



First United Methodist Challenge

615 East Main Street • Batesville, Arkansas 72501 • 870-793-3803
www.fumcbatesville.org

November 18, 2020

Our Vision is to be a Dynamic Community of Believers

From the Pastor . . .

November 22
Luke 17:11-19
"Where Did Everyone Go?"



This Sunday, we will be turning to the lectionary passage for Thanksgiving, since we are a few days away from that very special holiday. Recently, I wrote a faith column that I look forward to writing every year, because my family has had a big gathering each year for about 30 years. This year, that was a much harder column to write, because we will not gather.

As I think about it, I recall the old saying, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." I've come to realize how true that was for the first couple of months. Now, I believe that we have outlived that saying!

The lectionary text speaks directly to our situation. It's been so long since we've been together, and there is a new statistic I've seen tossed around: 16% of our members are likely attending another church, and 14% of our church members are likely to have left the church for another church. While I know of two families attending elsewhere and we have had several members move to the church triumphant, just what does God have to say to us about our situation?

Come and see this Sunday as we continue to meet online at 9:00 am and 11:00 am, or join us on 103.3 FM at 11:00 am. Don't forget that you can view our worship services anytime after they have premiered on YouTube or Facebook!

In the meantime, I'll give you a hint: God's got this, and in our lifetime, our mission has never been more important!

In Christ's love,
Pastor Mark

Saturday Morning Breakfast

Since COVID-19 has closed our church for the time being, we have changed the way we handle our Saturday morning breakfast. We have ten wonderful volunteers that come in each Saturday morning (wearing masks and gloves) to help prepare food for our breakfast. We are serving breakfast via carry outs from 8:30 to 9:30. Families drive thru our breeze way and pick up their meals. Since we have been doing this, we are serving between 60 - 100 meals each Saturday. **WONDERFUL BLESSING!!!**

However, with us still providing a full meal to everyone that comes through, this has also increased our expenses with having to purchase carry out trays for our food and cups for our drinks. As of right now we have enough money to serve breakfast for about (6) weeks.

We would very much appreciate any donations that you may be able to provide to continue feeding "God's Children" during this difficult time for all of us but, especially for those less fortunate.

Youth Mission Trip Deposits

As Pastor Mark has shared on the weekly update, our church lost all the deposits we had placed for our youth's summer 2020 mission trip because of the contract agreement. We will not be able to reschedule anytime soon, so we have canceled that trip entirely.

While we have lost all those "non-refundable" deposits, the Finance Committee will honor any refunds of church members who may need those funds because of financial hardships. We deeply appreciate those who have told us they do not want their deposit back, but we do not want anyone to struggle because of this. Simply contact the church to request your refund if you do need it.

"The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

COVID Update from the Pastor

Several people have asked when we will reopen for face-to-face worship, so I want to share a little with you about our hopes and our process.

You are well aware that the sanctuary is under renovations, but to complete that work around Christmas. Our dream is to finish in time to have Christmas Eve worship by reservation (in smaller groups of 25 or less). Clearly, finishing the work is a key component of that goal, but the virus spread is equally difficult to predict with any certainty.

Our Church Council has the primary responsibility of ensuring that our ministries are conducted safely, and our Board of Trustees has the primary responsibility for safely opening/maintaining the building. Both groups have agreed to follow the guidelines of the CDC, state officials, and our bishop.

Using these guidelines, we now allow small groups to meet inside with a host of restrictions. That is largely because the weather is colder and the days ending sooner, but it is also to see how we can safely meet indoors in small groups. So far, that has gone very well.

The bishop allows us to meet indoors with groups of up to 50 people, but we have limited occupancy to 25 in the fellowship hall under an abundance of caution. The bishop's guidelines also require masks at all indoor and outdoor gatherings, six feet of separation at all times, and a limit of no more than 45 minutes. We do contact tracing by having everyone take their temperature and sign in, in case someone tests positive. Even if that happens, our masks and separation can prevent the spread.

In worship the guidelines follow the same steps but add additional requirements such as entrance, seating, and exit procedures, no congregational singing, and stricter time limits.

While schools, sports, and other gatherings are taking place, we understand that people are asking why we are not doing so also. However, the governor has shared that church events have been key to the rise in COVID cases, and we are now at an all-time high. The governor strongly encourages that churches continue in online platforms for worship, and we are striving to honor reasonable requests by the bishop and the governor.

With that information, our ministry coordinators meet weekly to talk about ways to stay connected. We long for a time to come back together and worship in person, but also realize from many conversations that a large percentage of our congregation will not return until the vaccine is available, and the virus is clearly decreasing. We are working to find the time when we balance all those factors to begin indoor worship.

At the same time, we have had more than 1/2 dozen outdoor worship events, and attendance has declined as the virus increases. By allowing small groups to meet indoors, we have noticed an increase in attendance for those. We started 19 shepherd groups, and even those have struggled because people are not comfortable meeting in person. I have hosted 11 cottage meetings, and we have premiered worship online for 37 weeks (including 7 weeks with two different styles), 35 weeks of Weekly Updates, and 57 daily devotionals. There is more, but you get the idea. We are working hard to stay connected to God and each other during a pandemic!

Please continue to be in prayer for your leaders that are struggling to do the right thing. We know that other churches are meeting, and we have seen churches start and stop because of the virus' spread. We are very eager to find a new normal that allows us to come together, eat, and sing! We ask for your prayers and ask that you let us know how we can help you stay connected and stay strong in these tumultuous times. Please don't hesitate to contact me at mark.mcdonald@arumc.org. Barrett Moore is the chair of our council and can be reached at barrettsmoore@gmail.com. Alex Roofe is the chair of the trustees and can be reached at alexroofe@gmail.com. We welcome your ideas and so need your encouragement and prayers!

In Christ's love,

Pastor Mark McDonald

PS. The bishop's guidelines are at arumc.org, and the governor's guidance is at healthy.arkansas.gov if you want to view them.

Church Leadership

Senior Pastor

Reverend Mark McDonald

Associate Pastor

Carl Hudson

Choir Director

Amanda Pickett

Church Administrator

Teresa Brown

Minister of Congregational Care

Bennie Burks

Minister to Children & Family Ministries

Katie McLean

Minister to Youth

Lorrie McClure

Worship Leader

Alicia Williams

Sexton

Joe Johnson

Lay Leader

Mike Wilson

Lay Servants/Ministers

Cyndi House
Kathy McKinney
Sandy West
Asa Whitaker
Joel Williams

Church Council Chair

Barrett Moore

Staff/Parish Chair

Paul Holfield

Trustees Chair

Alex Roofe

Finance Chair

Tommy Newton

Our Presence

Daily Devotional Average.....68/day
Sunday Online Worship Service.....281
Weekly Update – Nov 11th 108 views

Our Gifts

Received in November

Received through
11/01/2020
Cash & Checks..... \$6,930.00
Online Giving..... \$1,725.38
Received through
11/08/2020
Cash & Checks..... \$17,705.00
Online Giving.....\$443.44
Received through
11/15/2020
Cash & Checks..... \$6,705.00
Online Giving..... \$1,578.82
Amount needed weekly \$11,427.00

When we return to our usual activities, please consider how you can be in ministry.

MEMORIALS

GEORGE BENTZ

James & Irene Canady

Birthdays and Anniversaries

from UMMEN Calendar

November 22 Glenda Bowers
Becky Kent
November 23 Paulette Arnold
Grace Neaville
November 25 Jason Ballard
Mark Brissey
November 26 Lorrie McClure
November 28 Dianne Lamberth
Georgiana Moody
Deana Qualls

November 25 Jimmy & Becky Winemiller

• Please consider giving electronically!

It is the most secure way to give, because it goes directly from your bank or card to our church within a few days. It is certified under strict security standards. We have several ways for you to give electronically:

• **Give Plus App.** This is an extremely convenient way to give and also to be able to see your gifts anytime you want to login. Simply go to the App Store (for your Apple devices) or to Google Play (for your Android devices), search for "Give Plus Church" and download that App. You can search for our church by location and then it will ask you to set up your account (including your choice of giving by checking or credit/debit card). After that setup, you will not have to enter account information for subsequent donations, and you can return to the app anytime to view your giving history confidentially.

• **Text to Give.** Text the amount you want to give to 855-726-9179 and follow the prompts to set up your account. After that, you will be able to simply text the amount and confirmation donation. You will not be able to review previous donations via text, but we will include it on your church's giving statement.

• **Website.** We also have a page on our website for you to give electronically. Visit our website (www.fumcbatesville.org), and click the "GIVE ONLINE" button on the right hand side of that page.

Our Mailing Address is:
First United
Methodist Church
P.O. Box 2014
Batesville, AR 72503-2014



Please review the names on the prayer list. Names will remain on the prayer list for 2 weeks.
At the end of 2 weeks to continue the name, please call the church office.

Our Prayers for Those at Home

Della Mae Dortch Member
Terri Presley.....member
Jim Smythe.....member
Carolyn Wilsonmember
Mary Whitaker family

Our Prayers for Those in Hospitals

Wakemed Raleigh Hospital in Raleigh, NC

Dianne Taylor.....member

Send cards to Dianne Taylor to:

Wakemed Raleigh Hospital
Room 3E41
3000 New Bern Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27610

Daily Devotionals to start your Day!

Monday through Saturday 9 AM

www.facebook.com/fumcbatesville

✠ Our Prayers for Those Who Mourn ✠

Our sympathy goes out to *Pam Smith and family*, in the death of her father **Troy Kuchler**, who passed away, November 13, 2020. The family will hold a private service Sunday, November 21st.

Due to privacy laws, First Church cannot access hospital admission records. Please let the church office know when you or a family member are hospitalized. 870-793-3803

Our Prayers for Those in Health Care Centers and Retirement Homes

Eagle Mountain Assisted Living

Janine Kimmer..... member
Polly Livingston member
Carol Robertson member
Barbara Stevenson member
Stanley Wood..... member

Wood-Lawn Heights

Mildred Arnold member
Bobbie Sue Graves..... mother of Diana Waldrip
Lucille Maris member
Virginia Swetnam mother of Lorrie McClure

Woodcrest Assisted Living

Marilyn Coffman..... member
Judy Murrah..... member

Our Prayers for Those in U.S. Military Service

MSgt. Jason Austinson of Robin Austin Gay
Colonel Mark Bowersson of Marcus & Glenda Bowers
Lt. Col. Chris Carpenterson of R.L. & Susan Carpenter
Lt. Col. Marc Jonesnephew of Mildred Arnold
SPC Lane Lively.....grandson of Glen & LaDonna Busby
Capt. Ian MacDonaldnephew of Starr & Johnny Kent
Trent McDonald.....cousin of member
Capt. Shannon McLoughlindaughter of Cecilia Vinson
Major Adam Mooreson-in-law of Ken & Ginger Davis
Staff Sgt. Jonathan Reed.....son of Dan & Vicki Reed
TSgt. Karl Sagerson of Shirley Stuckey
Stg. Bradley Skelton.....
Sergeant Keegan Smart member
Petty Officer Zane Smart member
Capt. Michael Stevensongrandson of members
Lt. Cmdr. Greg Tebbettsson of Diane & Terrell Tebbetts
Capt. John Ticenephew of Verona Bebow
Lance Cpl. James Brantley Wheelercousin of member

If you need pastoral assistance contact:

Pastor Mark McDonald - 501-650-0046
Associate Pastor Carl Hudson - 870-251-6227



First United Methodist Church
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email us at fumcbatesville@gmail.com
 Check out newsletters online!
www.fumcbatesville.org/



Community Breakfast



Free

8:30 Every Saturday

FUMC Fellowship Hall

No inside dining

Take out at side door of the Hall

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FACEBOOK CONNECTIONS
facebook.com/fumcbatesville

"Mid-week Update" with the pastor Mark each Wednesday at noon on Facebook Live
"Daily Devotional" on Facebook & YouTube each morning at 9:00 am

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

While we are closing the facilities, we are deeply concerned that we continue to provide care for our church and community. If there is anything, we can do to help you, please leave a message at (870) 793-3803 or call one of these staff members:

- Pastor Mark McDonald: (501) 650-0046
- Pastor Carl Hudson: (870) 251-6227
- Katie McLean (Children & Families): (870) 307-4034
- Lorrie McClure (Youth & Families): (870) 613-6961
- Bennie Burks (Visitation): (870) 834-8111
- Teresa Brown (Administrator): (662) 284-7390

Listen to the Worship Service at 11:00 am on KWOZ FM 103.3 or on the internet whiterivernow.com/ar1033/ and click Listen Live button
 Get the KWOZ app for your smartphone or add it to your favorites on apps such as TuneIn Radio



Watch our worship service Sunday at 9:00 am on our YouTube channel
 FUMC Batesville, AR
youtube.com/FUMCBatesvilleAR

Next Newsletter Deadline

Articles for the November 25th newsletter must be submitted by 3:00 pm Monday, November 23rd to the church office or by email to Lyndal at lyndalwaits@sbcglobal.net.