



THE WITNESS

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

Important Pandemic Announcement: Suspending In-Person Large Gatherings for Two Weeks

In response to the pandemic crisis in our community, we will be online only for worship and Sunday School, for the next two Sundays, Jan. 23 and 30. Our staff will continue to work and be available. Our Food Pantry, and some small group gatherings, will continue with special attention to our protocols. All of you are encouraged to participate in "Sermon and Song" for the next two Sundays. This online worship experience premieres at 9:30 am each Sunday on the church Facebook page and our website.

This decision flows from our calling to "love one another with mutual affection and outdo one another in showing honor." (Romans 12:10). As a congregation, may we be among those who lead the way and lead with love.

Motivated by Data:

First of all, we also have members of our staff and their families, along with members of our choirs, bands, and Sunday School leaders, who have been directly affected and are self-isolating right now. This certainly factors into our decision. Secondly, the number of new daily cases in Faulkner County are at an all-time high, with reported cases at 340 per 100K, up dramatically from last week, which was also a record-breaking number. With the latest variants, and with continually improving treatments, the risk of severe illness is reported to be lower, but the high number of cases is leading to increased pressure on our health-care system. As of today, ICU beds in Faulkner County are at 99 percent capacity, with 36 of 37 available beds filled and with 20 of those beds filled with Covid patients. This is alarming, especially for those in need of urgent care. And while I do not know the exact numbers about vaccination status, more general statements from officials would suggest that most, if not all, of these Covid patients are unvaccinated.

Motivated by a Calling:

This week I was challenged by the short verse that calls us to "love one another with mutual affection and to outdo one another in showing honor." (Romans 12:10). I invite you to reflect upon this calling. In terms of the pandemic, this calling can lead us to give special attention to vaccines, masks, physical distancing, and by avoiding large group gatherings when the numbers are at this crisis level. This is how we can do our part to help us all move from a pandemic to having a virus that is endemic. As a congregation, may we be among those who lead the way and lead with love. Let us "outdo one another in showing honor."

My friends, I hope you will join us for online worship these next two Sundays. As we gather in this way, may love grow in us and through us!

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VISIONS OF
CHRISTMAS EVE

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Online worship:

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



Christmas Eve 2021



More
photos
can be
found on
the
church
Facebook
page.



A Welcoming Environment



Mother-daughter team Becky Hammett and Brittney Schrick recently made the restrooms on the church campus much more hospitable by hanging photos and filling new hospitality baskets with personal care items for use by visitors and church family members alike. Thank you to Becky and Brittney for their work in hospitality ministries!



If you would like to help with the upkeep of the baskets, either by checking supplies or donating items, please contact the church office.

In Honor & In Memory

In memory of Frankie Reynolds by: Jamie Bird, Melinda Adams, Martha Bumpers

In memory of Henry Wilson by: Jamie Bird

In memory of Ann Poindexter by: Helen Benafield, Thea & Chris Spatz

In memory of Andrew Stratton Poindexter by: Thea & Chris Spatz

In memory of Lauren Anne Church by: Penny & Gordon Wilbourn

In memory of Ben Bakker by: Betsey Bakker

In memory of Bill Sanders by: FUMC Men's Prayer Breakfast

In memory of Bob McCormack by: FUMC Men's Prayer Breakfast

In memory of Jan David Ellis by: FUMC Men's Prayer Breakfast

In memory of Liz Workman by: Thea & Chris Spatz, Martha Bumpers

In memory of Danny Morse by: Martha Bumpers

In honor of Melanie Church by: Penny & Gordon Wilbourn

In honor of Ruby Jones Hulsey by: Pam Wren

In honor of Chris & Thea Spatz by: Carol Schedler

In honor of Janet Gingerich by: Matt, Heidi, & James Crane, Chancel Choir, Nichola Clark

In honor of Bob & Weese Clifton by: Jennifer Pearce

In honor of Mary Louise Rogers by: Jennifer Pearce

In honor of Jason Saugey by: Chancel Choir

In honor of Sue & Bud Hines by: Libba Tierney

In honor of Pastors Michael & Dede Roberts by: Bill & Janie Craddock

FUMC Children's Music Experience - Spring Edition

We are planning to offer another music learning opportunity for children in grades K-7 this semester. It will be divided into small groups, depending mostly on age. The younger group will focus on rhythm and melody experiences (no singing), and the older group will work on reading music, ringing chimes, and beginning keyboard lessons. For those who have already had the beginning keyboard experience, we would like to offer a more advanced class as well.

Due to the recent Covid surge, we don't know when these classes can begin. But we hope to offer six or more weeks of learning once we start. All safety measures will be in place for each class, which means we will limit the size of the groups to allow for social distancing. We expect to offer the classes on Wednesday afternoons from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

If you are interested in this opportunity for your children, keep watching for more information in the near future.

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501-329-3801

(USPS 625-840)

The Witness is published monthly by
First United Methodist Church
1610 Prince St., Conway, AR 72034.
Periodicals postage paid at Conway, AR

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
"The Witness,"
c/o Colleen Holt, editor;
First United Methodist Church,
1610 Prince St., Conway, AR 72034

Help Us Spread Some Valentine !

Let's send some extra love to our homebound friends this Valentine's Day! Create your own cards or buy some at the store. It doesn't matter. They just love hearing from you!

You can find a list of names of our homebound friends in the church lobbies or you can contact Kisha Bumpers, kbumpers@conwayfumc.org. If you would like to mail your own cards, we can provide a list with addresses.

Drop your cards in the boxes available in the church hospitality area or Trinity Building lobby on Sundays, or from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday. You are also welcome to drop them through the mail slot in the ramp door of the Sanctuary building.



All cards will be delivered along with a goodie on Monday, Feb. 14.

If you are willing to help deliver, please contact Kisha.

If you know of names to be added to the recipient list, please contact Kisha.

First United Methodist Church Staff Directory

Senior Pastor — Michael Roberts
Executive Pastor — Dede Roberts
Dir., Music/Worship Ministries — Janet Gingerich
Interim Dir., Children's Ministries — Catherine Gatlin
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

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

Example: mroberts@conwayfumc.org