



First Fruits

February 2019

Dear Friends,

For some time now, I have been encouraging you to pray for the called session of the General Conference of the UMC, to be held February 23–26 in St. Louis. The main item for discussion during this General Conference is anticipated to be the stance of the UMC regarding human sexuality.

Three plans, in particular, have been prepared for debate at General Conference: The One Church plan, the Connectional plan, and the Traditional plan. While these plans may be discussed, it is possible other plans may be presented for adoption by the UMC as well.

(These plans and other information about General Conference are found at www.vaumc.org.)

No one knows what will or will not be resolved at General Conference. No one knows how decisions made at General Conference will impact local churches. What I know is that my hope and my prayer is that we remain united at First United Methodist Church, Martinsville.

Many voices of faith contribute to my faith story. I was born into the Evangelical United Brethren Church. In 1968, the EUB Church merged with the Methodist church, so I then became United Methodist. I graduated from a

Mennonite college. I then graduated from a Presbyterian seminary. I married a woman of an independent faith background. Again, many voices of faith shape my faith story – and I celebrate them all.

In similar fashion, there are many voices of faith, many faith stories contributing to the witness of FUMC, Martinsville. Each of these voices, too, I celebrate; each of these voices contributes to the mission of this church: An uptown church where all are welcome, all worship, and all serve – to the glory of God.

The Apostle Paul writes to the church in Corinth, a church conflicted at the time, asking the

church this question: “Is Christ divided?” My prayer, again, is that you and I are able to witness to a united church, a united Christ, in Uptown Martinsville. United as we welcome, united in our worship, united in our service. For if Christ is here divided over any matter, our witness suffers, the body of Christ suffers, and those we are called to serve for the sake of Christ suffer.

Please join with me in prayer that Christ be glorified and that his church, for his sake, be united.

Grace and Peace in Christ,

Keith

Worship Schedule for February

February 3	Jeremiah 1:4–10	<i>God Calls Jeremiah</i>
February 10	Luke 5:1–11	<i>Jesus Calls Disciples</i>
February 17	1 Corinthians 15:12–20	<i>Easter in February</i>
February 24	Ephesians 4:1–16	<i>One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism</i>

Welcome to Matthew Hoover

In this newsletter, you will see a brief biography from Matthew Hoover. Matthew will be our new Director of Youth and Children’s Ministries at First UMC. Matthew will be with us at the Souper Bowl on February 3. I hope you will take this opportunity to meet and welcome Matthew

Matthew Hoover (Matt) is the newest member of staff at First United Methodist Church of Martinsville, VA. He is excited to be starting as the congregation’s Youth and Children’s Director. Matthew received his B.A. in Religious Studies from Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. Ever since a young age, Matthew has felt the call to ministry. He has made it his life’s goal to seek out the truth of God in order to help guide others into the Lord’s loving embrace. He has

interned under many different denominations, ranging from Presbyterian and Methodist to interdenominational congregations. Along the way he has picked up many different skills in leadership and organization, but has never lost his heart to help guide anyone of any age into a relationship with Jesus. Most notably, Matthew has been a head intern for Southbrook Community Church’s youth group, where he co-led and organized youth gatherings and retreats with their youth minis-



ter. Matthew has a true servant’s heart for the community God has placed him, which he eagerly waits to put into full use. Matthew currently resides in Winston Salem with his wife Sarah and their two cats, Esther and Molly. He can be reached at matthewlyonhoover@gmail.com.

Season of Lent Services

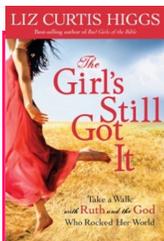
The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 6. First UMC will again host Ash Wednesday services at noon and at 7pm. These services will take place in the church sanctuary.

During the season of Lent, I am excited to host midweek services of worship. These services will be held each Wednesday at noon. Each service will offer scripture, a brief message, an offering of music, and the Lord’s Supper. I am especially grateful that other local pastors will share in the leadership of these services. I hope these services will be an important part of your Lenten Season.

Leadership for Midweek Lenten Services— Noon in Sanctuary each Wednesday during Lent

- March 6 Keith Ritchie, Pastor, FUMC
- March 13 Michael Harrison, Pastor, Community Fellowship, Collinsville
- March 20 Tim Gearheart, Pastor, Wesley Memorial UMC, Martinsville
- March 27 Kameron Wilds, Pastor, Smith Memorial UMC, Collinsville
- April 3 Lil Geib, Pastor, Bethel UMC and Cascade UMC
- April 10 To be announced
- April 17 Bonnylee Witt, Chaplain, SOVAH Health System



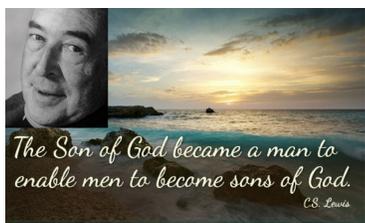


Join us on Tuesdays at noon as we learn more about Ruth.

We will use a book and video by Liz Curtis Higgs— *The Girl's Still Got It!*

Bring your lunch and come to the youth room of the Uptown Ministry Center!

Fred Smith began a new Sunday School class in January, and it will continue for the next few months! This class is studying meditations by C.S. Lewis. If you are interested in this study, please come to the 3rd floor at 10am on Sunday mornings.



Hats Off to the Martinsville Uptown Rotary Club

Martinsville Uptown Rotary Club, aka The Morning Club, is a group of hard working individuals who give back to their community.

They have been scheduling certain months to work with our food bank for the past several years. At the December food bank, we were blessed with their services, and they also

helped with the clothes closet.

We also scheduled them to help unpack Kroger and Food Lion food boxes purchased from Feeding America. These boxes help reduce the cost of food items we distribute to individuals with food insecurity. We had 11 Rotary members to unpack 287 Food Lion boxes and 224 Kroger boxes and help stock

the items. They finished in 1½ hours. They really worked hard and steady.

What a wonderful job they do to help our food bank and community.

Many thanks to the Martinsville Uptown Rotary for their devoted service of helping others.

Children's Choir News

And just like that, 2019 is off and running and January is in the books! Cantabile was invited to sing once again with the Smith River Singers for their encore Winter Concert on January 7 at First Baptist Church, Martinsville. They did an outstanding job, and the audience, along with the singers and director, Dr. Pam Randall, truly appreciated the dimension they brought to that performance. They rep-

resented our church and the FUMC music ministry beautifully!

As we look forward to February, we will finally be on a regular rehearsal schedule (hopefully)!

January brought weather and a holiday that both affected our Mondays! Jubilate will begin preparations for future worship responsibilities, along with preparation for the addition of instruments to their music education! Cantabile,

too, will prepare for worship responsibilities along with handbell education as we work towards playing as a handbell choir in worship in May!

With the New Year underway, we will continue, with renewal, the work of the church and the mission of that work through our children's music ministry.

In Christ's Love,
Beth



The date for Vacation Bible School has been set for July 29- August 2.

Please circle this week on your summer calendar!!!



What a JOY it was to make music with FUMC's Seniors Unlimited group on Wednesday, January 16, and then, in commemoration of Martin Luther King and his pursuit of social justice on January 21, all within our wonderful fellowship hall. As I complete my first year here at FUMC, I am enjoying very much getting to meet and know many within this sweet congregation, as well as the larger Martinsville community and these two referenced events were not only fun, but memorable for me, too.

Anyone who thinks young people are the only ones with energy, wit and drive these days have not met our senior citizens who make up Seniors Unlimited at FUMC! I can hardly get a word in edgewise when I am around these wonderful folks! I was honored to lead a sing-along for them on

Wednesday, January 16, as we sang hymns and songs from the 20s, 30s and 40s from memory after eating a delicious noontime meal of soup and cornbread. Two wonderful gentlemen who attended that I had not met were Chuck Marshall, who accompanied me on harmonica, and Bill Plonk, who sang a rousing rendition



of the hymn, "It is Well with My Soul." It was such a fun gathering, and I look forward to returning at a later date to make music with them again!

On Monday, January 21, at 10 am, FUMC hosted an Interfaith service in commemoration of Martin Luther King and his lifelong pursuit of social justice. A core group of

eight members from the FUMC Adult Chancel Choir sang at this service and led the congregation in singing one of the civil rights movement's most recognized songs, "Lift Every Voice." In addition, we heard very thoughtful reflections and commentary on Dr. King and his journey for justice in America by local faith leaders, Martha Woody of Ohev Zion Synagogue, Rev. Nicholas Hull of Christ Episcopal Church, and Khalil Shadeed of Martinsville-Henry County Islamic Center. It was

also wonderful to meet and talk with those from our larger Martinsville community who attended this service. Many said they came because this service was one of a few in our larger community which spoke to Dr. King's leadership and life of service in America on this federal holiday which recog-

nized him. In these times of political unrest and negativity in our country, I relish every opportunity to share the true light and vision of America's core values through worship, song and prayer, and am thankful for the leadership of this church to provide these kinds of community services of reflection and prayer.

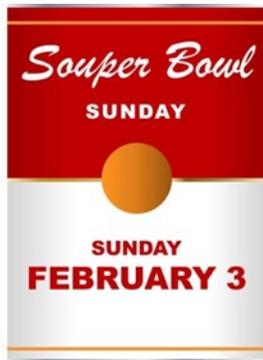
With a prayerful and joyful song in my heart, I remain ,
Yours as ever,
Jill



Souper Bowl Sunday

On Sunday, February 3, JAMZ kids and their families will host the Souper Bowl luncheon/fundraiser at the ministry center after worship. There will be many delicious soups so try them all! Please support this event with your attendance and your \$3 per person contribution. All the proceeds will be used to buy meat for distribution at one of our holiday food bank Saturdays.

Souper Bowl will also include desserts from the Birthday Bash by the fellowship committee.



On Friday, February 8, from 5:30 until 8:30pm we will have our **Annual JAMZ Game Night** at the ministry center (pancakes, fun, and fellowship for kids in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades).

JAMZ (Jesus And Me Zone) kids will meet for regular lessons on February 10 and 24 and will continue with New Testament books of the Bible memorization.

No JAMZ on Sunday, February 17, due to Presidents Day weekend.



Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

Mark Flint	2/2	Susan Childress	2/16	Cody Huffman	2/28
Lindsay Hawks	2/3	Nancy Bryant	2/18	Emma Prillaman	2/29
Zach Ryder	2/5	Vee Gross	2/18	Tate Lackey	2/28
Carl Smith	2/5	Megan Withers	2/18		
Gail Vogler	2/5	Jeff Corcoran	2/19	Anniversaries	
Hugh Gerlach	2/9	Cheryl Rigney	2/19	John & Linda Adams	2/1
Emily Parker	2/9	Martha Smith	2/21	Jorge & Iris Lopez	2/1
Amy Greer	2/10	Elizabeth Huerta	2/22	Doug & Lewis Riddle	2/3
Parker Gunn	2/11	Caden Spencer	2/22	Don & Dawn Howe	2/15
Harry Fisher	2/12	Hayden Shackett	2/23	Danny & Martha Smith	2/24
Hayden Bassett	2/12	Barbara Baron	2/24	Woods & Phyllis Carter	2/26
Glenn Powell	2/13	Lillie Cate Sapp	2/25		
Jaclyn Little Feather	2/14	Hanna Lyle	2/26		
Amy Smith	2/15	John Watts	2/27		
Jill Wingfield	2/16	Bailey Showalter	2/27		
		Gray Givens	2/27		

First United Methodist Church

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A reception will be held following the 11am service on February 24 to honor Annette Huckfeldt for her faithful service to FUMC in many capacities over many years. Please plan to attend this time of appreciation and celebration.

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Announcements

Seniors Unlimited will meet Wednesday, January February 13, at noon in the fellowship hall. The menu is pasta casseroles, salad, dessert. The program will be Alice Ann Blevins and Rebecca Crabtree, speaking about SPCA, with a tour of Fido's Find.

The food bank is collecting cereal for the month of February.

Join Pastor Keith and many other members of the United Methodist Church in prayer each day from 2:23–2:26, in preparation for the General Conference of the UMC to be held in St. Louis February 23–26, 2019.

The Danville District will receive a new District Superintendent this summer. The Rev. Denise Bates, currently serving as pastor of Cave Spring UMC, Roanoke, has been appointed by Bishop Lewis as our new DS, succeeding Janine Howard, who is completing her 8 year term as DS.

Please remember the **Bishop of the Virginia Conference, Sharma Lewis**, in prayer as she continues a lengthy recovery from hip surgery.