



The Witness

First United Methodist Church, 1610 Prince St., Conway, AR, 72034

Volume LIII

May 2020

Number 5

AN UPDATE FROM PASTOR MICHAEL SURVEYS, CALLINGS, PRAYERS, AND HOPES

Dear FUMC Family,

I start with a word about our calling as the Body of Christ in the world. In all circumstances, we are called to grow in love. To do so, we have a lot of scriptural counsel to help us. We hold fast to what is good; we show honor to others; we rejoice in hope; we contribute to the needs of God's people; we extend hospitality to others. These are a few of the "Marks of a Christian" as found in Romans Chapter 12. In these words, we continue to be reminded that the church is a body, not a building. The church is people, not a place. As the old song says, "we are the church together," and we live in a world that needs our witness.

In the light of this calling, I want to give a quick summary from the "Return to Worship" Survey that went out last week by email. We had 261 responses. This was a great response considering that we limited the request to email recipients rather than opening it up on social media. Our church council reviewed the result and we are using them to help discern our way forward.

The results shows that 90 percent of the respondents expressed appreciation for the online worship experiences that we are offering, with 22 percent seeing this as a good option for the future. In other words, some form of online worship is likely to

become one of the ways that we help people grow in the "Marks of a Christian" even after we are able to come together in person. We were also encouraged by the fact that the majority of those who said they are not interested in this particular type of worship are also those who anticipate returning at first opportunity. I definitely look forward to that day.

As we continue to experiment and learn how to offer meaningful worship in this new way, I want to give thanks for your patience, your encouragement, your stories of being inspired, and your "likes" and "shares." These responses help us connect in new ways to others. We regularly receive good words, not only from our own, but also from people beyond our membership.

Concerning attitudes about returning to in-person worship, 28 percent anticipate returning at first opportunity, with all others expressing an interest in waiting to return – for various reasons. The largest group, at 35 percent, liked the idea of Back-to-School Sunday as a possible hope. We will keep this date before us and work towards it, knowing that circumstances could change.

Concerning precautions, more than 80 percent expressed a willingness to wear face coverings, avoid physical contact, and

to practice physical distancing, while also wanting the church to encourage these and other practices, such as providing hand sanitizer stations and new methods for collecting the offering. Seventy-eight percent would be comfortable with children in either worship only or also in classes – with precautions in place.

To draw some initial conclusions, we will continue online worship. We will use the summer to reflect more deeply on what God is calling us to offer in terms of worship and discipleship. We will evaluate the possibility of smaller group gatherings during the summer when we are able to enter Phase 2, according to the governor's guidelines and the Conference recommendations. And we will form a task force to help put procedures in place. Be on the lookout for more surveys and opportunities to give your input. And, if you would like to see the results of this survey, they were sent by email last week and are on our website.

Once again, I give thanks for the great opportunity we have to be a community of faith, to learn patience in the midst of trials and how to persevere in prayer – which are more of the mark of a Christian in Romans 12. We will make it through, and together our witness can be an inspiration to many. May love be our constant goal.

Saying Goodbye to Pastor Lauren

When Pastor Lauren's appointment to Vilonia was announced it was said, "Now is not the time to say goodbye." Friends, now that time has come. Now is the time to share your love and appreciation for her and to give her blessings as she moves to be the pastor of the Vilonia United Methodist Church.

With that in mind, you are invited to participate in a "Goodbye Parade" on Sunday, June 14, from 5 to 7 p.m. Like a traditional receiving line, you may stop for a few moments and share your blessings.

You are also invited to help purchase a commentary set and to give a love offering. You may do so by check or by giving online (there will be a place to designate this gift). You are also invited to write a note or card. If there are groups or classes that would like to gather via Zoom or an outdoor gathering with Pastor Lauren, feel free to call or message her about a possible time.



Class of 2020

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Max
Bowen



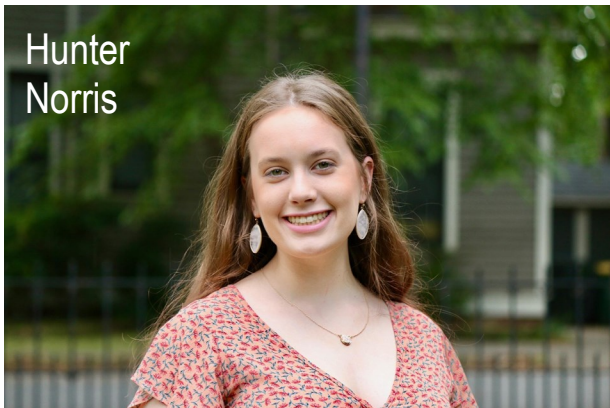
Max Bowen is planning to attend UACCM in the fall.

Ethan Talley has been awarded a Fellowship to the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville Honors College. He will begin his studies in Biology and Life Sciences at Fayetteville in the fall of 2020.

Ethan
Talley



Hunter
Norris



Hunter Norris plans to attend Arkansas Tech University majoring in Mathematics and minoring in Communications on a path to become a Broadcast Meteorologist.

Destiny
Elms



Destiny Elms plans to attend UCA in the fall, majoring in Special Education and Pre-Occupational Therapy.

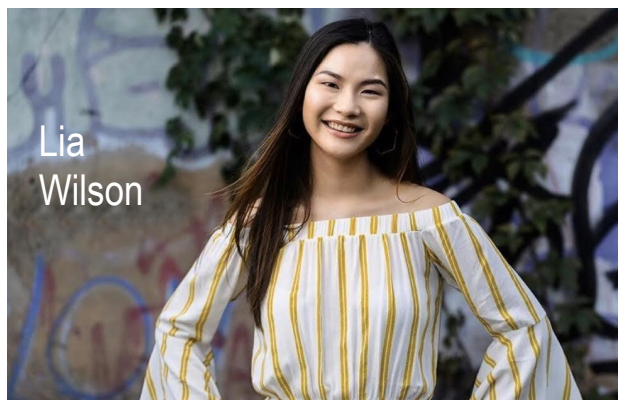
Olivia
Bowles



Olivia Bowles is considering all of her options.

Lia Wilson plans to attend the University of Central Arkansas in the Fall term majoring in Political Science or International Studies.

Lia
Wilson





Kinsey
Boone

Kinsey Boone plans to attend Arkansas Tech University in the fall majoring in Elementary Education.



Kenley
Mobley

Kenley Mobley plans to attend Arkansas Tech in Russellville to pursue a Nursing degree.



Elizabeth
Kennedy

Elizabeth Kennedy plans to attend the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville to pursue a Science Degree with an interest in medicine



Anna
Caroline
Gregg

Anna Caroline Gregg plans to attend Washington University in St. Louis.

Nick McCuin plans to attend the University of Arkansas, majoring in Computer Science — Engineering.



Nick
McCuin



Adam
Harness

Adam Harness plans to attend Rhodes College in Memphis.

NOT PICTURED:

Carraig Craun
Ethan Marotte

Katie Huett
Olivia Marotte

Joshua March

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1610 PRINCE ST.
CONWAY, ARKANSAS 72034
501-329-3801

(USPS 625-840)

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FUMC & Nursing Homes Join Efforts!

Pet Parade

Bring CHEER -- or Rover or Lily or your pet by whatever name -- to a showing outside the windows of our nursing homes while they are locked down by the Coronavirus! Our church has been invited to share our pets "outside" the windows of three Conway community Nursing Homes to provide support and cheer to residents and staff who can see our pets through the windows of their nursing homes.

Email Kisha Bumpers at kbumpers@conwayfumc.org to sign up for the parade. We need to know your name, contact info, kind of pet and pet name. We will be in touch with you to



join in sharing your pet following social distancing guidelines.

Face Masks

A few of our nursing homes have requested face masks for their residents. If you are able to sew we would love your help to try to meet this need. The total requested so far is 100 to 150. If you are physical distancing, we would be glad to deliver materials to your porch and/or pick up your completed face masks. For those getting out and about, face masks can be dropped off at the church.

Contact Jeff Kelley, 269-9044 or Kisha Bumpers, kbumpers@conwayfumc.org, if you have questions about helping our local nursing homes.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH STAFF DIRECTORY

Senior Pastor — Michael Roberts
Associate Pastor — Lauren DeLano
Dir., Music/Worship Ministries — Janet Gingerich
Director, Children's Ministries — Pam Lentz
Director, Lay Ministries — Kisha Bumpers
Director, Youth Ministries — Zach Schrick
Director, MidYouth Ministries — Sandra King
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Kitchen Coordinator — Kathleen Caruthers
Elementary Assistant — Catherine Gatlin
Nursery Assistant — Paula Bruner

Contact staff by email at:
first initial of first name plus last name
@conwayfumc.org

Example: mroberts@conwayfumc.org

Our Core Purpose:

To cultivate faithful and fruitful disciples
of Jesus Christ.

