



March 2018

THE FOCUS

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

Going for the Gold

Have you noticed that the Winter Olympics comes right after the holiday/football couch potato season and at the time when many of us are looking forward to spring and getting back into shape? We are inspired by the achievements of those dedicated athletes and newly resolved to increase our own physical fitness. It also coincides with the Holy Season of Lent, which is a time that the Church has set aside as a time for self-examination and increasing the fitness of our spiritual lives.

If the phrase "Spiritual Disciplines", which gets talked about often during Lent, sounds a little intimidating to you, lessons from the physical fitness world might be helpful.

1. Don't aspire to be an Olympic champion overnight! - lofty goals are terrific, but start slow and build strength and stamina as you go. Instead of trying to read the whole Bible in a short period of time, read thoughtfully and let the Word of God speak to you. Instead of starting with a goal of praying 2 hours/day, set short periods of time throughout the day to talk with the Lord. Instead of planning an initial fast of 40 days, begin by fasting a set meal or two/ weekly. Remember those Gold Medalists have been training for years and decades, so be realistic when you train.
2. Keep the Goal in mind and don't give up. Remember that good habits take time and there is a reason they are called Spiritual **Disciplines**. All new practices seem difficult at first, and it sometimes takes sheer determination to get up early to go to the gym and workout, but after persevering the hard work pays off. Then the results become the motivation for continuing. The same is true as we journey with God. At first, it may seem strange or inconvenient to set time aside for prayer, Bible study, worship, etc., but as you gain in your understanding and your faith increases, your love of God propels you on and becomes its own motivating reward.
3. Change up your training, so you don't get into a rut. Just as there are various ways to exercise our muscles, there are various ways to approach our Spiritual Disciplines. If you are not a morning person, then schedule your time with God later in the day when you are attentive and teachable. If you find yourself praying the same way over and over, then change it up with prayers from scripture, or from a book of prayers by a Christian writer, or singing your prayers. Ask Christian friends and mentors what they have found meaningful and experiment with your own practices.
4. Do your best and aim for the Gold, but remember your worth is not determined by being perfect, but by being a Child of God. I think some of the best stories of the Olympic Games are not always the stories of the Gold Medalists, but those of the athletes who gave their all while proudly wearing their country's uniform. While we bear the name of Christ, we want to bring Glory to God by giving our very best, knowing that we are loved unconditionally beyond measure by the one we represent.

May this Lenten Season be a meaningful time of preparation for the glorious Celebration of our Lord Jesus' Easter Victory!

"You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally."

I Corinthians 9: 24-25 (MSG)

Pastor Colleen

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE will be March 29th at 7:00 PM. We will be meeting at Mt Olive UMC. This year's service will be a Seder Meal. Please let the church office know by March 25th (Palm Sunday), if you will be attending.

HIGHLIGHTS of the FEBRUARY CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING:

- 1 Pastor Colleen reported on the Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday Services. Ash Wednesday Service will be at First Church at 7 PM. Maundy Thursday Service will be at Mt. Olive at 7 PM. This will be a Seder Meal.
- 2 A decision was made to serve communion differently during the flu season. Bread will be hand out to each person and individual cups of juice will be served.
- 3 The van has been sold.
- 4 CIC will be contacted on the status of the Sanctuary air conditioner. We are wanting to know when the project will be complete.
- 5 Rev. Jeff Zirkle will be our guest speaker on Sunday, March 18th.
- 6 The computer for the pastor's office has been purchased and installed.

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



2018 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE DONUTS

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

VERDA SMAIL SCHOLARSHIP -
The United Methodist Women's Scholarship Committee is now taking applications for the **Verda Smail Scholarship** (Women only). You qualify if: you are officially on record as a member of First UMC; you are a first-time recipient and you will be attending a college or accredited school of higher learning from which you will earn a degree. **All** applicants must pick up an application form in the **church office** and return it to the **church office** no later than **May 1st**



**Don't forget to set your
clocks ahead on hour
at 2 AM on March 11th.**



THANK YOU to the "Kitchen Crew" for my birthday surprise. It made the day extra special. *Beverly Paul*

THANK YOU! - First Church Family, Thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of the Love Offering. I appreciate it very much. It is a joy to me to be a part of this church and to be a part of your preschool. Thank you for allowing the preschool to be a part of this church, the preschoolers appreciate that as well as I do. Thank you again for the kind and generous gesture of making me a part of your love offering. *Donna Wiley*

Church Spending Plan as of 2018

Monthly	January	Year to Date
Income	\$16,679.05	Income \$16,679.05
Expense	\$19,123.53	Expense \$19,123.53

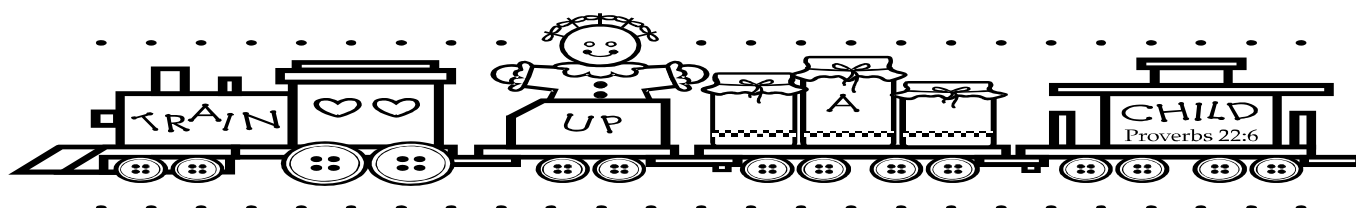
MARCH BIRTHDAYS

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



MARCH ANNIVERSARY

30 Andy & Amanda Varner



Preschool Postings

Another month has flown by, and some changes have happened in the preschool. We have another new aide, Arrington Kohn. Arrington is a former student of FUMC Preschool and will be starting IUPUI in this summer. She attended Central State University in the fall but due to a computer glitch was unable to return. It was not her fault but we are overjoyed to have her on board for the rest of the year.

We have also had three new students enroll in February. One little boy is coming two days and a set of twins for all five days. Now we have seven boys. It is trying sometimes so keep Miss Arrington and myself in your prayers.

The Concannon's popcorn fundraiser was a great success. We sold 132 tubs of popcorn. I didn't think we would do that well but I'm delighted. The profit on this was \$264. This was one of our better fundraisers. We are going to be doing an Applebee's Dine-to-Donate on Thursday, March 15th. As always flyers will be in the bulletin. If you get extras, give some to your family or friends. We can use all the help we can get. Thanks to your help and that of the preschool families, our fundraisers have helped us meet expenses. With so few students and several families on scholarships, we have had to hold more fundraisers than usual. Thank you for supporting us. We appreciate the help, we couldn't do it without you.

Please keep us in your prayers as we plan for the future.



Children's Easter Celebration

April 1, 2018, Easter Sunday

9:30 (3rd floor)
10:00 (Fellowship Hall)

Come hear Pastor Colleen tell the Easter story.
Enjoy the fun of our Easter Egg Hunt.

Anyone interested in donating goodies for the Easter egg hunt, please have the items in the church office by Palm Sunday. FYI: We will be filling treat bags for little, little ones (no choking items) and for K-6th grade and for our teens, around 8 in each group.



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

Return Service Requested

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

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

March 2017

THE NEXT FOCUS DEADLINE
March 21, 2018

H O P E

Discovering it
Living it
Sharing it

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

SERVICE TIMES

SUNDAY WORSHIP— 9:30 A.M.

SUNDAY SCHOOL— 10:45 A.M.

SUNDAY NIGHT LIFE—5:00-7:00 PM