



FIRST NEWS

JANUARY 2023

PASTOR'S PAGE

Happy New Year! Ahh, yes...a new year—a time of renewed hope, wonder, curiosity, lifestyle changes, and new opportunities.

One way that we can live into this new year is by committing, or recommitting, ourselves to meaningful vows and practices that shape not only our bodies, careers, marriages, and appetites, but also our faith and our commitment to the United Methodist Church. The concept of covenant renewal is deeply rooted in our faith tradition. Methodism's founder John Wesley first celebrated a covenant renewal, or Watch Night, service in 1755. Wesley felt strongly that Methodists and all Christians should reaffirm their covenant with God annually.¹

As part of the covenant renewal, or Watch Night service, a reaffirmation of our baptismal vows is typically used. All of the baptismal/membership vows are vitally important; but I won't discuss all of them in this one article. However, I do want us to begin this new year by emphasizing a particular vow that every United Methodist freely/voluntarily committed to upon being accepted into membership within our denomination and local congregation. The vow reads:

*As members of Christ's universal church, will you be loyal to the United Methodist Church, and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries?*²

Regarding this vow, Rev. Dr. Mark Stamm writes:

This vow about loyalty to Christ through The United Methodist Church says nothing negative about the validity of other churches. Rather it is our way of acknowledging that The United Methodist Church is the best place for us to live out our commitment to Jesus Christ. It acknowledges God's particular call on our lives to a particular way of being church. To live as a disciple of Jesus Christ

¹ Discipleship Ministries. <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/watch-night-liturgy>. Published Dec. 19, 2017

² *The United Methodist Hymnal*: Reception into the United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Publishing House. Nashville, TN; 1989. Pg. 38.

through The United Methodist Church means that we support our connectional system of ordering ministry and mission. We do not view ourselves as a loosely related association of local congregations, but rather as one church manifested in a variety of contexts. This unity does not mean that all of our churches should look exactly the same, perhaps something like the ecclesiastical equivalent of a fast-food chain. We do, however, believe that there is a unifying center in Jesus Christ, in our understanding of God's grace and the shape of the church. We are connectional for the sake of mission to the community and the world, to the end that we and others are formed as disciples of Jesus Christ.³

Happy New Year, Sylacauga First UMC family. I pray that your commitment to serving Jesus Christ as faithful members of the United Methodist Church is of the highest priority as we move into 2023.

Blessings,

Rev. Andy Curtis

³ Mark Stamm. *Our Membership Vows in the United Methodist Church*. Discipleship Resources. Nashville, TN. 2015. Pg. 27.

Kindergarten/Day Care News

LISA MCCAIN – NEW DIRECTOR

HI! I'M LISA MCCAIN. AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, I WILL BE TAKING OVER AS DIRECTOR OF FMK ON JANUARY 3RD. DEE DEE WILL BE MISSED. SHE HAS BEEN A GREAT MENTOR OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS.

I AM VERY EXCITED TO START MY NEXT JOURNEY WITH FMK. I LOVE CHILDREN VERY MUCH. MY DAUGHTER ASHLEE MULLIS TEACHES AT B.B. COMER. I LOVE CAMPING WITH MY TWO GRANDCHILDREN – BENTLEY AND PAISLEE. I ALSO ENJOY RIDING MOTORCYCLES WITH MY HUSBAND, TIM ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE.

Lisa McCain, Director

Worship & Arts!!!

Worship & Arts Calendar Update

*Jan.1	Epiphany Sunday	New Year's Sunday Worship	
	(in-house)		10:00am
	*Online Worship Offering Posted		10:00am
Jan. 2-6	Mon-Fri	No Worship & Arts Activities	
Jan. 8	Sunday	Worship	
	(Baptism of the Lord Sunday)		10:00am
Jan. 10	Tuesday	Handbell choir	5:30pm
Jan. 11	Wednesday	Chancel Choir	6:00pm
		Praise Band	7:00pm
Jan. 15	Sunday	Worship	10:00am
Jan. 17	Tuesday	Handbell Choir	5:30pm
Jan. 18	Wednesday	Chancel Choir	6:00pm
		Praise Band	7:00pm
Jan. 22	Sunday	Worship	10:00am
Jan. 24	Tuesday	Handbell Choir	5:30pm
Jan. 25	Wednesday	Chancel Choir	6:00pm
		Praise Band	7:00pm
Jan. 29	Sunday	Worship	10:00am
Jan. 31	Tuesday	Handbell Choir	5:30pm
Feb. 1	Wednesday	Chancel Choir	6:00pm
		Praise Band	7:00pm

Would you like to join one of our music or media ensembles?

david@firstmethodistchurch.com

Love of Christ!

David Simpkins, Director of Worship & Arts

ALTAR & NARTHEX FLOWERS

January 1st - ALTAR FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are presented to the glory of God and in loving memory of **Mr. Jack G. Spears** by Drs. Ted & Shirley Spears, Jonathon & Tara Douglas and Anthony & Tonya Strickland.

January 8th - ALTAR FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are presented to the glory of God and in loving memory of **Mrs. Lilian Shirey and Mrs. Jane W. Kramer** by Mr. Chris Kramer, Jr.

January 8th - NARTHEX FLOWERS are presented to the glory of God and in loving honor of **the Kindergarten Board Members (Clarene Jackson, Bebe Andrews, Lynn Hodges, Bonita Powell and Andy Curtis)** by Dee Dee Mathews.

January 15th - ALTAR FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are presented to the glory of God and in loving memory of **Deedie & Dr. French H. Craddock, Sr., Julia & Bro. Dan Whitsett, Miss Virgie Oden, Ms. Sadie Cliett** by Martha Hightower Turner.

January 22nd - ALTAR FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are presented to the glory of God and in loving memory of **Mr. & Mrs. Tony Holmes, Mr. & Mrs. W. J. McKemie, Sr. and Mr. William Joel McKemie, Jr.** by Mrs. Martha McKemie & Family and Mr. & Mrs. Howard Holmes & Family.

January 29th - ALTAR FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are presented to the glory of God in loving memory of **Cherry Rozelle** by Gene & Patti Rozelle.

2023 OPENINGS

MEALS ON WHEELS

1st Fridays
Jan. 6, Feb. 3, Mar. 3,
May 5, June 2, July 7,
Aug. 4, Sept. 1, Oct. 6,
Nov. 3, Dec. 1

5th Mondays filled
Jan. 30, July 31, Oct. 30

5th Fridays
Mar. 31, June 30, Sept. 29

ALTAR FLOWERS

Feb. 19 filled
Mar. 19
Apr. 30
May 28
July 9
Aug. 6
Aug. 27
Oct. 1
Oct. 29
Nov. 19

Call the church office 256-249-0362 if you can help.

~ SPECIAL GIFTS TO THE CHURCH ~

~ December ~

In Memory of Stephanie McGhee by Dee & Mike Ivey, Tommy & Donna Hebson, Steve & Carolyn Etrass, Rhonda Mason, Donald Ray, Dr. & Mrs. William Mims, Wayne & Carol Ann Hawkins.

In Memory of James L “Skip” Deupree by Joel & Rosie Cochran.

In Memory of Willa Dean Lewis by Earl Lewis.

Prayer Concerns

Cindy Diffie	Tiffani Persons	Pete Baker
Cheryl Dobson	Linda Morris	Wes Coleman
Mack Howell	Amanda Farr	Tanner Bowen
Lee White	Ben & Linda Gamel	Lenette Calvin
Fay Simpkins	Pat Pownall	Christopher Brown
Marese Rayfield	Larry Reynolds	Dennis Buckner
Ginger Marable	Bill Roberts	George Gilbert
Kelsey Abrams	Diane Atkinson	Sue White
Amy R. Thomas	Vaughn	Johnnie Tankersley
Lou Kyle	Pastor Joel Maxwell	AJ Heard
Barbara Bailey	Catie Simpkins	Cydney Heard
Rosie Cochran	Kenneth Turner	Byron White
Jim Isbell	Sally Werling	Wayne Hawkins
Dylan Durden	Ollie Heath, Jr.	
Jake Montgomery	Brandi McDonald	

Van Junkins Family (Carolyn Etrass’ brother),
 Ken and Ozaline Carter (Karen Parker’s parents),
 Gene Sasser (Jan & Steve Rousseau’s family).

December Worship & Generosity Report

Average In-house Attendance:	108
Average Sunday School:	17
Average Livestream views:	43
Average Facebook views:	71
Christmas Eve:	167
Receipts	\$ 44,271
Expenditures	\$ 47,252

Church Announcements

Monday Morning Bible Study will resume January 23 at 9:30 am in the church library. They will begin a study of Amos.

UWF United Women in Faith will meet January 17.

2023 Church Leadership List The list of church leaders for the 2023 calendar year is available in the Narthex and the church office. These individuals officially assumed their leadership roles on January 1. We are deeply appreciative of each leader and the work he or she will help the church do this coming year. Please get a copy of the list, keep it handy for reference and remember not only to pray for all of them but to take time to encourage them as well.

Safe Sanctuary Bonita Flippo-Powell is the Safe Sanctuary Coordinator for our church. Implementing a Safe Sanctuary policy is vitally important to protect our children, youth, vulnerable adults, church staff/volunteers and our ministry inside and outside of our church building. Now that we are back in full swing and have resumed most of our programs and ministries, we are looking for a few more volunteers! Please let Bonita (256-626-2417 or flippobonita@gmail.com) know if you are willing to serve as a safe sanctuary volunteer.

Thank you to everyone who has already volunteered!

Advent & Christmas Decorations - Thank you to everyone who took time to help decorate the Sanctuary, Narthex and church for Advent and Christmas, but especially **THANK YOU** to Catie Simpkins for all the hours she put into it.

CHURCH STAFF

Andy Curtis - Pastor

David Simpkins - Director of Worship & Arts

Chrystal Whitehead - Youth Ministries

Leslie Lucas - Children’s Ministries

Robin Lewis/Charmelle Lewis- Pianists

Karen Brewer - Church Administrator

Dolly Perry - Administrative Assistant

KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION

Monday - Friday 6:30 am - 5:30 pm (256) 249-2300

Lisa McCain - Kindergarten Director

Amanda McDaniel - Financial Secretary



January 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 New Year's Day 8:30 am - Prayer for Worship 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship</p>	<p>2 Church Office Closed</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 6:00 pm - Bible Fellowship</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 Church Office Hours Monday - Thursday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 8:30 am - Prayer for Worship 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship</p>	<p>9 5:30 pm - Trustees 6:00 pm - APPS Group</p>	<p>10 5:30 pm - Handbells</p>	<p>11 6:00 pm - Children's Activities, Youth, Choir, Bible Fellowship 7:00 pm - Worship Team</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 8:30 am - Prayer for Worship 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship</p>	<p>16 5:00 pm - Finance 6:00 pm - Admin. Board 6:00 pm - APPS Group</p>	<p>17 10 am - UWF 5:30 pm - Handbells</p>	<p>18 6:00 pm - Children's Activities, Youth, Choir, Bible Fellowship 7:00 pm - Worship Team</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 8:30 am - Prayer for Worship 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship</p>	<p>23 9:30 am - Monday Morning Bible Study 6:00 pm - APPS Group</p>	<p>24 5:30 pm - Handbells</p>	<p>25 6:00 pm - Children's Activities, Youth, Choir, Bible Fellowship 7:00 pm - Worship Team</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 8:30 am - Prayer for Worship 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship</p>	<p>30 9:30 am - Monday Morning Bible Study 6:00 pm - APPS Group</p>	<p>31 5:30 pm - Handbells</p>				