



Life @1st Church

905 Glendale Avenue, South Charleston, WV 25303

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 5

MAY 2021

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A Note from Pastor Paul

Dear FUMC Church Family

I must admit that the last year has taken a toll on me as your pastor. For the past months my thoughts have been on church attendance, finances and general outreach ministry. I have been greatly concerned as we relaunch into a different normal. Now that we are back in the building these worries have not been answered, at least to a level of where they were pre-pandemic. I also remember that a previous District Superintendent told me that I was the one who was paid to worry. That doesn't really ease the frustration. I share with you some observations that come from Church Answers and Thom Rainer, author of *The Post Pandemic Church*.

So, who are these non-returning church members? Why are they not returning? Here are the five most common dropout groups. The groups are not mutually exclusive; there could be significant overlap.

1. **The decreasing attendance members.** These were your members who, at one time, attended church almost four times a month. Before the pandemic, their frequency of attendance declined to twice a month or even once a month. COVID accelerated their trends. They are now attending zero times a month.

2. **The disconnected church members.** If a church member is in a small group, his or her likelihood of returning is high. If they attend worship only, their likelihood of attendance is much lower. Please let this reality be a strong motivation to emphasize in-person small groups once everyone feels safe to return.

3. **The church-is-another-activity church members.** These church members see gathered attendance as yet another activity on par, or lower, than other activities. They were the church members who let inclement weather keep them from church but not their children's Sunday soccer games. Commitment to the church was a low priority before the pandemic. They have no commitment in the post-quarantine era.

4. **The constant-critic church members.** These church members always had some complaints for the pastor. In fact, your pastor may be dying a death by a thousand cuts. They are likely still complaining even though they have not returned to in-person services. Many of them will not return at all.

5. **The cultural Christian church members.** They were part of a declining group well before the pandemic. They were those church members who likely were not Christians but came to church to be accepted culturally. Today, there are few cultural expectations for people to attend church. These cultural Christians learned during the pandemic that it was no big deal to miss church. It will be no big deal for them never to return.

With these observations in mind, I believe the church, yes even FUMC, has some great days in front of us if we decide to be proactive and take our church vows seriously and to heart. Your relationships with other people and the personal invitation remain the greatest evangelistic tool we have. Church, awake from your slumber and charge the new day.

I'm Pastor Paul.



***Original OIL PAINTINGS by
Nancy Altman
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Outdoor Show and Sale Rain or shine Yard and carport

Sat. and Sunday, May 1st and 2nd 1:00—6:00 Prices \$15-\$150

Think Original Gifts for Mothers, Fathers, Graduates, Friends

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Funds will go to FUMC.

*(Call 304-766-6369 and leave a
message to view paintings at a
different time.)*



May Prayer by David Biondi

Most gracious and loving God, as we enter into the month of May we find ourselves surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of your glorious Creation everywhere we turn. All of nature sings your praise, and we are most privileged to be a part of its glory and grandeur. May we, therefore, appreciate its goodness as fully as we ought, never taking it for granted. May is also the month in which we celebrate Mother's Day -- and so we give you heartfelt thanks for all our mothers who loved, cared for and nurtured us. We pray that their sacrifice and example would inspire us to give more fully of ourselves to all those whom we share relationships as well. And May is also a month in which we commemorate a special day

within the life of the church known as the "Festival of the Christian Home" -- a celebration of "the gift of Christian homes" and an affirmation of the "Christian family in its wholeness" (as it is described in our Book of Worship). And so we pray that, by the power of your Holy Spirit, you would illuminate all the homes of this world with the light of your holy presence so that all who comprise them would live together in love, compassion, care and civility for and with one another.

Thank you, dear God, for loving and being there for us in so many ways; and thank you especially for the gift of your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.



Good News FUMC Family Sunday Morning Small Groups aka Sunday School will resume May 2, 2021.

Back Door Services will continue with a schedule of 1st and 3rd Sundays at 7:00 PM.

**I hope to see you at one or both of these services.
Pastor Paul**



Memorial Gifts

Tom Daugherty, Malissa Hohmann's father

Karen Johnston

Donation in honor of Eleanor McClung's 100 Birthday

George Russell

First United Methodist wishes to thank all who have honored our loved ones with a donation to our church Memorial Fund.

Memorial gifts are often given at the time of a person's death instead of flowers. It is a way to say that the person was important and will be missed. But memorial gifts do not always have to come at a person's death. Some people also like to make memorial gifts on the anniversary of someone's death or at other times in remembrance of someone close.

Some gifts can be given to honor someone who is still alive. It is a celebration of one's life at an anniversary, birthday, or just to say thanks.

Donations can be mailed to the church advising if the donation is in memory of a deceased person or in honor of someone.

Spring Cleaning for Good by Teresa Matheny

The United Methodist Women are asking you to clean out your closets and garages. Donate your unwanted items to us for an EPIC Flea Market and Bake Sale. Your donated flea market items may be brought to the church from June 7 to June 16 and we will take it from there.

We are asking for baked goods such as cookies, fudge, brownies, pies, cakes and cupcakes. Whatever you and your oven decide to make. Baked goods should be packaged for selling. For example six cookies in a Ziploc bag, You don't need to price them. Drop off baked items on Friday, June 18th.

Help us spread the word by cutting out the printed flyer (on page 5) and give it to friends, neighbors and local businesses to post in windows, etc.

Join us on Saturday, June 19th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to view all the treasures that have been donated and purchase lots of treasures and baked goods to take home.

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
905 GLENDALE AVENUE
SOUTH CHARLESTON**



**SATURDAY, JUNE 19TH
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**INDOOR FLEA MARKET
AND BAKE SALE**

GLASSWARE

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

TOOLS

TOYS

DVDS

BAKED GOODS

CLOTHING

ELECTRONICS

BOOKS

HOMEMADE SOUP MIX

AND MUCH MORE!

Sponsored by FUMC United Methodist Women

Men to pick up litter on May 1 by George Hohmann

The Cross Lanes United Methodist Men invite First Church men to help pick up litter on **Saturday, May 1**.

Men will meet at the Cross Lanes United Methodist Church (5320 Frontier Dr., Cross Lanes, WV 25313) at 8 a.m. for a word of prayer and biscuits and doughnuts. Then they will pick up litter on both sides of Big Tyler Road (Route 622 North) from Frontier Drive, which is in front of the church, for one mile to Koontz Drive. If there are enough volunteers, the pick-up will be extended to the Point Harmony Elementary School.

Participants should expect to work a total of about 2 1/2 hours.

All supplies will be furnished by the state Division of Highways.

Pre-registering is suggested but not required. To pre-register e-mail Jerry Meadows at jwmead@frontier.com. *Note: this event was originally scheduled for April 24th and was postponed to May 1 because of inclement weather.*

Tech Team Help Needed by Michael Cidor

We need some volunteers to learn how to use the cameras, livestream equipment and soundboard to help run things for the Sunday services and to help us with the Backdoor services.

If you would be interested in learning how to use the equipment to help us with our Ministry, please sign up to come to one of our Trainings. Thursday, May 13 at 7 PM or Saturday, May 15 at 9 AM in the Church Sanctuary.

Thanks So Much! by Jeri Whitten

The United Methodist Women of First Church would like to thank our amazing congregation for the outpouring of love you showed for our Eleanor McClung. We sent a huge box of presents and cards to her, and she was thrilled that her church family thought of her and wanted to celebrate this milestone birthday with her. We pray that she enjoys many more years of good health and happiness.

Men meeting postponed to May 8; gathering to be in person & via Zoom

The May meeting of the First Church men has been postponed to 9 a.m. May 8. The meeting was originally scheduled for May 1.

It will be the first in-person meeting since the pandemic hit last year. Pandemic protocols will be followed.

In addition to meeting in the Wesley Social Hall, the event will be simulcast via Zoom. For a Zoom invitation call George Hohmann at 304 419-1916.

All First Church men are automatically members of the United Methodist Men.

The meeting date has been changed so those who want to participate in the litter pick-up at Cross Lanes may do so.

The litter pick-up, originally scheduled for April 24, was postponed to May 1 because of inclement weather.

Volunteers donate 371 hours to paint women's shelter

First Church volunteers and others have contributed a total of 371 hours to paint the women's shelter that is under construction at the former Rock Lake Pool property.

The goal is for the project to be finished by April 30, said Mike Warwick, president of the First Church Men.

A call for volunteer painters was issued after it was learned a contractor wanted more than \$10,000 to paint the facility.

According to a just-released study by the Do Good Institute at the University of Maryland, the value of volunteer time in West Virginia in 2020 was \$23.97 an hour, a 4.2 percent increase from 2019. Using the 2020 figure, the value of the volunteer painters' labor so far amounts to \$8,892.87.

We would like to congratulate our high school graduates: Cody Buckley and Taylor Fultineer!



These last four years **Cody Buckley** has been taking Engineering classes at South Charleston High School and is excited to be receiving his hard hat for passing his classes. He has enjoyed playing football and baseball and helped to make the SCHS football team the AAA State Champions. He plans to continue his Engineering education at Marshall University where he hopes to get his Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering and then hopefully, he can continue his education by getting his Master's degree in Civil Engineering. Until then, Cody plans to work with his dad doing grass cutting jobs, helping his grandparents, and doing any odd jobs that anyone has a need for.



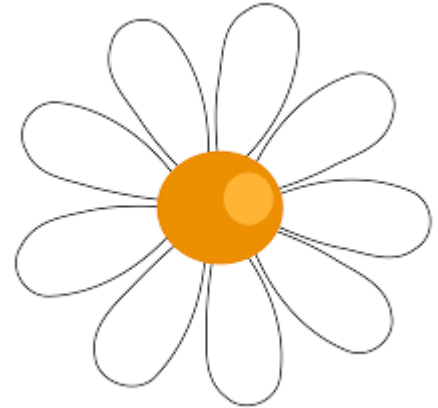


Taylor Fultineer is graduating from George Washington High School where he has played football and run track for the last four years. His plans are to study engineering at WVU with possible future plans of attending physical therapy school.



Join us for **WOW** by Carrie Hamilton

As of this printing, the WOW program will continue through the month of May and then take a break for the summer. We hope that your children can come and join us as we play, sing and listen to Bible stories. We have been blessed with 25-30 kids on a weekly basis. What great fun and fellowship. Hope to see you on Wednesday, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.



Seeking a creative person to take over the monthly newsletter. Is it you? 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.

Spring Cleaning is just around the corner. A new shipment of **Brooms** has arrived. Be sure to get a new broom to sweep out the cobwebs and dust bunnies. At \$10 a broom, you could pick one up for your next door neighbor, bff, or daughter-in-law. Check with the office or the UM Women to make a purchase.



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.

Two dozen scouts, cubs, parents, gardeners repair fence, picnic table during work day



Two dozen Troop 195 Boy and Girl scouts, Cub scouts, scout parents and gardeners participated in a Community Garden work day on April 10.

The scouts earned service hours as they helped rebuild the garden fence, weed around the fence and repair the picnic table.

It was a perfect-weather day. An anonymous donor provided a pizza lunch.

The Community Gardeners extend a hearty thank you to the scouts, cubs and par-

ents who made this effort a great success.

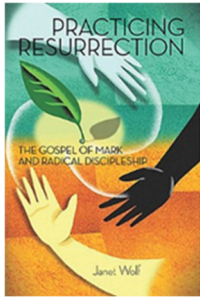
Garden plots for the 2021 season remain available. Gardeners pledge to donate at least 10 percent of their harvest to the needy or homebound. For more information e-mail George Hohmann at g.hohmann48@gmail.com or call him at 304 419-1916.



United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

Peace, Love and Books May 2021

by Teresa Matheny



Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship

By Janet Wolf

In *Mark and Radical Discipleship*, author Janet Wolf explores what it means to live a life of radical discipleship today using the Gospel of Mark as the foundation. Wolf explores the timeless issues of poverty, gender, justice, liberation, equality, and others using Mark as a guide. The stories of the women in Mark are a particular focus in this study and how, although often unnamed, they are prominent among Jesus' followers and in Mark's recounting of the gospel story.

Mark, the earliest of the synoptic Gospels, was written almost forty years after the crucifixion. A time when the early church was struggling, troubled, and traumatized. Many of those who had walked with Jesus were now imprisoned or dead. The Jewish-Roman War of 66–70 C.E. ended with a destroyed temple and a fractured and frightened community. And then, as now, Christians were asking, what does it mean to be a disciple of this Jesus, crucified and raised?

Wolf explores this question in five chapters that walk the reader through the Gospel of Mark, with each chapter exploring a different section of scripture. Throughout the text, Wolf tells of her own experiences as a pastor and community organizer, recognizing the power of these and other stories to heal, transform, liberate, and unshackle.

In Mark's day and now, Christians are caught in a world of crisis and confusion, a time of uncertainty and fear. There's a struggle going on and evil appears to be winning: injustice reigns, money and greed measure our living and our dying, divisions deepen and hope is sometimes hard to find. Then and now, part of the crisis is the church's complicity, complacency, and silence in a world where so much has gone wrong.

And both then and now the gospel proclaims it is right here and now when the struggle is fierce and the clamor is loud; when our hearts are heavy, and our bodies weary; when we're tempted to give up, to give in to the cynicism of our age. Here and now proclaims the gospel, in the fear and the uncertainty and the anxiety of living in our age, God comes singing to our souls, inviting us to be partners in the new creation, in God's kingdom, kin-dom, realm, and rule. Caesar's kingdom is already coming undone, the powers cannot stand, God's kin-dom, realm, rule, breaks in to here, to now. "The kingdom of God has come near" (Mark 1:15).

Wolf is director of Children's Defense Fund Alex Haley Farm and Nonviolent Organizing, in Clinton, TN; national organization working toward justice for children and the poor, led by Marian Wright Edelman who worked as a young lawyer with Dr. King in MS and on the Poor People's Campaign. She is also an ordained elder in the Tennessee Annual Conference.

*This book was a book for **Spiritual Growth Mission Study: 2019**.

*This book is a Bonus Book and counts as two books in the Spiritual Growth Category.

* This book is included in FAITH TALKS: podcast. unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks

This book is located on the United Methodist Women reading cart in the church library.
SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Graceful Generosity

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

Run the Race

"...let us throw off everything that hinders... let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Hebrews 12:1), exhorts the writer to the Hebrews. Perhaps that writer was the Apostle Paul, for running a race is a phrase he often used. In Acts 20:24, he declared that he wanted to *"finish the race and complete the taskthe task of testifying to the Gospel of God's grace."* That task belongs to us as well as to Paul. We have been chosen by God to run the race for the sake of the Gospel. Like Peter and John, we *"cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard"* (Acts 4:20).

Certainly our words testify to the Gospel of God's grace, and so do our lives. That's why we are also involved in the race of holy living. In this race, we put aside the hindrances of sin and self-interest that would keep us from a close relationship with our Savior and that would give ammunition to those who wish to disparage the Christian faith.

Our race is by no means all downhill. Competing in this race requires strict discipline and a focus on the goal. Scripture urges us to keep our eyes on *"Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith"* (Hebrews 12:2). Like the faith heroes of old, we run the race for those who will follow not in our own strength, but by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament.

Perseverance is key in our race. Scripture challenges us to stand firm, knowing that our labor for God is not in vain. We're commanded to hold fast to our faith and to keep to God's ways. As we run the race with perseverance, we are filled with *"inexpressible and glorious joy"* (1 Peter 1:8) in our Savior in whom we believe, even though we haven't seen him. Although the race is long and difficult, we have an eternal perspective and consider any suffering or distress but *"light and momentary troubles"* (2 Corinthians 4:17).

On the Lighter side

Garrison Keillor tells of a letter written from a local church to one of its members who was not present on pledge dedication Sunday, and therefore, did not fill out a pledge card:

"Dear Anne and Joe: We missed you last Sunday, Pledge Sunday. Since you were not present to fill out your pledge card, and to make it easy for you, we have completed a pledge card for you. Thank you for being so generous. Your Finance Committee."

Our culture now has "lite" everything on the market: butter, cheese, syrup, even beer. A suggestion arose regarding what a "lite" church might look like: perhaps a 45-minute worship service, a seven percent tithe, and only eight of the Ten Commandments. And you get to choose which eight!

Self-centered or God Centered

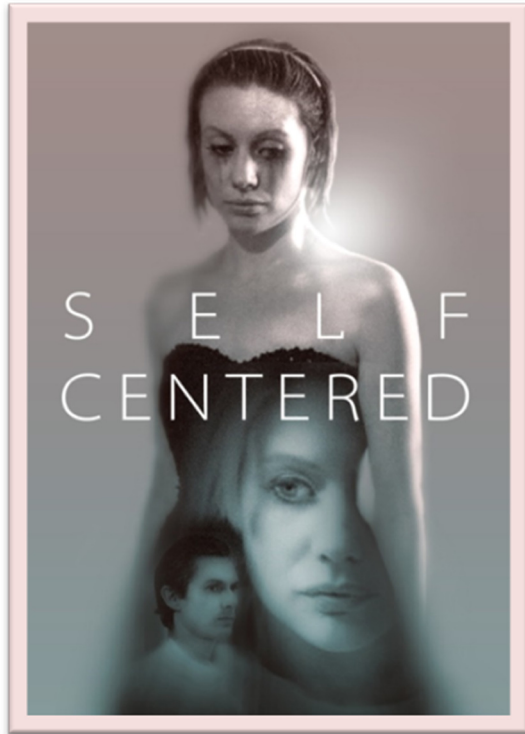
At different times throughout our lives, we all make the choice whether to serve ourselves or to be servants to others. If we make a practice of putting ourselves first, we will spend life joyless and empty, wondering why fulfillment escapes us

Even though God never abandons us, we can elect to turn away from Him. God wants the best

Continued on Page 14

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for us, and his best for us is that we deny ourselves and follow him. If we focus only on our earthly possessions and make it our top priority to take care of ourselves only, we push God out of our lives. Putting our own interests first, we become selfish and self-centered.



The Apostle Paul wrote that, as people redeemed by God's mercy, we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices. He further said in Romans 12:2, *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but*

be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is ... his good, pleasing and perfect will." Paul revealed the secret of the transformed mind to the Galatians. *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me"* (Galatians 2:20). Joy comes into our lives when God, instead of self, is the object of our love and worship. It was joy that compelled Jesus to endure the Cross (Hebrews 12:2).

The stewardship life is a life dedicated completely to God through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus said that if we would follow him, we *"must deny [ourselves] and take up [our] cross[es] and follow [him]"* (Matthew 16:24). The reward outweighs by far the sacrifice, for Christ promised in Matthew 16:25, *"Whoever loses his life for me will find it."* Martin Luther said, "If anyone would rap at the door of my heart and ask, 'Who lives here?' I would answer, 'Martin Luther once lived here. But Martin Luther has moved out and Jesus Christ has moved in.' " When Jesus has permanent residence within us, he can use us to build his kingdom among men.

Through God's grace, we are transformed into "new creatures" (2 Corinthians 5:17) willing to live lives that honor him with all that we are and have. God's love and generosity are seen through us as we recognize the opportunities God places before us to share our time, talents, and treasures in the building up of his kingdom.



Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!

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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!

May Celebrations

Birthdays

02 Becky Lilly, Peggy King	10 Nick Workman
03 Janina Syms	11 Caryle Snyder
04 Cheryl Holbrook	17 Jeanne Murphy, Noah Workman
06 Ella Hamilton	21 Harold Swisher
07 Barbara Brown	23 Suzanne Simmons
09 Ralph Burchett, Cyndi Anderson	

Anniversaries

07 Barney and Becky Lilly	25 Larry and Ann Kennedy, Robert and Teresa Matheny
11 Bruce and Ruth Conrad	
22 Larry and Becky Workman	

Special Upcoming Events To Remember

May 1-2	Nancy Altman's Painting Sale (page 2)
May 1	Litter Pickup (page 6)
May 2	Back Door at 7:00 pm
May 3	Finance Meeting at 6:30 pm ZOOM
May 8	UM Men Meeting at 9:00 am
May 13	Tech Team Training at 7:00 pm
May 15	Tech Team Training at 9:00 am
May 16	Back Door at 7:00 pm

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 any time. **Call 1-304-223-3080** to hear our latest sermon.

life @ 1st Church

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