



a New Beginning

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEW YEAR



Greetings First Church Family,

Gloria and I wish each of you a "Happy New Year." We now embark on a new year. A new year is just what it says. A new opportunity. A new page. A new beginning. This is God's gift to us and what we do with this new year will be our gift to God.

On my mind are the new ministry opportunities before us. I really believe with my whole heart that we, individually and as church, have the opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of others. We have the opportunity to introduce and represent Jesus to others in tangible ways. We have the opportunity to grow in our faith. This Connecting Point highlights numerous small groups to help us grow as Jesus' disciples. We have the opportunity be creative and dream, think outside the box, and vision what FUMCT can be in this new year and beyond. We have the opportunity to focus on our purpose, our WHY, our mission to **"make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of our [church, community and] world."** God has given us a promise as we seek to realize our opportunities before us in this new year. It is the same promise God gave to Joshua as he is on the threshold to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. **Joshua 1:9** says...**"Remember that I commanded you to be strong and courageous! Don't be afraid and don't panic, for I, the Lord your God, am with you in all you do!"**

I do not make New Year's resolutions. I just try to be better than I was in the previous year. For 2023, we can be a better church than we were in 2022. I want to be a better husband, father, and grandfather in this new year. I want to be a better preacher and a better pastor for FUMCT in this new year. We can be better. We must remember God's promise...**"Don't be afraid and don't panic, for God is with us in all we do!"** Let us expect better for our mission and ministries this year. Expect better for your life this year. I will expect better in my endeavors this year. Let us remember that God is with us in all we will do in 2023.

Blessings,

Dr. Clinton Hubbard, Jr.

Wednesdays are ALIVE!

SPRING
2023



CLASSES RESUME JANUARY 11, 2023

Dinner: 4:45-6:00 p.m.

Classes: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Peaceful Presence

Leaders: Danielle Spree & Nicole Swoszowski

Contact: dac724@yahoo.com

Location: Room #307

Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dates: January 11th-February 8th

Whether you are a woman facing the painful challenge of conceiving, or if you have suffered the unbearable experience of miscarriage or infant loss, you are not alone. This group will focus on creating a supportive community for women as we examine our faith through the challenge of multiple levels of grief, no matter the timing of loss or heartache. We will study the book, *Held* by Abbey Wedgeworth which uses "Psalm 139...to remind grieving women that God sees them, knows them, loves them, and is actively caring for them. These precious verses will show women that God can bring comfort, assurance, protection, and purpose in the very sorrow that they are experiencing."

WNA

WOMEN'S SMALL GROUPS

sponsored by
CULTIVATE WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Find Your People

Leader: Megan Winningham

Contact: meganelizabethhf@yahoo.com

Location: Room #212

Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dates: January 11th-February 8th

In a world that's both more connected and more isolating than ever before, we're often tempted to do life alone, whether because we're so busy or because relationships feel risky and hard. You were created to play, engage, adventure, and explore—with others. In *Find Your People*, you'll discover exactly how to dive into the deep end and experience the full wonder of community.

He is Enough

Leaders: Susan Page

Contact: spage830@gmail.com

Location: Room #308

Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dates: January 11th-February 8th

We live in a world of scarcity. We say, "I don't have enough time... maybe when we have more money...if only I had a little more help..." But Scripture says if we have Jesus, we have enough. In this 6-week study of Colossians, Asheritah Ciuciu leads readers to discover the life-altering importance of Jesus' sufficiency and sovereignty. Discover the joy and freedom that abounds when we know deep in our hearts that Jesus truly is enough.



SMALL GROUPS
for
MEN & WOMEN

FUMCT, UMC and Our Future

Leaders: Dr. Clinton Hubbard, Jr. & Adam Lang

Location: Sanctuary

Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dates: January 11th-February 8th

The mission of the church is "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of our church, community, and world." For over 200 years, this is what FUMCT has sought to do. We welcome everyone to participate in the life and ministry of FUMCT. Our mission to make disciples requires us to do it together--excluding no one. The present climate of the general church challenges us to conversation and clarity about our future as United Methodists. We will explore what the present climate of disaffiliation, discernment, stay UMC, etc., means for FUMCT as we move forward with our mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ. If you would like to submit questions in advance, please email them to Mary Miller at mary@fumct.org no later than Tuesday each week.

Friends United in Faith

Leader: Ann Marie Jordan

Contact: annslight@icloud.com

Location: Parker Fireside Room

Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dates: Begins January 11th

Our community of single individuals grows in faith and learns to navigate the world around us. We come from various denominations, backgrounds and professions. The group meets on Wednesday nights to embrace the adventure of learning that one is a whole number. Within this group we support each other as we study and grow together. Be you divorced, widowed or never married, we have a place for you. No registration required.

Transformative Grace

Leader: Rev. Jeremiah Wilson

Contact: jeremiah@fumct.org

Location: Chapel

Time: 5:45-7:00 p.m.

Dates: January 11th – February 8th

As a part of completing his Doctor of Ministry, Jeremiah will conduct a 5-week growth group discussing, "A Service of Word and Table," the liturgy for Holy Communion. The group will dive into learning how God's grace is received through the service and the impact that grace has on our spiritual, psychological, emotional, and relational health. Jeremiah is looking for a diverse group of all ages from both Traditions and Bridge service. However, space is limited. Contact Rev. Jeremiah Wilson.

Spirit Yoga

Leader: Janice Stewart

Contact: janice@fumct.org

Location: Room #110

Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dates: January 11th – February 8th

This is a yoga class for all levels with an emphasis on connecting mind, body, and spirit as we connect to God. Each session will start with a brief devotion and end with a Bible verse to meditate on during the relaxation time. Bring a mat!

Chancel Choir

Leader: Dr. Justin W. Durham

Contact: justin@fumct.org

Location: Choir Room #004 – Lower Level

Time: 7:05-8:35 p.m.

Dates: ongoing

The Chancel Choir welcomes anyone of high school age or older who enjoys singing choral music. No audition is needed. Music reading skills, while not required, are helpful. The Chancel Choir helps lead Traditions worship services each week and presents seasonal programs throughout the year. A strong culture of friendship and community is fostered when the joy of making music is shared each week. Childcare is available.

SPRING
2023

Handbell Choir

Leader: Jerrod Newell

Contact: jerrodnewell@yahoo.com

Location: Bell Choir Room #003 – Lower Level

Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dates: ongoing

The Handbell Choir plays during Traditions worship services one Sunday each month from September – May and is open to anyone high school age or older. New members are always welcome, and no experience playing bells is required; however, a basic understanding of how to read music is important. Those who are interested are welcome to attend a couple of rehearsals and shadow a current handbell member to see what playing bells is all about. Seasonal fellowship activities help create strong friendships among members of the group.

Children's Choir

Leader: Leah Durham

Contact: leahdurham.fumct@gmail.com

Location: Choir Room #004 – Lower Level

Time: 5:30-6:00 p.m. (Before FirstKids/FOOMACK)

Dates: ongoing

Children's Choir is for any 3rd-6th grader who loves to sing! This group has fun learning more about our voices and serving Jesus through song. The Children's Choir sings in church services in both Traditions and the Bridge several times each year.

A People of Grace: The Means of Grace

Leader: Rev. Jeremiah Wilson

Contact: jeremiah@fumct.org

Location: Room #304

Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dates: April 12th – May 3rd

Each week we will look at one of the Means of Grace understood by John Wesley; Prayer, Searching of Scriptures, Fasting, The Lord's Supper, and Christian Conferencing. The Means of Grace are outward signs God convey to humanity preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace. Come learn how these means of grace are a constant reminder to us in our lives of God's love.

Wellness WNA

Leader: Presenters coordinated by Janice Stewart

Contact: janice@fumct.org

Location: Room #220

Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dates: April 12th – May 3rd

APRIL 12 – NUTRITION PART 1

Basic guidelines and healthy eating tips

News Flash - the Food Pyramid that many of us learned about in school was abandoned years ago because it was WRONG. Do you know what is was replaced by? Many of us lack the knowledge, self-discipline, and/or planning skills needed to eat a balanced diet. Let's turn to the experts for facts and assistance. In this class, registered dietitians **Mandy Patrick and Virginia Willingham Davis** will teach us the updated standards and give their professional suggestions for healthy eating.

APRIL 19 – NUTRITION PART 2

Information addressing **your** nutrition needs. We all have questions about nutrition as it relates to our personal medical issues, daily routines and preferences. A group of dietitians will help us focus our attention as we break into discussion groups on specific topics such as eating to lose weight, eating to prevent/ manage chronic health problems, cooking for picky eaters, etc.

APRIL 26 – SABBATH KEEPING

lead by one of our pastors

This class considers several questions: What is the purpose of a sabbath? How is sabbath keeping different from resting or taking a break from our normal daily schedule? How do we honor the sabbath in our current hectic culture?

MAY 3 – WIND DOWN WEDNESDAY

a chance to breathe and reclaim your calm

You know best what helps you relax and can choose how to spend the evening. Unwind as you rotate in 10- or 15-minute intervals through options such as sitting in massage chairs, focusing on breathing, journaling, practicing yoga, playing with pet therapy animals, listening to music, etc. First Kids and youth programs will also include stress relieving activities so that we all feel refreshed as we wrap up WNA.

SPRING
2023

MORE GROUPS MEETING | Other Than Wednesday Nights

FUMC, UMC & Our Future

Leaders: Dr. Clinton Hubbard, Jr. & Adam Lang

Time: 11:30-12:30 (lunch available)

Location: Chitwood Hall

Dates: January 11th – February 8th

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TEN WOMEN OF THE BIBLE: ONE BY ONE THEY CHANGED THE WORLD

Leader: Amy Thigpen

Location: The home of Amy Thigpen – north of the river

Time: Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Dates: January 31st – April 4th

Their actions stood out to the writers of Scripture, even though society overlooked their contributions. In *Ten Women of the Bible*, a 10-session workbook, Lucado tells the stories of 10 pivotal biblical women, including Sarah, Rahab, Abigail, Esther, Sapphira, Mary Magdalene, and others. Each session features insights and questions that explore their lives and help you apply the lessons to yours. Please email Amy to sign up at amy@fumct.org.

Empty Nest, Full Life

Leader: Virginia Jones

Location: The home of Virginia Jones (near Southern Ale House)

Time: Mondays from 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dates: January 23rd-March 6th

If your children have moved out, returned to the nest, or you are a woman navigating life in your late 40s or 50s, this study is for you. Like most women, you are caught between grief and delight, full of questions, hopes, and regrets. We will spend our weekly time together discussing the chapters and mixing independent study with in-person conversation. Let's help one another navigate the empty nest stage of life together. Please email Virginia to sign up at vajones7@comcast.net.

FOR WOMEN

SISTERS FELLOWSHIP CLASS, LADIES, 30 +

Date: Begins on Sunday, January 8th

Time: During the Sunday school hour from 10:00-10:50 a.m.

Room: #219

Are you single, married, divorced, or widowed and looking for a group of women who will provide fellowship and spiritual growth? Please join in as we begin our new group with a study of Beth Moore's, *The Quest*. *The Quest* is a six-week study that uses questions from scripture to bring about intimacy with God. We will learn to answer questions posed by God and bring our questions to God.

NEW SUNDAY
MORNING CLASS



FUMCT MISSIONS & OUTREACH

JAN.
28

EARLY RESPONSE TEAM (ERT) TRAINING

Do you want to be a part of our Disaster Relief Team? Come join us on January 28th and become ERT certified. This training course will allow our Disaster Relief Team to be deployed to needed areas after a natural disaster. Early response training covers the basics of early disaster response, including roof tarping, cleaning out damaged homes, spiritual and emotional care, team protocols, and more. The purpose of the training is to prepare our United Methodist Volunteers to do good and do no harm. Please contact Rev. Jeremiah Wilson for any further details.

FEB.
11

HOMELESS CONNECT

On Saturday, February 11, 2023, FUMCT will host Homeless Connect. Homeless Connect is an event that focuses on serving those who are homeless in Tuscaloosa County. Love In the Name of Christ (Love INC), along with area churches, agencies, businesses, and volunteers come together to remove the barriers of homelessness. Volunteer as a guide to help clients walk to the various stations, work in the Love INC store, or in the prayer room. Registration will open January 1, 2023, at loveinctuscaloosa.com.

FEB.
15

MOSCOW SEMINARY

On Wednesday, February 15th, we will have a special WNA to hear from Dr. Sasha Tsutserov. Sasha is the President of the Moscow Seminary. Join us for dinner with Dr. Tsutserov and then hear him speak in the sanctuary.

SASHA TSUTSEROV, PRESIDENT OF THE MOSCOW SEMINARY

"I soon realized I could not keep both my faith and my job, so I quit working for the KGB. We – as a part of a team of ten converts – planted a church in Moscow. And I also knew God had called me to ministry in education. But there was no school in Russia offering a degree in Biblical studies because the Communists had prohibited theological training. Therefore, I had to study abroad. In 1997, I graduated from Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky with a Master of Divinity degree. In 2004, I earned a Ph.D. in New Testament at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. While studying, I also worked at the Moscow Evangelical Christian Seminary by consecutively taking each and every position the school had – from a secretary to the provost. I am a full-time minister – professor in Biblical Studies and the president of the Moscow Seminary. We are raising a whole new generation of Christian leaders, so from scratch."



APRIL
16

ENGAGE DAY

On Sunday, April 16th, we will worship our Risen Lord through service in our community. After a short worship service, we will disperse throughout Tuscaloosa and volunteer with local organizations such as Community Soup Bowl, Love INC, Habitat for Humanity, PARA, West Alabama Food Bank, and many more. Please be on the lookout for more information and contact Rev. Jeremiah Wilson with any questions.

MARCH
10-19

INDIA MISSION TRIP

FUMCT will be supporting Evangelical Mission for India (EMFI) with Mattathu Shajan. Starting February 12, the India Mission Team will meet for 4 weeks during Sunday School for a time to learn about culture, evangelism techniques/how to share your testimony, trip expectations, and other loose ends.

MAY 27-
JUNE 3

HONDURAS MISSION TRIP

FUMCT will be conducting a medical/dental mission trip with The Hands of Christ with John and Ana Lamon. We will have a team interest meeting on January 15th during the Sunday school to learn more about the trip. Starting April 30, the Honduras Mission Team will meet for 4 weeks during Sunday School for a time to learn about culture, evangelism techniques/how to share your testimony, trip expectations, and other loose ends.

JULY
2023

NATIONAL TRIP

FUMCT will be doing a national mission trip in late July. Be on the lookout for more information!

I'M READY! SEND ME.

STEWARDSHIP 2023

Our yearly stewardship focus begins Sunday, January 8th. Our theme is: "I'm Ready! Send Me," taken from Isaiah 6:8. We will remember our membership covenant to support FUMCT with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

Each member is asked to make a financial pledge for the 2023 ministry budget. Pledge cards will be mailed to you, or you can visit fumct.org/give to make your pledge online.

More information will be forthcoming in our church communications.

The Wellness Ministry is thriving under the guidance of committed Advisory Council members - Susan Brister, Michelle Cheshire, Kristy Fairburn, Kaleb Heinrich, Scottie McBride, Shanna Pope, Holly Tanner, and Rob Tanner. We asked you to identify your specific needs and interests and received over 100 completed surveys last October. The Wellness Survey results told us that: walking and weightlifting are the favorite types of exercise; a fitness class in the evening and a senior exercise class starting later in the morning would be preferred; the affinity groups with the highest interest are workout groups, walking groups, prayer groups, and accountability groups for weight control; and programs with the most frequent participation would be healthy eating/cooking, healthy aging, self-care, and stress reduction. Thank you for your responses and suggestions. We used them to make some exciting plans for 2023.



For more information, contact Janice Stewart at janice@fumct.org.

FUMCT FITNESS NEWS

When it's too cold to walk outside, remember that the FUMCT Walking Track is open during church office hours. **Full monthly schedules of our free classes**, including Senior Exercise, HIIT, Step & Sculpt, Yoga, and other formats, are posted on the website at fumct.org/fitness-recreation-wellness. When you check out the schedules, **notice two big changes. We have added a fitness class on Wednesday nights called Spirit Yoga and we have moved the starting time of the Wednesday morning Senior Exercise Class.** This class now meets from 9:00 – 9:50 a.m. (on Wednesday only) in the CAC.

PICKLEBALL | If you want to learn how to play, join us in the CAC for clinics lead by Sally Massengil on Wednesdays March 22 and 29 th from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Courts are also available from 2:00-4:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, February 7, 14, & 21 and 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, April 12, 19, 26. Reserve your spot!

THE IGNATIAN WORKOUT | DAILY SPIRITUAL EXERCISES FOR A HEALTHY FAITH BY TIM MULDOON LED BY JANICE STEWART | February 6th – April 3rd, Mondays at 10:15-11:30 a.m. | St.

Ignatius of Loyola was a sixteenth century Catholic saint who believed that spirituality is a practice that requires deliberate and consistent effort. He developed a set of spiritual exercises centered on an examination of consciousness called the Daily Examen. The exercises teach us to see God's work in our lives and to know God more intimately by considering our experiences, imagination, and feelings. The Ignatian Workout presents St. Ignatius' wisdom in today's language – as a daily program of "workouts" to achieve spiritual fitness.

SOLE TO SOUL WALKING GROUPS | A CHANCE FOR FITNESS, FAITH, & FELLOWSHIP

| New groups will start on March 6th and meet once a week until the middle of May. Complete the online registration form between January 17 and February 17 indicating the days, times and locations that work best for you. We will review the registrations and notify you of available groups based on interest.

GIRLS' SOFTBALL – Psalm 96:12 - "Let the field be joyful and all that is in it." | This is the theme verse for Spring 2023. We are calling all girls ages 12 and under to join our teams! Online registration opens on January 9th and closes on February 22nd. Sign up and let us know how you can help – particularly if you are willing to coach or be a team parent. The season starts with a signing-day event for all players on Sunday, February 26 th from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the CAC. This kick-off party is a time to get focused and have fun as we meet coaches and teammates, play group games, and hear about the ways we can encourage one another.

WELLNESS FOCUS FOR LENT | Feeding the body, mind, and soul Each year, the Wellness Ministry provides a personal guide to help members pursue the disciplines of Lent. Guides will be available on the website, in the church office, and outside the CAC office. The **2023 40 Days of Wellness - Feeding the body, mind, and soul** includes a practical how-to component – a special **Lenten Cooking Class with Josh Davis**. Join us in the church kitchen on Sunday, March 26 th from 2:00-5:00. Josh has space to teach 10 people how to prepare **healthy winter comfort food**. More details coming soon. Reserve your spot now!

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS | Let's give parents a much-needed break with **Parents' Night Out** on Sunday April 23 rd from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.! Cost is \$5 a child (ages 3 months – 3 rd grade) with a \$15 family maximum to cover the kids' dinner and payment of childcare workers. Volunteer with us as well. Pre-registration is required!

MENTAL WELLNESS | HONORING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH IN MAY | On May 7, 14, and 21 at 10:00 a.m. we will offer a **short-term Wellness Sunday School class** about how our faith helps us cope with stress and struggles. Nisha Warbington, PhD. will help us dive deeper into the issues featured in the May sermon series titled "stretched thin". All are invited to this discussion-based class. Wind down Wednesday is on May 3rd.



Kiddie Kollege Preschool

First United Methodist Church Tuscaloosa

REGISTRATION FOR KIDDIE KOLLEGE PRESCHOOL

Registration links will go out at 1:00 p.m. on the following dates for each of these designated groups:

Current Kiddie Kollege Families: January 8, 2023

FUMCT Church Members: January 15, 2023

Public: January 22, 2023

Please email Caroline Oswalt at kiddiekollege@fumct.org so that you can be placed on the correct list to receive the registration link. Feel free to include any questions you have about Kiddie Kollege preschool in your email.



What is the Little Lambs Consignment Sale?

The Little Lambs Sale is a large, community wide semiannual consignment sale sponsored by FUMCT. It is completely operated by church members and community volunteers. We offer gently-used children's clothing up to size 14, baby items (such as strollers, swings, and high chairs), nursery furniture, toys, and books.

Sale Schedule

VOLUNTEER SALE: Thursday, March 2nd

3:00 p.m. | Workers of two shifts

4:00 p.m. | Workers of one shift

5:00 p.m. | Consignors and Church Staff

PUBLIC PREVIEW SALE | Thursday, March 2nd

6:00 – 8:00 p.m. | No Strollers | \$5 Admission

PUBLIC SALE | Friday, March 3rd

9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC SALE | Saturday, March 4th

HALF – PRICE SALE | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

8:00 – 8:45 a.m. | SATURDAY VOLUNTEERS

More information at fumct.org/little-lambs.





The mission of the music ministry is to help make disciples of Jesus, to grow closer to Him through music and to feel His presence dwelling among us through a spirit of community

and common passion. The Chancel Choir and the Handbell Choir are two ensembles available for adults, and there is a Children's Choir for children in third through 6th grades, which sings in both Traditions and the Bridge services. Each ensemble rehearses on Wednesday evenings. Present in every rehearsal is, of course, music making, but also spiritual insights, laughter, and compassion. Finally, Morning Music is offered each Sunday during the 9:00 a.m. services for

children K-5 to participate in fun musical activities (playing instruments and singing) and movement while growing their faith. Participation in one of these elements of the Church's ministry is a terrific way to be involved in the life of the church and in the Discipleship of Jesus. It is vessel through which one may show how God shines forth His beauty through music and how he is present in the lives of His followers. For more information about joining the music ministry, contact Dr. Justin W. Durham at justin@fumct.org or for children's choirs, contact Leah Durham at leahdurham.fumct@gmail.com.

Dr. Justin W. Durham

Traditions Music & Worship Director



**MORNING MUSIC
With Mrs. Leah!**



LED BY: Leah Durham

LOCATION: Children's music room (Lower Level Room #009)

TIME: Sunday mornings during 9:00 a.m. services - children are dismissed from both Bridge & Traditions and escorted to the Children's Music Room

An offering for kids who want to have more music time at church, "Morning Music" is during 9:00 a.m. services on Sunday mornings for K-3rd graders! Children attend services with their parents and are dismissed to music like they are dismissed to FirstKids during the 11:00 a.m. services. During music time, children play instruments, sing, dance, and play music games--all while growing closer to God through music! Contact leahdurham.fumct@gmail.com for more information.

**We believe
love in action
can change
the world.**



**United
Women
in Faith**

First United Methodist has a very active group of ladies who participate in the United Women in Faith (formerly known as UMW). The circle groups are made up of women of all ages who enjoy fellowship, learning, and community involvement.

CIRCLE GROUPS

FAITH & FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE | 2nd Monday of the month at 10:30 a.m. in the Parker Fireside Room

CRAFT CIRCLE | Every Wednesday of the month at 1:00 p.m. - 1st floor craft room

CELEBRATION CIRCLE | 2nd Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m. in the Lee classroom

CHARLOTTE SHAMBLIN CIRCLE | 2nd Monday of the month at 10:00 a.m. in the Lee classroom

SISTERS OF GRACE CIRCLE | The next meeting is a casual dinner at Jalapenos Northriver on Thursday, January 26th at 6:00 p.m. Please visit our Facebook page for more information at **sistersofgracefumct**.

Please consider joining one of these great groups so that you can meet new people and make a difference in the lives of others! Contact Mary Lee at **alshadows@icloud.com**.



**Grief Share Meets Every Sunday, January 8th-April 2nd
from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. in the Stabler Conference Room**

Grief Share is a support group for people grieving the death of a family member, loved one or friend. Your bereavement experience may be recent or not so recent. You will find encouragement, comfort, and help in the grieving process. No matter what the cause of your loved one's death, this is an opportunity to be around people who understand what you are feeling. You will learn valuable information about facing your new normal in life and renewing your hope for the future. GriefShare meets weekly and contains three parts: video seminar; support group and workbook activities. We will begin our next 13-week GriefShare Session on January 8, 2023. There is a \$15.00 fee, and you will receive a workbook for your own personal journey. If you are interested in attending this 13-week session or if you would like more information, please contact Jackie Greene at **jackie@fumct.org** or 205-345-7261, ext. 104.

FIRST KIDS

A MINISTRY OF FUMCT

THANK YOU TO ALL
WHO CAME TO AND
HELPED WITH ANGELS
& ADVENT AND THE
HAPPY BIRTHDAY
JESUS PARTY!



Ali Lindsey,
Children's
Ministry Director

FIRSTKIDS

FIRSTKIDS ROTATIONS AT 11:00 AM

K-3rd graders are invited to return upstairs when children are dismissed from worship for more learning and in-depth lessons of the monthly Bible story.

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

FirstKids appreciates our volunteers! If you would like to join in the fun, contact Ali Lindsey at ali@fumct.org!

SPRING WNA RESUMES JANUARY 11TH!

Kids meet mid-week for a relaxed fun time of learning and growing in Christ together. (FirstKids will not meet on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd, or the week of Spring Break March 15th.)

5TH SUNDAYS FIRSTKIDS IN 2023

Mark your calendars for January 29, 2023 and April 30, 2023! Kids serve in all four worship services, and a special mission service opportunity will be offered during Sunday school. Visit fumct.org/children to sign up for service opportunities!

PALM SUNDAY PALM PROCESSION

All children are invited to join in the Palm Procession during the 11:00 a.m. services. Gather on the Sanctuary steps for Traditions or in the Courtyard for Bridge Worship at 10:45 a.m.

SPRING FLING AND EASTER THINGS

Sunday, April 2nd at Sokol Park, Red Barn Pavillion

Join us for an Easter Egg hunt for the whole community, crafts, face painting, inflatables, and a visit from the Easter Bunny. Filled Easter egg donations are appreciated! Drop off donations in the church office and around the church anytime during March.

BUTTERFLY RELEASE ON EASTER SUNDAY

Outside of the Sanctuary and in the courtyard after every Easter Sunday service, FirstKids are invited to release a butterfly! Elementary Kids move outside at 11:00 a.m. for FirstKids in the Son Memorial Day through Labor Day.

JOIN US FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL!

Preschoolers, elementary and preteen enjoy rich experiences **every Sunday morning during the 10:00 a.m hour**. Interactive and engaging Bible stories, crafts, games, music and snacks fill the hour with love and learning!

TODDLER/PRESCHOOL MONTHLY FOCUS JANUARY – MAY 2023:

JANUARY

FAITH | *We learn that Jesus did and said amazing things!* -LUKE 2:47

FEBRUARY

TRUTH | *Everything Jesus did shows us how much he loves us!* -EPHESIANS 3:18

MARCH

TRANSFORMATION | *Jesus taught us to love others!* -PROVERBS 17:17

APRIL

TRUTH | *What Jesus did, means he can be your friend forever!* -REVELATION 1:18

MAY

COMPASSION | *People in the Bible showed us different way God made us to help!* -2 CHRONICLES 32:8

ELEMENTARY/PRETEEN MONTHLY FOCUS JANUARY – MAY 2023:

JANUARY

KNOWLEDGE | *Learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do!* -PROVERBS 2:6

FEBRUARY

RESPECT | *Showing others they are important by what you say and do!* -LUKE 6:31

MARCH

FORGIVENESS | *Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay!* -COLOSSIANS 3:13

APRIL

HUMILITY | *Putting others first by giving up what you think you deserve!* -PHILIPPIANS 2:3

MAY

CONFIDENCE | *Living like you believe God is with you!* -HEBREWS 13:6



SAVE THE DATE FOR
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2023

TUESDAY, JUNE 13TH THROUGH FRIDAY, JUNE 16TH

VBS Kick-Off Sunday | June 11th at 11:00 a.m. | Traditions Worship
VBS Celebration Sunday | June 18th at 11:00 a.m. | Bridge Worship



ADVENT 2023



FOOMACK

STUDENT
MINISTRY

6TH-12TH GRADE



Dr. Wade Langer
Interim Youth Director

The search for our permanent Youth Director will continue in 2023 with a candidate being named prior to June of 2023

FOOMACK CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2023

January 13th | Middle School Lock-in

January 14th -16th | High School Leadership Retreat - Discovery Prep at Camp Sumatanga

January 18th | FOOMACK Wednesday starts

January 22nd | FOOMACK Sunday starts back

March 13th-17th | Spring Break - No FOOMACK

April 30th | Senior Sunday

June 2023 | Tentative Summer Retreat

August 2023 | Discovery 2023

DISCOVERY 2023

Discovery Weekend ministry was born out of a deep conviction that God was leading Melody Traylor and the staff of First United Methodist Church of Tuscaloosa, to create a spiritual weekend for young persons in middle school. They believed Discovery Weekend to be a joint venture with God in which the church does its part and leaves the rest in God's hands.

This weekend retreat provides an opportunity for middle schoolers to learn about and experience the love of God. High school students, youth workers, other adult volunteers, and church staff lead the weekend. Discovery Weekend is intended to be holy and fun at the same time. The weekend experience creates an environment in which middle schoolers can better listen to God and be aware of God's presence. Discovery Weekend has produced amazing results in many settings. The weekend celebration of God's love is designed to involve much of your church family in planning, leading, and providing resources:

- **HIGH SCHOOLERS WORK WITH SMALL GROUPS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLERS (DISCIPLE GROUPS), LEAD WORSHIP, SHARE THEIR FAITH STORIES, AND PROVIDE LEADERSHIP THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND.**
- **PARENTS SHARE GIFTS OF LOVE AND PRESENCE, ATTEND THE PRAYER SERVICE, AND SERVE AS LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS.**
- **YOUTH WORKERS AND STAFF PROVIDE OVERALL LEADERSHIP, DIRECTION, AND SUPERVISION.**
- **SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES AND SMALL GROUPS OFFER PRAYER SUPPORT, SNACKS, AND SMALL GIFTS KNOWN AS CLUES.**
- **CLERGY WORK WITH YOUTH WHO ARE CONSIDERING BAPTISM, ASSIST WITH WORSHIP PLANNING, HELP WITH TEACHING AND MENTORING, AND ARE AVAILABLE FOR SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE.**
- **ADDITIONAL ADULTS FROM THE CONGREGATION SERVE AS LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS. DISCOVERY WEEKEND ENCOURAGES THE ENTIRE CHURCH FAMILY TO LIVE OUT ITS BAPTISMAL COVENANT BY SURROUNDING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FAITHFUL EXAMPLES OF LOVE AND FORGIVENESS. PLEASE PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME AND TALENTS FOR THIS MOST IMPORTANT YOUTH WEEKEND!**

Connect WITH YOUR Faith THROUGH Community



That time of the year is now upon us again. Soon we will be rested up from all of the Christmas travel and chaotic schedules and we will be left with the long, dark, dreary winter months. Right now we may be

motivated to make positive changes in our lives, to pursue spiritual growth, to strive to become a better person in 2023, and to use this year to our benefit. But soon that enthusiasm will most likely fade into the struggle of the winter months this year just as it has in years past.

So how do we change that? How do we make this year look differently than it has for us in the past? How do we remain just as committed to growing as a follower of Jesus by the time we reach March as we are right now looking at the start of the year?

I believe we find ourselves following through when we do not try to

maintain such a commitment on our own. When we put all of the pressure on ourselves, solely holding ourselves accountable, then it becomes far more difficult to keep that enthusiasm. Yet when we let others in, we feed off of the collective enthusiasm and together, when one of us begins to feel the struggle of the winter months, the others help to build that person back up.

I hope you will take seriously every opportunity to connect with our faith community through these winter months as we together wait on the new life of spring. Who knows, if we do, then maybe by the time the flowers start to emerge, we will also see a bit of new life emerging within each of us and within our community as well!

Rev. Amy Howard

BRIDGE PASTOR/ASSOCIATE PASTOR