates to Remember

July 15th- New Bible Class

July 26th - Last day to Bring School Supplies to fill our bus

Aug. 12th -Blessing of the Backpacks

Aug. 12th -Back to School Water Day 2:00-4:00

Aug. 22nd - First Fellowship Resumes

New Bible Class



- Sunday, July 15th from 11:30- 12:45 in the Courtyard Conf. Room, 1st Floor

We will be learning how to use your new Bible with Rev. Charles Boling and Alexia Claborn. This class is for our 3rd- 5th graders that received Bibles in May. We will have two sessions with a lunch break in between.

School Supply Drive 2018

We are collecting crayons, glue sticks, pencils, paper, scissors, erasers, notebooks, folders, and markers for Austinville Elementary School. Please drop off supplies in the yellow school bus right outside the sanctuary entrance by July 29th.

Back to School Water Day

Please Join us for

Treats and

Fun in the Sun

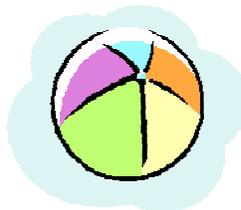
Sunday, August 12th

2:00- 4:00

Bring Friends and Family

Stefanie & John Underwood's Home

at 1807 Brookmeade Road SE



Upcoming Youth Events

We will be going to a Birmingham Barons' game on Sunday, August 5th. We will be leaving the church at 1:00 p.m. and will be back around 8:30 p.m. Admission is free, just bring money for food and souvenirs.

We will also be going to En Fuego, a Christian music festival in Verbena, AL, on Saturday, August 25. We will leave the church at 10:00 a.m. and be back around midnight. Admission is free, just bring money for food and merchandise.

Minister of Youth
Jonathan Creekmore
(662)736-0930
youth@decaturfumc.org



FUMC Senior Adult (50+) Survey

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Do you Text? _____

I am interested in:

____ short day trips ____ long day trips ____ overnight trips ____ 3-5 day trips
____ trips for women ____ trips for men ____ dinner/evening trips
____ lunch/entertainment at church ____ dinner/entertainment at church ____ covered dish meals

Days that are usually good for me to participate:

____ Sunday afternoon ____ Monday ____ Tuesday ____ Wednesday
____ Thursday ____ Friday ____ Saturday

Check any of these that interest you.

____ Cumberland Playhouse at Crossville, TN ____ Plays at other locations
____ Christmas lights drive thru (Huntsville, Birmingham Zoo, Victorian Christmas in Opelika,
Palisades Park at Oneonta, or _____
____ American Village at Montevallo (Christmas luncheon or tour in spring)
____ Museums Type? _____
____ Gardens ____ Christmas luncheon/entertainment at our church
____ Valentine's dinner/entertainment at our church
____ Arts/Crafts events ____ Other ideas _____

Restaurant suggestions in neighboring areas: _____

Other comments/suggestions:

****Return to church office or Kathy Archer by July 23, 2018. Thanks!****

Mid-Year Finance Update

Your Finance Committee is thankful to God that through the first half of 2018 First Church remains in sound financial shape. Our members and friends have blessed us with offerings sufficient to meet our Ministry Budget obligations, pay down our debt, and through Faith Promise reach out across the street and around the world to mission groups doing the work of God.

Ministry Budget Operations: Towards our prudent \$788,000 budget, offerings to date are \$412,600, \$11,000 ahead of last year at this time. Expenses are under budget. Nevertheless, we need continued emphasis on Ministry Budget giving to end 2018 with all obligations and opportunities met and no budget deficit for the seventh year in a row.

Thank you for your consideration in making Ministry Budget pledged and unpledged offerings a first priority for the balance of the year.

Building Fund/Debt Reduction Operations: So far members and friends have donated sufficient offerings this year to reduce your church's debt by \$119,055, so we now owe \$794,000 on our 2006-2008 building program. Debt is down from over \$1.2 million at the start of 2017 to less than \$800,000 now. Progress continues on this second church priority. We are in the first year of our five year "Building Believers" campaign aimed at reducing, then eliminating all debt by 2022.

Thank you for your consideration in making First Church debt free through pledged and unpledged offerings to "Building Believers." We look forward to having this long range goal behind us.

Faith Promise Operations: First Church has regained its historic devotion to missions through the Global Impact/Faith Promise campaign. So far this year members and friends have donated \$50,275.69 to this cause with \$44,025 paid out so far: \$22,975 to local missions, \$7,425 to national missions, and \$13,625 to international missions.

Thank you for your consideration in helping First Church continue its emphasis on outreach giving through pledged and unpledged offerings to Faith Promise.

First Grace Child Development Center continues with financial success. First Grace continues to grow in numbers and reputation. Earlier this year First Grace made a major donation to the purchase of a new church mini-bus. Your church provides space, utilities, and insurance for First Grace, but all operations are paid for entirely by cash flow from the tuition received. We are thankful to God for a highly successful and financially sound First Grace.

Respectfully,

Your Finance Committee

Drew Ward, Chair

Upcoming Events

Sunday, July 15 - 19
Youth Retreat at Ocoee

Sunday, July 15, 11:00 a.m., Courtyard Conf. Rm
Learning to Use Your Bible Class

Sunday, July 15, 11:15 a.m., Church Parlor
Meeting about Alternative Style Worship (see front page)

Tuesday, July 17, 10:00 a.m.,
Women's Bible Study, Courtyard Conf. Room

Tuesday, July 17, 5:00 p.m.,
First Grace Board Meeting, Courtyard Conf. Rm

Wednesday, July 18, 6:00 p.m., Choir Practice

Wednesday, July 18, 6:00 p.m.,
Yoga with Mollie Erickson

Thursday, July 19, 7:30 a.m.
UMM Breakfast at City Cafe

Thursday, July 19, 8:00 a.m.,
Urban Acre Garden Workday



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Patrick Finley, Minister of Discipleship & Youth, pfinley@decaturfumc.org
Daryenne Eads, First Grace Director, firstgrace@decaturfumc.org
Wayne Keller, Accompanist
Ruth Moyers, Organist
Melissa Wiley, Housekeeper

Upcoming Sunday 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, July 15 - Only one service at 10:00 a.m.
"Too Close for Government Work"
2 Samuel 6: 1-19
Rev. Hughey Reynolds

Sunday, July 22 - Only one service at 10:00 a.m.
"Our Plans and God's Purpose"
2 Samuel 7: 1-14
Rev. Hughey Reynolds

Scheduled To Serve July 15

Acolytes:
10:00 - Miller Roberts & Davis Roberts

Ushers:
10:00 a.m. - Steve Armstrong, Norman Roby, Phil Corazzari, Larry Weaver, Stephen Brown

Back to School Picnic at Sykes' Home

- Back to School Picnic @ Sykes' home
- Sunday, August 5, 6:00 p.m.
- 2449 Red Bank Road

Stop by your favorite fast food restaurant and purchase a meal for your family, or if you're feeling industrious, prepare a meal at home to bring. Bring a lawn chair and expect a delightful time with your church family!