

Prayer Concerns

Church Members

(As of 12/30/15)

Jack Kirksey (Grace Heights)  
Farrell Austin (Grace Heights)  
Floye Hood (CMC)

Extended Church Family

Nellie Adams (mother of Rahn Adams), Joanne Arnone (sister-in-law of Wendi Arnone), Wendi Arnone (daughter of Janet Jehnzen), Jessica Edwards-Banner (Granddaughter of Margaret Causby), Sylvia Cannady (sister-in-law of Joyce Keels), Bill Davis, Savannah Duncan, Chaz Erwin (grandson of Bob & Sis Erwin), Evi Gomez (Friend of Debbie Mitchell), Kaylen Hall, Mike Just (Friend of John Greene), Pete Lantvit (brother-in-law of Stacey Ripley), Caitlyn McKenzie (Granddaughter of Cackie Connelly), Zack Minorwicy, James R. Norman (grandson of John & Jane Greene), Blake Powers (Grandson of Suzan & Woody Tolbert), Joe & Ryma Puett (Friends of Woody & Suzan Tolbert), Jim Richardson, Sharon Orr (Mother of Stacey Ripley), Jim Richardson (friend of Ron & Annelle Mulwee), Jan Robarge (Friend of Ron & Annelle Mulwee), Chloe Scott (Friend of Morgan Steinert), Scott Taylor (brother of Larry Taylor), Sue Villines (friend of Janet Jehnzen), Amy Walker (Sister of Amalie Hinson), Eddie Ward, Dean Williams (brother-in-law of Debbie Mitchell), Pete Willis (friend of Brownie Rochefort & Ronny & Kay Childres), Military personnel.

Please notify the Church Office of prayer concerns and updates.

The Susanna Wesley Circle sponsors  
A TEAM FOR THE BUCM SOUP KITCHEN  
responsible for preparing and serving a meal  
on the 4th Monday of each month. Please contact  
Sue Johnson (584-2393 or snpjohnson1@gmail.com) if  
you are interested in being a member of this group. You  
can choose to work the entire morning (9:00-12:45),  
prepare (9:00-10:45), or serve (10:45-12:30).  
In 2015, we served 2545 meals. The need is great in  
Burke County. All hands are welcome.

Did You Know?

From the early days of the first circuit rider, Bishop Asbury, down to the present time, a common link of service to others has run through all people who have dedicated their lives to the betterment of the Methodism in Burke County. The First United Methodist Church of Morganton serves not only its members, but the community and the world. Its history is best celebrated when it instills a spiritual fire to live for God and to bring others Him.

Archives/History Committee



We are seeking **MUSICAL GROUPS** to lead congregational singing for our Sunday morning 9:00 Worship service. If you are interested in providing music for our informal time of worship, please contact Rev. Charlotte Brendel at 437-0921 or email [cbrendel@wnccumc.net](mailto:cbrendel@wnccumc.net).

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE  
BIBLE STUDIES  
for 2016:

January 13-February 3

“Stepping in the Stream: Learning to Relate to the Will of God” (led by Dr. John Fowler)

February 10

Ash Wednesday worship service

February 17-March 16

Lenten Bible Study: “John: The Gospel of Light and Life” (led by Rev. Charlotte Brendel)

Bible study (book of the Bible) led by Dr. John Fowler

February 17-May 4

Financial Peace University (financial program) Financial Peace University is a ministry of Dave Ramsey, financial consultant. This study will be led by Weyland and Sascha Prebor, with other consultants available. Kits are now available for purchase at \$50 for church members. See Rev. Charlotte Brendel for more information.

YOUTH NEWS:

First I hope everyone had a Merry CHRISTmas and are looking forward to the New Year. The youth ended 2015 with a great CHRISTmas Progressive Dinner that started at the Causby' s house for appetizers then went to the Messenheimer' s for the main course and finished at the Ramsey’s for desserts and Dirty Santa. Thanks to Karen, Kelly and Lauren for opening their house to all of us.

I want to give a big shout out to all the youth who have been part of the services during the CHRISTmas season. It is always great to see the talents we have in our youth.

Now it is time to look forward to the New Year, 2016. We have a lot of things planned. We start back with our Sunday night meetings on January 10 so plan on being there. During the upcoming year we will be looking at a youth service, going back to the Riddle Center, a ski/tubing trip and other service projects. It is also not too early to start thinking about ASP. Remember we have set the date for July 3 – 9 in Jonesville Va.

Well that’s all for now see you next year, be safe and make good choices on New Year’s Eve.

OUR CHRISTIAN LOVE AND SYMPATHY  
is extended to:

Steve Settlemyer and his family in the recent death of his brother, John Settlemyer.

Betty Smith in the passing of her sister, Clara Turner, on December 17, 2015.

The family of Edna Coffin in her passing on December 26, 2015.

Betty Smith in the passing of her sister, Lena Medlin of Northwest, NC, on December 28, 2015.

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[www.morgantonfumc.org](http://www.morgantonfumc.org)



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FIRST NEWS  
January, 2016

## A Disciple's Path –

Methodist minister James Harnish wrote an excellent book called *A Disciple's Path - Deepening Your Relationship With Christ and the Church*. In chapter 1 he reminds us of that important question asked in Alice in Wonderland. Alice is talking with Cheshire Cat. She has come to a fork in the road, and she asks “Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?” The Cat replied “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.” She said “I don’t care where.” The Cat replied, “Then it doesn’t matter which way you go.” As Christians seeking God’s will in 2016 we do care which way we are going. We want to take the narrow path that Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount. That path is one of adventuresome discipleship!

When we know where we are going, it does make a difference how we get there. Like the first disciples, we have heard Christ’s call to “Follow me!” The destination of a disciple of Jesus Christ in 2016 is to take the path of a life that is completely centered in loving God and loving others.

Methodist theologian Richard Heitzenrater describes it as holy living. He writes “Holy living is thus the exercise of grace in the development of those virtues which make one fully human (renewed in the image of God, seen in Christ) while at the same time continually struggling with the contrary views. Grace is not given in opposition to the exercise of the will, but rather it directs (or redirects) the will.”

Let Joseph Gilmore’s Hymn – He Led Me: O Blessed Thought be a Prayer for our Church Family in 2016, as we seek the Disciple’s Path together:

*He leadeth me; O blessed thought! O words with heavenly comfort fraught! What’re I do, wher’er I be, still ‘tis God’s hand that leadeth me. He leadeth me, he leadeth me, by his own hand he leadeth me; his faithful follower I would be, for by his hand he leadeth me.*

*Grace and Peace And Have a Blessed New Year!*

*Pastor John*

## Associate Pastor - Stephen Ministry

### Introducing “Stephen Ministry”: Equipping laypeople to provide Christ-centered care.

*“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ”*  
(Galatians 6:2)

We have an opportunity to explore whether or not God is calling our church to begin a “Stephen Ministry.” Pastor John and I want to provide care to everyone, but we cannot do this alone. Divorce, grief, financial stress, relocation, job loss, hospitalization, loneliness, rehab, and sickness are some of the challenges of family members in our church. “Stephen Ministry” is a proven system for training and organizing laypeople to provide quality Christian care to those experiencing life difficulties.

**A “Stephen Ministry” Introductory Workshop will be available Saturday, January 30 at Central UMC in Asheville. The workshop is 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.** Sessions include: An Introduction to Stephen Ministry, Ministering to those Experiencing Grief, and How to Care in a Distinctively Christian Way. I would like to send a team of servant volunteers to attend this workshop, and discern how God is calling FUMC to respond in a new way to providing Christ-centered care to members.

Imagine how much more ministry could happen if we had a team of well-trained lay caregivers equipped to provide one-to-one Christian care to people who need it. Dr. John Ortberg describes Stephen Ministers as “quiet heroes in our midst who are doing amazing ministry.” One Stephen Ministry care receiver explains, “Through Stephen Ministry, I’ve experienced Christ’s healing love and discovered the peace I was so desperately seeking.”

Since 1975, more than 12,000 churches from 170 denominations have trained over 600,000 laypeople as Stephen Ministers.

Millions of hurting people have benefitted from their care. The church I served last year, Aldersgate UMC in Shelby, had a Team of strong Stephen Ministers, assisting the pastors in providing excellent, extended congregational care. Stephen Ministers are not counselors, but provide a “ministry of presence” as they listen to others and show compassion.

If you sense God may be calling you to a ministry of caring, compassion, listening, and helping others, please consider attending this workshop on Saturday, January 30 to learn more about Stephen Ministry. Let me know if you plan to participate by calling me at 437-0921 or email [cbrendel@wnccumc.net](mailto:cbrendel@wnccumc.net).

Blessings,  
Rev. Charlotte Brendel  
FUMC Associate Pastor

### Kay's Corner

Can you believe that it is already 2016? Christmas 2015 was wonderful, but went by with lightning speed. Now it is time to think of activities for 2016. Keepers will meet on January 25<sup>th</sup>, not sure what we will be doing, but watch the bulletins and your mail to see what is planned. Our track record for trips is not very good because it seems the weather does not cooperate with us, so we might be meeting at the church.

Betty Brown has been very busy with her knitting needles; she has made matching hats and blankets for the pregnancy center. Thanks, Betty, for all your wonderful work.

Charlotte’s Knitters will be meeting on January 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am to begin a new project. We have been asked to make afghans for the habitat folks as they move into new homes. The group has also been asked to make pillows for breast cancer patients.

I am thinking about beginning a new program for senior adults, so be on the lookout! I think you will like it!

It is my wish for everyone here at First United Methodist Church, Morganton, to have a healthy, happy and blessed New Year!

## MUSIC NOTES ETC...



This year’s Chancel Choir Christmas music included a piece called *The Joy of the New Year*. It began with the text *When night shadows fly new year’s dawn floods all the sky and joyful voices sound....”*

Even as the brightness of Christmas wanes, we should remember the joy we feel in looking forward to the visions we have for 2016 for our church ministries and for our own lives. The lengthening of the days helps us celebrate the coming of the light in Christ. It is one of my favorite elements of my job to begin planning for the upcoming liturgical seasons. This year, the church calendar moves us quickly into the season of Lent (Ash Wednesday is Feb. 10) and anticipation of Easter. In that vein, here are some important dates to put on your calendars.

**Morganton Area Children’s Choir has a parent meeting on Sunday, Jan. 10**, with its **first rehearsal falling on Monday, Jan. 11 from 5:15 to 6:00 pm**. I also am accepting more participants through the month of January!

**Children’s Choirs, Van pickup, and Chancel Choir resume rehearsals on a regular schedule on Wed., Jan. 13.**

**Chancel Ringers resume rehearsals on Monday, Jan. 18.**

There will be **NO Children’s** Choirs or van pickup on Wed., Feb. 10, due to the Ash Wednesday service.

**Children’s Worship Arts Program** is tentatively scheduled to present a musical on **Sunday, March 13** in a combined worship service!

Finally, I’d like to add a word of thanks to all for your support of our music ministries. Whether you are a singer, handbell player, praise band member, dancer, teacher, donor, OR a listener, you made the Christmas season beautiful at FUMC again this year! Thank you!!