



THE FOCUS

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

A Taste For Godliness

Not long ago I was talking with several people about the consequences of overindulging during the holiday gatherings. Most of us were guilty of putting on a few pounds and are now trying to rectify the situation. During the discussion, two comments were made that God has frequently brought back into my thoughts.

The first comment was offered as we spoke of the healthy foods (chicken, fish, yogurt, fruit, vegetables, etc.) that would best fuel our bodies to achieve our weight goals. And yes, there was a little bit of whining. "But I don't like those foods, and this plan doesn't allow me to eat very much of the foods I like!" My first thought in response was that if we could continue to eat our preferred food (high-calorie, high-fat, high-carbohydrate, etc.), we wouldn't need to lose weight! Do you feel where the speaker is coming from? They want to be changed into their ideal body, but they don't want to change what they are doing to get there.

The second comment came from one who from her physical appearance had obviously been successful in reaching her goal weight. She was holding an energy bar and I asked her how it tasted. She replied, "I really like it now, but it is an acquired taste."

Those two comments started me to thinking about why we so often do not find success growing our relationship with God. We are frequently drawn to activities that offer no "nutritional" value to our Christian life. They may be harmless enough, especially in small amounts, but in excess they consume most of our time and resources. Then we are left with little room for the practices we know are needed for strong men and women of God. Bible study, prayer, worship, meditating on God, giving, acts of mercy, fasting, etc. are all healthy disciplines that help us to grow in our discipleship. When we fill our lives with "empty-calories", then we do not have room for the "good stuff". We want to **be changed**, without **changing**! To achieve the goal of becoming the person God intends may mean we need to acquire a taste for godly things, just like I must acquire a taste for different food to achieve my physical goal.

Do you want to become healthy and whole in your soul? Lent begins on February 14. It is a great season to begin to make those changes. See you on Sunday!

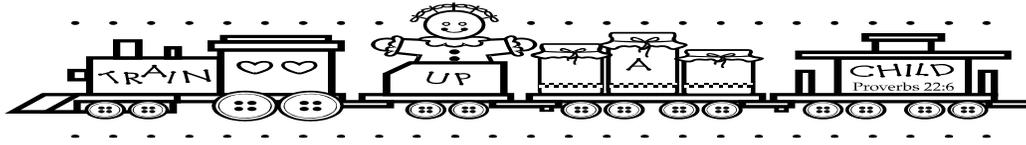
"Happy are people who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, because they will be fed until they are full."

Matthew 5:6 (CEB)

Pastor Colleen

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

We will be hosting the Ash Wednesday Service on Wednesday, February 14, at 7:00 P.M. 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.



Preschool Postings

It never ceases to amaze me how quickly time goes by. I keep singing the song from the 70's "Time Keeps On Slipping Into The Future" in my head, and occasionally out loud much to Megan's dismay. She doesn't appreciate my flash-backs to my teenage years. I tell her to wait, her time is coming.

But time certainly is going fast. We are already half way through the year. We are still working on letter and number identification with the younger children, and with Eli we started doing number words. He tells me he can't read but I let him know you have to practice. So I have him read me the letters and then tell him the number word and he puts it up on the board in the right spot. He enjoys doing something the younger ones can't yet. He's catching on that you read letters before you read words.

We want to thank Dee Aguilar and Pastor Colleen for helping us out with our Christmas party. I don't usually do anything big just before Christmas since they get so would up anyway. But Dee came to me and said she wanted to help. So we had a Christmas party. We started out with a story with Pastor Colleen, The Crippled Lamb by Max Lucado and she gave them stuffed sheep and cows. They were so excited that someone was coming in and Jeremiah showed the man what he had. The man said you have a cow. Jeremiah said no its and he looked at me and asked "What is this?" I knew he wanted to know the cow's name so I told him Abigale and he told the man "It's Abigale" of course we had to explain. We then went to make Gingerbread houses in Fellowship Hall. This is where Dee was a big help with that. We finished up playing a game. I think we all enjoyed the morning.

We are still having our open enrollment. If you know someone who has little ones, let them know about us. As always talk about us because you would be amazed how many people don't know that we exist. And we could use lots and lots of prayers. We appreciate the help and support you all give us through your support with fundraisers and donations as well as prayers.

2018 CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Steve Sharon—Chair, Sidenia Stace—Lay Leader, Jim Dougherty—Trustees Chair, Kathy Boxell—Finance Chair, Carroll DeVries—SPRC Chair, Sue Wagaman, Susie Flynn, Willard Rust, Kraig Piper, Phyllis Springer, Sally Varner, Shawn Swathwood, Jeanne Michos, Terry Ivey, Pastor Colleen

HIGHLIGHTS of the JANUARY CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING:

1. *The IWU ministry team 'Redeemed' will be with us on Sunday, January 28th in the Morning Worship Service.*
2. *Ash Wednesday Service will be at First Church on February 14th at 7 PM.*
3. *Jim would like to form a trustees team to be in charge of the property.*
4. *The spending plan (budget) for 2018 was discussed and approved with some cuts.*
5. *The council came to a consensus to do away with bulk mailing and go with emailing the newsletter. Paper copies will be in the bulletin once a month. We will send a limited number by mail.*

Full report of the December meeting is on the bulletin board in the church office hallway.



2018 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE DONUTS

February—J.O.Y. Class
March—Koinonia Class

WICK PIES – FUMC Preschool has pies for sale. If you would like to buy a pumpkin pie or two, see Donna Wiley or stop by the church office. One pie is \$6 or 2 for \$10. *Also, we have sweet dips for sale, \$3.75 a package or 2 for \$7.00. Good for gatherings!*



CHANGE FOR MISSIONS

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

November– Sunnycrest UMC Food Pantry \$112.00
December—Angel Tree \$111.00

2017 Church Spending Plan

Monthly	December	Year to Date
Income	\$34,961.50	Income \$165,523.78
Expense	\$18,367.62	Expense \$231,868.56

\$37,000 was taken from the Endowment Fund from the Foundation since April 2017. \$8,000 was taken from the Scrip Fund and The Crossing.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2/04 Jeff Weesner
2/12 David Devine
2/14 Bill Varner
2/20 Jane Sharon
2/20 Allie Pence
2/22 Marsha Moon
2/22 Drew Varner

If you do not see your birthday or anniversary on the list, please let the church office know..

ANNIVERSARIES

Feb. 5 Tom & Rita Holloway
Feb. 20 Bob & Barb Duckwall

THANK YOU! I would like to thank everyone for the generous Love Offering that was given. But most of all the love and support that has been shown to me over the last 15 years. Thank you for being a loving and kind family! *Rita Forsythe*

THANK YOU all for the generous and loving cards and gifts for my birthday and Christmas! It is a blessing to be a part of such a wonderful church family. I love and appreciate each of you and pray God's continued grace on us as we work together for the Kingdom. *Pastor Colleen*



ANNOUNCEMENT –We are thankful for all of the 2018 commitment cards which were returned to the church. In order to set a workable 2018 budget, the finance committee has determined, that we could no longer afford to salary our musicians. The Staff-Parish representatives and Pastor Colleen met with Susie and Sheila at the end of November, explained our financial reality, and asked if they would pray about volunteering their talents as a part of their membership vows. We are grateful that Susie has agreed to continue as our organist. Sheila has informed us of her decision to move on. We appreciate both Susie and Sheila's gifted musicianship for these many years. We are sad to say good-bye to Sheila, but she goes with our gratitude and blessing for God's best in the future.

THANK YOU! Dear First Church family: Since my employment as Church Pianist has come to an end, I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to work and grow as a musician with you. While I am sad about leaving under these circumstances, I will always be grateful for the 22 wonderful years that I was employed at FUMC. It has been a privilege to work with Susie and so many other fine musicians there. I always did my best to carry on the tradition of exceptional music that was established before me. Thank you for your love and support. I will be in prayer for the church and wish you all a blessed new year. - *Sheila Todd*



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

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. Postage

PAID
 Marion, IN 46952
 Permit No. 262

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

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

February 2018

THE NEXT FOCUS DEADLINE
February 21, 2018

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

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT— Rita Forsythe
 ORGANIST— Susan Seacott
 PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR— Donna Wiley

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

H O P E

Discovering it
Living it
Sharing it

SERVICE TIMES

SUNDAY SCHOOL—9:30 A.M.
 SUNDAY WORSHIP—10:45 A.M.