



THE WITNESS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1610 PRINCE ST., CONWAY, ARKANSAS, 72034

Updated Pandemic Protocols

From Pastor Michael Roberts:

Dear FUMC Family,

We have been through many variations of protocols and guidelines during this pandemic, all with the hope of loving one another well. We have learned much and been able to stay connected through an online presence and through opportunity to gather in-person in some different ways. Through it all, God has been with us with gifts of patience, wisdom, comfort, and an assurance of eternal love. For this we are thankful. Based on the newest guidelines from the Arkansas Conference and the CDC, it is time for new protocols and guidelines. Our Board of Trustees met last night and approved the following:

FUMC Guidelines As of May 19, 2021

From the CDC: Fully vaccinated people can resume all activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by state...business...or workplace guidance.

It is recommended that un-vaccinated people ages 2 and older practice physical distancing and wear masks in indoor settings. For children, and in worship settings, we will honor the decisions of parents but ask that physical distancing be practiced when masks are not worn.

Physical distancing of three feet will be encouraged. We will continue to cultivate distancing by the way we set up our rooms, including for worship in the Great Hall and Sanctuary.

We will have HEPA air purifiers available in all rooms where people are gathered and continue to clean rooms and surfaces to our current standards.

See **PROTOCOLS** on Page 7

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



HONORING
OUR HIGH
SCHOOL
SENIORS

PAGES 3-6



MISSION TRIP TO
GUATEMALA PLANNED

PAGE 2

A Letter from Pastor Michelle

Dear Conway FUMC Family,

What a year this has been! I can safely say this will be one of my most unforgettable years in ministry, and I have done it all with you. Well, sort of with you. If I have one regret for this year, it has been that I have not met so many of you in person! But I want you all to know that I have felt your presence in community even as we have been physically kept apart. So many of you took time in your lives to submit videos for worship, or our virtual scavenger hunt, or our Christmas cards in Cars project, our Advent and Lent series, or teaching last summer's WOW camp. You may or may not know, but I did the bulk of that editing, and as I did, I prayed for each of you and felt that I knew so much more about you. You shared your family, your home, your passions, your knowledge, and your faith, not only with me but with people all over the world. You have been inspiring people of faith sharing your love of church and Christ around the world.

See **MICHELLE** on Page 2

Join a Mission Team Next Year to Help Build Stoves in Guatemala

The Missions Committee at Conway FUMC will sponsor a mission team to Guatemala in February to help build fuel-efficient concrete block stoves for Mayan families.

The team will work with families who are either still cooking on a fire on the ground in their homes, or have some old or makeshift-type of elevated platform to cook on but with no way to vent the smoke out of the house.

Members of the team will work with Stove Builders of Guatemala, an Advance project with the United Methodist Church. The Advance is an accountable, designated giving arm of the United Methodist Church that ensures 100 percent of each gift is used for its intended mission or

ministry.

Bonnie and Steve Laycock will be leading this team and are excited about having an entire team from FUMC go to Guatemala. The dates for the trip are Feb. 4-13 with an option to extend to Feb. 16 to visit Tikal, famous Mayan ruins.

Cost of the trip will be around \$1,500, depending on air fare (with an additional fee for the extension). A \$100 deposit is required when you sign up and can be made to FUMC Conway and designated "Guatemala Team." Covid shots will be required.

If you are interested in joining this team, or would like more information about the team, please contact Bonnie Laycock at 316-207-0883.

MICHELLE from Page 1

For those of you I did get to meet, I am so grateful for the ways we built community in challenging times. From the Held Together group that gathered to pray for each other and seek ways to encounter God, to the Women's Bible Study who gathered to study God's word via Zoom on Wednesdays, to the youth who invited me to join them in discussion, to the GNC Praise Band who invited me in as we recorded week after week of songs, you have all been instrumental (pardon the pun) to helping us grow in our ways of understanding Christ and ministry.

To my digital campus team, you have been amazing in seeking to think out of the box as we reach people each week from as close as down the street to as far away as Kenya. I have loved brainstorming with you, changing our infrastructure, and learning from you as well. And for all those laity who serve on committees and in UMW, like those on the Mission Team who invited me into planning and implementation of Trivia Night and Christmas Coffeehouse, trustees who listened to and supported new technology and guided us through Covid, and all the other committees who made brave and challenging decisions this year, I am grateful. And to all of you who invited me to join your gatherings on Zoom, thank you for making space for a new kid on the block.

And finally, to an amazing staff ... what a joy to work with each of you. I have learned from each one of you, and I hope that will make me a better lead pastor when I arrive in Bentonville. You are an incredibly gifted, creative, and caring team. You have filled me with excitement about the future of the church. I am grateful for the ways you have received me this year, and thoroughly blessed that I have been able to navigate this weird year in ministry with you. A special thanks to Senior Pastor Michael Roberts. I have learned much from you, lessons that I will undoubtedly carry with me in the coming years. And I truly appreciate your kind and thoughtful heart.

I have three more worship services with you, during two of which I will preach. My last day in Conway will be June 6. Strange as it sounds to say, I do hope I get to meet some more of you in these last three weeks. Whether we meet face-to-face or not before then, know that I am grateful for the faithful way you have been the church this year, and you will remain in my prayers as we all jump further forward in this grand adventure that is a life lived for Jesus Christ.



CLASS OF 2021

First United Methodist Church, Conway, Arkansas



**Olivia
Cash**



Olivia plans to attend UCA and pursue something in the medical field while working in our FUMC Children's ministry as an intern and Conway Regional Health & Fitness Center, also while training to be a personal trainer.

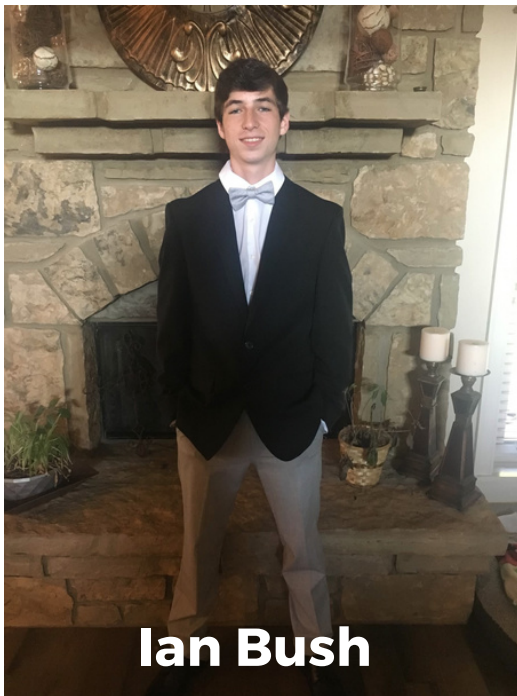
Favorite memory: I'm thankful for the "big sister" program from C1Youth. Bugging Sydney M. was my absolute favorite church pastime.

**Hayes
Polk**



Hayes plans to attend UCA and major in Digital filmmaking.

His favorite memory was doing the Best Christmas Pageant Ever.



Ian Bush

Ian plans to attend UACCM for 2 years and then transfer to UCA and major in Business.

Funny story: Getting kicked out of Sunday School by Amanda Mulhearn, when I was innocent and Thane was the culprit.



Raegan Bush

Raegan plans to attend U of Arkansas and major in Psychology.

"I will never forget all the bus jam sessions on the way to trips that definitely annoyed Zach."



Thane Johnson

Thane plans to attend the University of Arkansas and major in Mechanical Engineering.

Memory: According to Will Parrack, Thane got lost at Silver Dollar City.

Gage Guynes



Gage plans to attend UCA to study Criminology. Once he graduates from UCA, he will then join the U.S. Army as an officer.

His favorite memory is going to ReConnect and attending Hendrix Youth Institute.

Will Parrack



Will plans to attend Vanderbilt University and study Music Education in the five-year Blair to Peabody Program.

Favorite memory: Mystery Trip to Nashville, Tenn.

Ella Baumgarten



Ella plans to attend Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Abby plans to attend the University of Arkansas to study Exercise Science.

Her favorite memory is of the scavenger hunts in MidYouth.

Ella Jones



Ella plans to attend UCA to major in Occupational Therapy.

Her favorite memories are all from Ozark Mission Project.

Etta Haynes



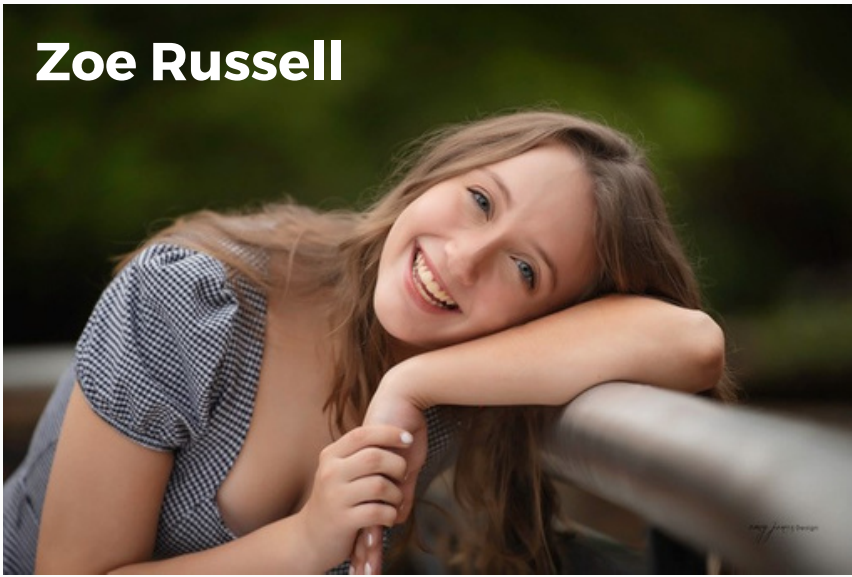
Etta plans to attend UACCM for 2 years and then transfer to UALR to major in Dental Hygiene.

A memory is from 5th grade and attending MidYouth with Raegan Bush and she introduced me to Olivia Cash. We swam and ate lots of hot dogs and have been friends since. I've gained life-long friendships from FUMC.

Abby Masters



Zoe Russell

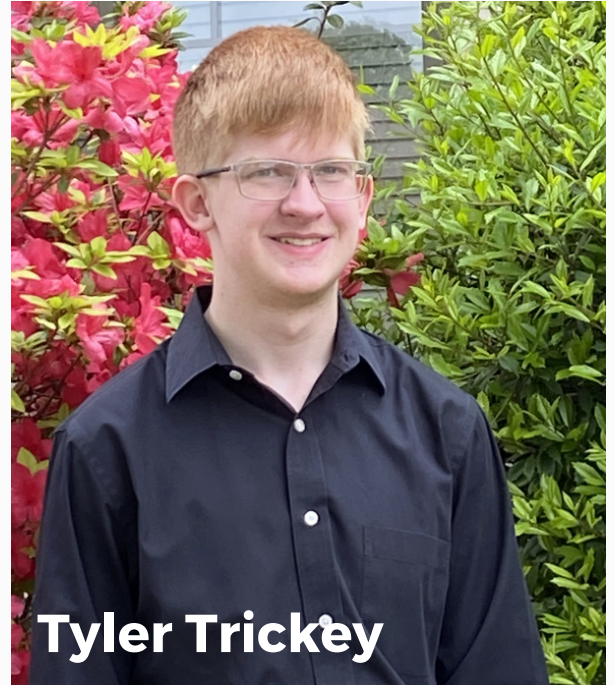


Zoe plans to attend Dartmouth College in New Hampshire and major in History and Government.

Funny story: When I was 11, I had to acolyte and read scripture on the same Sunday. I had forgotten my Bible and ran laps around the sanctuary trying to find one - then I realized I could just take a hymnal and no one would be close enough to tell the difference.

Tyler plans to attend U of Arkansas and studying Music Education and Saxophone Studio.

His favorite memory is playing bells with Mrs. Janet and every day at ECC.



Tyler Trickey



Hannah Gordon

Hannah plans to attend Hendrix College and major in Religious Studies.

Favorite memories: ACCYM Assembly and Converge Bible Study.

Funny story: Ask me about my segway riding skills from Washington, D.C.



Darci Burris

Darci plans to attend the University of Arkansas and major in architecture.

Funny story: Not known by my parents, so why not now. I jumped out of a window at Assembly in 9th grade and Hannah posted it to Snapchat. Caused a mandatory safety meeting that I did not attend.

Keaton plans to attend Hendrix College and major in International Relations and minor in Social Justice.

His favorite memory is of ReConnect, our own youth spring retreat.



Keaton Taylor

Gunter Campbell



Gunter plans to attend the University of Arkansas and major in Engineering.

His favorite memory is making friends and helping people at OMP.

Lanie Thornton



Lanie plans to attend UACCM and later transfer to Arkansas Tech and pursue a degree in Graphic Design

Favorite Memory: In the car on the way to an event some of the other kids and I were doing karaoke to Disney and other songs

Nyden Hill



Nyden plans to attend Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minn.

Favorite anecdote: Dancing during hymns at church when I was little.

Cade Smiley



Cade plans to attend the University of Arkansas on an Honors College Fellowship and will major in Data Science with a concentration in Business Data Analytics.

Favorite memory: Being in the 'Littlest Angel' play.

John David Grimes



JD plans to get a job and attend Ole Miss football games.

Nursery Offered for In-Person Worship

We are now offering nursery during our in-person worship services for children age 2 and under.

* Nursery for the 9:00 service will be in the Preschool Area Butterfly room in the Trinity Building.

* Childcare for the 11:15 service will be in the Trinity Building Parlor (just off the Lobby).

RSVP by emailing Pam at plentz@conwayfumc.org by Friday prior to Sunday worship so we can plan for your child. You may also call or email Pam at the church with any questions you may have.

UMW Circle Needs T-Shirts for Jump Ropes

The Clara Golden Circle of United Methodist Women needs clean old T-shirts (sizes L and XL) for a jump rope project on June 14. The T-shirts can have stains, but they should be in good condition. Cotton or cotton blend shirts work best.



Mary Henderson will teach the group how to weave the shirts into jump ropes that will be sent with Bonnie and Steve Laycock and their team of Stove Builders of Guatemala to give to the children there.

Collection tubs for your donated shirts can be found in the Hospitality area and Trinity Building Lobby at the church. Thank you.

PROTOCOLS from Page 1

Our children will meet outdoors as much as possible through the summer, and indoors in larger rooms, like the Great Hall, with specific protocols from our children's ministry.

We will continue to limit contact with items passed from person to person. (Bulletins and Offering, for example).

We will honor all who want to wear masks for their own health reasons, and those who want to do so in solidarity with others, especially children who have not yet been vaccinated.

The church offices and buildings will reopen to the public for all activities, with protocols in place.

We will trust people to practice love for others and abide by these simple protocols.

We look forward to resuming ministries and to seeing you in worship! At the same time, we will continue to offer online opportunities for worship. At our Church Council meeting next week, we will review a new Sunday morning schedule with the hopes of resuming three services and Sunday School. Our Sunday School rooms are being equipped for hybrid learning, where participants can attend in-person or online. Please keep all of this in your prayers as we move towards being able to gather in ways that are needed for our own health and our growth in the love of God.

Free Little Library



Our Free Little Library is filled with books to read. It is suggested that visitors take one book per person per visit. You may keep it for your home library if you would like to read it again, or return it for others to enjoy. Donations of new or gently used books are appreciated.

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In Honor and In Memory

In memory of Sue Dodd by: Tom & Patsy Desaulniers, Martha Bumpers, Richard & Carol Clark

In memory of James Matthews by: Tom & Patsy Desaulniers

In memory of Derwin & Blanche Ball by: Margaret Taverner

In memory of Brenda Jane Collier by: Jill Stratton, Gigi Peters, Joe & Sylvia Lybrand, Betsey Bakker, Larry Heiss, Sandra Heiss, Jennifer Holtz, Jeff & Norma Kelley, Jamie Bird, Chris & Thea Spatz, Jerry & Cherry White, Martha Bumpers, William & Freda Freeman, Frankie Reynolds, Tom & Patsy Desaulniers, Jim & Carolyn Bruce, Carolyn Sanders, Claudia Davis, Claudia Moreland, Robert & Glenda Schmidt, Christine Long, Steve & Laura Middlekauff, Charles & Paulette Berger, Paul Harrison, Sam & Carole Teague, Cliff & Maribeth Garrison, Carol & Barbara Means, The Bernard Family, Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families

In memory of Greg Wren by: Pam Wren, Mike & Amber Wren Vicory, Eric & Ashlie Wren Wills, Richie & Ali Wren Blanchette

In memory of Aleene Henson by: Dick & Mickey Sweeden, Jamie Bird, Martha Bumpers, Jerry & Cherry White, Roger & Linda Mills, Gaye Watson, Cecille Boyd, Charlene James, Tom & Patsy Desaulniers, Carolyn Sanders, Claudia Davis, James & Carolyn Bruce, Jacqueline Downs, Sara Shinn, John & Jennifer Parrack, Fred Covington, Clay & Pam Lentz, Larry & Marilyn Williams, David & Janet Adcock, Kay Bland, Matthew & Heidi Crane, Sharon Andrus, Sam & Carole Teague, Cliff & Maribeth Garrison, Carol & Barbara Means, Robert Leighton

In memory of William Floyd Hayden by: Martha Bumpers

In memory of Tracey Sutherland by: Gene & Meredith Wilbourn

In honor of Sarah Frost by: Allen Frost

In honor of Kathleen Caruthers by: Chris & Thea Spatz

In honor of Kisha Bumpers by: Margaret Taverner

In honor of Kish Jones by: Charles Pittman

In honor of Janet Gingerich by: Sara Shinn

In honor of Heidi Crane by: Sara Shinn

In honor of Van Lamar by: Sara Shinn

First United Methodist Church Staff Directory

Senior Pastor — Michael Roberts
Associate Pastor — Michelle Morris
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
Assoc. Dir., Music (Children) — Linda Ball
Praise Band Leader — Stuart Holt

Church Administrator — Jill Hankins
Business Assistant — Todd Burris
Supervisor, Hospitality Ministries — Ed Spears
Financial Assistant — Laura Bounds
Communications Assistant — Colleen Holt
Kitchen Coordinator — Kathleen Caruthers
Children's Ministry Assistant -- Catherine Gatlin

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

Example: mroberts@conwayfumc.org