

Pastor's Pen

Giving to the Church when the Denomination is a Mess

Dear Congregation,

By the end of 2023, estimates are that about 7200 churches will have departed the rapidly liberalizing United Methodist denomination, over 20% of the 30,000 some UM churches in the United States, according to Rev. Jay Therrell, retiring president of the Wesley Covenant Association.¹ News around the country from the Spring-Summer Annual Conference season showed accelerating trends of social and theological 'liberalization,' including several illegal ordinations and bishop consecrations, with traditional voices becoming weaker and weaker as conservative churches and clergy depart the denomination in mass.

With the current delegate ratio, many pundits are projecting the UMC's 2024 General Conference will collapse any remaining orthodox and traditional moral and theological guardrails in the Discipline – at least in the United States. This will open doors wide for the progressive sexual diversity agenda in the US already present in rebellious annual conferences, even if it alienates more culturally conservative American and international United Methodists. As a result, my guess is that millions more American members will gradually exit the denomination, just as has happened in the UCC, Presbyterian USA, and Episcopalian denominations. If the church stands for nothing different from the world, why bother? Future conflict with African United Methodism seems inevitable, but who knows? Either way, the handwriting seems to be on the wall for United Methodism's further rapid decline and irrelevance in the US.

As most of you surely know by now, our church's Administrative Board voted for our church to join a group lawsuit with about 55 other churches suing in Pennsylvania Civil Court to get out of the EPA Annual Conference of the UMC. They made this decision after numerous congregational straw polls showed total unanimity of desire to exit the UMC. I and others have written about this in past newsletters, and you can read those in the online database on the church's website if you need more information.

The legal process to get out is not fast. The church must wait patiently and let the lawyers (and God!) do their work. In the meantime, the Ad Board also voted to withhold the church's share of apportionments to the



Annual Conference and General Church, keeping them in escrow until the legal battle resolves.

How has this impacted you as a giving member of our local church? Our church has a long history of conscientious objection and indignation with the EPA Conference/UMC, going all the way back to the 1990s and the "Sophia" controversy. In response, even at that time, some members stopped giving to the church's general fund, because they did not want any of their money to end up in the coffers of the EPA Conference. (Our church's apportionments to the conference and General church make up about 9% of our annual budget.) Instead, they redirected their giving into things like 'building' or 'depreciation.'

UM Discipline (!) requires churches to honor the designated giving wishes of donors. For many years, this 'directed' giving pattern has created a challenge for the Finance Committee to balance the budget, since designated giving can leave some non-budget funds flush while the general fund supporting the budget is underfunded. This seems to be the case again this year. So far, total giving to support the 2023 budget is significantly down, though non-budget designated giving is strong, and we suspect some members are withholding or redirecting their support for the same "conscience" reasons.

With all this background, I invite you to reconsider what and why you give to the church, including while the church is in this transition season. I know it is frustrating to witness injustice and corruption in high places – whether it is in the church, denomination, or in civil life and government. We want to express that somehow. But the failures of those 'above' does not excuse our own call to be faithful and generous in supporting the work of God's kingdom, and to be responsible for resources God has given us. They will answer for themselves. We will answer for ourselves. Has God called you to be part of this church? Then give to his work in it. If you are benefiting in any way from the blessings and ministries of the church, then give to support it. It is an imperfect church made up of imperfect people in an imperfect denomination, but it is striving to 'move on to perfection' by working to follow Jesus, including working hard to align with a more biblically faithful denomination.

If as a matter of conscience, you still do not want your money to go to the conference or General Church offices, (even bearing in mind no apportionments are being paid right now), you can direct your giving to support some other part of the church's budget – the remaining 91% – whether it be for programs, personnel, legal help, office, worship, technology,

¹ Jay Therrell, "Focusing on the Future: Standing with Those Who've Stood with Us," July 26, 2023, ©wesleycovenant

(2023) At <https://wesleycovenant.org/2023/07/26/focusing-on-the-future-standing-with-those-whove-stood-with-us/>

missions, outreach, discipleship, etc. I hope most people will not feel they need to do this because it creates an accounting headache for our finance people, but if it is what you must do to keep a clear conscience, that is an option. This has the added benefit of not punishing the local church for denominational actions beyond its control.

Regarding that clear conscience, I want to remind you that the United Methodist Church has not yet 'crossed the redline' into apostasy of doctrine and practice. It may do so soon – at GC2024, but not yet. Individual clergy, bishops, and even annual conferences are flouting their 'enlightened' rebellion, but they are doing so by *disobeying* United Methodist Discipline. You can trust God to deal with those who violate his covenant in due time. To be sure, the breakdown of our polity is accelerating. But as an ordained elder in the UMC, I can still in good conscience say I vastly agree with and will uphold the Discipline. When that changes, I will be re-evaluating my ordination credentials. But for now, we all still experience some benefits by being United Methodist, even if it is in things as mundane as shared and cheaper property insurance, orderly governance structure, and the rich Methodist tradition we've inherited. I still serve as a 'man under authority' – appointed under the authority of the Annual Conference and bishop. We are 'sailing for new land' with our current plans, so let's give all we have to make sure our ship survives on the way and thrives after it gets there.

As we head into September, the Stewardship and Finance Committee of the church will be asking all of us to consider our giving commitment to the Church for the coming year. In closing, I invite you to consider what your giving really means, and why it is such an important part of your spiritual life. I invite you to prayerfully commit to give in proportion to how God has blessed you. After all, he is the one who gave you the power to produce. Your giving to the work of the Lord is a sign, among other things, of your spiritual maturity in generosity, of your commitment to further the church's Gospel mission, and of your love for God and his people. When you put your money in God's hands by giving it away to his work, it blesses others and shows you honor him and put him first as Lord of your finances. He will bless you for it.

If you have any questions about the state of the church or want to discuss any of these matters in more detail, I'd be happy to chat.

Yours in the love of Christ,
Pastor Chris Fisher



Worship & Preaching Schedule Sept - Oct, 2023

Sunday Worship: 9:00AM Live & Online
10:45 AM Coffeehouse Worship in Fellowship Hall
Saturday Worship: Live at 6:00 PM

Theme: Hard Questions on Faith

After we finish Ephesians, Sunday messages will align with various questions about faith posed in the Alpha Course. During this season, we encourage you to invite your friends and neighbors who may know little about Christianity but might be wrestling with spiritual questions. We will be making the messages 'seeker friendly.'

Sept 3 **14th Sunday after Pentecost**
w/ Holy Communion
"Armor of God: The Sword of the Spirit"

Sept 10 **15th Sunday after Pentecost**
"Weapons of our Warfare: Prayer"

Sept 17 **16th Sunday after Pentecost**
"Is there more to life than this?"
(Alpha Course Kickoff Night)

Sept 24 **17th Sunday after Pentecost**
"Who is Jesus, why does he matter?"

Oct 1 **18th Sunday after Pentecost**
w/ Holy Communion
"Why did Jesus die?"

Oct 8 **19th Sunday after Pentecost**
"How can I have faith?"

Oct 15 **20th Sunday after Pentecost**
Laity Sunday: Ministry Celebration Day!
"Why and How do I pray?"

Oct 22 **21st Sunday after Pentecost**
"Why and How should I read the Bible?"

Oct 29 **22nd Sunday after Pentecost**
"How Does God Guide us?"

Nov 5 **All Saints Day**
"The Gift of the Holy Spirit"

Nov 12 **Anniversary Sunday 10 AM Service**
Guest Preacher: D. S. Rev. Hun Ju Lee
11:30 Catered Anniversary Lunch



Communion Offerings

Sept 3 For the Mike and JoAnn Forbes
Oct 1 2024 Mission Trip to Puerto Rico

Sept: Mike Forbes continues to struggle with health decline due to dementia. Joann is trying to figure out his long-term care needs and has already incurred significant unexpected expenses. We are dedicating Septembers' Communion

offering to help them with their medical and care-related bills. Please give generously.

Oct: The Mission Committee is organizing a mission trip in January '24, to help rehab a sister church in Dorado, Puerto Rico. This is in response to a request for more help from Rev. Rosa Santos, Lisi's aunt. If you would like to participate in the PR mission trip, please contact the office or sign the clipboard in the church foyer. Team leaders will be in touch as they begin organizing for the trip.

†

Church Rebranding/Supper Night

Sept. 13, Wednesday, 6:00 PM

Dear Congregation,

We will gather for a light supper and discussion on rebranding/renaming the church at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, Sept. 13. Please come with a cover dish to share for this time of fellowship, planning, and reflection. We will begin with results from the last renaming survey conducted at the beginning of summer, giving everyone a chance to comment and ask questions on proposed new names. We look forward to seeing you then.



†

Lester Riegel Sr.,'s Estate

Our dear brother Mr. Lester Riegel, Sr. passed away on May 24, 2023. Having been predeceased by his wife Elaine and son Duke (Lester, Jr.), Mr. Riegel willed the balance of his estate to First UM Church. His bank agent is the executor, and recently organized the sale of Lester's property in Pinegrove at auction. Proceeds of Mr. Riegel's estate will be given to the church in due course. We thank God for Lester's life and generosity. He has finished his course in faith.

†

Anniversary Sunday: November 12

Sunday, November 12, 10:00 AM

This year is First UMC's 121st anniversary, which we will celebrate with one combined worship service on Sunday, November 12, at 10:00 AM, lunch following.

Our guest speaker is Rev. Hun Ju Lee, Superintendent of the North District. Rev. Lee is a dynamic and inspiring speaker who loves the Lord, and we look forward to hosting him. Lunch will be

provided afterwards by Mission BBQ of Reading. Tickets are \$10 per person, children ages 7-15 half price, 6 and under free. Tickets for lunch will be available in the foyer in October. Consider buying extra tickets and bring a friend. Please reserve early, as space is limited.

†

Church Prayer Ministry Updates

8 Things to Pray about in Sept – Oct 2023

- 1) Pray for the body of Christ to be built up in the spirit. Pray for our staff, pastor, lay ministry leaders, and our discipleship, small group, mission, and outreach teams, and for the missionaries we support.
- 2) Pray for the Alpha Course running Sept 17-Dec. 3. Pray for the guests, leaders, and support team, and for the Holy Spirit to move mightily in this outreach.
- 3) Pray for our children, youth, and their families, for strengthening in faith and growth in grace. Pray for revival among the young people of our area, for a hunger for the things of God. Pray for our new Senior High youth director Dave Williams and his family as he takes on that role beginning Sept. 1.
- 4) Pray for those in authority everywhere, that we may live at peace for the sake of the gospel.
- 5) Pray for our seniors, home-bound, lonely, and sick.
- 6) Pray for Rev. Portia Kuzanga, whose visa hearing to try to return to the US has been scheduled for mid-September. Pray also for her children and for Stacey Lehman and her daughter Kendall in their care-giving roles.
- 7) Pray for our communities and our sister churches, and for those doing the work of the gospel around the world. Pray for Israel and the peace of Jerusalem.
- 8) Pray for our church, the NCLL legal team, and the leaders of the UMC and GMC.

Weekly prayer team ministry continues.

We continue to recruit prayer teams to pray for one hour a day for one week for the Kingdom of God to come more fully in our church and our community and beyond. You can also pray together in your own homes via video chat or phone call.

Do you have a testimony to share?

Please consider sharing your story as part of our faith-stories series. Contact the office at office@havenfirstumc.org if you want to share.

SPRC ANNOUNCEMENT

Welcoming the new Senior Youth Leader –

David Williams



How do you start an introduction of who you are when you have been with this church for twenty years. Start at the beginning for those that don't know me. My name is David Williams. I come originally from Upper Bucks County along with my wife, Renee. We have three wonderful children (each with their blessed skills that support others) – Anakin, Kasandria, and James (Wyatt).

I've been with this church since November 2003, prior to was a member of the First United Methodist in Perkasi for several years. Prior and still currently in some positions; I've served as a Sunday school teacher, praise team and choir singer (other church), media team (creating slide, operating media center), and chaired committees (communications/media & technology).

But throughout almost eight years, I've been supporting the youth ministry as a helper to the senior youth pastor and middle school youth leader. From helping with discussions, to playing cricket or gaga ball, to driving the group to events or youth trips/retreats; my interest has been in supporting the youth. You could say (and I've heard it from a few) that I am young at heart. May the mind not remind the body of its age, but get reminded by the spirit it is still youthful. That is how I am and why I still enjoy being involved in youth ministry.

I want to look at this position not as a new role but as an extension of what I have been currently doing these past many years. By God's Grace and Mercy, I'll continue to guide our current young people to knowing and understanding God's path in their lives. I also hope to find ways to reaching out to our local communities' youth to help them to know and bring them closer to Jesus. With your support and the Spirit's guidance, all things are possible. "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13)

Senior Youth Fall Schedule

I'll be sending out the fall schedule at the beginning of September once I finalize with the office and the middle school youth leader. We'll be joining with the middle school group to start of the school year with the Back 2 School Bash on August 27 (4:30pm to 7:30pm) and September 10 (same time) for Movie & Pizza Night "Facing the Giants".

I hope to start off our study/discussion group "Senior Talk" on Wednesday, September 27 from 6pm to 7:30pm; starting off with "Me & My Identity" session from RightNow Media. Weekends (Saturday or Sunday) will be for fellowship, games or special events (more to follow).

Parents – I'll be setting up a text group (pending any changes to current one) and will be using the FlockNote program to send event and reminder notifications. Please contact me if you have any questions.

- David



Alpha Begins Sunday



September 17th

At 5:30 PM!!!

Please pray for the guests who will be attending.

Alpha consists of 12 sessions, each of which includes a time of fellowship and food, an approximately 25 minute video which looks at a different question about faith, followed by a time of discussion.

Our program will begin on Sunday, September 17th at 5:30 PM. Please see the schedule on the next page for the list of topics and information you can share with someone who may be interested in attending. We are hoping to share this course with people who are not necessarily church attendees, but people who have questions about faith.

Please realize that a person does not have to commit to attending every session. It is likely that there will be a scheduling conflict for some of the dates – but that doesn't mean they should not attend.

I am very thankful for the many people who have volunteered their time and energy for this program to occur.

There is a training for our team scheduled for Sunday, September 10th at 5:30 PM. It will be a 'dry run' of one of the sessions, with food, a training video, and time for discussion as we make the final preparations for the program.

If you know of someone who is planning to attend, PLEASE contact either me (570-449-2355), Donna Miles or the church office so we will be able to properly prepare for their presence.

Lynne O'Connell



You're invited to join a conversation.....

- Connect with new people
- Watch an episode on a question of faith
- Share your thoughts and hear from others

Alpha consists of 12 weekly gatherings which start at 5:30 PM with a light supper, followed by a video, and ending with discussion concluding at 7:30 pm. You do not have to commit to attend all the sessions, just come as you are able.



If you are interested in participating, please contact the person who gave this info to you or call the office of the First UMC, Schuylkill Haven 570-385-3941, so we can prepare for your presence.

Fall Alpha Schedule

Each Session begins at 5:30 PM

at the First UMC

420 Saylor St.

Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

570-385-3941

at the First UMC

420 Saylor St.

Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

570-385-3941

Date	Session	Topic
9/17	Week 1	Is There More to life than this?
9/24	Week 2	Who is Jesus?
10/1	Week 3	Why Did Jesus Die?
10/8	Week 4	How Can I have Faith?
10/15	Week 5	Why and How Do I pray?
10/22	Week 6	Why and How Should I read the Bible
10/29	Week 7	How Does God Guide Us?
11/4 – Saturday	Long Day	Holy Spirit – Alpha Day Away
11/12	Week 8	How Can I resist Evil?
11/19	Week 9	Why and How Should I Tell Others
11/26	Week 10	Does God Heal Today?
12/3	Week 11	What about the Church?

Faith Community Nurse's Notes

Brought to you by Ann Moyer RN, FCN

Preparing for the Cold and Flu Season

Fall is approaching and unfortunately, the cold and flu season along with it! With that in mind, you may want to take some steps to be prepared.

Trying to maintain your health is always the first step. Eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, try to get enough sleep, and maintain good body and oral hygiene. Keep health maintenance visits with your primary care providers as well as specialists such as cardiologists, endocrinologists, etc...

Speak to your physician about getting a flu vaccine and any other adult immunizations that are recommended based upon your age and health issues. Flu vaccines are a yearly vaccine and are manufactured according to the current information available regarding influenza for the year.

Gear up against germs! The golden rule for keeping yourself and others healthy is WASH YOUR HANDS, WASH YOUR HANDS, WASH YOUR HANDS! When you are out and about doing life, it requires touching all different types of things, from shopping carts, telephones, doors etc. All those surfaces can be loaded with germs that cause cold, flu, COVID and gastrointestinal ailments. A good habit is to wash your hands upon returning home. Wash them thoroughly for 20 seconds at least. Also wash your hands after using the restroom, before eating, and after using a tissue for wiping your nose or to cough into.

Clean and disinfect your home regularly. Some multipurpose cleaners remove physical dirt but do not actually kill viruses or illness causing bacteria. It is important that the cleaning product label states that it disinfects.!

Scrub kitchen and bathroom sinks. Make sure to include the faucet handles and area surrounding the sink, kitchen counter tops, and cooking areas. Other areas to focus on are frequently touched surfaces. These would include door knobs, light switches, TV remotes, handles on the refrigerator, microwave, dishwasher and oven. Be sure the sponges or rag you are using are clean and disinfected!

There are disinfectant sprays that can be used on soft surfaces such as upholstered furniture. This is an especially good practice if someone in your household is actively coughing or sneezing.

Prevention is key to fighting cold and flu!

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. 1Thessaloninians 5:18 (NLT)

METHODIST WOMEN MINISTRIES UPCOMING EVENTS

September 12- regular meeting in café at 1 pm– plan upcoming events

September 17th – 5 pm meet at Fellowship Hall- provide Alpha meal

September 24th between services- Bake Sale in café

Wide selection of sweet treats. Come taste and see!



Lemon sponge pies

Chocolate peanut butter brownies

Chocolate cake with peanut butter icing

Lemon cheese squares



Sticky buns German Apple cake

New York style cheesecake plus more

Bakers wanted- if you would like to donate some items, call Jean (570-345-5061) or tell her on Sunday.

Upcoming event- Sing along at Providence Place, Pine Grove Now.14th

We will be collecting the following items for the residents until November 12th. They may be placed in the wooden bin in the Narthex.

Chap sticks

Bags of peppermints or lifesavers

Shampoo

Toothbrushes & paste

Deodorant

Colored pencils

Soap



Adult puzzle & coloring books



We so appreciate your willingness to give. May the Lord richly bless you.

Alpha Meal Schedule

Small snack meal will be provided before the Alpha program Sunday evenings September 17th to December 3rd. There are two open dates available yet if you feel so moved to participate in making a meal.

Participant numbers will be available after September 17th. We would appreciate your help. November 12th and 26th are available. For more information see any member of MWM or Lynne O'Connell.



NURSERY NEWS...

We're having so much fun in the nursery on Sunday mornings! I love spending time with your little ones and the youth helpers. If you have young children or grandchildren, we'd love for them to join us too! Our time together is designed so that your children enjoy coming to church! Like the song goes: I've got Joy Joy Joy Down in my Heart. Where? Down in my Heart. The children leave with Joy in their heart!

If you would like to volunteer to be a helper in this outreach, contact April or Lisi. If you'd like to help but can't volunteer, we can always use supplies! Our little ones love small stick pretzels, small cookies snack packs, apple juice boxes, and of course, goldfish. Thank you!

In Jesus,
Kristy Kraft



Our Children's Ministry needs teachers, assistants, & substitutes!

If that's you, please contact Lisi or April for more info.



The amazing journey of a simple Shoebox Gift begins with YOU and results in Evangelism & Discipleship!

Children need great joy now more than ever. Most of all, they need the hope found only in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Will you partner with us to share that glorious hope of Jesus? Be on the lookout for the arrival of shoeboxes! Shoeboxes will be due by Sunday, November 12th!

Can't shop? For a \$25 donation, you can build a shoebox for a child in need online. Just visit:
<https://www.samaritanspurse.org>

and click on Operation Christmas Child Build a Shoebox

SAVE THE DATE!



Charlie Brown
Christmas Party

December 10

4-7 PM

Children are invited to join us for pizza, games, "Charlie Brown Christmas," & decorating Snoopy's doghouse while parents can get ready for Christmas or enjoy a night out!



I am more convinced than ever that there is no tougher job, and no greater calling than that of a parent. The powerful role a parent plays in their child's life cannot be overestimated. Your kids are drawing their cues on what it looks like to follow Christ from you more than they are any other person. This can be an incredibly motivating, convicting, and overwhelming thought. You won't always get it right or perfect. Pastor Mark Batterson once said, "You'll never be a perfect parent, but you need to be a praying parent."

We send our kids off on their first day of school with all of the supplies they need to be fully equipped and prepared to make the most of the year that is ahead of them. Why would we not do the same to spiritually equip and prepare them as they walk into the world?

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:13-17

Are you feeling like being a praying parent is just as much of a challenge as a perfect parent? Here are some easy first steps to take this school year...

1. **Pray** an armor of God prayer over your child by inserting their name into the Scripture above and asking God to help them daily.
2. **Ask questions** that can help you kickstart meaningful conversations and prayers with your kids. (Remember timing is everything. Sometimes, your kid may need some time to decompress from their day. Read their cues and find the right time to have these conversations.)

What are you most excited about right now?

This might just be the best (and easiest) jumping off point for connection. Ask the question and be prepared to listen...for a while. After all, kids are often bursting with excitement about one thing or another. Pray Jeremiah 29:11 over your child and ask God to help you guide them into the perfect plan He has for their life.

What's making you worried lately?

Kids are happy-go-lucky creatures, but they also have things they're affected by. Asking this question gives credibility to your concerns and helps your kid work through their emotions in a safe environment. Consider taking their concerns (and yours) to the Lord as you meditate on Philippians 4:6-8.

These questions are just a starting point that will hopefully break through the distracted exterior and help you to get to the heart of the matter and provide a foundation for meaningful prayer in your child's life.



Sunday, September 10

4:30-7:30 PM

Join us for
"Facing the Giants,"



A huge shout out to all of the youth for your dedicated service over the summer months. Whether you helped with Vineyard distribution, splash!, j.a.m, or community lunch, we were blessed to

Join us on Wednesdays,
starting September 27,
from 7:15-8:30 PM for



Where: Duncan's Corn Maze

Sunday, October 1

4:30 PM – 7:30 PM

RSVP is a MUST by
September 8

Cost is \$10.00 with the exception
of September, October &
November birthdays who get a
FREE ticket to the Corn Maze!



Our youth group will
be lending our hands
and feet to the Haven
Rec Commission for
their annual Pumpkin
Patch on Sunday,
October 15th from
12:00 PM – 5:00 PM.

Please remember to
dress for the weather
as we're outside all
afternoon.

Youth will receive \$5
for snacks but are
also welcomed to
bring extra spending
money along.

Rain Date:
Sunday, October 22



Harvey Cedars
Reunion Day

Saturday, November 18

10:00 AM – 10:00 PM

DESTINATION: PUERTO RICO

JANUARY 2024

The Missions committee is planning a Missions Trip to Puerto Rico in January of 2024. YOU are invited to participate!

We have received a request from Lisi's Aunt Rosa for some help at her home church in Dorado, Puerto Rico. They need help with some more repairs, such as installation of cabinets & storage units, new windows, lighting, painting and grounds work. The team needs folks with carpentry skills,

plumbing knowledge, electricians and general labor. If you have any of these skills, or a heart to help and would like a chance to serve our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico, please prayerfully consider going on this trip.

There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex under this poster, please add your name, phone number and email address. You can also ask our Missions Committee chair, Ellen Marino any further questions that you may have. There will also be fund-raising events in the near future to help with the costs involved with travel expenses, lodging and purchase of needed supplies.

Looking forward to serving our brothers and sisters in Dorado, Puerto Rico with YOU!!!



First Church has received the following thank you notes:

Dear First United Methodist Church,

Thank you for allowing me to come and share with you all about the Ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship this summer. Our ministry is coming to a close for the summer but it has been a great summer. It has been encouraging to see the kids excited to learn about and grow in Christ.

In Christ,
Ellie McCarthy

Dear Members of First U.M.C.,

On behalf of Zion U.M.C. in New Ringgold, Salem U.M.C. in Dreherstown, and Welcome U.M.C. in Landingville, we want to thank you for your monetary donation to Pastor Tim Christman and his family. We also want to thank anyone who contributed by attending the spaghetti dinner or donating to the cause with your time, monetary contribution or food. A special thank you to Doug Esposito for wearing his "waiter hat" at the dinner and helping with food distribution and thank you to Deb for sharing him with us that day. Fund raiser was a success because people like you care. Went to visit Pastor Tim at Hershey and he is doing very well. Doctors are pleased and he is anxious to come home. Again, thank you all for helping us. God Bless-

Donna M. Brobst

Zion U.M.C. , New Ringgold



"Opening the Storehouse of
God's Blessings"
Stewardship Campaign

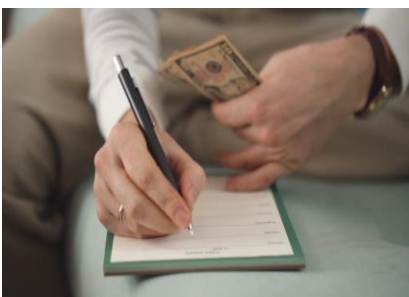
Finance News

This is worth repeating - We will be beginning our Stewardship Campaign on September 10th. Stewardship talks will begin in August and September. You will receive a letter, graph, copy of your personal giving, and a Statement of Intent card in the mail. Your cards will be due back to the church office by September 24th. Prayerfully consider how you can help our church do the ministries it was called to do. The letter shares the many programs and ministries we have at this church. It also tells of a concern with designated giving. Please consider giving to the General Fund to fund our everyday needs. We need your support.

Our theme this year is "Opening the storehouse of God's Blessings".

Unlike man's earthly storehouses, which keep food, goods, or riches, God's storehouses refer to His power over the natural world and His goodness which He pours out on those who follow Him.

We want the Lord's Blessings for our church. We need to be faithful in our giving of time, talents, and tithes. We are asking you to consider how you are giving and if possible, to increase your giving for next year. All we have is a gift from God on loan to us.



HELP OUR COUNTERS!

1. Put your check number and amount on the envelope.
2. If giving cash, please mark cash beside the amount.
3. If you miss a week, there is no need to give both the current and past weeks' envelopes- just put your total offering in the current weeks' envelope. The week that you give your offering is when it is credited to you.
4. Please use your memo line on your check if you would like to designate your giving to something other than the general fund. Also write it on your envelope so we know how to credit your giving.

For those of you giving online via our website, your only option is to give to the General Fund unless you add something in the Memo box to designate your gift. Thank you all for your faithful giving to our church. Jean Twardzik

A NOTE FROM OUR MINISTER IF VISITATION: MR. BRIAN READING

The following is a list of our homebound or shut-ins members. If I have missed someone, please call me or the church office and add them to the list, or if you know or someone who needs a visit or if someone else knows who that might be, tell them to call.

Marv Berger,
640 Clairmont Ave. ,
Sch. Haven

Gloria Stein, Providence Place,
Pottsville

Shirley Yenilaitus, 61 Memorial Dr.
Sch. Haven

Carol Wagner, Seton Manor

Helen Knight & Stewart Sattizhan,
York Terrace, Pottsville

Elaine Berger, Luther Ridge, Gordon
Nagle Trail

Eleanor Gicking, 216 W.
Independence St. Apt. 208
Orwigsburg

Mike Forbes, 3 Allenwood Dr. Sch.
Haven

Carl Geary

WEEKLY PRAYER MINISTRY

Sept. 3-9: Lisi Fisher

Sept. 10-16: Ruth Noecker

Sept. 17-23: Darlene Beers &
Dot Murphy

Sept. 24-30: Bonnie & Dick
Hawley

Oct. 1-7: Liz Wallace

Oct. 8-14:

Oct. 15-21:

Oct. 22-28:

Oct. 29- Nov. 4:



We still have a few dates left for October, please consider signing up for a week of prayer. If you would like to sign-up, please contact Mrs. Darlene Beers or the church office. Thank you.

SATURDAY NIGHT WORSHIP

6:00 P.M.

SPEAKERS SCHEDULE

Sept. 2: Dr. Fisher

Sept. 9 Doug Esposito

Sept. 16: Jodi Scheib

Sept. 23: Brian Reading

Sept. 30 Doug O'Connell

Oct. 7:

Oct. 14: Dwight Dros

Oct. 21: Brian Reading

Oct. 28: Bonnie Hawley

Do you have a busy Sunday and can't make it to services in the morning? You are welcome to join in for worship on Saturday evenings beginning as 6:00 p.m.

*Worship
the
Father
in
spirit
and
truth.*
John 4:23

CROP WALK

On October 1, World Communion Sunday, the Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches will hold our annual CROP Walk, to raise awareness about and funds for fighting hunger, in our community and throughout the world. The acronym CROP stands for “Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty”. Overcoming poverty in our community is one of the primary goals of the council.

The ongoing theme is “Ending Hunger One Step at a Time”. The Walk will begin at 1:00 p.m. at the Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches Food Pantry, with registration beginning at 12:30 p.m. We will follow the same path as last year, stopping for breaks when needed at Jerusalem Lutheran Church and First United Methodist Church. Prizes will be offered to the fastest walker/runner and to the church with the most participants. Maybe your church could offer a friendly challenge to another Council church to see who can raise the most money?

One-quarter of the funds raised will be returned to the Council Food Pantry. The remaining funds will be sent to Church World Service to be used where they are needed in this country and around the world.

If you would like to volunteer to be at the church on October 1, to welcome participants with water and a bathroom break, please call the church office. Registration packets for FUMC will be in the Narthex throughout September. If you have any questions, please contact Bernice Machamer, Liz Wallace or the church office.

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www.havenfirstumc.org



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The Circuit Writer
September / October 2023

First United Methodist Church
"Our Mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world"

*In Person Sunday Service at 9:00 A.M. & Saturday Night at 6:00 P.M.
10:45 A.M. Coffeehouse Worship Service*

*You can also join us online at: www.havenfirstumc.org Or
like us on Facebook and join us there.*

Our Vision: Welcoming, Empowering, Reaching Out

Ministers: Everyone of us:

Pastors and Staff:

Dr. Christopher Fisher
Rev. Portia Kuzanga
April Bergen
JoAnn Daum
Marcy Hudock
Adam Kraft
Ann Moyer
Cynthia McClelland
Brian Reading
Julie Saunders
Pamela Setlock

Senior Pastor
Director of Sr. High Youth
Dir. Of Children's Discipleship and MS Ministry
Office Manager
Sexton
Treasurer
Parish Nurse
Organist/Music Director
Minister of Visitation
Choir Director
Church Secretary