

First United Methodist Church
proudly presents their
2020 High School Graduates

Reflections
May 2020

*First United Methodist Church
317 South Main Street
Monticello, AR, 71655*



Brendon Berry



Kate Brown



Nick Griffin



Blake Howard



Rubin Langley



Reid Merrell



Harrison Whitaker

We wish God's richest blessings upon each of your lives.



FUMY News

May 2020

Important Reminders:

Sunday Zoom:

Jr High @ 6 pm
Sr High @ 7 pm
Instagram LIVE @ 8 pm

Monday Zoom:

High School Graduating Seniors @ 8 pm

Tuesday Zoom:

"Lunch with Lori" @ 12 pm
FUMY Alums @ 8 pm

Wednesday Zoom:

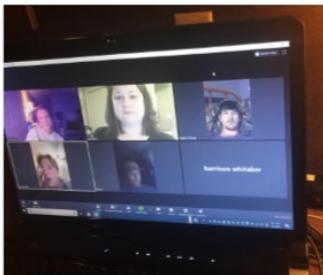
All FUMY @ 7 pm plus small groups

Lori will send out Zoom codes & passwords

April was completely different from any other month in FUMY. We zoomed on Sunday nights and on Wednesday nights. We played games online and we texted A LOT. I mailed a "thinking of you" card to each of my students and have started doing "driveway visits" at a safe physical distance. We have very much "monitored & adjusted." Has it been easy? **NO WAY!** However, we first and foremost want to **DO NO HARM** so we are doing what we must and we are staying connected, nonetheless. We will celebrate when we get to be physically together at church again one day!

We found out in mid April that our mission trip has been officially canceled for this summer. Our hearts are broken but we know that this is the best choice for all of us and those we go to serve to stay safe. So at this time we will NOT have our "envelopes of support" fundraiser. However, if you feel led to donate to our FUMY Mission Fund, you can donate to Youth through the Give + app and it will go to our future mission trip and future mission projects.

Hooray! It's May! And although we are still not together, we are so excited to celebrate with 7 *amazing* graduates: **Brendon Berry, Kate Brown, Nick Griffin, Blake Howard, Rubin Langley, Reid Merrell and Harrison Whitaker.** Of these 7 seniors, 6 of them have been a part of FUMY since the 7th grade. It has been such a fun journey to be on with them. We are going to celebrate them **AT LEAST** two times... we will celebrate them online in worship on Sunday, May 17 and we will celebrate them **IN PERSON** when we worship again inside our Church. We hope that you will join us in celebrating them, as well. As far as the rest of FUMY, we will continue to meet on Zoom and do some Instagram Live trivia nights with Stuttgart UMY. We'll continue to reach out to our students and keep them in our prayers. If you would like to write our youth and would like their names & addresses, please let me know and I will gladly share their info.



Continue to stay safe & stay healthy. We are praying for you all. Christ Above All, Lori



Seniors 2020





CONGRADUATIONS(?)

“So God created humankind in his image; in God’s image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them, ‘Bear fruit and be great.’” —Genesis 1:26-28a

It feels so strange to graduate without *graduating*. Earlier this week, I completed my Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) degree through Candler School of Theology at Emory University. After we presented and defended our dissertations in Zoom, the director of the program pronounced us doctors. While the school will recognize our accomplishment online, I have to say that there is something about walking across the stage, shaking hands with the school officials, and receiving my diploma that I will miss.

As the normal time for graduation nears, the situation in which we find ourselves is anything but normal. My heart aches for our high school seniors who missed those seminal events of prom and acknowledging thirteen years of accomplishment in a public commencement ceremony. I am so proud of Brendon, Kate, Nick, Blake, Rubin, Reid, and Harrison – for who they are and for what they have accomplished. I’m also proud of our other graduates, from pre-school to doctorate.

I still remember walking across the stage on the football field at Jonesboro High School back in 1988. It was a proud moment, but at the same time I was experiencing an existential crisis. It felt like the whole world was shifting under my feet. I clearly remember the three questions on my heart that day: Who am I? Why am I here? What am I supposed to do with my life?

You don’t have to be seventeen to ponder those questions. When my Papa died, my grandmother had been the “Mrs.” in “Rev. & Mrs. Gerald D. Hammett” for 56 years. It took her some time to regain her sense of identity and purpose outside of her relationship with my Papa. When we lose a loved one through death or lose a job or simply go through a transition like graduating – for a time we’re not quite sure who we are, why we’re here, and what we’re supposed to do.

The writer of Genesis reminds us of the most important relationship we have, our relationship with God. Our relationship with God is the only thing we have from the moment we are born to the moment we die (and beyond).

Genesis says that God created us to be in relationship with God. Every human being who ever lived was created in God’s image. That’s to say God created us to reflect God’s nature in the world. Most importantly, it means that God created us to reflect God’s love to the world. God created us to love as God loves, unconditionally.

None of us loves perfectly, but with God’s help and by God’s grace we grow in our ability to share God’s love day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year. That is the journey each of us takes as we follow Jesus as his disciples.

Here is my prayer for our graduating seniors: No matter what life throws at you, may you always remember who you are: God’s child. May you always remember why God put you on the planet: to love others unconditionally as God first loved us. And as you choose what to do with the life God has given you, may you seek first God’s Kingdom and God’s righteousness. Then you will bear fruit and be great as God created you to be. Amen.

Grace and Peace!



Transition to Online Giving

At the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, our Executive Council decided to offer new ways for our church family to honor their vows to support our church family with their gifts.

We now offer online giving. The Executive Council chose the company recommended by the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) of the United Methodist Church (our denomination's "Finance Committee"). Vanco Payment Services handles online giving for the UMC, including UMCOR. It is also the company our Annual Conference uses. Because we will not be meeting at the church for some time, **we encourage every family who can to transition to electronic giving as soon as you are able.** There are three ways for you to do so that:

Go to www.fumcmonticello.org/give. Currently, gifts may be made only to the General Fund. We will be adding the other funds (memorials, building, youth, etc.) over the coming weeks. Sign up for an account. It's free, simple, and secure.

Download the Give+ app to your phone or smart device (<https://giveplushelp.vancopayments.com/>). Set up an account for ease of use.

Contact your bank to set up an automatic draft to the church.

For those who choose to give by check, please mail your gifts to the church office at 317 South Main Street, Monticello, AR 71655. However you choose to give, God will honor and bless it for the building of God's Kingdom in Monticello and beyond.

FUMC MONTICELLO IN THE PANDEMIC:

a Word from Bro. Hammett

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we closed the doors to the church facility on March 13. The church staff and I have moved our offices to our homes. The office phone has been forwarded to our Administrative Assistant, Lynne Russell. Feel free to call her at (870) 367-2471. Here are answers to some of the questions I have received.

Why is the church facility closed? Because people can be contagious with COVID-19 without showing symptoms.

Most, if not all, of our interactions within the building put us in close proximity with one another. That puts all of us at risk, especially those who are most vulnerable.

How long will the building be closed? I don't know. Bishop Mueller and the cabinet restricted in-person gatherings of any kind through at least May 17. In-person gatherings will likely be phased in over time, and will include safety measures like wearing masks.

How are our pastors and staff doing? We're doing well. The top priority of each staff member right now is to keep in touch and care for the groups they lead. A great example of that is how Brenda Wright, Kathy Borchardt, and Jennifer Fryer are staying in contact with our children, sending them cards and faith-based activities to do while the building is closed.

What have the pastors and staff been up to? We began with two goals: 1) Provide pastoral care, and 2) Create community online. Regarding pastoral care, our congregation is comprised of over 250 individual families. When we include persons who participate regularly but aren't official members, it's more like 275 (perhaps even 300). Lori and I are focusing on those who need a pastor the most—those who are sick, grieving, or experiencing a loss. I have asked the leaders of our groups to serve as a "shepherd" for their members. This includes any group, study, class, or ministry team of any age. I'm checking in with the leaders weekly to see if there are pastoral needs that require clergy attention. We are now in the process of identifying families who aren't a part of a group or class, and we will recruit a group of people to serve as their "shepherds." If you're interested in serving as a shepherd, please email me at hammett.evans@fumcmonticello.org. Pastoral care has been the priority. At the same time, we have been creating connections through technology. In many ways we are blessed to live in a time when we can see and communicate with each other online. Worshiping on Facebook isn't like worshiping in a sanctuary, and meeting in Zoom isn't like meeting in person, but it's better than not being able to see and worship with one another at all.

How can I give? Our congregation is very generous. Even in the midst of global economic turmoil, people want to give. The best way to support your church family financially is to sign up for online giving at www.fumcmonticello.org/give. You may already give to the general ministry fund and will soon be able to give to all the other funds.

Who can I contact about a care or concern? Call or text me at (501) 944-9719 or email me at hammett.evans@fumcmonticello.org.

Congratulations Class of 2020

University

Tye Brown

University Arkansas Monticello—May 2020
Bachelor of Science in Biology & Chemistry

Hammett N. Evans, D.Min

Doctor of Ministry from Candler School of Theology at Emory University

Christine Felts, Ph.D., R.N.

Doctor of Philosophy
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Amy James, M.D.

UAMS
MD & Masters of Public Health
Amy will be going to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, for her residency in internal medicine

Clark Jarrett

Henderson State University—December 2019
Bachelor of Business Administration-Management
Working for Amazon

John Arthur Whitaker

University of Arkansas Fulbright College of Business
Double Major: Finance & Accounting

Mary Beth Wigley

Sam Houston State University

Daniel Wigley

University of Arkansas School of Law

High School

Natasha Riding

Aliso Niguel High School, Aliso Viejo, CA

Kindergarten

Grace Burnett

Isaac Coburn

Jack Fryer

Hampton Jack Gilbert

McClain Hudgens

Elson Stevens

All Kindergarten students attend Monticello Elementary School

Preschool

Cortez Atkins , Monticello Preschool

Adalynn Felts, FUMC Preschool



Camp Tanako News

**Summer overnight camps
at Tanako have been
cancelled for this year.
See you next year.**



Memorials were given to the glory of God

And in loving memory of:

Peggy Goodwin:

Bennie & Buck Henderson

Mary E. Calhoun

McQueen & Co., LTD.

Rae Hobbs:

Bennie & Buck Henderson

Sonny Holland:

Sue & David Anderson

Wes McCoy by:

Sue and David Anderson

First United Methodist Youth

Gibson & Keith

Cliff Gibson, III

Bennie & Buck Henderson

Margaret & Rodney Norton

Memorial given in honor of:

Chuck and Cindy Dearman:

Mary E. Calhoun

Children's Ministry May 2020

What a different time we find ourselves living in! Understatement! Still as Children's Sunday school teachers, we are staying connected with our children. Kim Fletcher (PreK), Lisa Tolin and Margo Stevens (K-1st), Kathy J and I (4th-5th), and Isabel Bacon and Diantha Beer (6th) have continued to be in contact with all our children through letters, e-mails, texts, Easter packages and art activities, games, word searches, and origami paper games. Sometimes the children will text us or send what they've done. Sometimes we hear from a parent. We have loved hearing from you!

Kathy B, Jennifer, and I have also been in contact with the children who came to church on Wednesday afternoons. We have also sent cards, emails, and texts to the children.

Through these efforts our purpose has been the same: Let the children know they are still in our hearts and prayers, we miss them, and we look forward to getting together in person again.

Brenda Wright, Children's Minister

Mark 10:16 "And Jesus took the children in His arms, placed His hands on them, and blessed them."



A story from FUMC Samaritan feet shoe distribution:

The little girl's feet had been washed and dried. A clean pair of socks had just been put on her feet. And now came the shoes! She was shown a couple of different choices, and she chose the ones that she wanted. This is always the fun part—putting the shoes on their little feet. But after her shoes were given, she just sat there and looked at them. Then, she stood and looked at her feet from all angles. Finally, she smiled and said, “These look new!”

The worker replied to her, “They *are* new.”

Again, she thought about this before saying, “You mean no one else has ever worn these?”

“That’s right. No one else has ever worn them. They are *brand new*.”

“And I can keep them?”

“And you can keep them.”

Her smile said it all.

Her first pair of new shoes.

“We are blessed to be a blessing.”

If you are currently at home and cleaning out closets, please keep your children’s coats that they can no longer wear. Call Belinda Carpenter (870-723-3980) and arrangements will be made to pick up any coats that you wish to donate. These will be distributed during the September Samaritan Feet distribution.



During this time of “stay at home,” your church office is still functioning. I am working from home, and the phones have been transferred to my cell phone. I am receiving the mail and paying the bills. I am making deposits as needed. If you need anything, please do not hesitate to call the church office. We are here for you. If you don’t already have it, the phone number is 870-367-2471, and my email address is lynne.russell@fumcmonticello.org.

Your email is how we are able to send out OneCall messages, prayer concerns, and announcements. Please send the office your updated email address so that we can update our OneCall list. Thank you. Stay safe.

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