



THE WITNESS

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

Christmas Week Worship

“A Service of Light in Our Darkness”

Wednesday, Dec. 22,
11 a.m. in person in the Sanctuary
5 p.m. on Facebook Live
www.facebook.com/conwayfirstumc

Some of us are wondering where the “happy” and “merry” went this holiday season. There has been too much illness, loss, and change. We are learning to accept the empty chairs around the table. We are calculating the risks of being with loved ones over the costs of loneliness. It is almost as if we are dragging the weight of the world to the manger where Jesus is sleeping. Psalm 30 could have been written by or for us this year.

You are invited to a time of worship at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 22, in the Sanctuary. We will sing. We will pray. We will share the scripture together, and we will sit in the light together and be reminded that “the light shines in the darkness and the darkness HAS NOT overcome it.” Join with others to face the darkness and lessen the load in the light of Christ.

We will also gather at 5 p.m. on Facebook to light our candles to remind us of the light in the darkness. You are invited to attend both services, or just one as you are able.

Christmas Eve Worship Friday, Dec. 24

11 a.m. -- Carols, Candles and Communion in the Sanctuary
4 p.m. -- Carols, Candles and Communion in the Great Hall
7 p.m. -- Carols, Candles and Communion in the Sanctuary

5:30 p.m. -- A new worship opportunity held outside in the parking lot with music and candlelight.

This service will be shorter in length and will be perfect for those who are not yet ready to attend in-person worship inside the building.

Please note, however, that in case of inclement weather, the service will be held in the Trinity Lobby.

There will not be a worship service on Christmas Day this year.

Worship on Sunday, Dec. 26

On Sunday, the day after Christmas, we will have one worship service in the Sanctuary at 10 a.m. It will be an informal service with singing of carols and having the opportunity to play chimes. Our pastors will share a dialogue message and invite us into the Christmas story. There will be no Sunday School on this day.

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Sunday Worship Opportunities

In-person worship:
8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
9:05 a.m., Great Hall
11:00 a.m., Sanctuary

Online worship:
9:30 a.m. Sundays
www.facebook.com/conwayfirstumc OR
www.conwayfumc.org

Announcement of Staff Changes



Pam Lentz, our Director of Children's Ministries, has accepted a job at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church in Little Rock as the Director of Children and Family Ministries, effective Jan. 1, 2022. We are thankful for her 26 years of faithful and fruitful ministry among us.

Our Children's Council is putting together a "Memory Box." All are invited to send cards, pictures, and memories by email to Pam or to Catherine Gatlin, cgatlin@conwayfumc.org. or by mail, addressed to Pam at 1610 Prince St. All gifts of appreciation should be made directly to Pam.



Janet Gingerich, our Director of Music and Worship Ministries, has announced her upcoming retirement in June of 2022. We are thankful for her 28 years of faithful and fruitful ministry. We will celebrate her ministry among us at the appropriate time. For now, we look forward to the next few months of her leadership in worship as a member of our staff.

For each of these positions, our Pastors and the Staff Parish Relations Committee will establish a task force to assess our staffing needs and help us to move forward.

What's With the Door on the Corner?



It's ready for your use as a decorative, holiday background for family photos!

In conjunction with our Advent theme of "The Inn: Making Room for the Holy," the door was created to keep the idea of "making room" at the forefront this holiday season. Several members of the church staff recently gathered to take a photo by the door

The door will also be the centerpiece of our new outdoor Christmas Eve worship service at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 24. (Other Christmas Eve services will be held at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary and 4 p.m. in the Great Hall.) We would love to see the photos you take! Share them on social media with the hashtag [#fumcmakingroomphotos](https://twitter.com/fumcmakingroomphotos)

Thank you to Sam Shores for building the door and Shirley Bowen for painting the lovely sign.

Interim Director of Children's Ministry

We are pleased to announce that Catherine Gatlin will serve as the Interim Director of Children's Ministry as we appoint a task force to explore our needs for this important area of ministry. Catherine will start on Jan. 1, moving from a position which she has held for several years as the Assistant for Children's Ministry.

Conway FUMC on Channel 5

Conway FUMC is joining with Conway Corp. Channel 5 to be part of their plans to air special Christmas programming all day on Dec. 24, 25 & 26. Area churches will be included in the schedule. We are currently putting together a program that will include music from some of our Sanctuary musicians and our Good News Celebration Praise Band, along with a short devotional from the pastors. At this point we don't know what time our show will air.

UMW Unit Recognized

As a United Methodist Women (UMW) Unit, Conway FUMC recently received several Certificates of Appreciation in recognition of contributions.

The Unit received the Jewel Unit: Diamond designation, which means the members have completed 20 of the required activities by UMW. The Unit also received the designation of being a 5 Star Unit, which requires participation in pledges, gifts and offerings.

The group also was recognized for contributions to and participating in Camp Aldersgate; Miles of Pennies; Elizabeth Thornburn Workman Fund; MIWATCH; National Charter of Racial Justice; Mission Study; and UMW Sunday.

In addition, seven women completed the UMW Reading Program.

These Unit members received recognition from the Arkansas Conference Central District UMW:

- Jamie Bird, Five Star Woman and Reading Program Plan 1
- Jema Elms, Reading Program Plan 1
- Beth Ruple, Reading Program Plan 1
- Carol Teague, Reading Program Plan 1
- Sara Shinn, Reading Program Plan 2
- Melinda Adams, Reading Program Plan 3
- Claudia Davis, Reading Program Plan 3

End-of-Year Giving & Church Office Hours

For gifts to be deductible for the 2021 tax year, they must be in the church office by noon Friday, Dec. 31, or postmarked by that date.

The church office will be closed Monday, Dec. 27, and Tuesday, Dec. 28. Office hours will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 29, and Thursday, Dec. 30, and 9 a.m. to noon Friday, Dec. 31.

The office will also be closed Monday, Jan. 3.



In Honor & In Memory

In memory of Ann Poindexter by: Larry & Hilda Malpica, Linda Tyler, Kim & Ellis Arnold, Tom & Margaret Beasley, Lorlie March, Sara Shinn, Pam Wren, Carol Schedler, Claudia Davis, Robert & Shirley Bowen, Matthew & Heidi Crane, Nancy Williams & Bob Dornblaser, Dr. Jack & Dimple Royal, Martha Bumpers, Tom & Patsy Desaulniers, Clint Johnson, Nona Jo Spatz, Gene & Meredith Wilbourn, Rick & Becky Rasnick, Chris & Kathy Cooper, Roger & Linda Mills, Jimmy & Jann Bryant, Richard & Carol Clark, Vicki Crockett, Jack & Melinda Adams

In memory of Andrew Poindexter by: Linda Tyler, Kim & Ellis Arnold, Chris & Kathy Cooper, Dr. & Mrs. Jack Royal, Richard & Carol Clark

In memory of Gay Moore by: Michael & Donna Harris, Sharon Thompson

In memory of Vickie Bench by: Donna Townsell, Frank & Debbie Bartrow

In memory of Mary Pat Cullum by: Nik & Courtney Meena, Marolyn Lee

In memory of Eloise Raymond by: Sharon Thompson

In memory of Leah Farris by: Martha Bumpers

In memory of Erika Cohen by: Martha Bumpers, Tom & Patsy Desaulniers, Jim & Karen Foust

In memory of Rosemary Lentz by: Sam & Carole Teague, Martha Bumpers

In memory of Rev. Ben Jordan by: Chris & Kathy Cooper

In memory of Ron Dickson by: Chris & Kathy Cooper

In memory of Chloe Meena by: Courtney Meena

In memory of Donald Nixon by: Betty Nixon

In memory of Linda Waymack by: Martha Bumpers, Sam & Carole Teague

In memory of C.R. Trent by: Connie Trent

In memory of Frankie Reynolds by: Jeff & Norma Kelley, Claudia Davis, Jerry & Cherry White, David & Margaret Crouse

In honor of Doug Poindexter by: Dr. Jack & Dimple Royal

In honor of Peggy Crowell by: Pam Wren

In honor of Carolyn Berryhill by: Pam Wren

In honor of Kish Jones by: Charles Pittman

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'First Steps' Series Planned for Epiphany

During the season of Epiphany, we invite you to join us for a series titled "First Steps." In building a life of faithfulness and fruitfulness, the first steps are crucial. In the series, we will explore Jesus' first acts of ministry that set the course of all that will follow. Join us as we set the course for a year of growth and blessings. The series will run from Jan. 2 through Feb. 27.

During this worship series, we will build upon the theme of the door that was featured in our Advent series, "The Inn: Making Room for the Holy." We will explore first steps into the realm of God's will and ways, into the kingdom of God. We will witness the magi "enter the house" and be changed forever. We will stand on the banks of the Jordan River with people who are "filled with

expectation" and remember and renew our baptism. We will attend a wedding where the first sign is given, as a couple starts a new life together. We will enter the synagogue and hear the first recorded sermon of Jesus that sets the tone for his whole ministry and our mission. And we will witness him come down to our level, enter into our lives, and show us the way forward with his teachings on the plains.

Epiphany is the day Christians remember the coming of the Magi to visit Jesus, bringing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. It occurs on Jan. 6 every year, which is the 13th day of the Christmas season. The word "epiphany," from the Greek word epiphania, means appearance or manifestation.

First United Methodist Church Staff Directory

Senior Pastor — Michael Roberts
Executive Pastor — Dede Roberts
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
Campus Dir., Wesley Foundation -- Amy Shores

Assoc. Dir., Music (Praise Band) -- Stuart Holt
Organist -- Jason Saugey
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