

Reflections

September 2020

317 S. Main Street
Monticello, AR 71655



BACK TO SCHOOL

"Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous and they will gain in learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight"
—Proverbs 9:9-10 NRSV

I still remember many years ago when Andrew, our oldest godson, started Kindergarten. Andrew's mom, Amy, e-mailed Michelle and me a picture of him on his first day of school. He was all decked out in his new school clothes with his *Spiderman* backpack slung on his shoulders. It seemed like it was only yesterday that his favorite outfit included a diaper and Blues Clues pajamas with feet in them. As many of our children, grandchildren, and even some of us who are a little older start school, here are some lessons about learning.

1. Learning is a gift. This may sound strange at first because a lot of times learning feels more like a chore than a gift, but it's true. When you look at the whole world, most people don't have the chance to learn many of the things we take for granted. Also, don't forget that your teachers are sharing what they have learned with you. That's a gift too.

2. Do your best. When I was young, I got a bicycle for Christmas. It was purple and had purple and white streamers coming out of the handlebars. It's one of the best gifts I ever got, but wouldn't it have been sad if I had never learned to ride it? Even when Dad took the training wheels off and it got really tough, I still did my best because I didn't want to waste that gift. When I went back to school several years ago, I realized that learning is like that too. Do your best so that you can take full advantage of the gift of learning.

3. Life is full of "do-overs." If you haven't already, someday you will hear about something called your "permanent record." Usually, people talk about it to keep you from doing something you shouldn't be doing as in, "If you eat that crayon, it's going to go on your permanent record." It's never good to do things you shouldn't be doing, but there's no such thing as a permanent record. I've found that the old saying is true: it's never too late to become what you might have been.

4. Learn for yourself. This one goes along with doing your best. Don't look at homework, reading, or other assignments as something you have to do to get good grades, a degree, or to keep from being grounded. Instead, look at them as a chance to gain wisdom.

5. Learn so you can help other people. In the end, the gift of learning is to be shared with others. Whether you're a teacher, a preacher, or an astrophysicist, we should use what we learn to help others. Imagine what the world would be like if Isaac Newton, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Orville & Henry Wright, or Albert Einstein had kept what they had learned to themselves! We don't learn so that we're smarter or better than other people. Paul put it this way, "[God] is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'" (1 Corinthians 1:30-31). We learn not so that we can boast, but so that we can become like Jesus, who is wisdom itself. Then, we use our learning to help him make this world a better place for others. That is what being a disciple (which means student) of Jesus is all about!

Grace and Peace!



Drive-In Holy Communion September 6 at 6:00 PM

We plan to hold our first drive-in service of Holy Communion at the church September 6 at 6PM. Register now at www.fumcmonticello.org/worship.

Please remain in your vehicle for the duration of the service. Watch your email for instructions for registration, parking, and how to tune in via your car radio.

Disciple Bible Study

Register online at www.fumcmonticello.org/disciple. Disciple Bible Study is a unique opportunity to enjoy an in-depth Bible study with a small group of people who grow as Jesus' disciples together. Each week includes daily Bible readings and a 90-minute class session which combines group discussion and a study manual to go deeply into God's word. \$35 covers the cost of the manual. Class(es) will begin in Zoom and may transition to in-person if possible. You will also need to purchase **one of the following study Bibles: *The Common English Study Bible (ISBN #1609260295)*, *The New Interpreter's Study Bible (ISBN #978-0687278329)*, *The HarperCollins Study Bible (ISBN #978-0060786847)*, or *The New Oxford Annotated Bible (ISBN #978-0195289602)*. Having the Apocrypha is helpful, but not required.** Devotional Bibles are great in other settings, but will not work for Disciple 1.

DISCIPLE 1: a 34-week survey course of the entire Bible. *Prerequisite for all other studies.*

YOUTH DISCIPLE: a survey course of the Bible for older youth (ages 16-18).

DISCIPLE 2: a 32-week in-depth study of Genesis, Exodus, Luke and Acts.

DISCIPLE 3: a 32-week study of the prophets and the letters of Paul.

DISCIPLE 4: a 32-week study of the Old Testament Writings (books not in the Torah or Prophets) and the Johannine writings, James, and Jude in the New Testaments

DISCIPLE: JESUS IN THE GOSPELS: a 32-week study of the way each Gospel writer portrays Jesus and expresses his significance.

SHORT-TERM DISCIPLE STUDIES: Dive in deeper to a particular biblical book with one of these 8-12 week studies.

CHRISTIAN BELIEVER: a 32-week study of the classic doctrines of the Christian faith.

Transition to Online Giving

Thanks to everyone who has made the transition to online giving. Because we won't be "passing the plates" in worship for the foreseeable future, **we encourage every family who is able to transition to electronic giving.** There are three ways for you to so that:

Go to www.fumcmonticello.org/give. 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.

UPDATE: 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. Here are answers to some of the questions I have received. I pray about reopening daily, and I research guidance and best practices for congregations our size so that as we gradually open up more, we do so in a way that keeps us safe and healthy. In this situation, I would rather err on the side of caution. I encourage you to reach out to me at (501) 944-9719 or email me at hammett.evans@fumcmonticello.org, if you have any questions or concerns.

When will we reopen? This is the question I hear the most, and it's tricky both because we never completely closed, and because we are reopening in stages. Currently, we allow groups of less than 10 persons to do active mission-oriented work in the building (e.g. Feed Our Neighbors and Samaritan's Feet). The best indicator that it is safe to allow larger groups to meet indoors remains a state-wide 14-day decline in new cases, in positive tests as a percentage of overall testing, in hospitalizations/deaths, and widely-available testing (www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/). To date, none of these criteria have been met. Under the current guidance from the CDC, Governor Hutchinson, and Bishop Mueller, full reopening without safety measures and restrictions will occur only when there is a COVID-19 vaccine or a 95% effective treatment.

Why is the church facility closed? John Wesley's first rule for Methodist societies was "Do no harm." We are a congregation, and congregations *congregate*. Congregating in crowds, especially indoors, is the issue. 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.

When will in-person church events, including worship, resume? In the early stages of the pandemic, we received guidance to wait until there was a fourteen-consecutive-day decline in active cases in our state before entering Phase 1 (allowing groups of less than 10). Although our state leaders and some churches are choosing not to follow that guidance, a fourteen-consecutive-day decline remains the best metric indicating a decrease in risk to our families. On top of that, the guidelines we have received for in-person indoor worship are *highly* restrictive (masks, distancing, no more than 30-35 minutes, no more than 50 persons, no nursery/childcare, no live singing, no hugs/handshakes, no hymnals, no *coffee bar or donuts* for goodness sake!). That being said, we are preparing to meet once we have seen the two-week decline, and we are gradually increasing in-person church events, with safety guidelines in force. Currently, in-person church events include Feed Our Neighbors, preparation for Samaritan's Feet, drive-by parades, and drive-in worship events.

What about Sunday school classes, Small Groups, Circles, etc.? The restrictions on indoor gatherings (no more than 30-35 minutes, all in masks, everyone distanced at least 6ft apart at all times, following a strict regimen for cleaning and sanitization, etc.) severely limit what small groups and classes can do inside. It isn't the same as meeting in person, but right now Zoom is the best option we have. We are working on online options for discipling children, youth, and adults (Bible studies, Confirmation Class, etc.). I will be facilitating adult Bible studies and short studies in Zoom and I would be glad to work with any group or class to coordinate meeting in Zoom.

How long will the restrictions be in place? Bishop Mueller has provided pastors with guidance for re-opening in three stages. We will enter Stage 1, allowing groups of 10 persons or less to meet, once we have had fourteen consecutive days of declining cases in the State of Arkansas. In-person indoor gatherings will be phased in over time, and will include strict enforcement of safety measures like wearing masks and physical distancing. Stage 2 allows for groups of less than 50, and Stage 3 allows for groups of more than 50 with strict enforcement of the restrictions. According to the current guidance, the church will fully re-open without restrictions and safety measures in place when there is a vaccine or 95%-effective treatment for COVID-19.

What are the church staff doing? Most of us continue to do the same work as before, just in different formats. There has been a steep learning curve for all of us, and we try to improve constantly. Lori has done an excellent job transitioning youth ministry online, and children's ministry staff are working on ways to keep our kids connected as well. Our music and tech staff are working hard to provide music for the online service while maintaining separation between all of the singers and musicians.

What can I do? Support our church family through your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness, and keep yourself and your family safe and healthy. This includes the following:

As we offer more in-person events, follow any instructions you receive, especially those promoting safety (masks, distancing, keeping windows rolled up, etc.). As long as we practice these things, we will open up more.

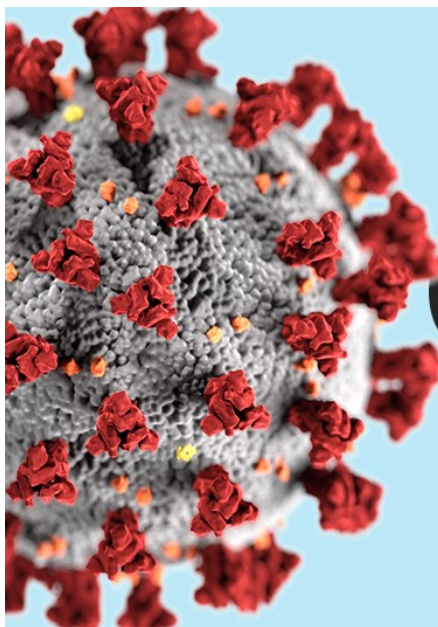
Wear a mask or facial covering anytime you are near people who do not live in your household.

It is true that cloth masks aren't 100% effective, but they do *reduce* your risk of infection, especially when everyone is wearing one and you maintain at least 6ft of physical distance both indoors and outdoors.

Maintain a minimum of 6ft of physical distance between yourself and anyone who does not live in your household. Wear a mask if you have to be indoors with them for any length of time, especially in an enclosed space.

Limit your time indoors with people who do not live in your home. Being indoors – in a home, in a restaurant, in a vehicle, or in church – is *highly* risky. Do not allow anyone in your home who does not live with you. If you must enter someone else's home, masks are essential for everyone, and limit the time you are together. Contracting COVID-19 involves both distance from infected persons and duration of exposure. Based on current research, 5 minutes of conversation in close proximity is enough to transmit the disease. An hour or more of conversation in a home or restaurant is more than enough to spread the disease.

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.



COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



FUMY NEWS

September 2020

FUMY Officers 2020-21:

President	Sydney Fallon
Vice President	Megan Stephens
Secretary	Mallory Fallon
DCYM Reps:	Sydney Fallon, Megan Stephens

August was ... well, August... just not like any August we had known before in FUMY. We did lots of zooms and talked about faith & grace & forgiveness. We had a Planning Day on Zoom and even learned haircare tips on Zoom. As far as "planning our year in FUMY," we planned as much as we can. We still plan to do mission work and meet on zoom plus we have plans to meet in small groups, socially distanced outside and we elected our FUMY officers! Our theme for 2020-21 is **"Togetherness."** This school year we will focus on what it means to nurture togetherness: with God, with each other, with ourselves. School is now back in full swing-ish and our youth are in school in-person and virtual.

September brings more mission work & new lessons & some social-distanced fun for FUMY! We are excited to once again collect shoes this entire month for the **nationwide Soles4Souls mission**. Please drop off new & slightly used shoes in the designated box outside the administrative glass doors. On Sundays we are planning to do some small group social distancing outside and zoom on Wednesdays. We will continue talking about some of our favorite Bible stories that we find in each book of the Bible. We did that last year and enjoyed it so much, that we plan to continue the lesson series. On Wednesdays we are doing a new series on prayer. We will follow the book Pray Like This: Living the Lord's Prayer by Steve Gaines. Our in person prayer breakfasts are on hold right now. We continue to reach out to each other through text messages and facetimes and

We welcome ANY 7th to 12th grade students to our group. We are fun-loving group that seeks to be the hands & feet of Jesus in the world. Pray for our youth! Christ above all, Lori

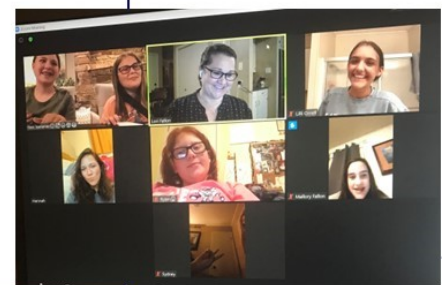


FUMY Reminders:

- Pray for each other
- Reach out
- God is always with you!
- You are NOT alone!



New FUMY t-shirts (plus sweatshirts, tank tops, hoodies) COMING SOON!
(special thanks to Megan Stephens & Sydney Fallon for design)



SOLES 4 SOULS
WEARING OUT POVERTY



We invite YOU, your family, your friends to partner with First United Methodist Youth Group to collect new & slightly used shoes the entire month of **September** for the nation-wide Soles4Souls mission.

This will be our youth group's 10th collection!

Collection box will be outside the Administrative Office Glass Doors. The shoe drive will be held September 1-30, 2020!

Thank you for your generous spirit & help!

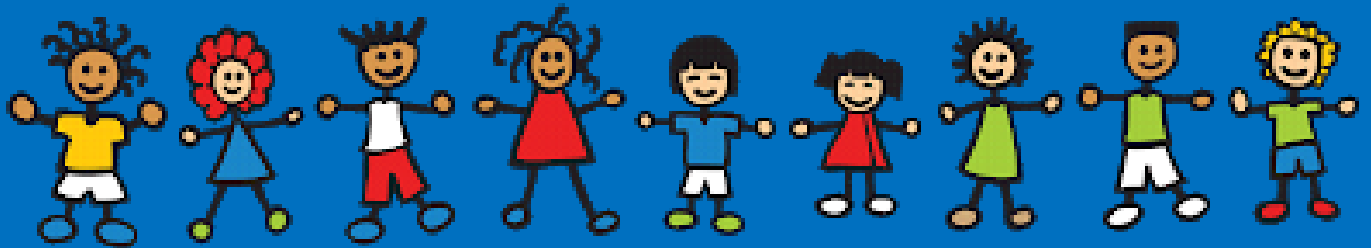
Weekly Events

Sundays

9:00 AM Online Service

Wednesdays:

6:00 Wednesday Zoom Meeting



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

The children in the 4th and 5th grades had been working for the last year or so in Sunday school to memorize the Ten Commandments and the books of the Old and New Testaments. Many of these children were successful. Congratulations to them! Each of the students in these grades recently received a Ten Commandments plaque. What a well deserved reward for their efforts!

The drive-by Blessing of the Backpacks was enjoyed by all those who attended. Several children received Bibles: Cortez Atkins and McKenzie Sanderlin were given Bible Storybooks; Third Graders Dawson Loyd, Andrew Maxwell, Zade Sanderlin, and Jack Wagner each received an NIV Adventure Bible. Our prayer for you is that you will grow in your knowledge of God and your love for Him as you read your new Bible.

School has begun! Prayers continue for all students, teachers, and anyone in the school system.

In Christian love,

Brenda Wright, Children's Minister

Mark 10:16 "And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them."



Feeding the Community

Feed Our Neighbors

As we continue to add more and more families to those we deliver food to weekly, our need for more help from you, Our Church Family, has grown as well. Many of you have been incredibly generous in your giving of nonperishable food items and monetary donations. Thank You! We need both.

Often when the next food distribution is about to happen, our nonperishable food items in the boxes are less than we wish them to be though each box contains merely a small supplement to Our Neighbors' weekly food needs. Your donations are enabling us to put a few more items in each box so that the deliveries are indeed worthwhile - though the food delivery is only part of this ministry.

Through this ministry we weekly are able to check on Our Neighbors without invading their privacy. They seem to understand that we truly care about them. To tell them we will pray for them when they share any concern or issue they might have helps us connect in a much more important way. We also let them know our Prayer Team prays for them each week.

THANK YOU for your prayers for this ministry: Our Neighbors, our drivers, those who unload the distribution truck, and those who pack the boxes.

Brenda Wright



Chancel Choir and Handbells

Thanks so much to the talented Chancel Choir and Bells of Hope musicians that participated in the on-line hymn sings over the past few months! You guys are brave souls that embraced the virtual challenge of a new way to worship! The traditional hymns are such an important part of our Christian heritage! So, thanks again for leading in such a meaningful way.

In the coming weeks, we will have MORE hymn singings and we will have some special soloists presenting songs for us. I am thrilled to share that Charles Graham is one of those soloists that will be singing for us soon!

As we move into this fall season, I hope that you find a song in your heart and that you sing it...for MUSIC truly is the prayer the heart sings!



Kathy Lyon, Director of Adult Music Ministries



BSA Troop 67 was very busy during the month of August. We met virtually and in small groups



outside of the church. We had 10 Scouts participate in Virtual Camp Week and work on 8 different merit badges. We had small groups with the Photography merit badge in August at the church. The challenge this month was to see who finished the most by August 31. Our winner completed 7 merit badges this month!! For the month of September and October we will continue to alternate in person and virtual meetings with a focus on Character of a Scout, Service of a Scout, and Outdoor Ethics of a Scout. The challenge this time will be who provides the most service hours between September 1-October 26.

Cub Scout Pack 69 will start back on September 14 with having den meetings once a month with each den alternating a week. These will be outside in the grass like the Troop, with masks worn, social distancing at 6 feet, and lawn chairs.

Thank you from Tyler, Lakyn, and Hudson “for all that FUMC has done to welcome our sweet baby boy into this world. We look forward to the day our church family gets to meet him.”

Thank you from Harrison Whitaker for “the Bible and all his memories over the past 12 years from children’s choir to , FUMY.”

Thank you from Hope Place for the continued support.

Memorials were given to the glory of God And in loving memory of:

- Nina Bradshaw:** Helen Guenter
- Carolyn Brown:**
Helen Guenter, Bennie & Buck Henderson, Robin Johnson
- David Carmical:** Robin Johnson
- Betty Andrews Davis:** Helen Guenter and Robin Johnson
- Jack Estes:** Helen Guenter
- Kacie Gage:** Helen Guenter
- Nancy Gage:** Helen Guenter
- Phyllis Gibson:** Helen Guenter
- Larry Hart:** Bennie & Buck Henderson
- Blake Haynes:**
Helen Guenter, Phyllis and Sonny Jones, and Sandra & JD West
- Genella Henry:** Helen Guenter
- Sonny Holland:** Helen Guenter
- Betty Hughes:** Helen Guenter
- Floy Mae:** Sandy & David Funderburg
- Mary Fish McCauley:** Helen Guenter

- Wes McCoy:** Helen Guenter
- Keith Montgomery:** Helen Guenter
- Rev. Norman Moyer:** Helen Guenter
- Gail Pitts:** Helen Guenter
- Helen Posey:** Helen Guenter
- Betty Rabb:** Helen Guenter
- Beverly Reep:** Helen Guenter
- Jerelyn Richard:** Helen Guenter
- Jennie Smith:** Helen Guenter
- Gwen Stanford:** Helen Guenter
- Steve Stewart:** Helen Guenter

Gifts Given in Honor of:

- Norma & Joe Fletcher:** Susan Musick
- Janie & Larry Fuller:** Helen Guenter
- Charlena & Mike Johnston:**
Mary Jo & Bill Wisener
- Rev. Don & Carol Ann Nolley:**
Helen Guenter
- Mary Jo & Bill Wisener:** Helen Guenter