

THE FOCUS

Summer 2017

Changing Lives Through Jesus Christ

Volume 19, Issue 3

Worship series to explore wisdom from the past

If it's a cliché it must be true

The wise teacher Qoheleth wrote, "There is nothing new under the sun" (*Ecclesiastes 1:9*). That simple phrase can be seen as the mere ramblings of a weary cynic, or a gift to be received as wisdom from a sage. The more things change, the more they stay the same. If we don't learn from the past we are doomed to repeat it. The phrases are clichés, but they're true.

The Bible is full of examples of people failing to learn from the past. Ancient words of wisdom, repeated missteps, tired proverbs that are all too true — they all come to us across the ages, and we fail to learn the important lessons they teach. We seem intent on repeating the mistakes and making the lessons our own.

Our divisions are not unique

When we consider the divisions in our community, nation, and world, we forget that there were even greater divisions in the past. When we struggle with competing theologies in our church, we do not remember the struggles between Peter and Paul, between the so-called Hellenists and Greek converts in the early Church, and between those who followed Apollos and those who were devoted to Paul.

We think our own positions on sex, abortion, biblical interpretations, or race relations are far and away the most important issues to face our church, and we are willing to leave the church before we would ever submit to compromise. Yet, we forget that circumcision and transubstantiation and slavery were even more controversial and divisive in their own time. We fail to learn from our past; so, we continue to repeat it.



Maybe it's time for us to pause for a moment and take a breath. Perhaps we can learn from those who have gone before us. This July, I will take us on a journey with our ancestors in the faith...people like Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Esau and Jacob. Together we will learn from their mistakes and, hopefully, from their successes.

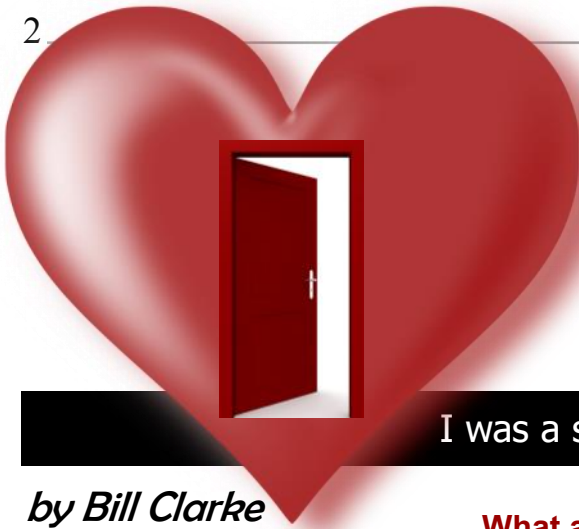
We can learn from our past

The Sunday morning worship series is titled, "Old Lessons for a New Age: What Our Ancestors Can Teach Us about Faith." I'd like to think we can learn something from the past and allow these lessons to direct our future. We think we're the first to travel this road called life, but in reality we're just descendants of those who paved the way. Faith, courage, temptation, and generosity — these can be stumbling blocks along our way or the foundation stones for a new highway.

If you're still trying to fight a battle you think no one else has ever encountered, come to worship on Sunday morning and let's see how our ancestors in the faith dealt with the same challenge.

- Pastor Al 

Wednesday Evening Communion Services
suspended for July and August.
Will resume in September.



Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

I was a stranger and you welcomed me. - *Matthew 25:35*

by *Bill Clarke*

Several years ago The United Methodist Church introduced the motto “Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors” to be used as an expression of our commitment to make everyone feel welcome within our doors. First Church participated in a four year program to make our facility more friendly and earned the distinction of a “Welcoming Congregation.” Your Witness Ministry Team monitors our commitment to being a welcoming congregation. So, how are we doing with “Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors”?

Are our hearts open?

The people of First Church display “Open Hearts” in numerous ways. We are a generous people with both our time and our money. We helped start ecumenical ministries for the homeless and for those who are victims of injustice. We feed 80-100 persons lunch every Monday. We helped start a food pantry which now distributes tons of food each year. We travelled to Haiti to build an orphanage and to Appalachia to make homes warmer, safer, and drier. We support the ministry of a United Methodist Church in Lithuania. And when called upon to open our wallets to those in need, we do it without reluctance. Our hearts are open.

What about our minds?

Are our minds open, too? There is great polarization in our community and nation regarding issues of race, religion, ethnicity, immigration, sexual orientation, and care for those who are less fortunate than ourselves. There is even polarization regarding some of these issues within our own denomination. Open minds require us to listen to all sides of issues before asking ourselves the question, “What would Jesus do?” First Church is reaching out to those who we see as different from most of us. “Bridging the Gap” is an example of our trying to better understand race relations in our community. We have made it known that we are willing to consider requests from a variety of community organizations in order to better understand how we are more alike than different. We are trying to have open minds.

What about our doors?

Our doors are open to numerous groups in our community who wish to use our facilities. And they are open daily to a preschool. But what about those in our community who are looking for a quiet place to mediate and pray? Unfortunately, those big doors to our Sanctuary remain locked to them. Our Sanctuary is “open” only on Sunday mornings. The rest of the week it is closed. Your Welcome Ministry

Team is proposing to open these doors every weekday, 1-5pm, to all who wish to enter .

You might ask, “Is such a change advisable? Who would enter and how will they behave? Might they harm what we cherish?” Your Welcome Team and the Trustees have asked these same questions, prayed about this new ministry, and have some answers. Plans are to have a host in the Narthex to welcome guests and monitor their behavior. The doors to the Sacristy and offices will be locked. The Chancel will be roped off, as will the balcony stairs. An alarm will sound should someone open the door to the Gathering Space. First Church *can* be a church with “open doors.”

Let's welcome all...

Throughout the world, cathedrals with magnificent stained glass windows, sculpture, and artwork receive guests with open doors. Hosts are present to welcome visitors and answer questions. Special areas are sometimes roped off. Some visitors enter just to look around. Others enter to pray or meditate. But all are welcome. Let us also welcome guests and make First United Methodist Church a “house of prayer for all peoples” (*Isaiah 56:7*).

Prayer – Dear God, Help us to have open hearts, open minds and open doors. Give us the courage and discernment to do what you would have us do. Amen.

Staff Changes

Alex Erwine is our new Director of Discipleship for Youth & Children

Beginning June 15, Alexandra “Alex” Erwine will be First UMC’s newest addition to the church staff. She will be our full-time Director of Discipleship for Youth and Children.

A recent graduate of Randolph-Macon College (RMC) in Ashland, Alex grew up in Hatboro, outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but “quickly ran to the south” where she has been for the past four years immersed in business and communication studies at RMC.

During her college years she was very involved with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship on the RMC campus and co-led a small group

for two years. She has also had various internships for the past two summers, including a position as Youth Ministries Intern at Grace Presbyterian Church in Ashland, where she helped the senior pastor lead the youth group.

She has participated in mission trips, led a youth group for middle and high school students, and was the Vacation Bible School Coordinator for Grace Church last year. In her down time, she says you can find her on a golf course or watching a good movie. “I am looking forward to this next chapter in my life,” she says. Her new email address is alexerwine.fumc@gmail.com.



Alex Erwine

Welcome aboard, Alex!

Thank you, Julie Marazita!

For the last four months Julie Marazita has served as our Interim Director of Discipleship for Children as she has so graciously overseen the Sunday school program for the children of the church. Quietly working behind the scenes, she has kept our children’s ministry alive and well on Sunday mornings. We are grateful for her service to First UMC and to the children of the church. Well done, good and faithful servant.



Julie Marazita

Current First UMC Staff

PASTORAL STAFF:

The Rev. Alvin J. Horton
Senior Pastor

The Rev. Phil Woodson
Associate Pastor
for Outreach and Witness

The Rev. Dr. Harry Kennon
Pastor Emeritus

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

Kathy Berkeley
Administrative Assistant

Jeannie Gentry
Business Manager

Lyndsay Harshman
Facility Manager

Oscar Anderson
Custodian

PROGRAM STAFF:

Carolyn McGee
Spiritual Life Coordinator
Dir. of Celebration Singers
& Children’s Music Ministry

Kevin White
Chancel Choir Director
Organist/Accompanist

Alex Erwine
Director of Discipleship
for Youth and Children

Erika Woodling
Coord., Infant/Toddler Care

Ida Caramanis
First UMC Preschool Dir.

Tim Williams
Director, Technical Ministries

Farewell Reception for Parnells set for June 11

The Rev. Barbara Parnell, our Assistant Pastor for the last year and a half, and her husband Lynn will be moving to Baltimore later this summer where their daughter Merrilee and husband David are relocating with their sons Lucas and Owen. The Parnells’ son-in-law, David, has completed his MD/PHD at UVA and will be doing a Pathology Residency at John’s Hopkins. “Pastor Bee” will continue on Family Leave from the California-Pacific Conference of The United Methodist Church so that she and Lynn can continue to be available to help with their grandsons. A Farewell Reception in their honor will be held

immediately after the 11am Worship Service on Sunday, June 11, in the Gathering Space. We have been blessed with Pastor Bee’s ministry among us, and the Chancel Choir will miss Lynn’s wonderful tenor voice. We wish them Godspeed as they continue their journey of faith and family support.



Pastor Bee & Lynn



The King Orphanage in Ft. Liberté, Haiti.

Orphanage in Haiti prepares for transition

The Boards of Directors of Jerusalem Baptist Church (JBC) and Friends of Fort Liberté (FFL) have recently developed a vision of “kinship care and community-based family care” in which the children and young adults at The King Orphanage will transition into care with relatives or others in the community.

Over the next 18 months, the JBC, led by Pastor Dasnis Pierre, will work to create an individualized plan for each child, and sponsors will continue their relationships with their assigned children. The orphanage will remain open for the coming year, and the older children will have the opportunity to move on to a trade school or university.

The newly completed orphanage building that many First UMC members helped build will provide a long overdue and much needed learning environment for the younger children in the JBC school. “We anticipated providing shelter for a few dozen children,” a FFL news release acknowledged, “but now the facility will be a safe space for hundreds more over the coming years.”

The decision to make this transition was inspired by research showing that children thrive best within a family environment, not in an institutional setting. “We will join the global movement to eliminate orphanages by 2050,” FFL reported, “and work together to enable the people of Fort Liberté to raise all children in family settings.”

Questions? Contact Clair Peyton at clairpeyton@gmail.com, Annette Crislip at annettecrislip@gmail.com, or Malissa Smith at malissabsmith713@gmail.com.

Notes for team members requested

ASP mission team heads to Tennessee

The Appalachia Service Project (ASP) team heads to Tennessee the first Sunday in July for a week of construction work. The group always covets prayers, but the group leaders also covet notes of encouragement for the youth volunteers.

Every morning at breakfast the team has a mail call, and letters and notes from the congregation are distributed to the team members.

“It’s a big deal,” says Cindy Remington, “and means a lot to the team to know that people back home have kept us in their hearts and prayers.” Would you consider participating in this important mission trip in this way?

A list of participants is available in the Gathering Space at church, where you can also find a box to collect your letters. (If you have any extra notecards lying around your



house, this would be a good time to donate them to the cause!

Thank you for supporting the team as it travels to Tennessee to make homes “safer, warmer, and drier.”

(Y) = Youth — **2017 ASP Team Members** — (A) = Adult

Zach Burrier (A)	Alan Gray (Y)	Mateo Maughlin (Y)	Cindy Remington (A)	Wayne Remington (A)
John Davidson (Y)	Andy Guertler (A)	Mark Myers (A)	Samantha Strain (Y)	Preston Duprey (A)
Georgia Davidson (Y)	Charles Kidd (A)	Evan Niehoff (Y)	Jonah Wermter (Y)	Elizabeth Duprey (Y)
Meghan Eddy (A)	Carrie Lewis (A)	Tighe O’Laughlin (Y)	Charlie Wermter (Y)	Peyton Symmers (Y)
Peyton Eddy (Y)	Ellie Lewis (A)	Alex Pettigrew (A)	Dave Wheatley (A)	Kat Coggeshell

6pm concert includes dinner

Florida youth choir to present concert Wed., June 7

Join your church family on Wed., June 7 at 6pm in the Sanctuary for a special evening of music and worship led by the Lakewood UMC Youth Choir. As part of their annual mission trip, this youth group will be traveling from their home in Jacksonville, Florida, all the way to Bar Harbor, Maine! As they journey northward they will



present a musical entitled “Mended” which looks at the various ways God takes our brokenness and turns it all into something beautiful. Their message will be shared through songs, skits, Scripture, and other means. Following the program, everyone will be invited to join the choir for dinner in the Fellowship Hall.

Annual Conference Offering announced

Bishop Lewis has announced the Va. Annual Conference mission offering goal of \$200,000 to focus on the following projects:

- \$50,000 Cambodia** - In support of the Methodist Mission in Cambodia
- \$25,000 Brazil** – Supporting Shade and Fresh Water ministry with at risk children through the Methodist Church of Brazil.
- \$25,000 Mozambique** – For lay resources in the United Methodist Church of Mozambique
- \$50,000 Virginia Long Term Disaster Recovery** – For response to tornadoes and Hurricane Matthew in 2016.
- \$25,000 Ethnic Minority Missional Ministries** – Grants for ministry outreach in the conference to immigrants and other marginalized groups.
- \$25,000 Virginia Volunteers in Mission** – For small membership churches with limited funds to engage in mission.

Contributions to the conference offering may be made through First UMC by designating gifts as “Conference Offering.”

‘Miracle of Christmas’ and ‘White Christmas’
Dec. trip planned to Sight & Sound Theatre

We don’t often have a white Christmas in Charlottesville, but this year you can experience the “Miracle of Christmas” along with a “White Christmas” with your church family. On Tues. and Wed., Dec. 12-13, a group from the church will travel to Lancaster, Pa. to The Sight and Sound Millennium Theatre to see the exquisite “Miracle of Christmas.” While there, the group will also have the opportunity to visit The Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre to enjoy “White Christmas,” the well-loved musical made famous by Bing Crosby.

The per-person rates are as follows: (We need 30 people to go to receive this pricing)

- ◆ Single \$331.00 (one person in a room)
- ◆ Twin \$276.00 (two persons in one room)
- ◆ Triple \$256.00 (three persons in one room)
- ◆ Quad \$ 248.00 (four persons in one room)

The trip includes roundtrip motor coach transportation, a night at the Country Inn of Lancaster, an American Country

Breakfast, dinner and reserved seats for the two shows, baggage handling (one bag per person), and all taxes and gratuities on the included meals.

Sound like fun? Give yourself a break from the busy holiday season and enjoy some Christmas joy! If you haven’t been to The Sight and Sound Theatre you will *not* want to miss this event. It truly is spectacular!

Full payment is due June 30. If we don’t get enough interest, your payment will be refunded. Don’t delay; the first deposit will be due SOON! Questions? Contact Carolyn McGee at 434-981-0458 or Carolynmcgee.fumc@gmail.com.



People in the News



Lisa Hanrahan

Annual award created in her name

Irma Mahone honored by psychiatric nurses

Irma Mahone was honored by the Virginia Association of Community Psychiatric Nurses (VACPN) for her career and role as co-founder of the organization with the creation of an annual Founders Award in her name at the association banquet on April 20. Irma is an assistant professor and RN-BS location coordinator in the

Department of Nursing at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU). A 1980 nursing graduate of EMU, she has a MS in psychiatric nursing and a PhD in nursing from the University of Virginia.

“We chose to honor Irma on our 30th anniversary because she is always looking to advance shared communication within the community psychiatric setting to better assist our nurses and clients,” said Jennifer Phelps, VACPN co-president.

In remarks following the presentation of the award, Irma stressed that “it takes a village” and acknowledged that it was the psychiatric nurses throughout the state who have kept the organization alive and flourishing for 30 years.



Irma Mahone

Funds raised for Emily Couric Cancer Center

Lisa Hanrahan runs in half marathon

Running in memory of First UMC’s own Leslie Gilliam, and in honor of cancer survivor Patt Keats, Lisa Hanrahan celebrated her 70th birthday April 30 by running in the 'Diva' Half Marathon Race in Lake Zurich, Illinois. She was also running to raise funds for the Emily Couric Cancer Center.

Not only did she exceed her fund-raising goals with more than 46 people supporting her efforts, but

she also came in first in her age group (including the age group below her own). “I think Leslie would be pleased knowing we are remembering her this way,” Lisa said, “and I know Patt is. That I am healthy and able to continue running when I know there are others who can't, even if they wanted to, is a great blessing to me. I thank God every day I run for the strength, ability, and determination I've been given.”

Congratulations to Our Graduates!

High School Graduates

Sarah Hamilton
Amanda Histand
Woody Kennon
Benjamin Jacob Lutz
Ryan Auman Manly
Mateo Maughlin
Eva McGehee
Jonah Wermter

Albemarle High School
Miller School of Albemarle
The New Community School
Albemarle High School
Albemarle High School
Albemarle High School
Fluvanna County High School
Charlottesville High School

University Graduates

John “Andy” Clarke (posthumous)
John Dowdy
Max Mann
Keith Nichols
Dr. J. David Peske
Meredith Rose
Ellen Wermter

Mary Baldwin University
University of South Carolina
James Madison University
James Madison University
University of Virginia
James Madison University
Virginia Commonwealth University

Jim O’Kelley speaks at Memorial Day event

At a Memorial Day ceremony in Earlysville, retired Marine Col. James “Jim” O’Kelley spoke about the history of Memorial Day and the decreasing number of those who observe it. The event was hosted by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2044. Jim also spoke about the Dogwood Vietnam Memorial in C’ville, noting the 28 names of fallen soldiers who are memorialized there. The ceremony included a history of the Pledge of Allegiance and a wreath laying ceremony. Jim’s photo and speech were featured in an article in the *Daily Progress* the next day.

Church windows are due for a facelift

Main water lines of church will also be replaced during repair

First United Methodist Church broke ground in 1923 to build its present structure. That means the existing windows of the church are now nearly 100 years old. When they were installed they met the standards of construction and energy use of their time. Over those years, the windows have been painted many times at considerable cost, but the old, lead-based paint has never been removed, posing health hazards to the congregation and passersby alike. Air leakage around the sills wastes energy and creates considerable discomfort for people. In addition, the sashes no longer raise and lower properly, making it almost impossible to even open some of the windows.

Replacing not an option

Replacing the windows is not feasible because the Charlottesville Board of Architectural Review (BAR) would have to approve any modifications to the exterior of the building, and historically they have only approved exact replacements of such windows in the downtown area. To replace these custom windows with new wooden windows to match the existing trim

would be extremely costly and only prolong the need for periodic, costly painting of the trim.

New paint to last 50-60 years

Therefore, starting the week of June 4, the church will rebuild its 100 windows by utilizing the services of the general contractor who recently restored the church's steeple. The plan is to strip the windows down to bare wood, removing all lead-based paint; replace all rotting wood; and install weather stripping on all window sashes. A linseed oil paint (natural material), like that used on the steeple, will be used to paint all wooden surfaces and can conservatively be expected to last 50 to 60 years. Such work is expected to more than double the energy efficiency of the building and will improve both the value and comfort of the church.

In addition, the copper gutters will be repaired, if needed, and the main water lines serving the church (which date back to 1923) will be



replaced. They are galvanized steel pipes and are corroding on the inside. The corrosion is reducing the building's flow of water and is increasing the water pressure, which in turn increases the chance of the pipes bursting. The plan is to upgrade the church's main water lines to meet modern standards and capacity using Pex (plastic) pipe, a material with low surface resistance and long life expectancy.

If you have questions concerning this work, contact Guy Moffat at rgmhvacconsulting@gmail.com.



Single, combined worship at 10am

Hymn Sing set for Sunday, June 18

There will be a **single, combined worship service** on **Sunday, June 18, 10am** when the voices of all three regular worship services will join for a joint HYMN SING. The Chancel Choir and Celebration Singers will unite for three anthems during the service, and they would like to invite others to join them. If you are able to come to either or both of the rehearsals on June 5 and 15 at 6:30pm then you have passed the audition! Also, you can suggest favorite hymns to be sung during the service by completing one of the hymn selection cards located near baskets in the Welcome Center. You can also indicate on the card if you would like to share a story behind why your hymn is a favorite. If you like music, don't miss this exciting service!

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