

“Seasons of Change and Renewal”

This is an article about personal and church renewal. It starts, however, in a garden. Since temperatures fell below freezing last week, driving by our church’s Urban Acre Community Garden has made me sad. Our garden was beautifully laid out last spring. When the plants matured in the summer, they produced abundant crops of over a dozen different fruits and vegetables. As plants ceased to produce, we pulled them, but we left the okra, peppers, eggplant, and zinnias. Volunteers no longer harvested but these plants were still bearing fruit. The recent freezing weather killed the last of the plants. Rains have made it too wet to work the garden, so until we do, we have a garden of lifeless plants.

Gardening is seasonal. I know that. I believe my sadness when I see it comes from the memory of our garden at the height of its productivity in July and August. That memory played a role in persuading me to delay winterizing our garden even when three-fourths of the plants were dead and extracted. Now winter weather has come, and the damage done to the remaining plants has been deadly.

The garden analogy is a parable of my spiritual and vocational life. I believe the parable sheds light on the life of our church, too. I have vivid memories of high times we have experienced together over the past three-and-a-half years. There were Baptisms, GICs (Global Impact Celebrations), Bible Schools, Youth Discovery Weekends, mission projects, community events we hosted, historic anniversaries we celebrated, weddings, and starting a new worship service. The glow of those events warmed me, warmed us, for months after they occurred. We have done other things that were as important but not as visible or emotionally stirring. We developed a Five-Year Ministry Plan, defined discipleship and the strategies our church will use to grow disciples, and made strides in restoring and growing our youth ministries.

I must admit to you that the memory of these events and activities has played a role in persuading me to delay preparing myself spiritually and vocationally for the next season. I have been in this role now for 45 ½ years and I know that the seasons of my spiritual and vocational life come and go, that fall follows summer, and winter comes before the spring that leads to another summer. I have been in the autumn season for several weeks now still holding on to the fading glow of summer. And thanks to the sight of a church garden on Central Parkway for reminding me that freezing temperatures are on the way and I cannot delay preparing for them any longer.

The first thing I will do is renew my commitment to Scripture. I will preach no more sermons and make no more talks based on what I already know about the Bible. I will approach each passage I preach on as if I knew nothing about it and allow the Bible to speak a new Word into my life. I will, in the words of a classic sermon attributed to the late Helmut Thielicke, “Believe again for the very first time.” I will recommit myself to the daily study of scripture, not just to prepare for the next talk. I will recommit myself to praying at a specific time each day. These are the things I have found that prepare me for the next season, that prevent me from living off the memory of past productivity, that plow the ground and sow the seeds that will grow and produce a harvest in due season. I invite you to join me in preparing for seasons of change and renewal.

Yours in Christ,

Hughey

Finish Strong! Update

Last Sunday, 78 members or giving units returned Ministry Budget pledge cards with \$360,192.00 pledged to next year's church needs. **If you have not turned in your pledge, please bring your card to church this Sunday or return it by mail as soon as possible.** We ask that you prayerfully consider what you can do to make 2019 another successful First Church year.



If you have not already pledged to the Building Believers five-year campaign to pay down and then pay off our church debt, we ask that you consider returning the pledge card sent you for offerings over the last four years of that campaign.

Thank you for helping your church **Finish Strong**

Respectfully,

Your Finance Committee and Your 2019 Stewardship Committee

Ignite Youth and the WinGS group

Ignite Youth and the WinGS group are partnering for an upcoming fundraiser! For the youth, we are selling tickets for smoked turkey breasts to be picked up on Sunday, Nov. 18th! Find Jonathan or any youth for tickets or information.

Sweet and Savory Sale

- **November 18** - Church members and First Grace staff will bring items to sell to the Fellowship Hall on Nov. 17 anytime between 9:00 and noon.
- Doors will open on Nov. 18 at 8:30 a.m. and we will sell items until 12:30.
- There will be no pre-sales.

New Members

Jonathan and Shelby Creekmore recently transferred their membership to us from Water Valley FUMC, Mississippi. Jonathan is currently serving as our Youth Minister through a partnership with The Center for Youth Ministry Training, also known as CYMT, an affiliation with Memphis Theological Seminary. It equips youth ministers and churches to develop effective youth ministers. Jonathan and Shelby reside at 1817 Summerlane SE, Decatur, AL 35601. His work email is youth@decaturfumc.org and his phone number is 662-736-0930.



Church Prayer List November 14

Finish Strong! Stewardship Drive

Death of Sandra Cummings, Larry Archer's sister

Jean Windsor Virginia Smith, broken hip

Susan Baughn, liver cancer California Wildfires

Garry Johnson Pete Graham

Jeff McCulloch Tom Roddeffer

Loeita C. Locke, Dianne Perry's mother and Mac Perry's mother-in-law, colon cancer surgery

Gary White Emmy Whatley

Libby Sims Patrick, daughter of Bill and Betty Sims

Jeff Crosswhite Jean Elliott

Kerry Hawkins, cancer Martha & Robert Long

Bob & Mary Alice Johnson (friends & neighbors of Mary Jane Sasser. Bob has Lymphoma.)

Amanda Gentry & Family

Yvonne Michaels (Margaret Denton's mother)

Stacy Adams, pneumonia (Jen Winkler's cousin)

Brantley Motes, Lymphoma & Treatment

Bill & Bettye Dennis

Eston & Peggy Lovingood Jeanne Smith

Eric and Laverne Armstrong

Joanne Wheat Alice Ackley

Maryanne Robbin, cancer Unspoken

LaVerne Dollahite Dot and Burl Oliver

Dick Williams Ronald Matthews

Judy Coon Deborah Stewart

"Big Rocks" Calendar Meeting

To the ministry staff, Administrative Board Chair, current chairs of all ministries and committees, incoming 2019 chairs of all ministries and committees, lay leader, and presidents of all organizations:



Make plans to attend the "Big Rocks" Calendar meeting on Sunday, November 18th from 1:00 until 2:30 p.m. in the Minister's Conf. Room.

We will be building next year's calendar, sharing information between current committee chairs and representatives and incoming chairs and representatives, and discovering how we can coordinate events to make them all more successful. This will be a good time to pass on helpful information to the person who is to replace you. Please consult with your team prior to this event for calendar planning purposes. Please let Alyson know that you are attending and if you need childcare: aquinn@decaturfumc.org

First Grace Child Development Center

First Grace Child Development Center News

First Grace is excited to serve 110 families and 31 teachers for the 2018-2019 school year.

We are thrilled to have introduced the OSR Pre-K program for our four year olds this year. We currently have two spots open for this program. If interested, please call the center for more information at 256-214-3584.

For our 1k-3k classes, we have enhanced our learning curriculum by following learning objectives that are age and developmentally appropriate. Good news that affects all the children of the CDC (infants-school age) in a very positive way is that we have been working through the process of becoming licensed. With becoming a licensed CDC, we simply hold ourselves at an even higher standard of providing a safer and healthier environment for all the children and staff at First Grace. We are hopeful to have this title by the end of the year.



First Grace partnered with the church to assist in buying new buses that both the church and First Grace could share. First Grace uses the buses to pick up the after school-school age children. Not only is it blessing to have the After School Program back in business, we are thrilled that we were able to give back to the church in doing so! God's blessings are flowing at First Grace. Thanks to DFUMC for its continued support of our mission!

If you're on facebook, we'd like to invite you to see our page:

<https://www.facebook.com/firstgracecdc>

You'll notice we post pictures and updates to share with you. God is so good!

Daryenne Eads

Center Director

First Grace Child Development Center

805 Canal Street NE, Decatur, AL 35601

Phone: 256-355-5555

Center Cell: 256-214-3584

Hilltoppers Senior Adult Ministry

The Hilltoppers will not be going to Huntsville on November 16. The trip will be rescheduled after the Christmas holidays. Happy Thanksgiving!

December 12, Wednesday

Join us for our **annual Christmas luncheon and entertainment** in the Fellowship Hall at 11:00 a.m. Lunch will be \$10.00 per person. Sign up sheets will be available soon!



Notecards

The Tuesday Morning Ladies' Bible Study are selling notecards with a drawing of Decatur First United Methodist Church on the front. The price for a package of ten with envelopes is \$5.00. Proceeds from the sale will be used to benefit WinGS, Women in God's Service, a new women's service/learning organization here at DFUMC. The cards can be found in the volunteer office as you enter from Lafayette Street. Please help support the outreach and growth of WinGS by your purchase. Thank you.

Hanging of the Greens

- **Sunday, December 2nd**
- **6:00 p.m.**
- **Here in our First Church Sanctuary**

*Hanging
of the
Greens*

This is a special time to begin our journey to Christmas as we are reminded of the meaning behind many of our decorations. Nursery will be provided.

Ushers Needed

We currently need ushers for our Christmas Eve Services. If you are interested, please let **Ronnie Dukes** know at either 256-758-6770 or email at rdukes@pepsicoladecatur.com.

Church Cookbooks

We still have an abundance of our Church Cookbooks available for purchase. You will find these in the Church office for only \$5.00 each. These make wonderful Christmas gifts. Pick one up today!

Find Us On Social Media

"Like" us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/DecaturFirstUMC



November Mission Emphasis

Tennessee Valley Outreach (TVO) is our November Mission Emphasis. They have given us a list of items that they need. Place these items in the blue barrels in the hallway to the Fellowship Hall.

Q-Tips

Disposable Razors

Shampoo and Conditioner

Feminine Hygiene Products

Bar Soap

Antiperspirant/Deodorant

Bleach

Laundry Detergent

Dishwashing Liquid

Toilet tissue

Paper Towels

Clothing

Non-Perishable Food Items



First Church Children's Ministry

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

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Volunteers for Sunday, Nov. 18

Sunday School 9:00am

Preschool Room #215- Carrie Hart

K-5th Room #209- Jen Winkler & Mary Ila Ward

Children's Church

10:00 Service Teachers- Alexia Claborn & Bailey Copeland

Volunteers for Sunday, Nov. 25

Sunday School 9:00am

Preschool Room #215- Jessica Mitchell

K-5th Room #209- Calley Ondocsin & Diane Summerlin

Children's Church

10:00 Service Teachers- Vickie Earwood & Katie Caldwell

Acolyte Schedule

Nov. 18 - Hunter Claborn & Nelson Earley

Nov. 11 - Mary Emma Harper & LuLu Underwood

Dates to Remember:

Keepsake Christmas

Wednesday, Nov. 28th 5-7:00 p.m.

Children's Choir Sings in the 10:00 a.m. service- Sunday, Dec. 9th

Keepsake Christmas: A Christmas Event for Families

At Keepsake Christmas, families create their very own Keepsake nativity scenes and watch as the nativity comes to life on stage. Come capture memories from the first Christmas and celebrate the best Keepsake of all.... Jesus!

Wednesday, November 28th from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Dinner will be served at 5:00 p.m. (Reservations required)



Happy Thanksgiving!



Upcoming Events

Sunday, Nov. 18, 8:30 a.m.—12:30
Sweet and Savory Sale, Fellowship Hall

Sunday, Nov. 18, 11:15 a.m.
Grace United Contemporary Service

Sunday, Nov. 18 at 1:00 p.m.
“Big Rocks” Calendar Meeting, Minister’s Conf.
Room, New 3rd Fl.

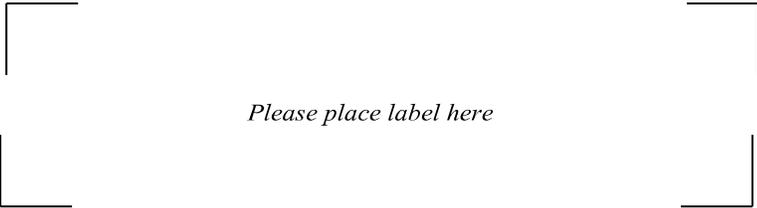
Happy Thanksgiving!
Church Office will be closed on
Nov. 22 and Nov. 23.



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Permit No. 226



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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, November 18
Rev. Hughey Reynolds preaching
10:00 a.m. - Traditional Service, Sanctuary
“Work’s Done, Now We Give Thanks” Hebrews 10: 11-25
11:15 a.m. - Contemporary Service, Fellowship Hall

Sunday, Nov. 25
Patrick Finley preaching
10:00 a.m. - Traditional Service, Sanctuary
“The Peace of Christ” Luke 1:79
11:15 a.m. - Contemporary Service, Fellowship Hall

Scheduled To Serve Nov. 18
Acolytes:
10:00 - Hunter Claborn & Nelson Earley
Ushers:
10:00 a.m. - Stephen Brown, Kin Copeland,
Sage Copeland, Sammy Dean, Ronnie Dukes



First Fellowship Is Over for the Season and Will Resume in January.