



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
TUSCALOOSA

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CONNECTING POINT INFORMATION

The Connecting Point is published monthly by FUMCT, 800 Greensboro Avenue, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401 | 205.345.7261 | www.fumct.org | Editors: Savannah Smith & Hannah Crisp
Submissions can be emailed to cp@fumct.org or may be submitted to Savannah Smith in the church office. To unsubscribe to this publication, send an email to contact@fumct.org or call 205.345.7261. The Connecting Point is posted at fumct.org/media when it is mailed. If you would like to opt out of receiving the Connecting Point via U.S. Postal Service, please contact Savannah Smith at savannah@fumct.org.

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSINGS

- **Thanksgiving:** The church office and fitness center will close at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 27th and remain closed through Friday, November 29th .
- **Christmas:** The church office and fitness center will be closed on December 25th and 26th.
- **New Year's Day:** The church office and fitness center will be closed on Wednesday, January 1st .

POINSETTIA SUNDAY

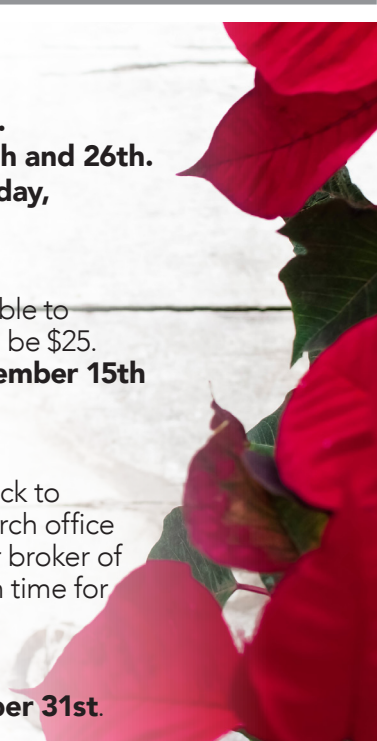
If you wish to give a memorial or honorarium for Christmas, please make your check payable to FUMCT or go to fumct.org/give and click Make a Donation. A customary amount would be \$25. Submit the necessary information by **Sunday, December 8th to be printed in the December 15th Order of Worship.** Anything received after this deadline will be printed at a later date.

STOCK GIFTS

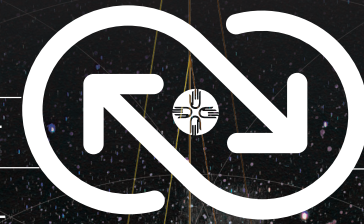
Transferring stock is a great way to give to the church. For those members who use stock to fulfill pledge obligations or for other purposes, please contact Charles Tuten at the church office (205.345.7261 ext. 103) with the necessary information as soon as you have notified your broker of the transfer. Stock transfers take several days to process, so make sure to leave enough time for your gift to reach the church by the contribution deadline.

2019 CONTRIBUTION DEADLINE

Please submit all 2019 contributions online or to the church office by **Tuesday, December 31st.**



A D V E N T



2 0 1 9

F U M C T

CONNECTING POINT

A D V E N T & C H R I S T M A S 2 0 1 9

A Thrill OF Hope



I was around eight years old. I had a lot of excitement in anticipation of Christmas Day which was fast approaching. One day MaDear had gone somewhere and my older sister and I let our Christmas excitement get the best of us. We began to search the house for Christmas gifts. Guess what...we found them! Not only did we find them, we opened them and played with them. Christmas came early for us and we were glad. When MaDear got home, and found out what we had done, we were in for it and we received our just discipline. Even to the point that we were told that we'd get nothing for Christmas. But with childlike hope, we waited for Christmas to come believing that we would get Christmas gifts--and we did. What a good Christmas we had because we received what we had been waiting for.

There is excitement in the air. We are fast approaching the Advent Season and our focus will be "A Thrill of Hope," taken from Isaiah 9:2. It reads, "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine." (NLT) During

our shared weekly worship experiences in both Traditions and the Bridge, our focus will be on Preparation...Proclamation...Anticipation...Consolation...Expectation...Celebration. My prayer is for these shared worship experiences to undergird our hope for this season.

With great hope, Gloria and I are looking forward to sharing our first Advent/Christmas season with our wonderful First Church family. Our prayer is that we all embrace "A Thrill of Hope" and participate in all the events our church is offering this season as we prayerfully discern "What are we waiting for?"

Merry Christmas!

Blessings,

DR. CLINTON HUBBARD, JR.

Senior Pastor
First United Methodist Church Tuscaloosa

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2019

A *Thrill* OF *Hope*

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS *Schedule*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2019

1ST WEEK OF ADVENT WORSHIP

9:00 & 11:00 A.M. | TRADITIONS | Dr. Clinton Hubbard, Jr.
 9:00 & 11:00 A.M. | THE BRIDGE | Rev. Jesse Tosten
 5:00 P.M. | Chitwood Hall | Children's Musical Star Search

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2019

2ND WEEK OF ADVENT WORSHIP

9:00 & 11:00 A.M. | TRADITIONS | Dr. Clinton Hubbard, Jr.
 9:00 & 11:00 A.M. | THE BRIDGE | Rev. Jesse Tosten
 7:00 P.M. | Sanctuary | "GLOW! A Feast of Carols": Chancel Choir Music Concert

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019

3RD WEEK OF ADVENT WORSHIP

9:00 & 11:00 A.M. | TRADITIONS | Dr. Clinton Hubbard, Jr.
 9:00 & 11:00 A.M. | BRIDGE CHRISTMAS MUSIC SPECIAL

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2019

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

6:00 P.M. | Dr. Clinton Hubbard, Jr.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2019

4TH WEEK OF ADVENT WORSHIP

9:00 & 11:00 A.M. | TRADITIONS | Rev. Sandy Felkins
 9:00 & 11:00 A.M. | THE BRIDGE | Rev. Jesse Tosten

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2019

1:00 P.M. | Lee Classroom | Happy Birthday Jesus Event

TRADITIONS CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION WORSHIP

2:00 P.M. | Rev. Jesse Tosten
 4:00 P.M. | Dr. Clinton Hubbard, Jr.
 6:00 P.M. | Dr. Clinton Hubbard, Jr.

BRIDGE CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION WORSHIP

4:00 P.M. | Rev. Jesse Tosten
 6:00 P.M. | Stephen Stroud

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2019

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:00 A.M. | Rev. Jesse Tosten Going Away Party

TRADITIONS AND BRIDGE WORSHIP

9:00 A.M. | TRADITIONS | Rev. Jesse Tosten
 11:00 A.M. | BRIDGE | Rev. Jesse Tosten

DEATHS:

- In Thanksgiving for her life, Edna Flynn Lane of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, who died on October 6, 2019.
- In thanksgiving of his life, Alvin R. "Al" Sneckenberger of Tuscaloosa, Alabama who died on November 11, 2019. Sympathy to his wife, Mary Jon Sneckenberger. Sympathy also to his son, Chris (Julianne) Sneckenberger and grandsons, Ethan, Sage and Paxton Sneckenberger.
- Sympathy to Shelley (Chris) Kyle on the death of her mother, Sally Morrisette of Mobile, Alabama on August 14, 2019.
- Sympathy to Lisa (Cooper) Shattuck on the death of her mother, Geraldine Conwill Waldrop of Vincent, Alabama on September 23, 2019.
- Sympathy to Freddie (Joe) Bruner on the death of her sister, Carolyn Knox of Tuscaloosa, on October 16, 2019.
- Sympathy to Pat (Joyce) Whetstone on the death of his sister, Jill W. Reece of Columbus, Ohio on October 6, 2019.
- Sympathy to Beau (Cindy) Wicks on the death of his uncle, Stanley William Moyer of Birmingham, Alabama on September 13, 2019.
- Sympathy to Charles (Melissa) Tuten and daughter, Natalie on the death of his aunt, Teresa Albright of Tuscaloosa, Alabama on October 28, 2019.
- Sympathy to Ken (Barbara) Dunivant on the death of his father, William Dunivant of Northport, Alabama on October 28, 2019.
- Sympathy to Josh (Allison) Thomas on the death of his grandmother, Frances L. Thomas of Viburnum, Missouri on November 10, 2019.
- Sympathy to David (Iris) Hinton on the death of his mother, Lutrelle King Hinton of Tuscaloosa, Alabama on November 8, 2019.
- Sympathy to Rush (Diane) Smith on the death of his mother, Maxine Smith of Tuscaloosa, Alabama on November 12, 2019.

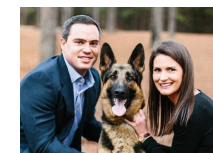
BIRTHS:

- Congratulations to Morgan and Justice Smyth on the birth of their daughter, Frances Elizabeth Smyth on August 12, 2019.
- Congratulations to Morgan and Bryant Bruce in the birth of their daughter, Elliott James born August 14, 2019.
- Congratulations to Anna and Mike Crady on the birth of their daughter, Alice Rhodes Crady on August 31, 2019.
- Congratulations to Megan and David Welborn on the birth of their son, William Welborn on August 31, 2019.
- Congratulations to Allison and Brian Tillery on the birth of their daughter, Lucille Grace Tillery on September 5, 2019. Congratulations also to Beth and Paul Roberts on the birth of their granddaughter.
- Congratulations to Rio and Brad Earnest on the birth of their son, Wyatt Smith Earnest on September 10, 2019. Wyatt is the grandson of Tim Smith and the late Judy Smith and the great grandson of Margaret and Bill Smith.
- Congratulations to Dorie and Riley Edwards on the birth of their son, William Dixon Edwards on September 24, 2019. William Dixon is the grandson of Melanie and Claude Edwards.
- Congratulations to Emily and Jesse Tosten on the birth of a daughter, Lucy James Tosten on October 8, 2019. Congratulations also to brother, Bennett Tosten.
- Congratulations to Megan and Tim Parker, III on the birth of a daughter, Callaway Carolyn Parker on October 12, 2019. Congratulations also to brothers, Mize and Rhett and sister, Olive Parker. Calloway Carolyn Parker is the granddaughter of Cathy and Tim Parker, Jr.
- Congratulations to our new Director of Preschool Ministries, Becky Smelley on the birth of her granddaughter, Isabella Kate Smelley on September 15, 2019.
- Congratulations to Claire and Justin Ahalt on the birth of their daughter, Sophie Elizabeth Ahalt on September 10, 2019.
- Congratulations to Kendra and Jeff Powell on the birth of their daughter, Sadie Cayte Powell on November 18, 2019. Congratulations also to big brother, Harrison Powell.

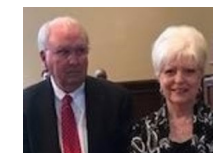
NEW MEMBERS:



· Morgan & Justice Smyth



· Caroline & John Lassiter



· Kathy & Tom Watson



· Donna, Hope & Ben Benjamin



· Mary Kaylor Caffey & Pete Silliman (engaged)



· Todd Arendale with son, Miller Arendale



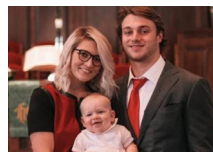
· Theresa & Gary Meendering



· June Ussery & great-granddaughter, Sarah Shofner



· Kimberly Tucker & children, Kellen, Wells & Ellis



BAPTISM:

- Congratulations to Meagan Thomas and Henry Allen on the baptism of Carson Mckennon Allen. Congratulations also to grandparents, Lori and Randy Allen, and great-grandparents, Martha and Bill Allen, Theresa and Gary Meendering and aunt, Elizabeth Allen.

Help us reach our year end giving goal. Here at First Church, one way we worship is through giving.

Here are a few ways to give:



SCAN THE CODE WITH YOUR SMART PHONE



THIS IS A PUBLICATION OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TUSCALOOSA.

Broadcast & Contact Information

The Sunday 11:00 AM Traditions Worship Service is broadcast on WACT 1420 AM, 96.9 FM and online. Listen to and watch sermons on our website at fumct.org/welcome/listen-to-a-sermon.



THERE'S NO PLACE *Like Home*

REV. JESSE TOSTEN

Last Christmas, after preaching our Christmas Eve services in the Bridge, I jumped in the car for home. Only this year home wasn't 15 minutes away, but 800 miles. I was headed to my childhood home for Christmas. Emily and Bennett had already flown to Maryland earlier in the week, so I was to make the 12-hour drive alone throughout the night in order to be there for the Christmas morning festivities.

Those endless hours gave me a lot of time to reflect. Besides thinking about which coffee pick-me-up I would purchase at the next gas station and that I will never drive 12 hours alone through the night ever again, one phrase kept returning to my mind.... "There's no place like home."

I get sentimental around the holidays. I remember the joy of waking up to presents underneath the tree, the smell of cinnamon rolls, the laughter around the table, warm fires filling up the air and sitting on my grandparents' laps who have long since gone. At Christmas time, *there's no place like home*. And so I'm willing to pay an exorbitant amount of money on an airplane ticket or plow through the night to be home.

Of course, what gets lost in all this emotion is the reality of home. For some of us, there's a reason we left home. Others of us, we experienced none of this sappiness except for what we've witnessed on all those Hallmark movies. Most of us have simply forgotten the complexities of home.

So often you and I fail to remember we don't actually get along with our siblings. We ignore the wound our mother inflicted years ago. We omit our stepdad isn't the nice guy he first was when he met our mom. And then there's the family drunk. Add in

our uncle's new wife and a family member you haven't seen for decades, and you're getting close to what most families actually look like. Give or take a character or two, that's mine. Finally, of course, we neglect looking in the mirror at the failures and mistakes we've made along the way to make this going home thing difficult.

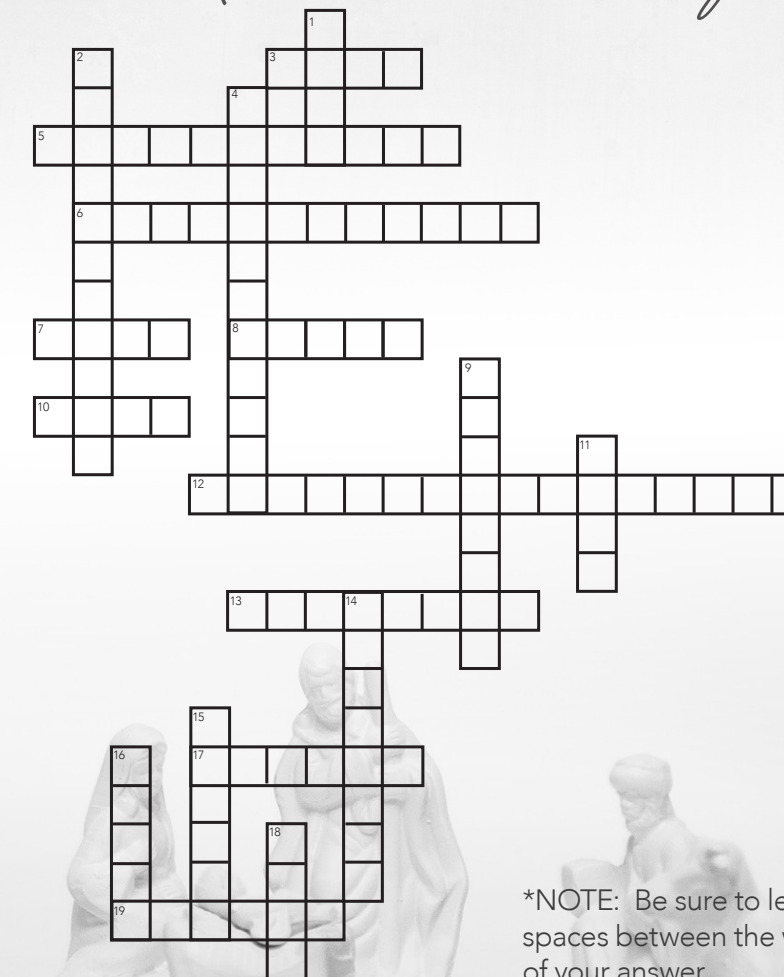
All that is to say this — that feeling deep down in your soul... *there's no place like home*... it's true. It's true. Despite the realities of most families, there is no place like home. We know it in our bones. And we often spend our lives looking for it.

Just understand this - that home you long for... that home you wish you had... a place where you feel you belong and that in some sense belongs to you... a place where you feel that all is somehow ultimately well even if things aren't going all that well at all... that place... that home... is found near a manger in Bethlehem.

So wherever you go this Christmas... make sure you're headed there. Because there, you'll feel right at home.

Fill in the crossword puzzle with words that have to do with our Christmas season theme, "A Thrill of Hope". Use the clues below to figure out the puzzle. Good luck!

A Thrill OF Hope



ACROSS

- 3. Carrier of the Gospel
- 5. Important occasion
- 6. Expectation
- 7. In the night sky
- 8. Cheerful and lively
- 10. Expectancy or desire
- 12. Forerunner for Jesus*
- 13. There were three of them*
- 17. Season in December
- 19. Feeling of excitement

DOWN

- 1. Delay action
- 2. Making ready
- 4. Official announcement
- 9. 12th month
- 11. Astrologers
- 14. God with us
- 15. Open feeding trough
- 16. Opposite of day
- 18. Consecrated to God

**Follow us on Instagram
@fumct to check your answers!**

*NOTE: Be sure to leave spaces between the words of your answer.



Reception For The Tosten Family

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2019
AT 10:00 A.M. (NO SUNDAY SCHOOL)

Join us as we celebrate the Tosten family and their ministry here at FUMCT. Send them a message of well wishes as they continue their ministry in New Jersey.

THE CHANCEL CHOIR OF FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH PRESENTS

Glow!
a Feast of Caroles

DECEMBER 8, 2019 AT 7:00 P.M.
IN THE SANCTUARY

THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF TUSCALOOSA
INVITES YOU TO

THE
Longest Night
SERVICE

DECEMBER 19TH AT 6:00 P.M.
IN THE SANCTUARY
HOLY COMMUNION WILL BE SERVED.

Christmas may be a difficult time this year for individuals dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after a divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, or living with cancer or other disease that puts a question mark over the future. All these situations make us feel sad and alone in the midst of all the celebrating. In other words, you may be having a "blue" Christmas. Join with us during this special service as we recognize that God's presence is here for those who mourn and struggle. God's word comes to shine light into our darkness, offering hope and healing to all. Join us for this special and meaningful service.



Homeless Connect

SERVICES OFFERED

Legal advice
Housing information
Court (minor offenses)
Eye exams and glasses
Medical exams
Dental exams and services
Veterans' Affairs
Prescriptions (non-narcotic)
Clothing and other supplies
State-issued ID cards
Employment opportunities
Vaccinations for the flu
Hair cuts
Hygiene items
Prayer
Addiction Counseling
STD and HIV testing

HOMELESS CONNECT

WHEN: Saturday, February 1, 2020,
8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

WHERE: First United Methodist, 800
Greensboro Ave, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

WHO: We need you to volunteer!

Homeless Connect is an event that focuses on serving those who are housing insecure in Tuscaloosa. We will be hosting the event in our church again this year. Love In the Name of Christ (Love INC), along with area churches, agencies, businesses and volunteers come together to remove the barriers of homelessness and get help for those who desperately need it. On Saturday, February 1, our homeless guests can receive any and all services provided, free of charge. Lunch will be served, too.

WHO IS A GUEST?

- An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- An individual who resides in a car, park, abandoned building, bus station, airport, camping ground or shelter. Or one who resides in a hotel,

motel or transitional housing that is designated to provide temporary living arrangements.

- An individual or family living temporarily in a multi-family residence.

HOW TO VOLUNTEER

We will need 300 volunteers.

Volunteers must register through Love INC at www.loveinctuscaloosa.com.

Registration opens **December 2**.

Volunteers will work in a variety of ways including:

- Host the homeless guest or family and lead them through the agencies and services they need.
- Pray with guests who identify the need for prayer.
- Prepare and serve lunch to the guests.
- Shuttle guests to services like dental that are in town.
- Work in the clothing area or eyeglass ministry.

There is no training required prior to the morning of **February 1st**. Mark this date and plan to serve with us.

UMW MEETINGS

- Monday, December 2, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. | UMW board meeting in Stabler Conference Room.
- Monday, December 8, 2019 at 5:45 p.m. | Celebration Circle in Stabler Conference Room.
- Monday, December 9, 2019 at 10:30 a.m. | Faith & Friendship Circle in Parker Fireside Room.



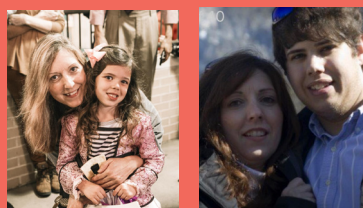
Dates to Note

• **Sunday, December 8 | Theatre Tuscaloosa for "The Watson's Go to Birmingham"** | Box lunches will be ordered for those attending. Lunch will be in the Lee Classroom. Deadline is December 1 if you want a lunch for \$7 and if you will be riding the van. Contact nini@fumct.org.

• **Sunday, December 8 at 2:00 p.m. | Tuscaloosa Preservation Society hosts their Christmas Tour of Homes** The theme this year is the 1950s decade. This is not an official Merry Methodist event but get a friend and go!

• **Thursday-Sunday, December 12-15 | Tuscaloosa Community Dancer's performance of The Nutcracker** | If you want to order tickets go to tututix.com.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CHURCH FAMILY



NICE TO MEET YOU, BECKY SMELLEY



When you pick up Becky Smelley's family Bible, all sorts of pictures and notes are tucked in its pages. If you give it a shake, out will fall certificates—Vacation Bible School certificates! Becky was a VBS junkie. She attended several each summer at a variety of churches. "I loved VBS!" she said. **"EVERYTHING WE DO IS A TRAINING GROUND FOR WHAT GOD PLANS FOR US."**

Becky joined our church staff in September as the Director of Pre-School Ministries. You will find Becky on the first floor children's hallway, supervising staff and teachers and loving the little ones!

Becky and her husband Alan have two sons, Tyler and Trent and a "daughter in love", Kaitlyn. Alan retired from Goodrich and after two days of relaxing, he joined Northwest Supply. Becky has always been involved in children's ministry—first in volunteer positions at small churches where there was no budget for a director and later as a Children's Pastor. "We were at a church meeting when they announced that our Children's Pastor had left

and they were looking for someone to fill that position because VBS was in a couple of weeks," she recalls. **"I ALMOST RAISED MY HAND BECAUSE I FELT THAT TUG."** The pastor sensed her eagerness and recruited her to lead the children's ministry. And God had prepared her to direct her first VBS.

Becky has had a long career at American Christian Academy. Her sons were students there and she complained about the food in the lunchroom. And you guessed it... They gave her the job. She continued adding on tasks like PTO, athletics, events director and development director. She travelled to 22 countries with the ACA students. Her wish was to "retire" to the Pre-School which the headmaster allowed.

She finally retired from a full-time position when her family expanded. Sophie Grace is four now and she has a baby sister, Isabella Kate who was born September 15th. The Smelleys live on some family land near NorthRiver. Sophie Grace calls it "the country" and Becky and Sophie Grace plant a vegetable and flower garden each year. Family time is the number one priority now! All of her life, Becky has put her trust in God and God has been faithful. She has many favorite verses but when pressed, she said, "John 14:1, when Jesus said, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God and believe also in me.'"

"I LOVE FUMCT AND I'M SO GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THE LORD JESUS," she concluded. Stop by the Pre-School hallway and introduce yourself to Becky Smelley. She's the one on the floor playing with the babies or hugging a toddler who is having a hard time letting Mommy go to the worship. Her bright smile hints at her warm heart. Welcome Becky!

EXERCISE CLASSES START BACK JANUARY 7 HAVE A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

Please come try a free class soon to help sustain a healthy lifestyle! We offer free classes in Aerobics (dance and athletic moves), Interval Training (cardio and muscle work), Senior Fitness (with emphasis on balance, strength, flexibility and muscle coordination and mental clarity), TBC – Total Body Conditioning, Step & Sculpt, Yoga (modifications given for beginners), and Pilates. Classes are held in the Church Activity Center. Our monthly exercise classes schedule is posted on our website at fumct.org/ministries/fitness-recreation.

THE BRIDGE
Christmas
MUSIC SPECIAL
 DECEMBER 15TH AT 9:00 & 11:00 A.M.
 IN CHITWOOD HALL

The BEST way to spread Christmas cheer? Singing loud for all to hear and inviting everyone to The Bridge Christmas Special, of course! We are planning to see you on December 15, at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Join us for wonderful Christmas music by our Bridge team and a few special guests!

DEC. 3 **#GIVING** 2019
TUESDAY™

Help kick off the giving season and make a difference by joining **#GivingTuesday, December 3rd**. **#GivingTuesday** is a worldwide movement designed to counter balance the spending frenzy that occurs on Black Friday and Cyber Monday. You can redefine your giving spirit or jump start your year-end giving this season by giving to the church at www.fumct.org/give.



FIRST KIDS Upcoming Events

You're Invited to a **Happy Birthday, Jesus Party!**

Tuesday, December 24
at 1:00-1:45 p.m. in the
Lee Classroom, Room 110

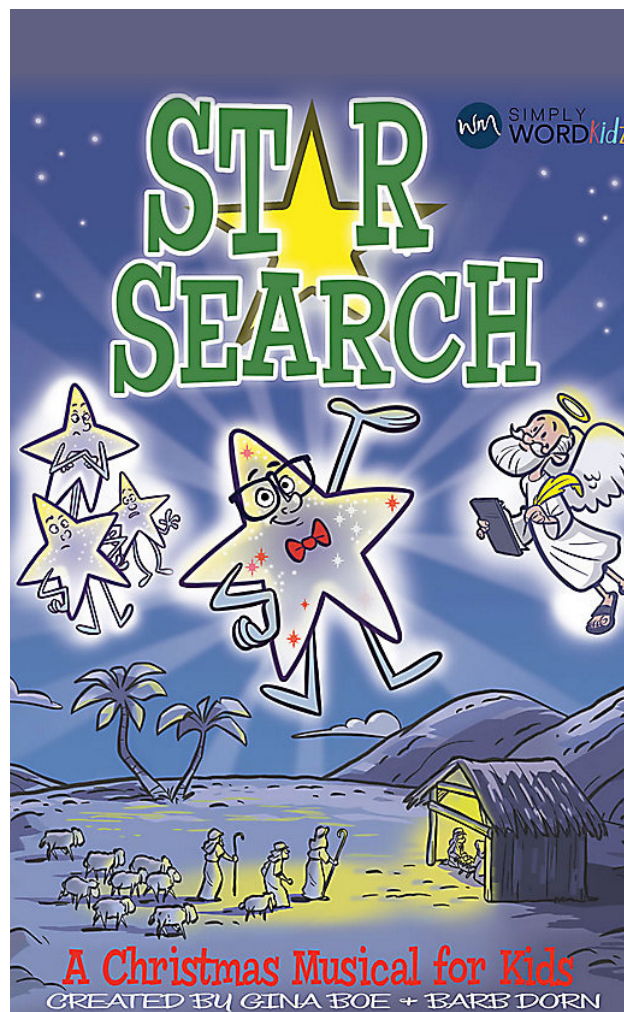
Children and families will enjoy birthday cake, and a special favor to take home!

Contact Becky Smelley at becky@fumct.org for more information.



"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."

Luke 2:7



JOIN US FOR THE CHILDREN'S MUSICAL

STAR SEARCH

December 1 at 5:00 p.m.
in Chitwood Hall

FOOMACK STUDENT MINISTRY | FOO MACK



I-D-E-N-T-I-T-Y

In year two of IDENTITY there were 54 students that participated. This year our focus was on *PERMANENT*— making a mark that can't be erased. Students were challenged this year to make memories that they will never forget. We believe that God's word is permanent and has changed our lives forever. This weekend was a huge success as it serves as a pre-cursor to Discovery. Thank you so much to the student interns that made this possible.

CONFIRMATION

Congratulations Confirmation class of 2019!!! This year First United Methodist church welcomed 26 committed individuals to the church family as they confessed their faith in our Lord and Savior. It was a privilege to watch these students grow as they learned about community, theology and the purpose of the church. Our classes this year were taught by our Pastoral staff.

There are great days ahead for these students who will carry our church in to the future as they help take our church to new places and continue the work that has been given to them.



Congratulations to the following Confirmands: Madelyn Abston, Miller Arendale, Carter Ashley, Ford Cole, Sarah Copeland, Boyd Denney, Tayte Dunn, Samuel Gosa, Walker Green, Sam Guy, Gavin Hall, Gracie Hawkins, Miller James, Evan Malone, William Orrell, Sally Poole, Aliegha Robertson, Nathaniel Schultz, Ella Strickland, Paige Stroud, Sara Quinn Tompkins, Ellis Tucker, Sarah Verzino, Harper Ann Weddle, Liza Beth Whipple, Lilly Bea Wood.



WEDNESDAY NIGHTS ALIVE!

Save the Date:

Wednesday Nights Alive starts again January 15, 2020! Join us every Wednesday for dinner from 4:45-6:00 p.m. in Chitwood Hall. Classes at 6:00-7:00 p.m. Dinner: \$7 for adults/\$4 for Children/\$20 Family Max.