



FIRST
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A NEW Focus

September, 2021 | Issue 5

NOTES FROM PASTOR ALEX FIRST STEPS

by Alex Joyner

It was a Saturday evening on the steps of First Church. I was out on the portico filming and I noticed two people down on the sidewalk. They seemed to be waiting for someone. One of them called up to me when he saw I was packing up my gear. "Hey, is it alright if we use the steps for a few minutes?"

As it turned out, he was a pastor from Virginia Beach who had come to Charlottesville to do a renewal of marriage vows for some friends. The couple had chosen the steps of our church for a brief sunset ceremony. I was pleased to tell them, "Certainly, and I'll add my blessings as well."

We've been rediscovering our steps during these past two years. During the pandemic the steps and portico made a good outdoor space for gathering. When the statue was removed from the park across the street, we played music for those gathered in the park. On the anniversary of the August 12 rally, a trombone choir gave a free concert on the steps. We've had the paleta man come to visit for an after-church treat and now we have the Portico Café post-service.

Our steps are where our church meets the city. They are a place where we have the opportunity to begin our outreach. They are the first test of our commitment to love our neighbors.

I love our steps and I love this community. Where can we go next in building our relationship with the place where we are? I'm gathering a vision team to help us start living this out. We'll be asking for your visions too. And as we begin you just might catch us... out on the steps.

In Christ, Alex



THE PORTICO CAFE

Have you enjoyed having some refreshments the past few weeks while greeting one another after worship on the front portico? We hope so!

Many thanks to those who have helped set up and/or provided cookies and muffins. We would like to continue what we're calling the "Portico Cafe" until we can again safely meet and greet indoors after church.

If you'd like to help, either with set up, serving, or providing store bought treats (due to Covid), please email or call Lisa Hanrahan, ligrhanrah@aol.com, 434-245-1764. It won't mean every week or even every month but if we have a list of people to call on as needed, it will make less work for others. Thanks in advance!

~ Lisa Hanrahan



Children's Ministry

Calling for volunteers to help with a Children's Chapel time on Sunday mornings! After the children's message, the children will be invited to go with two adults to the Chapel for a time of stories, music, and small craft. Adults and children will all be masked. We cannot make this happen without our wonderful volunteers! Interested? Contact carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org.

NEW TO THE FUMC STAFF!
KATHLEEN MUELLER
TECHNOLOGY AND
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



Kathleen has been working in the production world for 30 plus years, always in a behind the scenes capacity. She has worked for the US Senate, PBS stations in both Detroit and Seattle, plus various production and post-production houses. Kathleen has also worked the last 7 years on many local community theater stage productions as stage manager and sound designer.



CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES

This past August we saw the last of the color coded, date specific envelopes used for our offerings. Now there will be new envelopes available at the front and back of the Sanctuary for those who wish to continue their use. They will be pre-addressed to the church for mailing. For anyone wishing to give a cash offering, putting your name in the return address section of the envelope will assure your gift being credited to your giving record. For those unable to attend services, please call the church office and a pack of envelopes will be mailed to you. ~ Thank you for your faithful offerings. *Beryl Wilkes, FUMC Church Treasurer*

FINANCIAL BOX SCORE

Year to date

Total Income: \$434,086.74

Total Expenses: \$396,505.18

WELCOME!

We welcome to the First United Methodist Church Family the following:

- ◇ Melissa, Ryan, and Oliver Dorris.
- ◇ Kojiro Matthew Ichida-Marsh, (call him Matt Marsh!)
- ◇ Suzanne Joyner
- ◇ Chris and Jim Roehl



Make a point to introduce yourselves to our newest members!



OPPORTUNITY TO HELP OUR NEW NEIGHBORS FROM AFGHANISTAN

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.” [Leviticus 19:33-34, NIV](#)

“But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’” [Luke 10:29, NIV](#)

The local chapter of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) is part of the massive effort to resettle families from Afghanistan who have fled the country. Many of these brave folks are arriving with few possessions and are now beginning the process of adjusting to a new city, culture, and language. These are major challenges that we can help, in a small way, to alleviate.

The local IRC office is pausing the acceptance of donated items for the rest of September, as the response from the community has been great and they need some time to move the items received to date into homes. In the meantime, they are asking for the donation of gift cards that will help our new neighbors. They ask that the gift cards be for one of these accessible stores:

- ◇ Kroger
- ◇ Food Lion
- ◇ Walmart
- ◇ Amazon

If you would like to help, you can purchase gift cards and leave them in the offering plate or drop them by the church office. We hope to be able to deliver a stack of gift cards to the IRC office in a few weeks. Thanks for your help!



NOT RECEIVING THE WEDNESDAY BLAST?
CHECK YOUR SPAM, PROMOTIONS, OR TRASH!



WOMEN AT THE WELL THURSDAY MORNING STUDY

Our first Thursday gathering kicked off with a morning of making no-sew tee-shirt bags to send to Haiti! About 30 bags were made in under 1 hour! The following Thursdays, the women will be seen studying Adam Hamilton's "Making Sense of the Bible." The study is available in person in the Fellowship Hall or on ZOOM. Contact carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org with questions or for the link. Are you are interested in a study at a different time due to work/family schedules? Contact Carolyn!



ONE THING MINISTRY

Thank you to all that donated peanut butter in August! We collected 197 pounds for The Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry! September's ONE THING was face masks for Haiti. October will see us collecting diapers for little bottoms to be donated to Loaves and Fishes. Drop off containers will be throughout the church.

The Ronald McDonald House also sends a BIG thank you for our donation of 26 pounds of pop-top tabs! Keep them coming!



**CONGRATULATIONS TO
JULIA KUDRAVETZ ON
HER RECENT ENGAGE-
MENT TO JOEL HOPPE!**

IT ALL STARTED WITH A CARD GAME: THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS THAT WOULD NOT QUIT!

by Patricia Graham



Would you believe, a Sunday School class evolved from a card game? No ordinary class, they have met together, for 38 years often in the same room! As a current class member, I had often wondered how the class got started.

Recently, Kathlene Harding (our one remaining charter member) sat down with me and told me how it all began. Following that, Joan Elledge, long term member and greatly loved teacher, shared a booklet written by June Chaffin, also a charter member and no longer with us. I'm sharing June's exact words now: (direct and unedited)!

"The Adult Fellowship Class evolved over a friendly card game- as the evening waned, the stakes were high, and candles were low. The year was 1983. Four gentlemen, Gene Harding, Don Carroll, Bud Burton and Blain McIntire, decided that there should be a Men's Sunday School class here at First Church. However, before their plans got off the ground, they thought why not include the wives and other ladies as well? All but one of the foursome agreed with this idea so the majority ruled." June Chaffin, 1997. The class grew as word got out about this new class and their classroom quickly filled.

Nothing has stopped them since then- not COVID restrictions, church disruptions, dividing issues, member changes; through it all they have hung in there. What has held them together for so long? June's recorded class activities from 1997 to 2007 provided answers. I found it was truly "all about the love"- love for their members and others, love of learning and loving to have a good time! The class is an example of Jesus' words: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. John 13:34, NRSV.

Class members' love is far-reaching, for many others near and far. Each year they have provided financial support for FUMP (Preschool) and that practice continues. They have donated faithfully to the Prison Ministry, and continue to contribute to PACEM each year. Each Thanksgiving and Christmas class members have found a needy family and have provided food and gifts. Caring for each other during grief and illness, with prayers words, hugs, cards, food and visits are done freely and automatically as needed.

Their love of learning comes through as they describe various teachers who have inspired them across the years. Joan Elledge (was) "our distinguished teacher for more than a dozen years" Chaffin, 2004.

At some points in the history of the class, teachers have had to stop teaching for a variety of reasons. Following Joan, Sheila Balian "stepped up to the plate" presenting each lesson with warmth and professionalism which is her own personal trademark." Chaffin 2005. At other times, without a lead teacher, class members have pitched in, taking turns teaching and keeping the class intact. (cont. page 4)

CREATION JUSTICE CORNER

HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Does it seem overwhelming to make an impact on global warming at a personal level? It may seem that way, but the actions of many individuals can make a difference. Here are a few easy steps that can help you become more environmentally conscious and reduce your carbon footprint.

Buy energy-efficient appliances

Using less energy around the home is one of the more direct ways to reduce your burden on the environment. Using less energy means putting fewer harmful emissions into the atmosphere. Look for appliances with the Energy Star label. An added bonus of efficient energy usage is the money you'll save on monthly bills.

Waste less water

Taking shorter showers and turning off the tap while brushing your teeth are two of the simplest positive changes you can make to your daily routine. This helps reduce atmospheric pollution because it takes a lot less energy for the water that reaches your home to first be collected, purified, pumped, and heated.

Eat less meat

According to Greenpeace, the livestock sector of our global economy generates as much greenhouse gas emissions as all the world's automobiles combined. Even if you don't swear off meat altogether, developing a meat-conscious approach to your diet and incorporating more plant-based meals can benefit both your health and the environment.

Unplugging

Many devices you leave plugged into your outlets draw power even when they are not being used. A fully charged phone or a "turned off" TV still has an idle load on your energy consumption. Make sure you aren't needlessly consuming energy by unplugging devices whenever you aren't actively using them.

Take public transportation

Less driving = less fuel consumption, which means less carbon dioxide entering the atmosphere. Choose public transportation as often as possible. Even if you can't go totally car-free, you can still make a difference by riding a bus or a train. And you'll save money on gas!



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOK

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL time! The theme this year is "Home for Christmas." Send your memories, stories, devotionals to carolynmcgee@cvillefirststumc.org by November 1. Carolyn will be happy to add a scripture and prayer or you do it! This completed booklet, a short devotional for each day of Advent, will make for a nice gift to give/send to loved ones or give to neighbors/coworkers. What a nice way to share the good news of the birth of a Savior!

(Sunday School, cont. from page 3)

My involvement with the class began when Sheila invited me to visit the class. I had recently moved to Charlottesville (2009) and had planned to visit several classes before deciding on one. Two Sundays with this group and I was hooked- I never wanted to go anywhere else!



This class loves to have a good time and that was evident from the start! Every description of the class's activities made some reference to the annual Christmas party. At the top of the list was the "White Elephant" game still played to this day and an on-going tradition of fun and laughter! Although I suspect that the elephants of the past may have been whiter and funnier than those of today, it continues to be a fun time for all.

Much of the fun comes from class members themselves as they share stories from the past and present. One involved a truck full of animals returning from a live Nativity Scene accompanied by some of our senior male class members. Somehow two of the cows got loose from the truck and ran into the woods! Picture our senior men quickly exiting the truck to chase the cows down while neighbors watched from their porches and shouted advice. "Grab them by the tail" was heard frequently (might have worked if they had found a tail to grab!)

While they love to have a good time, they handle sad times as well. During times of crisis, whatever is needed, class members jump right in. Members have been lost; not always to death, but always missed.

As we emerged from the COVID restrictions the class faced new issues. Our church services had changed, we did not have teachers, and we had lost some class members. So, we met and asked the ultimate question "Should we disband as a group?" *(cont. page 5)*

(Sunday School cont. from page 4) One of our newer members quickly said, "I would like the class to continue!" We then began brainstorming for a way to keep the class together without putting excessive demands on the teacher/s. We settled on a hymn study based on the book "Then Sings My Soul" (RJ Morgan). Now class members take turns discussing two favorite or seasonably appropriate hymns each week. The hymns trigger memories that provide for discussion beyond the base of the book. We sing our hymns at the end, and that we've found ways to have musical accompaniment as needed. On that note we invite you to drop in and join us in Room 208 some Sunday at 11 AM. You will have a good time and will get a firsthand look at "The Class That WILL NOT QUIT!"



YOUTH GROUP UPDATE



The FUMC Youth Group's 2021-2022 year is off to a terrific start! Kids and adults gathered for our

annual pool kick-off party on September 12 and it was a wonderful afternoon of swimming, food, and fellowship. A week later, a new tradition was launched... the First Annual Youth Group Tailgate was a roaring success, as youth and leaders Dave Breslin and Philip Hahn gathered in the church parking lot for tailgating involving a breakfast buffet, cornhole, and fellowship. Coming up on September 26th will be our monthly Pen Park Activity Night, which will include a pizza dinner, kickball, airsoft, and a discussion on the Fruits of the Spirit. October will be filled with fun and fellowship, as well as day trips to Watermark Camp and Kings Dominion. Youth Group Families: watch for details in your weekly youth group updates!



BEING THE CHURCH IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD BY KAY KOTAN

Review by Frank McMullen



Several members of our church recently completed a study of "Being the Church in a Post-Pandemic World" lead by our pastor, Alex Joyner. I heartily recommend reading and contemplating the eight recommendations made by author, Kay Kotan. She begins by stating that our life and habits have forever been changed by the pandemic and there is definitely no going back. This book may indeed change your perspectives of what your church should be in this newly created world.



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

HABITAT HAS A VISION FOR THE GREATER CHARLOTTESVILLE COMMUNITY: TO BE A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE CAN FIND A DECENT PLACE TO LIVE.

But what do you know about Habitat and First Church? A team of First United Methodist Church members regularly work to make that vision a reality, to make a difference in the lives of people in our community. Habitat builds about 20 homes a year, providing interest-free loans, and new owners help provide sweat equity.

Strategic planning calls for Habitat to leverage family ownership to catalyze pathways to decent affordable housing. The different parts of the strategic plan include Building, Rebuilding, Housing System Development, and The Habitat Store, all of which will directly address the conditions that cause housing poverty in the first place.

Next Steps

Volunteer once a month to work at one of the job sites with other people from FUMC. You don't need experience; you just have to be at least 18 years old.

- ◇ The Outreach budget donates \$1,000 annually to Habitat.
- ◇ The Youth Group plans on doing a "rack-a-thon" to help raise money, and spend some time volunteering at the Store.
- ◇ Take a Habitat van tour to see finished projects and projects in progress around Charlottesville. It is well worth the time!

For more information contact Charles Kidd at Charleslkidd@yahoo.com.

Thank you for your support in the community now and in the past!



DUETS TO LIFT THE SPIRIT!

Heather Hightower and Christina Fleming, vocals
Kevin White, piano

October 23 at 4:00 p.m. FUMC Sanctuary

This program is a celebration of the joy of music, sharing in the fun of being alive! Opera and oratorio selections by Mozart, Vivaldi, Delibes, Faure, Pergolesi and Parker.



First United Methodist Preschool

FUMP (FIRST UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL) NEWS

We are off to a fantastic start here at FUMP! The two-year-old class is learning to be away from their parents for the first time (not always easy) and they are doing such a great job. The three-year-old class is learning how to use their words to express what they need. (again...not always easy) and the Pre-K class is focusing on the letter A this week. You will find in our big room we have a store where the children can sell apples (Chiles Orchard competition!) and paint pictures of things that begin with the letter A. We are busy, busy, busy! In the next edition of The New Focus we will introduce you to our fabulous teachers, Anika Winterhoff, Caroline Chang, Nickie David, and Chrissy Porco and teaching assistants, Sara Daniel, Nickie David, and Jennie Bottas.



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CHARLOTTESVILLE FIRST UNITED
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@CVILLEFIRSTUMC



GET TO KNOW THE ROEHL!



The Roehl family consists of Chris, Jim & Aimee (a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel). We met and later married at Camp Highroad (a UM summer camp & retreat center) in Middleburg, VA. We lived in King George (east of Fredericksburg) where we raised our 2 sons, David & Mark who are in their 30s & are both Eagle Scouts. We enjoy walking Aimee, bicycling, eating out, swimming, sailing and volunteering.



Jim worked as a civilian engineer for the Navy for his whole career. He graduated from UVA as a Nuclear Engineer. Chris worked at various things: having & raising kids, secretary, payroll, CPA (doing individual taxes and estates), volunteer in 1st grade classrooms and always cooking. She graduated from Lebanon Valley College (PA) and U of Mary Washington.

Since we retired we have been moving around a lot. (The kids keep finding us.) We've lived in: Meyersdale, PA (to ride on the GAP Trail), Florence, AL (to take care of Chris' father when he was in hospice), Rincon, PR (one block from the beach to swim, snorkle & scuba dive), Henrico, VA, Lancaster, PA (to wait out reconstruction in PR after Hurricane Maria), Rincon (again), Farmville, VA (to ride on the High Bridge Trail) and now Charlottesville. We also travel to bike, mostly on Rail to Trails (they're fairly flat).

Chris' favorite foods are chocolate & cheese. Jim's are anything you put in front of him.



DOING THE RIGHT AND LOVING THING

The PRG, (Post-Covid Reentry Group) set up protocols to make coming together in the building as safe as possible. As a body of Christ, we all show our LOVE for one another by wearing masks while in the building and maintaining social distancing. We do this even though it might be considered uncomfortable. Even in times outside of COVID, we request that all groups must reserve meeting rooms with Joey, our Church Administrator, (office@cvillefirstumc.org) to avoid conflicts with scheduling, so the air conditioning/heat will be on, and the rooms properly sanitized. We request that all groups that meet in the building please wear masks as you enter the building and any time that you are not in your assigned room. We can agree that most of us are weary of all that comes with COVID protocols, but let us continue to give each other grace, as we will make mistakes. Gently remind each other to use masks. Let us continue to reach out with respect, hope, and encouragement. If you have concerns please bring them to one of the following PRG members and they will seek to find answers.

Kathy Berlin kjberlin56@gmail.com · Hu Shaffer huberts@aol.com
Guy Moffatt rgmvaconsulting@gmail.com

