



# THE FOCUS

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

## Times: They Are Changing

We often hear people comment about the “changing times” when referring to how life today is different from the past, and how the future will look different from the present. That is certainly true when considering life in Christ. Through repentance and forgiveness we shed our past and are made new. Then through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we grow and as we are being transformed into the image of Christ, our future looks very different from the present.

Beginning **April 2, 2017**, “changing times” will be realized literally here at Marion First UMC. After much prayer and discussion, the church council has approved a switch in our Sunday Morning Worship and Sunday School times. The morning schedule will be as follows:

**9:00 Donuts and Fellowship**

**9:30 – 10:30 Sunday School for all ages**

**10:45 Worship**

We realize that many may question if this change is necessary, so let me explain why we believe it is. In January it was brought to the church council’s attention that some of our more senior members, while not exactly homebound, find it nearly impossible to adapt their morning routines to attend our 9:30 worship. They miss being a part of corporate worship and seeing their church family. So the request to consider a time change originated from some of our most longtime members.

At the same time, the Reaching the Next Generation team from our Fruitful Congregation Journey have been reflecting on whether our time is appealing to younger individuals and families who are looking for a church home. For most, worship is the entry into congregational life. So, without previous connection to a new church, most people will take as a first consideration the time of worship. For the younger generation, a later time seems to be most sought after.

Changing the order of our morning schedule will have some other benefits as well. As we planned our calendar for 2017, the council agreed that for our community life, we needed to have bi-monthly **carry-in dinners** accompanied with a town hall session and celebrations. So the **third Sunday of odd calendar months** (March, May, etc.) we will have carry-ins after worship. The time switch enables us to have dinner at a more appropriate time and the Sunday School classes will still be able to meet.

Beginning the first Sunday of April gives us a chance to get the word out and make sure everyone is informed and becoming accustomed to the new time before **Easter on April 16<sup>th</sup>**. There will also be an opportunity for everyone to enter the discussion at the **Town Hall** meeting on **March 19<sup>th</sup>**. The 2017 church council members are listed in the Focus and would be happy to talk about any concerns you may have.

I realize that change is not always easy. Our desire is that this change of times will enable our Sunday morning gathering to reach more people and thus encourage all of us as we worship together our Wonderful God.

*“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!” Isaiah 43:18-19*

*Pastor Colleen Harden*



**PLACE TO PRAY** – We are opening up the church on Wednesdays from 12 noon to 1:00 PM to give people a place to pray. *We know that prayer makes a difference and a good place to pray is in the church. Everyone is welcome!*

## HIGHLIGHTS of the FEBRUARY CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING:

1. Pastor Colleen will be attending a meeting for all neighborhood association leaders.
2. We need to create a prayer team, visitation team, cleaning team and other teams to help with church responsibilities.
3. Fruitful Congregational Journey— we would like to wrap by the March carry-in, so we can celebrate our Journey.
4. ‘Be Hope’ Learning Day will be at Kokomo St Luke’s UMC on Saturday, February 18 from 8:00 AM to 2:45 PM.
5. Andy and Amanda Varner’s little boy, AJ will be baptized in the next couple of weeks.
6. The boiler is almost finished with repairs only needing to replace one more part.
7. Ash Wednesday service will be at Sunnycrest UMC on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Time will be announced later.
8. They talked about moving all children up to third floor. That would include nursery and preschool ages.
9. Sacred Places Project Meeting will be on Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 – 10:30 AM. Breakfast will be served.
10. Sunday Morning Service times will be changing. Sunday School at 9:30 AM and Morning Worship at 10:45 AM with coffee hour before and after Sunday School.
11. Pledges for 2017 stand at \$62,000 as of February 13<sup>th</sup>.
12. Sustainable Future report was submitted to the church council. A full report is on the bulletin board. The final two reports are expected to be into the council for the March meeting.

*Full report from the January’s meeting is on the bulletin board in the church office hallway.*

### 2017 Church Council

Seth Harshman—Council Chair  
 Pastor Colleen Harden  
 Kathy Boxell  
 Kathy Carder  
 David Devine—Finance/Trustee Chair  
 Susie Flynn  
 Carroll DeVries  
 Jim Dougherty  
 Tom Holloway—Staff Parish Chair  
 Denise Pearson  
 Kraig Piper  
 Willard Rust  
 Steve Sharon –Co-lay Leader  
 Sidenia Stace—Co-Lay Leader  
 Sue Wagaman



### 2017 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE DONUTS

March—Koinonia Ckass  
 April—J.O.Y. Class



### CHANGE FOR MISSIONS

The first Sunday of each month we pass a galvanized bucket around to collect change for missions.

December - Angel Tree	\$98.00
January—Meals on Wheels	\$93.00
February—Gilead Ministries	\$55.75

Don’t forget to set your clocks ahead on hour at 2 AM on March 12th.



**SACRED PLACES PROJECT**—Please join the team to learn some interesting ways to identify both personal & congregational assets on **Saturday, March 4**. David Devine will be serving his famous pancakes beginning at 8:30. Then we’ll start identifying assets & brainstorming ways to use those assets at 9. We plan to adjourn by 10:30. Please let one of the team members know if you plan to attend. If you need further information, please contact one of the team members (Pastor Colleen, Jim & Kay Dougherty, Sue Bratton and David Devine

### Church Spending Plan as of 2017

Monthly	January	Year to Date	
Income	\$12,207.35	Income	\$12,207.35
Expense	\$20,279.19	Expense	\$20,279.19

**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE** will be Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at Sunnycrest United Methodist Church (1921 W. Bradford St. Marion) at 6:00 PM. This service will include prayer, a reflection on drawing nearer to God during the Lenten season, and the imposition of ashes. We hope that you will join us.

### UPCOMING BOOK STUDIES

**CREED**—Beginning the **March 5**, Pastor Colleen will be offering a study for the **6 weeks of Lent**. It is for anyone who wants a first time understanding, or a refresher course on what are the basic beliefs of Christianity. Via video, Rev. Adam Hamilton will lead us through the Apostles' Creed and we will discuss together how this historic statement of faith verbalizes who we are in Christ Jesus. We will meet as a **short-term Sunday School class**, and everyone (**high school and older**) is welcome. Location will be determined by size of class. A second time, **Wed. at 10:00 AM** will be offered if there is enough interest. Please let the church office know your interest and time preference, so that books (not required, but available) may be ordered. Books are \$13.39, and large print is available for \$14.06.

### **THE ART OF NEIGHBORING: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door**

Our Vision Statement is **HOPE: Discovering It, Living It, Sharing It**. How can we share the Hope of Jesus Christ without first building relationships that afford us the privilege of entering into people's lives? In this book the authors ask, "What if Jesus meant that we should love our actual neighbors? What would happen if every follower of Jesus took the Great Commandment literally? Is it possible that the solution to our society's biggest issues has been right under our noses for the past two thousand years?" The study will be **6 weeks** beginning **Wed., April 19** at **10:00 AM**, and *if there is interest in an evening group* at **7:00 PM**. The book is \$10.79 and is also available in Ebook (\$14.99) or audio (\$15.79)

### **FRUITFUL CONGREGATIONAL JOURNEY CELEBRATION**

Sunday, **March 19<sup>th</sup>**, we will be celebrating the culmination of Marion First UMC's Fruitful Congregation Journey. Although the mid-process pastoral change necessitated the journey be longer than anticipated, many good things have been discovered and we rejoice in the Lord's faithfulness as we look forward with hope filled excitement.. After worship, there will be a **Carry-In Dinner** and **Town Hall** where everyone will have the opportunity to share. FCJ Teams and Task Forces will present their findings and we will talk together about where God is leading us from here. If you treasure our church's past and dream of our future, you want to be sure and be a part of this special Sunday.

## MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

### NEW TEAMS FORMING

God has called and equipped **ALL CHRISTIANS** to serve in Kingdom work. If you are wondering how you can make an eternal impact on others, here are some teams which are now being formed and seeking willing members:

**PRAYER:** We serve the same Savior who changed the world starting with 12 unlikely, but committed disciples. From Biblical times until now, powerful works of God **are always** preceded by the prayers of His people. As we look to the future of our church and community, we are aware that changes are inevitable. We want to make sure that the hearts of Marion First UMC are in tune with the direction that God is leading us. Is prayer a passion for you? Pastor Colleen is seeking those willing to commit to meeting together weekly for 30 minutes dedicated to praying for the future of our church and community. Please contact Pastor Colleen about your interest.

**VISITATION:** We have several members of our church family who for various reasons are unable to be present at worship and other congregational activities. They miss the fellowship of their friends and the spiritual encouragement of their Christian brothers and sisters. If you have a loving heart and generous smile, being a part of the visitation team, may be your calling! Call Sue Wagaman (765) 662-8645 to be a part of this ministry blessing.

**DUST BUNNIES:** The Dust Bunnies need you! Join the Dust Bunnies if you can do some light dusting a few times a year at the church. Call Sidenia Stace at (765) 674-9128 or 860-4332.

**BUILDING MAINTAINANCE:** Are you handy with a hammer? Do you notice and want to fix those little building maintenance issues? If so, your help would be greatly appreciated. Call Jim Dougherty (765) 618-3605 to volunteer your help.

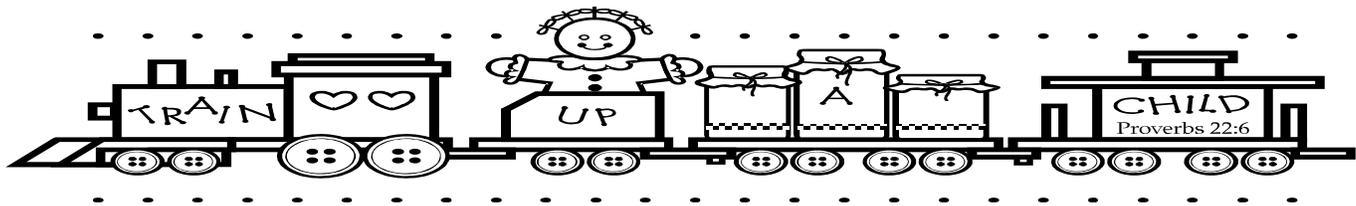
**NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES:** First UMC is located in the Historic Marion neighborhood association. As we work with the city to help revitalize our community, we need laity along with Pastor Colleen to represent our church at neighborhood meetings and events. If you want to be aware of what is going on in our city and desire to help the church make a difference, contact Pastor Colleen.

# MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1	Bill Harris	15	Carolyn Ellis
1	Rick Harris	22	Matt Varner
2	Mary Emrick	22	Donna Wiley
3	Robert Swathwood	23	Kathy Boxell
6	Phyllis Springer	24	Dorothy Winters
9	Steve Sharon	27	Wilma Brookshire
13	Natice Miller	28	Laura Kistler
14	Peg York	28	Janet Brauchla
15	Lauren Morrow	29	Barbara Piper



MARCH ANNIVERSARY  
30 Andy & Amanda Varner



## Preschool Postings

Time is an amazing thing, from a child's point of view, it goes by very slowly but at the age of 21, that child will say time goes fast. From my point of view, well over 21, it seems to go too fast.

We've been working on taking turns and following through to the end of activities by playing games. The older children are quick to pick it up. The two-year-olds, not so much. They tend to lose interest after about 5 minutes or so. The favorite game of all the children is called "Sounds Like", sounds are played and they look to see if they have a picture of that item on their card. The older children love the animal sound game and choose their card according to their favorite animal. The first time we played with the two year-olds plus a four year-old was a very interesting game. The two year-olds kept pointing to the CD player and saying here it comes, like the animal was in the CD player. We told them it was just a CD of the sounds and even took the CD out and showed them, but still haven't convinced them. Two year-old Jeremiah kept covering his ears with his hands and saying, "It hurts my eyes." After the end of the first game, Megan asked them if they wanted to play again, and they all said yes. So half way through, when the mouse squeaks, Jeremiah looks at me and says, "I scared". This is the child who doesn't seem to be afraid of anything, except maybe mice. It's been fun to watch them try to figure things out.

Barb Pack came in to read to the children, they enjoyed that very much and were trying to talk Barb into reading what Jude kept calling the "cat story". A book with a cat named Pete. We finally convinced him we'd read it the next time he came to preschool. They are a lot of fun, we still need readers for April and May. If you don't want to read, come down and the children will tell you the story.



First United Methodist Church  
624 S. Adams St.  
Marion, IN 46953

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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

***Making disciples of Jesus Christ  
for the transformation of the  
world.***

**March 2017**

**THE NEXT FOCUS DEADLINE**  
**Marxh 15, 2017**

**H O P E**

*Discovering it*  
*Living it*  
*Sharing it*

PASTOR—Rev. Colleen Harden  
Home: 765-662-2414  
Email address: colleen.harden@inumc.org

YOUTH PASTOR—Zachary Manton  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT— Rita Forsythe  
PIANIST — Sheila Todd  
ORGANIST— Susan Seacott  
PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR— Donna Wiley

CHURCH PHONE — 765-664-5177  
Email: info@marionumc.org  
**www.marionumc.org**

**SERVICE TIMES**

SUNDAY WORSHIP— 9:30 A.M.  
SUNDAY SCHOOL— 10:45 A.M.  
SUNDAY NIGHT LIFE—5:00-7:00 PM