



Life @ 1st Church

905 Glendale Avenue, South Charleston, WV 25303

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 2

February 2021

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A Note from Pastor Paul

In this day and age of satellites able to read from outer space the date on a dime, or Google Maps seemingly able to show us any place in the world, there remains a large part of the planet that is unmapped. Author Deirdre Mask, who wrote *The Address Book*, suggests that about 70% of the world is insufficiently mapped, including parts of many cities with more than a million residents. Invariably, the unmapped areas are in the poorest sections of these cities. The is problematic on many levels. Without good maps, how can police or ambulance drivers find their way to people in need? Without good maps, how do public health officials know if everyone's been vaccinated during a pandemic? Without good maps, how do we know who our neighbors are and how they are surviving in our global village? This means that problems are most effectively dealt with where there are maps, data, and statistics—but without such things, health crises abound.

How often have you been driving around Charleston and you stumble onto a new route or neighborhood that prompts you to say, "I never knew this was here!" Our city is full of fascinating neighborhoods, shopping districts, and strip malls that are hidden from view unless you happen to live nearby. We don't see these places because we are creatures of habit—prone to driving the same routes every day, whether going to work, shop, or check in with friends. The problem is that these same habits make us creatures of limited "sight" and over time can lead us not to "see" what is happening all around us.

There's a reason Jesus said that God knows even the number of hairs on our heads, and no sparrow falls to the ground outside of God's knowledge. In a world where we selectively map our communities and selectively know our neighbors, God rejects such partial responses and knows us completely. Each back street, alley, and slum pathway is mapped and known to God, including all who live there. Each person hidden behind an overlooked door or forgotten apartment high-rise is seen and loved by God.

As a new year begins and a pandemic's curse will hopefully be thwarted by vaccines, may the medical challenge of reaching out to all people to fight COVID-19 be a parable also for the spiritual work before us. In 2021, may we go forth into the world, intentionally seeking the lost, the lonely, the unmapped, the neglected, and the forgotten. Even just a little light can shine a long way in such places of darkness.

Our journey continues,

Pastor Paul

Newsletter Opening by Barbara Brown

I have had the pleasure of working on the church newsletter for several years and have enjoyed every minute. I consider it an honor to help the congregation stay in touch and up to date on happenings at our church, in our many groups, and throughout our West Virginia Conference. The preparation of the newsletter has allowed me to meet my need to be creative and continue to learn. I was able to establish a good network of news and article providers and depend on them monthly to help keep FUMC in the know. In fact, thanks to them, I rarely have to write an article! I also rely heavily on the eagle eyes of George Hohmann who helps make sure the newsletter is mistake free.

Our newsletter can be so much more. My hope is that there is someone in the wings that might want to take over the monthly newsletter and take it to greater heights. I am sure there are things we could be doing better. Perhaps there are different formats or platforms that we could use that would hit a younger audience.

So, Church, do not be afraid of this change. Take it and embrace it. Close your eyes and imagine how we can reach more people. Dream in vivid colors with a vibrant message. What would that newsletter look like? Are you interested in helping the Church to create that new, exciting newsletter? Be the one that steps up. Contact Pastor Paul with your interest.



THANKS A BUNCH, FROM THE UNITED METHOD- IST WOMEN

The United Methodist Women of First Church would like to send out a great big smiley face to everyone who took the time to purchase and donate nonperishable food for Heart + Hand. We were able to deliver an SUV crammed full of canned goods, cereal, jelly, spaghetti sauce, syrup, and other much needed food items. Thanks to our loving and generous congregation, families in Kanawha and Putnam County can receive food to see them through the month.



Do not forget, we will be holding another food drive in February, with the drive-through date on **Monday, February 15 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

February Prayer by David Biondi

Dear Lord, we come to you with ongoing concerns regarding our state, our nation and the world. While we are most grateful for the roll-out of the coronavirus vaccine in hopes of stemming the tide of the global pandemic, we are greatly concerned over the fact that the distribution of the vaccine has met all kinds of obstacles such that it is taking far longer to administer inoculations to the public than was originally anticipated. Consequently, we find the number of coronavirus cases on the rise rather than diminishing.

Beyond that, last month our nation held the inauguration ceremony for our 46th President, Joseph Biden -- an occasion which should have transpired smoothly and without incident. But due to the events of January 6 when crazed mobs stormed the Capitol Building breathing threats of violence and insurrection, everything changed. Our nation's capital looked like a war zone. Barricades and fencing were put up and troops were stationed everywhere for fear of further

incident; and the public could not be on hand to witness the inaugural transition as had always been the case in prior times.

Most gracious Lord, we are already confronted with a "new normal" due to effects of the coronavirus pandemic. So please bring about a healing of the evil, demonic spirit of malice and divisiveness which has pervaded our nation in recent days so that we do not have to endure a second "new normal" when it comes to our civic life and relationships. Help us to see that what we as Americans share in common far outweigh our differences; and continually remind us that, as your people, we are called to be loving, forbearing, patient and kind in all our dealings with one another, just as you have been so toward each and every one of us.

Abide with us, O Lord, and guide us in the days ahead so that a spirit of goodwill, cooperation and reconciliation would emanate throughout our nation; this we pray in your most holy and precious name. Amen.

Get Your Gardening Questions Answered

Get your gardening questions answered during a virtual meeting with a master gardener at **12:30 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 21.**

You do not have to be a Community Gardener to participate. All gardeners are welcome.

Feb. 12 is the deadline to submit your questions and to request a Zoom meeting link. Contact George Hohmann by e-mail at g.hohmann48@gmail.com or call 304 419-1916.

The Community Gardeners thank Kanawha County 4-H Extension Agent Jocelyn Crawford for arranging this program.

Following the master gardener's presentation on Feb. 21, attendees will be asked if they want to sign up for Community Garden plots for the 2021 growing season.

Other 2021 growing season issues also will be discussed.

UMYF Reflections on 2020 by Sara Hampton

The Youth have been keeping in touch on our Snapchat group. At the end of 2020, we took some time to look back on the year. In the midst of the uncertainty with school and the chaos of the pandemic, they persevered and were able to share some pretty profound lessons that they learned. Below are the reflection questions and some of their answers, which they asked that I share anonymously.

What were your small wins?

- Reading more, cooking more, and sleeping more were my small wins.
- My small win was being able to relax and comfortably be able to take my time on my decisions for my future.
- Getting closer with my friend group and taking on a big responsibility with my sibling were my small wins for 2020.
- In 2020, my small wins were reading more, being content with doing less, and learning to make bagels.

What did you learn that you need this year?

- I learned that asking for help isn't a bad thing and that if you need to talk to someone about your problems it's ok to do that.
- I need social connections, reliable news and data, and hope.
- I learned that I need the sun. The complete flip of my mental health from being in the dark winter to warm, sunny spring showed how much I just need to be outside.

How did your resilience carry you through this year?

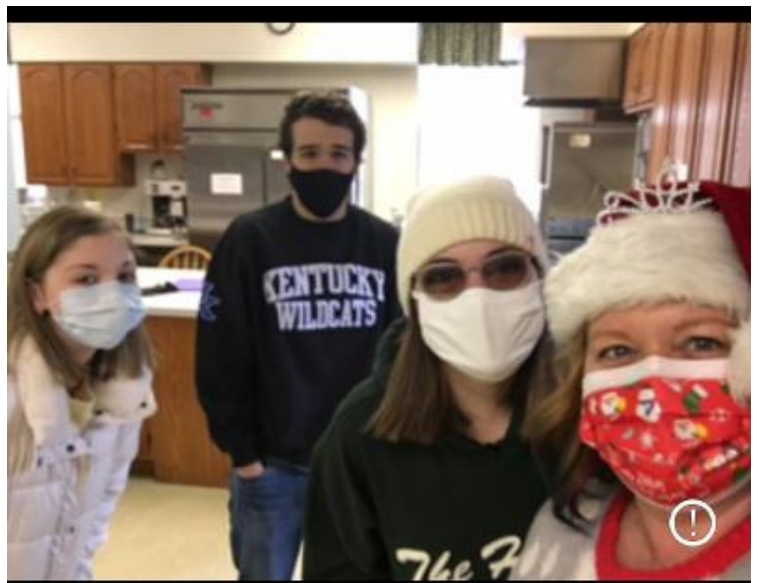
- I still got to laugh with friends either in person or over the phone.
- I depended on the people closest to me to help me through the tough times.
- I got to see who was a real friend in my life, and I gained amazing friends since I transferred schools.
- I adapted to being at home all the time and doing work without being face to face.
- I was still able to laugh, be joyful, and find hope on most days.

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UMYF Continued from page 4

What is something that makes you feel hopeful?

- Getting the announcement about going back to school makes me feel hopeful. I am thrilled. It's been super tough keeping our grades up and our mental health is going to improve.
- The vaccines make me feel hopeful. I think that things are really going to improve as more and more of the population gets them.
- What makes me feel hopeful is that one day we can return to some form of the normal we used to have. After the pandemic it won't ever be exactly the same, but I'm hoping it can semi-return to our original lives.



The new church directory is in layout and editing at the time of our newsletter publication. Hopes are to mail the new directory the first week of February.

How To Join A Zoom Meeting

Here's a step-by-step guide to join a Zoom meeting quickly:

A. JOIN USING A MEETING LINK (BY FAR THE EASIEST WAY)

If you have a meeting link, just click on it or paste it into your web browser to join the meeting. This can be done by desktop or on your phone. For Pastor Paul's Bible Study, an email is sent out with the Zoom Meeting information. You can simply click the link listed in the email. (An example of the information is below).

EMAIL INVITE EXAMPLE

Paul Helmick is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Paul Helmick's Proverbs Study

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet Wednesday 7:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85712359640?pwd=cDU3NHRwUEMrNUdtMmZTUWhKMHNEdz09>

Meeting ID: 857 1235 9640

PASSCODE: 901374

B. JOIN USING A MEETING ID

THIS STEP REQUIRES YOU TO DOWNLOAD THE ZOOM APP ONTO YOUR DESKTOP OR PHONE.

Step 1: Open the Zoom app and click on the "Join" icon.

Step 2: Paste the Meeting ID in the box provided, add your display name for the meeting and click on the "Join" button.

Step 3: Enter the Passcode

This is a wonderful and safe way to stay connected to each other in this time of covid-19. Haven't you missed seeing each other?

New Proverbs Bible Study via ZOOM.



Pastor Paul is leading a weekly Bible study on Proverbs. The class is on Wednesday starting at 7:00 p.m. through ZOOM. Look for the weekly invite in your email.

Kroger Rewards

If you have a customer account with Kroger, have you named First Church to receive your “Community Rewards” points? After you sign in to your account, you can go to “My Account” then to “community rewards” and see if you are signed up and who gets your rewards. The church is organization JK383-First UMC of South Charleston, WV. If you have previously signed up, please check to make sure it is still current. They contribute 5 cents of every dollar you spend with them. That can be a big help for our church!

Seeking a creative person to take over the monthly newsletter

Barbara Brown has decided to pass the creation and distribution of the monthly church newsletter over to a new person. Are you interested in creating the monthly newsletter? If you are, please contact Pastor Paul or Linda at 304-744-3211.

Prayer Request Guidelines

New guidelines for prayer requests: Any prayer requests that are to be mentioned during the upcoming online Sunday service must be sent to 1stumcsc@gmail.com by Wednesday evening. Prayer requests made after Wednesday will be read the following week. Additional prayer requests can be sent to 1stumcsc@gmail.com at any time. Also, all prayer requests will be read for two weeks unless we are notified otherwise.

Graceful Generosity

Published to help you grow as a steward of God's grace.

Materialism

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world ... the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does ... comes not from the Father but from the world" (1 John 2:15-16).

Webster's Dictionary defines materialism as follows: "the tendency to be more concerned with material things than with spiritual goals or values." Based on this definition, there is no doubt that we live in a very materialistic society. Materialism involves greed, covetousness, and the love of money. It results in our envying others who have what we don't have. It causes us to dwell on money and possessions and is characterized by an extreme lack of contentment. Materialism leads us to spend money we don't have to buy things we don't need to impress people we don't even like.

Some of the symptoms of materialism are as follows:

- ♦ *Love of money*
- ♦ *Lack of generosity*
- ♦ *Lack of contentment*



People want the front of the bus, the back of the church, and the center of attention.



Testing your Knowledge of Scripture

What parable could the following picture refer to?

If you said The Parable of the Hidden Treasure, you were right! This two-sentence parable, which is found in Matthew 13:44-45, reads as follows: *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."* The man understood that what he had found in the field was of such great value that he was willing to give up all he had to gain it.

The parable does not imply that we can buy the kingdom of God with money, but teaches that, when Christ enters our lives, we willingly surrender our past lifestyles and loves and devote ourselves completely to Jesus.

On the Lighter Side

A minister was walking along the beach one day and stumbled upon a lamp. Picking it up and wiping it off caused the lamp to shake and smoke, and a genie came out. The genie thanked the minister for this new-found freedom after years of captivity and offered him one wish.

The minister immediately said, "I've always wanted to visit the Holy Land, but I am afraid of flying. I just can't bring myself to fly. And I get seasick thinking about boats. So could you build a highway across the ocean so that I could drive to the Holy Land?"

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The genie looked at him in surprise and shock and replied, “You must be kidding. Do you realize the engineering challenges that would have to be overcome to achieve that feat? Even I have limitations. Can’t you think of anything else to wish for?”

The minister thought for a few minutes and then said, “Okay, I know what I want. I wish for all the members of the congregation I serve to become tithers.” To that the genie replied, “Do you want that to be a two-lane or four-lane highway?”



Disciples of the Cross

In Ephesians 2:1, 4-5, the Apostle Paul writes, “*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ . . .*” Before Christ, we were dead in sin. Through no effort of our own, we have been made alive “with Christ”!

Now what? Now what, indeed! Yes, Christ has saved us for eternity, but that eternity begins at Baptism. Some of us will spend only a short portion of eternity on earth, others much longer, but all of us are called to make these days count. In the Great

Commission in Matthew 28:19, Jesus calls us to “*go and make disciples of all nations.*” He asks us, empowered by Word and Sacrament, to carry on his work.

There are many facets to the work of the church. Not all of us are preachers and teachers of the Word, but we read in 1 Peter 4:10 that each of us has a gift and each of us is to use this gift to serve others. Peter speaks of offering hospitality and serving as gifts which God has given to edify the church. The Apostle Paul writes about spiritual gifts to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Ephesians, each time stressing the point that we are to use the gifts we’ve been given for the good of the Body of Christ and according to the grace we’ve been given.



Jesus said, “*If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.*” (Matthew 16:24-25). This is the challenge Jesus issues to each of us individually and to the church collectively. Alive in Christ, we pick up the cross and, joyfully, just as Jesus, “*Who for the joy set before him endured the cross*” (Hebrews 12:2), carry it wherever Jesus leads us. There is no life apart from Christ. As disciples of the cross who have found this to be true, let us carry this message to the world.

Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!

Men to continue discussing 2021 projects at Feb. 6 meeting

The First Church Men will continue discussing 2021 projects when they meet virtually at 9 a.m. Feb. 6.

Being considered in 2021: The distribution of potatoes to area food pantries and a high-way litter cleanup day.

The Cross Lanes United Methodist Men invite the First Church Men to join them via Zoom at 6 p.m. March 11 to meet with Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball.

On Jan. 14, the Cross Lanes Men invited First Church Men to a Zoom meeting with Midland South District Superintendent Joe Hill. First Church members Rev. David Biondi, Roy Fultineer and George Hohmann attended the meeting.

Rev. Hill said the turmoil in America is “The long-term consequence when humans define community differently than the way Jesus defines community.”

He challenged the men to take the intentional step of engaging with another person who doesn’t hold our views, “to recognize that they, too, are of our community...to love them for who they are. To treat them as Jesus would treat them...to say, ‘In spite of _____, we care about them because they too are a son or daughter of God.’”

For a Zoom invitation to the Feb. 6 meeting and/or the March 11 meeting with the Bishop, e-mail George Hohmann at g.hohmann48@gmail.com or call him at 304 419-1916.

All male members of First Church are automatically members of the United Methodist Men. Join us Feb. 6 as we continue our quest to make disciples and serve as Jesus’ hands and feet.

State Methodist Men launch bi-weekly newsletter

The West Virginia United Methodist Men have launched *The West Virginia United Methodist Men’s Journal*, a free online newsletter delivered every other Friday by e-mail.

Each edition of the newsletter contains news about events from across the connection. The newsletter also contains prayer requests, a three-minute devotion, and links to websites like the conference mens’ website, <http://wvcummen.org>

The next edition of the newsletter will be e-mailed on Friday, Feb. 5. Get on the mailing list by sending a request to Jerry Meadows at jwmead@frontier.com

Did you miss an online service? Want to see the service again or share with family and friends? Visit: <https://www.youtube.com> and enter FUMC South Charleston into the search bar to locate the recorded sermons. We have over 22 recorded sermons to view.

Know someone who would like to follow our service, but doesn't have Facebook or internet service? Try our Sermon by phone option. Sermons are uploaded and available all week at anytime. **Call 1-304-223-3080** to hear our latest sermon.



United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

Peace, Love and Books February 2021

by Teresa Matheny

Congratulations to Ruth Conrad, Donna Haynes, Teresa Matheny, Jeri Whitten, and Nancy Wolfe for completing Plan 1 of the United Methodist Women Reading Program for **2020!** Let's get started on 2021!

There will be new books added to the UMW Reading Program cart located in the church library by February 1st. Take a few minutes to browse through all the books and check one out. Simply choose a book, write your name and the name of the book on the clipboard sheets, and enjoy! Please return your books promptly so others can enjoy as well.

- The following are just a few of the new books being added:
- What Comes With the Dust (Social Action)
- If I Should Die Before I Live (Spiritual Growth)
- When Others Shuddered (Education for Mission)
- Glory Happening (Nurturing for Community)
- Which Way Lord? (Leadership Development)

Just because circles are not meeting at this time does not mean you cannot participate in the UMW Reading Program. The church is open Monday through Thursday until 3:30 and you are welcome to come and check out a book at that time. Be sure and wear your mask!

Happy Reading!

Heart + Hand Christmas Food Baskets 2020 Update by Teresa Matheny

Jesus said, "I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink." They asked, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty and did not help you?" He answered, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me." Matthew 25: 42-45

Due to the Corona Virus pandemic, I was so worried that we were not going to be able to participate in our usual Heart + Hand Christmas Food Basket distribution this past December. The Christmas food distribution is such a major part of what we do for Heart + Hand. How were these people who were already needing extra help and now had to deal with less because of the Corona Virus pandemic going to be able to have food on their tables for Christmas and beyond? I talked to Pastor Paul and he was 100% for going ahead with it. So, then some changes needed to be made about how we shopped, packed, and distributed our boxes to the public. Changes, changes, changes! Bob Corey donated our produce (potatoes, onions, apples, and oranges) as well as boxes for the food to be packed. On Thursday Clark and Donna Haynes, and Sue Hawkinberry folded, taped, *Continued on page 12*

Heart + Hand Christmas Food Baskets 2020 Update

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and numbered the boxes as they socially distanced and masked themselves. On Friday Joyce French and JD Pauley picked up the food from Aldi and brought it back to the church in his work trailer. Roy Fultineer, Taylor Fultineer, Joyce French, Barbara Warwick, Sharen Deitz, Rob Matheny, and I packed the food baskets as we socially distance and masked ourselves. On Saturday the distribution began. Rob Matheny, Sharen Deitz, Mike Warwick, Sara Hampton, Zeke Hampton, Roy Fultineer, Taylor Fultineer, Crystal Crouch, Emma Crouch, Ella Hamilton, and I, all masked and socially distanced, loaded cars as the food basket recipients drove through the parking spots on the Daniels Avenue side of the church. All the recipients had to do was pop open their trunks and we loaded their food. The recipients also had on masks. Despite all my worries with trying something new and keeping everyone safe this went smoothly and quickly. Plus, we all had a great time enjoying some socially distanced fellowship.

Here are a few more details you might want to know: The Stewards of Fellowship class donated the bread, milk, canned corn, and canned green beans; the United Methodist Men donated the canned fruit, and canned soup; the Divas donated the hot chocolate; the Youth donated the macaroni and cheese; Jeri Whitten donated the pinto beans; and the United Methodist Women donated \$500 toward the hams.

Mary Jane VanCamp Circle also included a whisk, a handmade dish scrubby, and candy with a card that read “We Whisk You a Merry Christmas and a Scrubby New Year!”

Pastor Paul included a Christmas letter to all recipients.

I was especially worried that because of the pandemic we would not be able to collect enough food or money to meet the needs of our Heart + Hand Christmas Food Basket Mission. Why should I have doubted our generous and loving congregation? We had enough money to purchase all the food we needed and more! We ended up with more than enough money and the Finance Committee donated \$1,100 to Heart + Hand Food Pantry and we have \$1,200. to start our Heart + Hand Christmas Food Basket fund for 2021.

We had 60 families that we helped this year. To break it down that included 85 adults and 93 children. This includes singles, couples, single parents, parents, and grandparents raising their grandchildren. What a blessing that we are able to help so many!

Thank you all for your gifts of food, money, time, and prayers. It really does take a village!



February Celebrations

Birthdays

02 Holly Biondi	20 Sarah Deitz Ratliff
08 Katy Abbott, Sean Whitten	21 Judy Herd
14 Kathy Fultineer	22 Lillian Hamilton
17 George Hohmann, Chandra Massey, Sean Hawkinberry, Kim Barnard	26 Brian Christian
18 Charley Brown, Ruth Conrad	

Anniversaries

27 Bob and Kathy Judge Robert and Sharen Sumpter-Deitz	28 Bud and Cyndi Anderson
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Special Upcoming Events To Remember

Saturday, 2/6	UMM meeting at 9 a.m. (page 10)
Monday, 2/15	Food Drive from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (page 2)
Sunday, 2/21	Digital meeting with Master Gardner (page 3)
Thursday, 3/11	Cross Lanes UMM invite First Church UMM to meet Bishop (page 10)
WED 7:00 PM	Proverbs Bible Study Via Zoom

Church Website: southcharlestonfirstumc.org

Did you miss an online service? Want to see the service again or share with family and friends? Visit: <https://www.youtube.com> and enter FUMC South Charleston into the search bar to locate the recorded sermons. We have several recorded sermons to view.

Know someone who would like to follow our service, but doesn't have Facebook or internet service? Try our Sermon by phone option. Sermons are uploaded and available all week at anytime. **Call 1-304-223-3080** to hear our latest sermon.

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