



# Tidings of Joy

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

November 28, 2018

## **“What Does Church Mean to You?”**

**Daddy became a circuit riding Methodist preacher when I was two years old. In those days, each of the four congregations he served had “church” once a month. That was the Sunday the preacher showed up to preach. In my earliest recollection, church is what people did when they gathered, sat in pews, sang hymns, prayed, and heard preaching.**

**I heard the phrase spoken again last June at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville during a session of the North Alabama Annual Conference. Our bishop invited Bishop Sharma Lewis to be the guest preacher for the conference. She preached her heart out and many in the congregation were shouting “amen” and words of encouragement and praise while she preached. During one of her sermons we were all on our feet urging her on. When the service ended, one of my colleagues turned to me and said, “We had church today.” For him and many others, church is what happens when we feel the Holy Spirit in our worship and are inspired to respond openly in the moment.**

**There is one thing church is not. I recently heard the Rev. Kelly Clem, our Superintendent in the Northeast District, tell clergy and local church leaders that the one complaint about church she no longer takes seriously is, “I’m not being fed.” Is church where we go to be fed? A point Rev. Clem made is that this complaint exposes the immaturity of one’s faith and discipleship. Unless we are brand new to the faith, we are no longer infants who need to be nursed but disciples who deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus. And Jesus assured everyone that he “*came not be served but to serve and to give himself as a ransom for many*” (Matthew 20:28).**

**When we follow Jesus in self-giving service, God pulls off for us the same grand reversal of end-results described in Philippians 2. After Jesus “*took on the form of a servant*” God exalts and glorifies him. (vv. 11-12). Jesus taught his disciples, that the same thing would happen when we serve others in his name: *The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted*” (Matthew 28:11-12).**

**Church is what happens when the people who are committed to following Jesus gather to serve others in the name of Jesus and when we scatter and serve others in the name of Jesus. The church is the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27) and we are individually members of the Body of Jesus. Church happens where Jesus happens, and Jesus happens where His followers abandon all self-serving and self-protecting pretenses to serve others.**

**What does church mean to you? Who does church mean to you? To whom are you the church, the Living Body of Jesus? When we care for and serve those who are hurting inside and outside our congregation, church happens. Allow church to happen today in our life.**

**Yours in Christ,**

*Hughey*

## Hangings of the Greens

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



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.

## Hilltoppers Senior Adult Ministry

**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 are available in the Welcome Center and on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board!

## UMM December Breakfast Meeting

The men of the church will celebrate Christmas with our **December 9**, second Sunday breakfast in the Wesley Fellowship Hall, starting at 7:45 AM. 

Our special speaker for the Advent Season meeting will be our own **Dr. Burl Oliver**. Burl and wife Dot served our church from 1986 until 1989 and after retirement in the 1990s returned home to Decatur and First Church to bless our fellowship and community with their good spirit and spiritual insight. We have been honored with their presence for most of the last three decades. We are also honored by other retired pastors who have graced our fellowship and continue to do so over the years.

Breakfast at \$5.00 per member or guest will be served under the leadership of December chef Norman Roby. All men who are members or friends of First Church are invited, and the men attending are encouraged to bring their wife or other guest. Anyone else wishing to attend is likewise welcome.

Merry Christmas!

**Billy Hudson**, UMM President

## Austinville Christmas Boxes

It's that wonderful time of year to make our Austinville children and their families merry! This year we are packing 35 boxes of food. (The Church at Stone River is also packing 35 boxes for these children.)

There are the items that will help us fill the boxes:

- 16 oz. jar of Peanut Butter
- Box of Saltine crackers
- Canned Pasta
- Fruit Cups 
- Pop Tarts
- Granola Bars
- Peanut butter crackers
- Pudding cups
- Boxes Macaroni and Cheese

If you could bring these items to the church by Sunday, December 9th, that would be great! The blue barrels are close to the Fellowship Hall.

Thank you for helping these children have a Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,  
**Jan Dean**

## UMW News

**UMW General Meeting**  
**Monday, December 10th**  
**10:00 a.m.**  
**Wesley Fellowship Hall**



**Followed by Christmas Cookie Boxes for**

**Our Congregational Care Friends**

Sponsored by UMW and WinGS  
Monday, December 10th  
Wesley Fellowship Hall  
10:30 a.m.

All women of the church are invited to participate in this joyful annual holiday event. Please bring three dozen cookies and help fill and deliver the boxes.



## Finish Strong! Update



So far your church has received 105 Ministry Budget pledges for 2019 with pledges totaling just under \$500,000. We have nine members or friends who are pledging for the first time. We have 25 folks who have increased



their pledge for next year. We normally receive around 140 pledges from members or giving units. We are encouraged by the response to date. We have about 30 folks who have yet to return a pledge card. We are also encouraged that four members have submitted Building Believers pledges for the first time and have joined others in the congregation dedicated to paying off our marvelous 2006-2008 building program by 2022 if not sooner. Your Finance Committee and your 2018 Stewardship Team are grateful for your prayerful attention to the work of the Lord through your local church going into next year. **Thank you!**

Your Finance Committee is at work rationalizing next year's budget to reflect what we think will be a prudent attempt to pay for all obligations and opportunities on time and in full and without a deficit. For all members and friends who have not returned a 2019 Ministry Budget pledge, we respectfully ask that you consider returning a pledge card ASAP. Use the card sent you in the mail, bring it to church or mail it back, or call Financial Secretary Cindy McCulloch to provide pledge information over the phone. **Thank you for your consideration.**

If you have yet to pledge to Building Believers and are now led to help, your consideration in helping First Church be debt free soon is genuinely appreciated.

Our number one goal is to **Finish Strong!** in 2018. We again ask that you do all you can to fulfill your 2018 Ministry Budget pledge or commit your unpledged end of year giving to your church so we can end the year in the black with no deficit for the seventh straight year. **Thank you for your consideration.**

We are entering the blessed Advent Season when we celebrate the birth of our Savior and renew our vows to His Gospel and his example. We genuinely hope this Christmas season will be a blessing to you and yours. Pray for your church, pray for those in our fellowship who are going through difficult times, and pray for those outside our walls who are in need of God's love, the Love of Christ, at this point in their lives.

See you in church Sunday.

Respectfully,  
Your Finance Committee and Your  
2019 Stewardship Committee

## Church Prayer List November 28

**Finish Strong! Stewardship Drive**

**Death of Jean Windsor on Nov. 19**

**Van Windsor, DMH Rm 415 Virginia Smith**

**Susan Baughn, liver cancer Jean Elliott**

**Eric and Laverne Armstrong Jeff McCulloch**

**Jenae Windsor Cox, granddaughter of Van Windsor.  
Her husband recently died at age 39.**

**Garry Johnson 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 Bill & Bettye Dennis**

**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**

**Eston & Peggy Lovingood Jeanne Smith**

**Joanne Wheat Alice Ackley**

**Maryanne Robbin, cancer Unspoken**

**LaVerne Dollahite Dot and Burl Oliver**

**Dick Williams Ronald Matthews**

**Judy Coon Deborah Stewart**

## 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!

## Sweet and Savory Sale

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, delicious food and beautiful crafts, and purchased items to make the Sweet and Savory Sale a sell-out! WInGS, Youth, and our kitchen will benefit from the proceeds!



## Help Needed for Historic Decatur Christmas Tour

*Your help is desperately needed on December 8, 2018.*

**Kathy Archer needs help on Saturday, December 8. Our church is the tour headquarters where people can purchase their Historic Decatur Christmas Tour of Homes tickets. We do not help with tickets and we do not help with refreshments.**



**Here is how you can help:**

- 1. I need nativities to have on display in the Church Parlor across from the Sanctuary. We will not need as many as we had in the past since we will display them in the parlor. We are not using the Fellowship Hall due to not having room with the new set up.**
- 2. I need two or three volunteers to help set up nativities on Friday morning.**
- 3. I need volunteers during the tour to be stationed in the Church Parlor where the nativities will be displayed. Hours will be 3-5:00 and 5-7:00.**
- 4. The Sanctuary will be decorated and open during the tour. I need volunteers to be stationed there 3-5:00 and 5-7:00. It would help to have volunteers familiar with the history of our church.**

**If you can help in one or more of the ways listed above, please contact me at one of the following ways:**

**Email – [archk1@bellsouth.net](mailto:archk1@bellsouth.net)**

**Text – 256.412.8520**

**Call – 256/412/8520**

**Thanks, Kathy Archer**

**The Christmas Eve Communion Services will be December 24 at Noon and 5:00 p.m. (Nursery Available) Candlelight will be at 5:00 p.m.**



### **First Friends (formerly Memory Café)**

***First Friends meets on Thursday, December 13 from 1:00-2:30 in room 250 of the New Wing.***



We hope you will join us for fellowship, fun, and food with a Christmas theme!



# First Church Children's Ministry

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

## Sunday Morning Volunteers

Volunteers for Sunday, Dec. 2

**Sunday School 9:00am**

Preschool Room #215- Dell Ward

K-5th Room #209- Betty Ann Mitchum & Barbara Ashwander

**Children's Church**

10:00 Service Teachers- Alexia Claborn & Larry Sturges

Volunteers for Sunday, Dec. 9

**Sunday School 9:00am**

Preschool Room #215- Leigh Ann Blankenship

K-5th Room #209- Katie Caldwell & Molly Ferrell

**Children's Church**

10:00 Service Teachers- Alexia Claborn & TBA

## Acolyte Schedule

Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> -

Miller Roberts & Davis Roberts

Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> -

Lydia Matthews & Miriam Matthews

## Dates to Remember:

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



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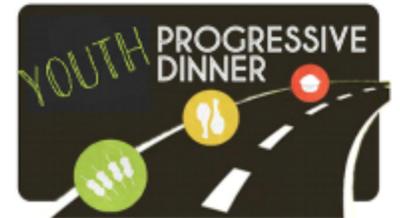
# First Church Youth Ministry

Jonathan Creekmore, Youth Minister  
662-736-0930 - youth@decaturfumc.org

## Youth Christmas Party

On Sunday, December 9th, we will have our youth Christmas party! It will be progressive dinner style, which is where we eat appetizers, dinner, and dessert at different church member's houses. Students will need to bring a \$5 gift for dirty Santa. We will leave the church at 5:00 p.m. and be back at 7:30 p.m.

Appetizers will be at the home of Miranda Nichols, dinner will be at the home of Jean Hovey, and dessert and dirty Santa are at the home of Bailey Copeland. Bring friends!



## Youth Study Day

Instead of Ignite Youth on Wednesday, December 12th, we will have a study day! This event is intended to give the students a place to go where they can help each other on papers, projects, studying, etc., so they can have a greater opportunity to do their best on their semester finals. We will also have some field experts for students who may need a little extra help. This event will start at 5:00 p.m. on the Youth 3rd Floor and will go as long as the students need help. Heavy snacks will be provided. Please, advise your students to attend this study day and to invite their friends.

## Safe Sanctuary Training

There will be a make-up Safe Sanctuary Training on Thursday, Dec. 13th at 6:00 p.m. on the Youth 3rd Floor.

## Upcoming Events

**Sunday, Dec. 2, 11:15 a.m.**  
**Grace United Contemporary Service**

**Sunday, Dec. 2, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Choir Rehearsal**

**Sunday, Dec. 2, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Hanging of the Greens, Sanctuary**

**Monday, Dec. 3, 5:00 p.m.**  
**Worship Planning Team, Courtyard Conf. Room**

**Tuesday, Dec. 4, 5:30 p.m.**  
**Finance Meeting, Room 351**

**Wednesday, Dec. 5, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Choir Rehearsal**

**Saturday, Dec. 8, 3:00 - 7:00 p.m.**  
**Christmas Tour Headquarters, Fellowship Hall**

**Sunday, Dec. 9, 7:45 a.m.**  
**UMM Breakfast, Fellowship Hall**



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**Hughey Reynolds, Sr. Minister, hreynolds@decaturfumc.org**  
**Jonathan Creekmore, Youth Minister, youth@decaturfumc.org**  
**Tommy Davis, Music Director**  
**Cindy McCulloch, Finance Secretary, cmcculloch@decaturfumc.org**  
**Alyson Quinn, Church Secretary, aquinn@decaturfumc.org**  
**Alexia Claborn, Director of Children's Ministry, aclaborn@decaturfumc.org**

**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, December 2**  
**Rev. Hughey Reynolds preaching**

**10:00 a.m. - Traditional Service, Sanctuary**  
**"Who Needs the Hope Jesus Brings?" Isaiah 9: 2-7**

**11:15 a.m. - Contemporary Service, Fellowship Hall**  
**6:00 p.m. - Hanging of the Greens, Sanctuary**

**Sunday, December 9**  
**Rev. Hughey Reynolds preaching**

**10:00 a.m. - Traditional Service, Sanctuary**  
**"Who Needs the Love of Jesus?" Romans 13: 8-14**

**11:15 a.m. - Contemporary Service, Fellowship Hall**

## Scheduled To Serve Dec. 2

### **Acolytes:**

**10:00 - Miller & Davis Roberts**

### **Ushers:**

**10:00 a.m. - Steve Haddock, Charles Taylor, Tom Earley, John Alderman, Jim Riant**

## Find Us On Social Media

"Like" us on Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/DecaturFirstUMC](http://www.facebook.com/DecaturFirstUMC)

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