



FIRST
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A NEW Focus

April, 2021 | Issue 2

NEW PROJECTED PASTOR FOR FIRST UMC IN JULY 2021!



Alex Joyner, 57, is currently the District Superintendent of the United Methodist churches on Virginia's Eastern Shore, where he has lived since 2005. Rev. Joyner has served pastorates in Texas, England, and Virginia, and was the campus minister at the Wesley Foundation at UVA from 1998-2005. He is the author or co-author of 8 books and is a staff writer for the FaithLink curriculum. He also edits the Heartlands website (www.alexjoyner.com). He has taught Bible, history, and theology courses for the UM Course of Study program in Dallas and Burundi.

Alex holds degrees from the University of Virginia and Southern Methodist University. He is married to Suzanne Birdsall Joyner and they

are the parents of two adult children: Joel and Rachel. Both Alex and Suzanne grew up in the Charlottesville area and have family members living close by.



FUMP (FIRST UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL)

It is with excitement and gratitude that we would like to announce FUMP is re-opening for the 2021-22 school year! We are very grateful to our church family for your support and prayers during our closure for COVID.

FUMP is pleased to report that two of our three classes are fully enrolled. We do have a few spaces in our two-year-old class so spread the word! For more information, email us at fump@cvillefirstumc.org.

FINANCIAL BOX SCORE

Year to date through February

Total Income:	\$108,302.68
Operating Expenses:	\$68,623.87

(As a side note, we pay apportionments and other outreach giving quarterly and will be sending out about \$35,000 in March.)

FUMC PRAYER TEAM

Did you know that there is a faithful group of folks that are VERY serious about the task of lifting up our praises, our prayers, and our pleadings? Every week a list of prayer requests from the membership and community is sent to them via email and they get to work! Charles Finney once said, "Nothing tends more to cement the hearts of Christians than praying together. Never do they love one another so well as when they witness the outpouring of each other's hearts in prayer." If you are interested in being part of this integral ensemble of prayer warriors, contact nurture@cvillefirstumc.org.

THANK YOU FUMC FRIENDS!

Nancy Hensley and her sister Brenda Garrison would like to thank their friends at FUMC for the cards and letters they have received. They so appreciate their church family and all the kindnesses shown, especially during this time of isolation.



WELCOME TO THE WORLD!

George and Avan Batten are the very proud and happy parents of Maximus Ordell Batten! Born on May 31, 2020, his grandparents are Maurya and Patrick Batten and Susan and Bill Ordell. Max or Maximus sometimes known as Maxey Monster enjoys clapping and reading "I Howl, I Growl," ...often at the same time! We can't wait to meet you in person Max!



WANT A COOL JOB?

Trustees are looking for a member of the church who would be interested in learning about our HVAC systems for the church building. This member would become a member of the church property committee to help monitor the systems from their home computer. Requests from the church office to change space temperatures or occupied times could be part of their duties. Eventually this person could communicate with the HVAC contractor to schedule HVAC maintenance and repairs. This person would be working with the new Facility Administrator and myself. If you are interested, please contact Guy Moffat at rgmhvacconsulting@gmail.com or call 434-531-3152.

MEMBER DEVOTION

"RETHINKING CHURCH AS WE LOOK TO REOPEN"

By Bill Clarke



*But how can they call on him
to save them unless they believe in
him? And how can they believe in him
if they have never heard about him?
And how can they hear about him
unless someone tells them?*

Romans 10:14 (NLT)

None of us could have anticipated last February that a coronavirus pandemic would last for such a long time and require so many changes to routine activities including forcing FUMC to close its doors to congregational worship. The good news for the people of God, however, is that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And His church continues to worship regularly despite the conditions we find ourselves in. Indeed, we have had to "Rethink" our church rapidly and adapt to on-line worship with unique musical offerings, creative sermon topics, locations, and a host of lay volunteers participating in greetings, scripture readings, and congregational prayers. The great success of these services is evidenced by the over 400 worshipping viewers each Sunday

Several years ago, the United Methodist Church asked congregations to "Rethink Church" and provided some provocative ideas about what "Church" might become in the future. What if "Church" were a verb instead of a noun? What if "Church" were "a movement of people empowered to transform the world, seeking to make disciples of Jesus Christ by gathering in buildings on Sunday, seeing the world as its parish, and then acting faithfully in it?" What if the Church experience extended well beyond its doors? What if the church were not just a place to come into and stay within, but a base of operations for the faithful to express that faith by moving out into communities and around the globe to be a part of God's plan for the world's transformation"? What if those "Open Doors" were really opened so that everyone who knocked knew that the door would be opened? (cont. page 3)



("Member Devotion" cont.) Don't you wonder what church is going to look like when the pandemic is over and we can once again meet in person? Who will be in the congregation that returns? Will there be new worshipers? Will we recognize people we haven't seen for well over a year? How will we "Rethink" this new church experience? Will re-thinking church be like re-inventing our worship services or will we just attempt to copy what we were doing in February 2020? What parts of our successful on-line services will we wish to continue? What will we decide is critical to our worship experiences and what will we decide is not essential?

There are many unknowns and many important questions awaiting us when we come together, in-person again "Re-thinking" church will be an exciting challenge and an opportunity for spiritual growth. May each of us seek His guidance and grace as we begin again.



HANDBELLS

We will celebrate being back in church in person on May 23, Pentecost Sunday! Our musical praise in worship will need to be "non-aerosol" for awhile, so we will be starting up handbell rehearsals very soon! This ensemble is open to all and welcomes new members. Questions? kevinwhite@cvillefirstumc.org



SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES



THE WOMEN AT THE WELL

are collecting Face Masks to be sent to Haiti. If you don't sew, many retail businesses (and Amazon) are selling packs of masks very inexpensively! For those of you that DO sew, there is fabric for the taking in the church office if you want to make some for this project. Let's continue to work toward our goal of collecting 2000! On another note, everyone has been so faithful collecting and saving pop tabs for the local Ronald McDonald House (be sure to separate the tab from the lid). Continue to save 'em and bring 'em in!! All items can be left in the Welcome Center at church. Thanks in advance!



HOW CAN WE FINANCIALLY SUPPORT OUR CHURCH?

The pandemic has changed so many things in the life of our church; how we worship, how we meet, and how we give.

My name is Beryl Wilkes and I am the FUMC Treasurer. I would like to share the many ways that you can continue to give of your tithes and offerings as we look to get back to worshipping in person in the near future.

Use of the FUMC church website (cvillefirstumc.org): The on-line Giving portal is on the top right of the webpage. Our church utilizes the secure Vanco Services, LLC as our web host for transaction processing. It is simple to use and gives options such as using your checking account, saving account, or a debit or credit card, and whether you wish to give on a regular schedule, or on a one-time basis. This service does have minimal charges, but please note that you are given *full credit* for your gift.

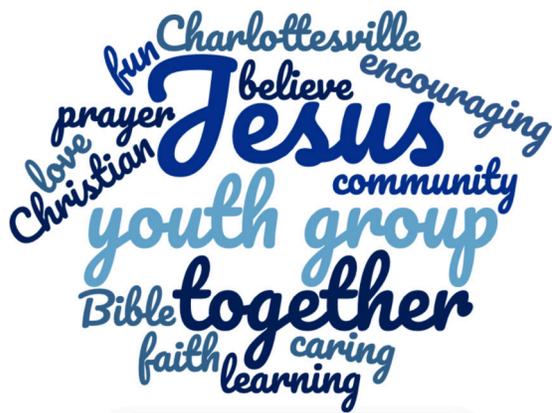
If your bank offers a **bill-pay option**, you can set up a payment to the church.

Checks can still be mailed to the church (101 East Jefferson Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902) where they will be placed in a secure Finance Office lockbox until they are tallied and deposited each week. Church envelope use is optional.

Cash gifts can be deposited in the lockbox, just down the hall from the main area of the church office as well. If you wish your gift to be credited to your giving account, please place it in an envelope with your name on it.

As the pandemic hit last year, the church was in the process of looking at some of the newer forms of receiving gifts such as card readers, Venmo, etc. We are once again looking to add some new options for giving.

Please let me take this opportunity to thank you all for your faithfulness in giving and fulfilling pledges in this very difficult past year. In this, we
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."



MEET THE HOTT FAMILY!

(ASK PATRICIA WHAT “DIAMOND PAINTING IS...)



Patricia and Robbie Hott were married at First UMC in 2014. They met through Patricia's cousin, who went to college with Robbie. Robbie is an Assistant Professor at UVA in the Computer Science Department. Patricia works for the state office of Habitat for Humanity managing grants. In August 2020 they welcomed baby Micah! Patricia became a part of the First UMC community in late 2006 when Rev. Harry Kennon invited several college students to help with a movie night he was leading for the youth. The rest is history, as she has continued to volunteer with the youth group ever since! Robbie started worshiping at First soon after the pair began dating in 2013. At the time, he was volunteering with a youth group in Richmond.



In their abundant spare time as new parents (ha!ha!), both Robbie and Patricia enjoy reading and board games. Patricia likes doing crafty projects, and last year tried her hand at “diamond painting” (which involves neither diamonds nor paint!). Robbie enjoys photography and puzzle-based games. Baby Micah's favorite activities include story time, babbling, eating, and chewing anything he can reach.



WE ARE “COUNTING” OUR BLESSINGS

A warm welcome is extended to Sharon Bogdon, our new Financial Manager! Sharon lives in Forest, Virginia and will be commuting to the church when needed, plus working from home. Sharon has extensive experience in accounting and is familiar with several accounting software programs including the Methodist ACS system and Quickbooks. She was the Controller for Glen Mar UMC, (3,000 members) in Ellicott City, Maryland. She is also an accountant for Synergi, LLC in Elkridge, Maryland. She has worked for a Homeowners Association, the Mitre Corporation, and was budget analyst at the Pentagon. We are confident that her vast experience will enhance the financial programs at First United Methodist Church and we're looking forward to her joining the family!



A hearty thank you to Beryl Wilkes, our dedicated Church Treasurer and Anika Winterhoff for taking on this roll for an extended amount of time during the transition. They both have taken the definition of “volunteer” to another level. Please accept our deep-felt appreciation.

YOUTH GROUP OFF AND RUNNING

The Youth Program is once again up and running! Middle school (grades 6-8) and high school (grades 9-12) gatherings have been taking place for a month via Zoom on Sunday nights, and both groups are busy getting acquainted. Led by new Youth Coordinator Dave Breslin and the power trio of Phillip Hahn and Patricia and Robbie Hott, students and leaders are learning how to use the Bible as a guide during times of joy and challenge. Currently, our students are studying James 1:2-3 and Romans 8:28 and discussing how to handle challenging times through the lens of faith.

Dave states “I'm really encouraged by the kids that have been showing up for our Zoom gatherings. They are really inquisitive and seem focused on learning how to depend on God during good and challenging times. In addition, they are super fun and we cannot wait to start to get together in-person as soon as possible! Having Phillip, Patricia, and Robbie helping to guide and encourage our middle and high schoolers is such a blessing...they are terrific examples of what faith-based lives look like!”

The youth will continue to meet via Zoom through March, and hope to have their first in-person gathering early in April. Currently, the youth group represents 11 area middle and high schools...how's that for diversity!

Contact davebreslin@cvillefirstumc.org for more info!



FROM THE PASTORS:



In the last month, your pastors have participated in a significant and uniquely United Methodist experience. Guided by the Holy Spirit, our ecclesial leaders facilitated gatherings that introduced both of us to the new congregations and communities that we will begin serving in July. As itinerant ministers, we are sent by the bishop to serve God through telling the story of Jesus and meeting the pastoral needs of the communities and congregations to which we have been sent. It has been our privilege to both tell this story, and pastor the people of First United Methodist Church, the surrounding community, and the wider world over the past several years.

Having received new projected appointments for ministry, we will be leaving this area at the end of June to serve in the northern part of the state. Gary has been projected to serve at Kernstown United Methodist Church (just outside of Winchester) and Phil at Springfield United Methodist Church (in the suburbs



of Washington D.C.). This will be Gary's last time to itinerate as he and Beth will be moving into their own home in the Shenandoah Valley. Apart from the appointment to serve at Wesley Memorial this past year, this will be the first time that Phil and his family will be moving to a new faith community as the Pastor and family.

Phil's appointment is not only an opportunity to step into a church as the lead pastor, but also an honor to First United Methodist Church as this is the congregation that affirmed his calling and developed his pastoral identity. We both are pleased with our projected appointments.

Our primary focus for the last few months of our ministry in Charlottesville will be to bring the church out of the "COVID" pandemic and into a time of regathering in a post-pandemic world. The Healthy Church Team and the Board of Trustees have set Sunday May 23rd (PENTECOST SUNDAY) as the date we plan to re-open the sanctuary for public worship. The last several years have been filled with some dramatic and



challenging events in the life of the church.

The Holy Spirit has led us to respond in bold and creative ways that have challenged and strengthened us. The faithfulness and giftedness of this congregation has been an inspiration and affirmation to us about the power of the love of God to serve and transform this world. You are the Body of Christ at work in the world. You are the Love of God made known to your community. You are the family of believers whom God has brought together to worship and serve.

Your new pastor, the Rev. Alex Joyner will continue to work with us in this transitional time. He has been praying for us and already participating in administrative and staffing efforts to ready the church for in-person worship sometime in the late spring/early summer. We pray that you will receive him into the life of the church and the community with joy and anticipation. We know that his gifts and graces will be a blessing to you as you will be a blessing to him.

Please pray for us and our ministry as we move on to another parish. We will pray for you, giving thanks for the work we have done, for the spiritual growth that we have experienced, and for the relationships that have built us up in love.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Gary Heaton & Rev. Phil Woodson



Not Alone - *Preparing to commune with God and each other at the Lord's table.*

Goal: To celebrate Holy Communion in worship on Easter Sunday.

On Easter Sunday (April 4), as part of our online livestreamed worship service, the pastors are planning to lead the congregation in a service of Word & Table. To prepare for this service, the pastors will consecrate and distribute communion elements to the congregation on Maundy Thursday (April 1), with the expectation that everyone will wait until Easter morning to consume the bread and wine together in worship.

On Maundy Thursday (April 1), the pastors will be at **First UMC from 11am-1pm** and then at **Wesley Memorial UMC from 5pm-7pm** to distribute pre-packaged communion cups. Congregants and community members alike are encouraged to pick up their communion elements at either location and to coordinate pick-ups for friends, family, and neighbors who might not be able to drive to the churches at these times.

Holy Week Schedule

Palm/Passion Sunday – Sunday, March 28

- Online Worship Service – 10am (First) 11am (Wesley)

Maundy Thursday – Thursday, April 1

- The pastors will be at **First UMC from 11am-1pm** and then at **Wesley Memorial UMC from 5pm-7pm** to distribute pre-packaged communion cups. Congregants and community members alike are encouraged to pick up their communion elements at either location and to coordinate pick-ups for friends, family, and neighbors who might not be able to drive to the churches at these times.

Good Friday – Friday, April 2

- A brief worship service with music and readings that is centered around the *Seven Last Words of Christ* will be posted online at noon.

Easter – Sunday, April 4

- Online Worship Service (with Holy Communion) – 10am (First) 11am (Wesley)