

The Lamplighter

February 2025 • Volume XVIII • Issue I

"From Here to There"

This past week, I and the other Cabinet members of the North Carolina Conference of the Global Methodist Church had the privilege of meeting our new bishop, Jeff Greenway. Jeff comes to us from the Allegheny West Conference after a long and distinguished time in the local church. He is also the co-author of the book *Multiplying Methodism*, which was read by many of us during our journey into the Global Methodist Church. I am grateful to be able to tell you that Jeff is very personable as well as knowledgeable, but above all he is committed to helping the church to live into its calling. He left us with little doubt of his great love for the church and for Jesus.

This past week, I also had the opportunity to be the teacher/facilitator of a couple of study/discipleship groups here at the church. In both instances, we reflected on the idea of real love. One thing became clear in both groups' conversations: *love means wanting those we love to be the very best people that they can be and that means we have to be willing to hold one another accountable for our efforts in striving for this goal.* It seems to me that this thought was present in some of Jeff's remarks to us this week. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of what Jeff said to us, in hopes that it gives us all some food for thought.

Jeff began by joining us in celebrating God's goodness in guiding us to this point in time. We all acknowledged God's hand in our journey into the Global Methodist Church and gave thanks to God for the many signs of God's blessings in the lives of our congregations. At the same time, Jeff encouraged us not to be content in only reaching this point...he encouraged us to continue to follow in the footsteps of our Lord as we and our churches go from who we are now to what we can be with God's help; what He called a journey "...from here to there." Such a journey has many different elements. Jeff encouraged us to move from:

---**Come and Do TO Go and Be:** Sometimes churches will develop a case of "*spiritual myopia*," where we expect people to come to us and to fit into our lives together. We need to be willing to be people who are not content to stay behind the walls of the church, but rather be those who go into our communities, not for the sake of any program, but for the sake of living before others a "*life that becomes the gospel.*"

(Article continued on top of Page 2)

Baby Book Program

A children's book is placed in the Church Library in honor of each child born to our church family. The following child was honored with the book listed below:

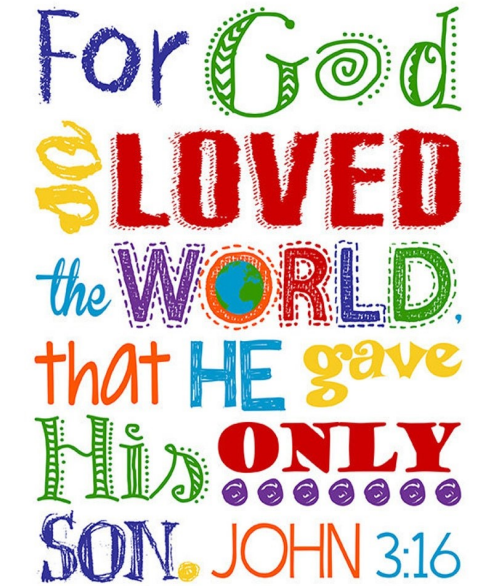
Just in Case You Ever Wonder by Max Lucado

In honor of: William Fisher Peele

Parents: Ben and Katlyn Peele

Grandparents: Bill and Dale Peele

Larry and Karen Keech



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Amanda Bazan and these six children shared the Christmas story with scripture and song to the delight of our guests at the Matthew 25 December meal.

Ann Cherry prepares decorated containers for each homebound member. Ann was honored for her service during preparation for the December Matthew 25 meal.



(L to R) Jane Weaver, Ann Cherry, Diana Tew, Barbara Smith, and Missy Deaner (absent is Kay Smith) faithfully deliver meals from Matthew 25 to homebound church members each

will address cards to family members and friends for a donation of \$2.00 per card. Please watch for the pink sheets. Complete the form and let us help you send love to others. All proceeds go to local missions. Tuesday, February 4, will be the last day to purchase cards.



The Agape Circle will be addressing and mailing Valentines again this year. We

Valentine Cards



First Methodist Church Washington, Inc
304 West Second Street
PO Box 715
Washington NC 27889
Phone: 252-946-3311
Email: admin@fmcwashington.com
WebPage: www.fmcwashington.com
Return Services Requested

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage Paid
Washington, North Carolina 27889
Permit #95

(Senior Pastor's Article Continued)

---**Infancy TO Maturity:** We have to commit ourselves to continuing in the path of sanctification... growing daily in the knowledge and love of God, seeking not just our self-interests, but above all the will of God.

---**Making Church Members TO Making Disciples:** Connection to the church is important, but helping people become followers of Jesus is more important.

---**Dysfunctional Politeness TO Kingdom Kindness and Honesty:** We must learn how we can better speak the "truth in love" to one another with the aim of helping one another become the best disciples of Jesus we can be.

---**Carnal TO Spiritual:** We must strive to "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness."

---**Moralism TO Holiness:** We must not settle for a mindset of moralistic therapeutic deism (God wants us to be nice; the goal of life is just to be happy; God doesn't need to be in our lives, except when we want something) but rather to truly grow in our knowledge and love of God, as we "press on... to the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14)

---**Information TO Transformation:** We must share the teachings of our faith, but we must also seek to share how they are applied and endeavor to help one another to live up to them.

This is quite a list...one that deserves some thought. I look forward to some times of conversation that may spring up around these thoughts. We have come a long way by God's grace and we love the church. I believe we love it enough to help the church become what it can be...enough to help it in the journey "from here to there." See you in church Sunday!

Ken

From Your Associate Pastor of Missional Discipleship

It has been one year since we launched our Lay Shepherding program here at First Church. I wanted to give a brief update on the purpose of this program, celebrate its success so far, and help us look ahead into 2025.

With the help of our Lead Lay Shepherds, George and Bonnie Isovitsch, the Lay Shepherding program exists to help Ken and me in our task of looking after our family here at First Church. We imagine lay shepherding to help us in two major ways. First, to look after our existing members of the church. Second, by building relationships with new visitors and potential members by helping them get acquainted with our church in hopes that they will find themselves ready to become members. Lay shepherds lead groups (equally divided alphabetically), too accomplish four tasks. 1) They quickly introduce themselves to first time visitors by taking gift bags to their homes. 2) They continue to build relationships with returning visitors (we call them constituents) and help connect them to the pastors, to various life giving groups, and ministry opportunities throughout the church. 3) They connect at least twice a year with every church member to answer any questions and offer resources on an as needed basis, as well as share relevant information throughout the year with pastors and staff as needs arise. 4) They look to invite new gifted shepherds to join their team and help train them to eventually take their place when the time is right.

Lay Shepherding, even in its first infant year has already yielded great results for our church. Ken and I have appreciated the news we receive from our shepherds as it has helped us respond more timely and effectively to needs. We have welcomed 16 new members into the church in the last year and believe that the shepherds have had a big part to play in helping those new members feel connected and embraced well before joining our church. We have also noticed a greater number of members and visitors find and become engaged in life groups, Sunday school classes, and service ministries throughout the life of the church. All of this signals the strength and vitality of our church.

In the coming year, we are welcoming some new lay shepherds onto the team. We hope that you will continue to grow in your relationship with the church with the help of your lay shepherd and your pastors. We exist as servants to help give all of you the resources you need to live into your discipleship journey as we follow together our Head Shepherd Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

First Methodist Church Meetings & Activities Calendar		February 2025		SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT																
				2 9:00 AM Blended Worship and Children's Church 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Traditional Worship Service	3 9:30 AM Methodist Women Executive Board Meeting 10:00 AM Adult Education Committee 7:00 PM Troop 99 Meeting	4 Circle Meetings 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 11:30 AM Methodist Women Memorial Service 12:00 PM Methodist Women Luncheon and General Meeting	5 9:30 AM WWBS "Revelation" by Jen Wilkin 4:00 PM Men of Redemption Chancel Choir Rehearsal 5:30 PM Family Night Dinner 6:15 PM "Love in Chaos" Study Ministries 7:30 PM Praise Team Rehearsal	6 7:00 AM Men at the Table 6:30 PM Pack 99 Meeting	7	8 12:30 PM Sullivan/Bailey Wedding 1:30 PM Sullivan/Bailey Reception	9 9:00 AM Blended Worship and Children's Church 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Traditional Worship Service 6:00 PM Yahoos	10 Newsletter Deadline Meeting 5:30 PM Missions Committee 7:00 PM Troop 99 Meeting	11 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Wiccoan Order of Arrow Meeting	12 9:30 AM WWBS "Revelation" by Jen Wilkin 4:00 PM Men of Redemption Chancel Choir Rehearsal 5:30 PM Family Night Dinner 6:15 PM "Love in Chaos" Study Ministries 7:30 PM Praise Team Rehearsal	13 7:00 AM Men at the Table 6:00 PM Child Care Staff Meeting 6:00 PM SPRC 6:30 PM Pack 99 Meeting	14 Valentine's Day Rehearsal	15 4:00 PM Wilson/Page Wedding	16 8:00 AM Methodist Men's Breakfast 9:00 AM Blended Worship and Children's Church 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Traditional Worship Service	17 5:30 PM Child Care Board Meeting 6:30 PM Preschool Board Meeting 7:00 PM Troop 99 Meeting	18 10:00 AM Staff Meeting	19 9:30 AM WWBS "Revelation" by Jen Wilkin 4:00 PM Men of Redemption Chancel Choir Rehearsal 5:30 PM Family Night Dinner 6:15 PM "Love in Chaos" Study Ministries 7:30 PM Praise Team Rehearsal	20 7:00 AM Men at the Table 6:30 PM Pack 99 Meeting	21	22	23 9:00 AM Blended Worship and Children's Church 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Traditional Worship Service 1:00 PM Youth Bowling at Bowlero/Greenville	24 1:00 PM Matthew 25 Board Meeting 7:00 PM Troop 99 Meeting

More Letters

This past December, fourteen men with Caring Christian Carpenters showed up at our door ready to build a ramp for my mother Barbara!

I have never witnessed such organization. Everyone had a job to do. More proof of "many hands make light the load"!

Because of your service, I can now safely take my mother to doctors' appointments and even do a little sight-seeing!

May you continue to serve God in such a special way.

Susan and Barbara Jamison

The Staff would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude for all the expressions of love and appreciation we have received from our church family during the Christmas season. We have enjoyed them all immensely and are grateful for these expressions of love from you. We thank God for you and pray that you have a prosperous 2025.

~Your FMCW Staff~

Dear First Methodist Church Washington, Inc.,

On behalf of The Salvation Army of Washington, please accept my thanks for your generous contribution. We greatly appreciate your donation which enables us to continue our mission of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and meeting human needs in His name.

May God continue to bless and keep you!

Lord Bless,
Sgt. Les Ashby
Corps Officer

Dear Friends ~

We can't thank you enough for your generosity and promptness in our time of need. The ramp appeared like magic and all of you were great! We would highly recommend you to anyone in need.

In appreciation,
Teresa and Bob Jenkins

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your gift to the ministry of Samaritan's Purse.

As we celebrate Christ's birth, home looks very different this year for survivors of Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Samaritan's Purse continues to come alongside these families to bring relief and offer the eternal hope of the Gospel. As we mud-out houses, clean up debris, and help people rebuild, we pray many will come to know the comfort that only comes from a relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. **"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).**

Dear Staff,

Wish y'all a healthy New Year. I am truly blessed by the outreach ministry of the church.

With love,
Ann Warner

Your gifts and prayers are a crucial part of our ministry in over 110 nations. Thank you for your partnership. God bless you, and Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,
Franklin Graham
President, Samaritan's Purse

continued

Celebrating the gift of life during the month of February:

- 1st Erin Cox, Nic Stembridge
- 2nd John Tallcott
- 3rd Barbara Van Vliet, Katy LaBarbera, Tori Donadio
- 4th Rod Annis, Annabelle Howdy
- 5th Jill Gravely, Linda Howard
- 6th George Isovitsch, Marquis Woolard
- 8th Betsey Lee Hodges, Harris McKinley
- 9th Chris Stembridge, Livia Edwards
- 10th Jane Dockins, Betsy Howard, Nicole Jackson
- 11th Lee Hartsell, Ingrid Hall, Erin Blackmon
- 12th Stephen Bazan
- 15th Daniel Gurganus
- 16th Carolyn Erwin, Rebecca Wilkins
- 17th Charlie Alligood
- 18th Robbie Edwards
- 20th Shirley Stone, Greg Howard
- 21st Moses Moye, Brenda Hardy
- 22nd Tom Atkins
- 25th Seth Edwards, Ashley Tallcott, Sarabeth Franz
- 26th Linda Moore, Ed Lich, Brad Jackson, Sarah Katherine Oden
- 27th Lewis Sloan
- 28th Audrey Turnage, Donna Burrus
- 29th Dal Newbold

Salvation Army Angel Tree

Thank you to all of the First Methodist families who selected an Angel from the tree. Together we provided a nice Christmas for twenty children this year.

Family Ministries

In one of my morning devotions that gets delivered to my email inbox every morning, (Seedbed's Daily Wake Up Call), the leader this month encouraged everyone to pick out a Bible verse as their verse for the year. A verse or verses to be able to memorize, to be encouraged by, to share with others and to be able to claim when things are not going so well. He has started to share those with the readers so they can be encouraged as well. The verse that was shared this morning was from Romans 15:13 and it reads *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

When I was here at the church and was in with the preschool students and about to start chapel, as they repeated the Bible pledge it hit me that we all need this reminder. The Bible Pledge - *I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word, I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path and will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God.*

As adults, sometimes we get sidetracked and think that we know the Bible and don't need to continue to read and study and memorize Scripture, but we do! It's so very important that we continue to not just hear the Word, but learn the Word, memorize the words of encouragement that God has given us so that in times of trial. We can have that memory and be reminded that God is with us in everything!

I also want to share some great things that are coming up for our church family. In response to a request for more opportunities for our church family to grow and build relationships, the Family Ministries Committee has events coming up for you to put on your calendar. On Wednesday February 26th we will have a fun evening of family line dancing! We encourage everyone, young and old to come. Even if you are like me and have two left feet, come join us at dinner that night for Baked Ziti and a salad then stay for the dancing! It promises to be a fun night for everyone!

We will also have a churchwide family picnic on May 4 at Paige and Laura Davis' house. Go ahead and put it on your calendar! It will be in the afternoon, and we will have games and activities and serve hot dogs and hamburgers by the river and enjoy fellowship time together. As we get closer, we will share more details, but I do pray that everyone can join us!

Our last Wednesday night supper will be on May 14, and we will end the year with a family fun night like how we started in the fall. Lots of fun and games and everyone taking part in this family fellowship opportunity! Stay tuned for more details!

Blessings,

Sarah Beth Wood

Operation Christmas Child

Many thanks to all of you who helped pack our 63+ boxes this year. Because of you, 63+ children and families will hear about Jesus. Kudos to the youth who shopped and packed 25 of these!! Because of your generous giving, the shipping costs for all of the boxes was paid by the Mission Committee. May God use these boxes to increase His kingdom. To God be the glory forever.

Letters

Greetings,

I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support of our Project Cheer program this year. Thanks to your kindness, we were able to bring holiday cheer to 51 kids through our Shop with a safety office program, 30 Special Needs high school students, 16 Special Needs adults, 60 Seniors enrolled in our I Live Alone Program and 240 nursing home residents in the city of Washington.

On behalf of First Methodist Church Washington, your donation has made a direct and meaningful impact, helping us provide, clothing, toys, and other items of necessity to those who needed it most. We are deeply appreciative of your ongoing commitment to our mission. Your belief in our work enables us to continue serving our community, and your support makes all the difference.

Washington Public Safety is committed to providing positive interactions for families in the city of Washington. Thank you for considering this opportunity to partner with Washington Public Safety.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at sdrakeford@washingtontnc.gov or 252-402-1438.

Thank you,
Stacy Drakeford
Police and Fire Services Director

FMCW Church Family,

We want to thank you for all the cards, texts, and calls expressing sympathy at the passing of Rick's dad. The minister at his funeral reminded us that "People Need Church." Indeed we do, and we are so grateful for you all, our church family!

With gratitude and love,
Rick & Lynette Amick

At this time of the year, we are reminded of how thankful we are for those who have been consistent and generous supporters of the Blind Center. Thank you so much.

The Blind Center Staff

"May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." - Romans 15:13

Merry Christmas and thank you for the hope you've provided for the House of Hope women and children this year. May this season serve as a reminder of the gift that God gave to this world and by His light continue to shine through you in the seasons to come.

Blessings,
April Havlin
International Director, and
Hannah Hoskins-Williams Development Coordinator

Dear Church Family,

The Saturday Night Jamboree would like to thank you for the support that you have provided. As you know, this organization provides a monthly social gathering for mentally and physically challenged individuals who do not have an opportunity to participate in the normal functions of the community. The Jamboree traces its beginning from March of 1973 and is now celebrating 51 years of service to our community.

This concept was started so those who are mentally and physically challenged could have an opportunity to enjoy themselves in an environment that they would not be subjected to ridicule. The success of the Jamboree can only be attributed to the commitment of the volunteers and support of churches or other organizations in our community who have kept this going for so many years. We really do not know what we would do without the love and selfless work of our volunteers and of those in our community that support us through words of encouragement and good deeds every month. You have looked into your heart to provide a gift of love to make the Jamboree available for many individuals in our community that need our support and for that we are very thankful! God truly has blessed and provided for The Saturday Night Jamboree.

Thank you for your support and God bless you,
Tine Woolard
SNJ Secretary/Treasurer

Methodist Women Circle News

Monday, February 3, 2025
MW Executive Board Meeting
9:30 AM, Asbury Conference Room

Tuesday, February 4, 2025
MW Memorial Service and General Meeting
11:30 AM, Wesley Hall
MW Luncheon and General Meeting
12:00 PM, Wesley Hall

MW Circle Meetings:

Agape Circle
9:00 AM, Fellowship Hall, Backpack Pals
and Child Care Snacks

Circle of Kind Blessings
10:30 AM, Choir Room

Circle of Mary and Martha
9:00 AM, Fellowship Hall—Backpack Pals
and Child Care Snacks
10:00 AM, Asbury Conference Room

Circle of Joy
TBD

SONshine Circle
TBD

Shepherding Ministry

We are looking forward to our Shepherding Ministry here at FMCW this New Year. The goal of this ministry is to make disciples of Jesus Christ through lay members by assisting pastor and church staff to guide members and visitors toward discipleship groups and ministries within the church.

The Core Values

1. For people to know Christ, grow in Christ and to Share Christ.
2. Keep your shepherding flock, ministers, and church in prayer.
3. Help Pastors and staff to be more connected to the congregation
4. Connect with first time visitors
5. Build relationships with ongoing visitors and help them to become more familiar with our church family.
6. Helping members as needed to stay connected with our church

On January 4, 2025, we had an informational meeting for existing Shepherds and new Shepherds who have been called to serve. We would like to thank all our Shepherds who served last year and all those who will join us this year to continue this ministry.

Please continue to pray for this ministry and the Shepherds who will be in contact with our members and visitors.

George and Bonnie Isouitsch

Preschool

We were excited to return to school after the Christmas holiday, and the children were glad to see their friends once more. They were full of stories from Christmas, and it is always fun to hear all that they did over the holiday. January was filled with winter activities and stories of Jesus growing, maturing, and beginning His ministry with his disciples.

This month is sure to be busy as we have our Valentine parties, discuss Dental Health month, and learn that no one loves us as much as Jesus does. The Pre-K class will take a trip over to the post office to mail out some Valentines. We are looking forward to all the fun the children and teachers will have.

Registration is now open for the 2025-2026 school year for Childcare children and church members. The deadline for this priority group is Wednesday, February 12. Applications can be found online by going to <https://fmcwashington.com/preschool-registration>. Our spots are filling up fast, so please contact Amanda Bazan if you would like more information. On February 15, the registration will be open to the public and will continue until all classrooms are filled.

We would like to thank the Agape Circle for their generous donation to our scholarship fund that was given in January. Many circles and individuals often help in this way, and we are so grateful to receive any and all donations that are then used to help further a child's education as well as grow their knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

Amanda Bazan
Preschool Director
Cell: 252-532-7604
fmcwpreschool@gmail.com

Childcare

Welcoming the New Year with Gratitude and Trust in the Lord

As we bid farewell to the year 2024, we pause to reflect on the immeasurable grace and love of our Heavenly Father. With hearts full of gratitude, we acknowledge the ultimate sacrifice God made for each and every one of us by giving His Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem and guide us.

In this season of transition and renewal, we look to the powerful reminder of Jesus' return as told in John 20:19-20:

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

Just as the disciples found peace and joy in the presence of the risen Lord, we too are called to trust in His promises, even when faced with uncertainty. During this time of change in leadership, it is natural to feel apprehension about the unknown. Yet, we are reminded that the Lord is ever faithful, guiding and sustaining us through every season.

As we step into the New Year, we are blessed to nurture the children of FMC Childcare with the teachings of Christ, grounding them in His love and the hope of His return. Together, we are sowing seeds of faith that will grow and bear fruit for generations to come.

Let us embrace 2025 with unwavering faith, joy, and a spirit of unity. May we continue to trust in the Lord's guidance, finding strength in His word and peace in His promises. With His light illuminating our path, we move forward with confidence and purpose.

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all as we begin this New Year together.

Jessica Powell
Childcare Director
Director's Cell: 252-947-2836

Children's Ministry

Children's ministry had a wonderful Christmas Play in December, and I wanted to make sure that we said a big thank you to everyone who helped. Our wonderful directors, Amanda Bazan and Stephanie Capehart, did a great job of coordinating every aspect of the play. Erin Franz made sure that all our children were able to be heard both in person and online. There were many other volunteers that sat with the different groups to make sure that when the squirmies hit, the children were still ready for their cues. The praise team and congregation were flexible with time to allow us to share the Christmas play on Sunday morning during the 9:00 a.m. worship hour on December 22. Thank you all so much!

In January, the children's Sunday School classes started the second volume in the Bible Project series starting with Moses and the Burning Bush and will go all the way to Moses appointing Joshua as the next leader of Israel. Please check with your child each week and ask about the take-home paper that has a QR code you can scan, and your family can continue talking and learning about the lesson at home.

On Wednesday evenings, we will be studying "The Fruit of the Spirit." We learned in the fall that our children enjoyed having a variety of ways to have fun, so each week we will have a lesson time but also a time with either an interactive game or science experiment that goes along with our lesson for the week. I hope that many of our children will choose to join us. Parents are welcome to join in our fun or check out the adult study in the Fellowship Hall titled "Love in Chaos."

Our new Leader of Children and Youth Ministries, Leslie Keely, started on January 15. We are very excited to welcome her back to First Methodist. Leslie has an article here in the newsletter, and we are excited for all the great things with which God will continue to bless our children's ministry through Leslie's leadership!

Some dates for you to go ahead and put on your calendars:

Wednesday, February 26 - Family Line Dancing in the Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, April 16 - Easter Egg Hunt (Weather dependent) at 6:15 p.m.

*Rain date is Saturday, April 19

Sunday, May 4 - Church Family Picnic at Paige and Laura Davis' house

Wednesday, May 14 - Last Wednesday night supper - Family Fun Night

Monday, June 16- Friday, June 20 - Vacation Bible School - Registration will be out soon!

In Christ's service,

Sarah Beth

SIP AND GREET WITH LESLIE KEELY

We are excited to have Leslie Keely join us at FMC as the Leader of Children and Youth Ministries. Please plan to gather as a church family on Sunday, February 9 during the Sunday School hour to share coffee, snacks and a few minutes getting acquainted with Leslie.



Matthew 25

December 11, 2022

What a Merry Christmas meal and celebration with our guests in fellowship on December 11th.

The preschool, under the direction of Amanda Bazan, delighted the group with children from the FMC Preschool singing songs related to the Christmas story in Luke 2 as Amanda read the scripture. The participating children were Zachary Cushing, Kandace O'Brian, Issac and Nathan Bazan, Eileen and Cassie Culbertson and Claire Stechschulte.

Also donning the tables were festive Christmas mats decorated by the children and laminated so the guests could take them home if they wished. Many mats went out the door. Lovely Christmas arrangements were provided by Sally Brodie.

The traditional Christmas dinner was prepared by the Channels Missional group under the leadership of Elaine Sheridan. The cook team volunteers; Les Sheridan, George and Bonnie Isovitsch, Ray and Judy Peede, Jim and Penny O'Brian, Ken and Lee Matveia, and Rob and Deb Branch served turkey, dressing, gravy, sweet potatoes, green beans, cranberry sauce and rolls. Asbury Church provided homemade desserts that were cut and wrapped by Cathy Oestreich, Judy Griffin, Kathi Burdi and Barbara Buckalew.

There were 104 served. Twenty-six meals were taken to our homebound by Missy Deaner, Diana Tew, Barbara Smith and Jane Weaver. Five additional meals were also taken to various recipients.

Health is a continued concern for Matthew 25, and our volunteer nurses, Sharon Williams and Wanda Lilley, talked with guests and took six blood pressures.

Other faithful volunteers serving in various capacities were: Robert and Kay Smithwick, Cathy Oestreich, Pam Deese, Will Jefferson, John Gunnels, Tim and Kim Copeland, Lorre Bowen, Hazy Murphy, Evelyn Maqueda, Yamilett Marrine, and Beth Litchfield who greeted our guests in the parking lot.

Matthew 25 dedicated the Christmas dinner to the memory of Moe Weaver who originated the idea.

"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29

HEAD TO TOE PROJECT

The Matthew 25 team is now collecting cold weather comfort items to share with our guests at the February 8 and March 8 meals. We need donations of new knit hats, gloves, scarves, and socks that would be suitable for adults and children. Please consider making a donation. You may place items in the basket labeled Matthew 25 outside the main sanctuary or in the bin labeled Matthew 25 in the lobby of Wesley Hall.

For more information contact Lorre Bowen at 252-944-6548 or lorrebowl@gmail.com

SPECIAL THANKS

The Matthew 25 team sends a special thank you to those who donated turkeys for our Christmas meal:

Gail Travis, Buffy Lich, Beth Page, Libby Cameron, PJ Stembridge, Ann Jones, Kemp Huss, Shirley Stone, Janie Hauser, Julie McSwain, Moses Moye, Anne Mears, Sheila Tanner, and Al Nichols. Also, there is a mystery donor who provided a turkey.

We are blessed by your generosity.



PRAYER GARDEN GUIDELINES

The Prayer Garden was designed and funded by First Methodist members, Frances and Tad Larkin. If possible, the committee will include one or more members of the Larkin-Roebuck family. The committee provides the care and maintenance of the Prayer Garden.

The Prayer Garden is provided as a place for worship, as an invitation to prayer—a quiet place for personal and group meditation. It is not a recreational/play area. It is to be considered and used as a sacred part of the church—an outside sanctuary.

As such, it may be used for weddings, provided the Pastor approves, and the church's official wedding guidelines and policies are followed.

While the Prayer Garden is not to be considered a cemetery in the traditional sense, it may, however, be used for the interment of the cremations of members of First Methodist Church, provided the following rules are observed:

1. It is recommended that the cremains be poured into the ground at designated locations beside the cross.
2. No permanent vessels containing the cremains may be buried in the Prayer Garden. All containers must be quickly biodegradable.
3. No burial markers are to be placed anywhere in the Prayer Garden.
4. No artificial memorial flowers, wreaths, or plants may be placed in the Prayer Garden.
5. The Church will be responsible for providing the Memorial plaque and for keeping the records of the location of the interred cremains.

Those who use the Prayer Garden, as a site for cremains interment may make a contribution to: "The Prayer Garden Maintenance Fund."

BARNABAS FUND

The Barnabas Fund is a Pastor's Discretionary Fund used to help people in need in our church and community. Donations left at either altar rail will be used to help support this fund. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Family Night Dinner Menus

Feb 5	Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Green Peas, Rolls, Dessert
Feb 12	Marinated Pork Tenderloin w/Rice, Green Beans, Baked Apples, Rolls, Dessert
Feb 19	Hamburger Steak, Corn, Mashed Potatoes w/Gravy, Rolls, Dessert
Feb 26	Baked Ziti, Mixed Green Salad, Garlic Bread, Dessert

Youth Ministry

The Youth Ministry has certainly started the new year off with adventure. In Sunday School, the youth are continuing using the Gospel Project and are starting the second volume. This started in Exodus with Moses seeing the burning bush and talking with the Lord and, over thirteen weeks, will take them through the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and up to Deuteronomy where Joshua is named to replace Moses as the leader of the Israelites. Parents, check with your youth about the family take-home page that gives you our scriptures for the week as well as some follow-up questions so your family can continue to learn and grow at home.

The youth were sad not to be able to serve lunch for Matthew 25 which was cancelled due to winter weather. They were glad to resume Wednesday night youth where, for the next 6 weeks, they will be learning about the "Fruit of The Spirit." Wednesday night youth groups will be a time of fellowship, games and lessons on the different fruits of the spirit.

Some important dates for Youth and parents to go ahead and put on your calendars:

Sunday, February 23—Bowling in Greenville at Bowlero - meet at 1 p.m.
 Wednesday, February 26 - Family Night Line Dancing in Fellowship Hall
 Saturday, March 8 - serving Matthew 25 with lunch afterward—meet at 10:30 a.m.—end about 1 p.m.
 Week of April 14 - 17 - Beaufort County Prayer Breakfast
 Wednesday, April 16 - Youth help hide eggs for Children's Easter Egg Hunt at church
 Saturday, April 19 (Rain Day in case Wednesday does not work out)
 Sunday, May 4 - Family Picnic at Paige & Laura Davis' house
 Wednesday, May 14 - Last Family Night Dinner - Family Fun Night

Vacation Bible School will be from June 16 to June 20 - we appreciate the help of our Youth every year and need every one of them! Please let Leslie or Sarah Beth know if your Youth can commit to help at VBS!

In Christ's Name,

Sarah Beth

New Leader of Children and Youth Ministries

My name is Leslie Weston Keely, married to Rev. Patrick Keely of Richlands Methodist Church, mother to Darcy (11), Weston (9), Marilyse (almost 7), and Hayden (almost 5). My parents are Butch and Laurie Weston, and First Methodist has been my home church since I was 12 years old. I am thrilled to come home again!

I graduated high school from Terra Ceia Christian School in 2004, college from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill in 2008 with a degree in Dramatic Arts, and graduate school from Asbury Theological Seminary in 2011 with a Masters of Christian Education. I went to Asbury in 2009 specifically to pursue ministry with children and youth.

When I graduated, First Methodist welcomed me home with open arms, and I became the part-time Children's Ministry Director. During my time in that role, I facilitated the start of the FMCW Childcare and carried the additional role of Childcare Director. My husband directed the Youth Ministry at that time, and when his calling took him elsewhere, I traded the Childcare Directorship for the Youth Ministry, making me the full-time Youth and Children's Director.

When we left because my husband's calling took him too far away to commute, and I wanted to stay home with my babies, I stayed active volunteering in Youth and Children's programs in Snow Hill, mainly Kids on Stage and Rainbow UMC. We moved to Richlands where I became actively involved in the American Heritage Girls troop there, eventually taking on the role of Troop Coordinator.

It has always been a joy for me to work with Children and Youth and their families, and I am so excited to continue that calling here at FMC again!

Leslie Keely

Leader, Children and Youth Ministries
 252-945-1222
 lkeely@fmcwashington.com

SPRC to lead an organizational review

As part of the UMC, First Methodist had little input regarding its organizational structure or succession planning. The GMC, within the provisions of the Book of Disciplines and Doctrines, allows more latitude for local churches to determine their structure and pastoral staff.

Given this new reality and the evolving needs of our church, the SPRC, with the blessing of the Church Council, has embarked on an organizational review. The foundation of this review will be information gathered from interviews with a diverse cross-section of church members from both services, as well as our pastors and staff. The objective is to better understand whether our current organizational structure and leadership can be enhanced to improve our ability to achieve our mission.

These one-on-one interviews will be conducted by members of an eight-person group established by SPRC. Interviews will be based on a set of five questions that are designed to determine the pulse of the congregation. They will take into consideration FMCW's Statement of Faith and Commitment (e.g., our Mission); FMCW's culture, history and committee structure; and the career goals and expectations of our pastors and key staff. Interview responses will not be shared outside of SPRC so that interviewees feel comfortable openly expressing their insights.

After reviewing interview responses, SPRC will present a synopsis of those responses with accompanying recommendations to the Church Council no later than its May meeting. This review is expected to:

- Identify opportunities to improve efficiency of operation and effectiveness the execution of FMCW's Mission, especially towards achieving the goal of making disciples of Christ
- Review job descriptions for pastors and key staff to ensure that they are aligned with the Mission and related goals; and provide greater specificity and clarity regarding responsibilities and accountability to the achievement thereof
- Create a succession plan for pastors, key staff and lay leadership, so that stakeholders gain some clarity regarding FMCW's future leadership needs.

SPRC's report and recommendations will be made available to the congregation following Church Council's review. Pastor Hall and I welcome any questions you may have about this effort.

Chris Smith

Chair, Staff Parish Relations Committee
jscypress@gmail.com

*Christian sympathy is
expressed to the families of:*

*William Reece Amick
Elnora Woolard*

The Best of Church Bulletin Bloopers

The Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say "Hell" to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Don't let worry kill you off—let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.

The Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done.

Applications are now being accepted for two-year-old nursery workers.

Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 to 8:30p.m. Please use the back door.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 p.m. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

The choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join the choir.

Women's Luncheon. Each member bring a sandwich. Polly Phillips will give the medication.