



THE FOCUS

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

An Incredible Beginning

For many of us, Christmas is a wonderful yet hectic time. We love the lights, carols, and time with family and friends. We love meals together, and the sharing of presents. Church often fits right in with all of the other things going on. It is a comfort, a beautiful look at Jesus, and yet it is also just one more thing piled onto all of the other events that we have going on. Christmas is a nice reminder of Jesus, but it ends up as little more than that.

For Christians, however, this cannot be the case. Christmas marks the moment when God became human, when the Son was born as Jesus of Nazareth and the defining moment of our faith began. Even this, however, might be missing just how important Christmas is. As important as remembering “Jesus’ birthday” might be, the importance of Christmas is much larger than a date in human history. John notes the scope of this in the poem with which he begins his gospel. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being (John 1:1-3a).” John’s Gospel decides to start at the very beginning of everything. Not just the beginning of Jesus ministry, like the Gospel of Mark. Not just the events leading to Jesus’ birth, like Matthew and Luke. The beginning of the universe. And why does this matter? “[T]he Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).” In John’s poem, Jesus’ birth is not just an important day; it is compared to the very beginning of time. Jesus’ birth is not just the birth of one man, but the dawning of an entirely new creation.

This is what we celebrate at Christmas. Not just an important date in history. Not just the start of Jesus’ life on earth. We celebrate the fact that God is now making all things new, a process started in earnest at the first Christmas. Far from just a nice holiday in the middle of a chaotic time, Christmas is the very center-point of God’s work in the world. As we begin our preparations for Christmas, let us not lose this fact in the midst of the toys and trees: “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! (2 Corinthians 5:17)”

Pastor Jason Stanley

*Light of
the World*



First United Methodist Church
624 S. Adams Street Marion
11pm Christmas Eve
Please join us

HIGHLIGHTS of the NOVEMBER CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING:

1. Pastor Jason has been working on new vision and mission statements for the church.
2. Several Trustees issues were discussed: Annex building, parsonage, boiler, awning downspout in the alley.
3. Pledge cards are out and will be collecting them on Sunday, November 18th.
4. Shepherd program is moving ahead and we have 13 shepherds at this time.
5. The council voted to accept Tom Holloway, Rex Lane and Joe Simpson to serve on the council starting January 2018.
6. Christmas Eve Service for this year was decided on. We will be having our service at 11 PM. And Christland will be at 6 PM.
7. Decorating the church for Christmas will be the week of November 26th.
8. Youth had a movie night with 20 youth in attendance.

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

BIBLE STUDY—We will be not having Bible Study in December. Pastor Jason will let you know when we will be starting again in the new year.



2018—2019

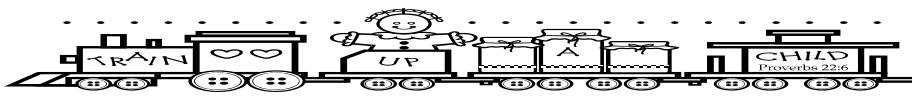
RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE DONUTS

December—J.O.Y. Class

January—Koinonia Class

Church Spending Plan as of 2018

Monthly	October	Year to Date
Income	\$13,424.50	Income \$143,881.36
Expense	\$14,810.76	Expense \$152,168.00



Preschool Postings

Yet again another year is flying by. We are almost half way through the year. We want to thank everyone who helped us out with the last Applebee's fundraiser. We made about \$130. We are planning on having an Applebee's fundraiser every other month. Keep an eye out for details. We also want to thank everyone who bought Wick's Pies. We did well on that but we don't have numbers for that yet. There are still a few pies left. We have Pecan and a few other kinds. If you are interested, let me know or ask in the office.

We are having a good year with the children. We have settled in with 2 aides. Miss Arrington is with us for 3 days, she is attending Ivy Tech this year and can't be with us all 5 days. If her name sound familiar not only was she my aide most of last year, she is a former preschool student. Most of the time I don't know the impact we have had on former students, but this one is good. Arrington is studying Early Childhood Education. She is the second student that came to preschool opting for the teaching profession, that I know of. Another former student, my daughter, Megan is filling in on the other 2 days. She is moving at the end of this semester to Michigan. We may have to work something else out depending on Arrington's schedule for next semester.

The other day I was in the office doing some things talking to Nancy and Philip Worthy and I hear, "Miss Donna, Me here". Rhyan, the 3 year old daughter of a former student, was ready to go down, usually walk her down since Great Grandpa has trouble with the stairs. For a while Rhyan was fussing about staying with me but since I started walking her down, she has been much happier about staying.

This year all of the children are willing to stay and not fuss too much when parents and grandparents drop them off. Even Alice, almost 2, wanted to stay on a day she doesn't usually come. She came with her aunt to drop off her cousin Waylon. She was taking off her coat and giving me her funny look. But when Aunt Tilar told Alice she couldn't stay, Alice got very upset.

Thank you for all the support both financially and through prayers. We ask that you continue to keep the preschool in your prayers.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2	Carol Fisher	18	Lauren Swathwood
6	Ann Zobrosky	22	Phylis Kepler
12	Jan Michos	24	Jack Stace
13	Sally Bancroft	26	Ruth Ann Rust
15	Jane Scholar	26	Mary Ann Frankenfield
16	Jim DeForest	29	Patricia Soultz
17	Sue Bratton	30	Leland Gamson



12/12 Rex & Cathy Lane
12/29 Lee & Laura Kistler

SCRIP ORDERS - We will be ordering weekly (if we have enough orders) until December 17th. We can't guarantee that an order on the 17th will be here by the 21st. Debbie Ivey is willing to order that week if we have enough orders.

THANK YOU! I would like to thank everyone for the cards, calls, flowers that I received while I was in rehab following my surgery. I really appreciated it all. Thanks to all! Love, Carolyn James



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2018
Thank you, thank you,
thank you! ----- 36 children will
receive a Christmas shoebox be-
cause of your generosity!



2019 PLEDGES CARDS If you haven't turned your card in there is still time; you may turn it in to the church office. We ask that you prayerfully consider your pledge for next year. The pledges help us to set the 2019 budget. Thank you for your continuous support to the ministry of Marion First United Methodist Church!

FOOD DRIVE - We will be doing a food drive starting December 1 through December 15. Please bring non-perishable items and place them under the Christmas tree on the stage in the Fellowship Hall. We will then take them to the Salvation Army to help others have a Merry Christmas!

YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY will be on Sunday, December 23rd at 6 PM. Please bring a gag gift. We ask that you share an embarrassing story from this year that goes along with the gift you bring. If you have any questions please see Pastor Jason.

BRIGHTEN THE HOLIDAYS FOR SOMEONE - If you're willing to make your greeting a little more personal: Our church family has around thirty members in town who find coming to church just a little more challenging these days. Are you willing to visit one household between Thanksgiving and Christmas? Please check out the display in Fellowship Hall and select the name of a neighbor or friend to visit. Your caring will be so appreciated by these dear friends who might feel a little blue during the holidays. This would make a great family project. For additional information, please call Barbara Salveter at 662-7514.



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

December 2018

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

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

THE NEXT FOCUS DEADLINE
December 19, 2018

H O P E
*Discovering it
Living it
Sharing it*

PASTOR—Jason Stanley
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Email address: jason.stanley@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

MORNING WORSHIP— 9:15 A.M.
SUNDAY SCHOOL— 10:30 A.M.