

WHAT'S INSIDE



Children's Activities
PAGE 2



Christmas Eve Services
PAGE 3



Volunteer Spotlight
PAGE 4

Love God. Serve People. Make a Difference.

First United Methodist Church

The Flame

JANUARY 2022

A word from our pastor

Rev. Dane Womack



Greetings Paragould FUMC,

As I write this month's article I am basking in the joy and celebration of Christmas! We had a wonderful Advent and Christmas celebration at FUMC. Staff and volunteers put together an excellent Advent Devotional! We enjoyed a wonderful children's float in the Downtown Christmas Parade. Our Choir and guest instrumentalists put on a wonderful concert in our beautiful sanctuary! A group of FUMC members visited homebound folks to share Christmas carols and holiday greetings.

Our children, staff, and volunteers blessed us with an awesome Christmas Pageant followed by a time of fellowship and a concert by the Kinders! And we capped it off with four beautiful Christmas Eve services including sharing in Holy Communion. Thank you for your attendance and support of our many holiday ministries. It was a joyous season!

I expect a great Christmas to launch us into an equally wonderful new year. As you turn the page on the calendar there are many things to note. The Senior High Trip to Memphis is on Jan. 14-17 including a visit to the Civil Rights Museum. Looking toward February, YOUTH will attend VERITAS Feb. 25-27. Ash Wednesday is March 2 and Easter Sunday is April 17. Senior Sunday is May 1. May 26-28 we will take a trip to Mt. Eagle & the Buffalo River. June 5 is Pentecost & Confirmation Sunday. We even have some summer dates already lined up: June 12-17 Ozark Mission Project @ FUMC; June 19-24 Ready, Set, Read! Elementary Literacy Program; June 26-July 1 Vacation Bible School; Camp Tanako Elementary Camp (3rd - 6th) July 17-22 & Jr High Camp (6th - 8th) July 24-29. As you can see, it will be a busy year. Plug in where you can!

Being this is the January newsletter article, I'd like to consider where we've come this year. While it does not compare to 2020, 2021 was still something of a rollercoaster. We began worshipping in-person again on Valentines Day 2021. This included a buildup with in-person activities as vaccines became available and case numbers improved over the summer. As school restarted, another wave of covid cases slowed down ministry. We have

continued on page 2

Witt House Ministries

The Witt House food pantry served 262 households (49 New Households) representing 802 individuals in December.

In 2021, they served 2,203 households representing 7,093 individuals.

Money for hams was donated to the Witt House who then issued 275 ham certificates to clients beginning November 9, 2021; 232 certificates were redeemed.

The Witt House is open every Tuesday from 4:30-6pm and Friday mornings from 9:30-11am.



continued from page 1

learned to “hold on loosely” to our plans. Across these two years we have seen ministries and services respond differently to the challenges of the pandemic. That’s okay! Sometimes it is uncomfortable, but we are moving ahead as faithful and as best we can. As I write, we are again being warned of another surge of covid cases. Sources including information shared at our local hospital indicate this strain is more contagious but hopefully less harmful. I am praying for the best. I remind you our ministry calendar outlined above comes with something of an asterisk as we take things week-to-week as safely as possible.

Though final numbers are not yet in, indications are that December was a very strong month for giving - as is usually the case. Thank you for your generosity. We anticipate ending the year in great shape. With respect to facilities, this past year was very busy as we began tackling water damage around the sanctuary. We are proud of the progress we’ve made and will pick this work up again in January. One growing area of attention is technology improvements. We have upgraded several computers and are constantly considering what further improvements need to be made to our tech systems. Our staff and Trustees have done a great job of caring for and improving the facilities where necessary.

One important emphasis in 2022 will be the “Next 100 Years” capital campaign. This will have a three-fold emphasis. First, our church owes ~\$3.1 million due to facility additions and renovations completed in the fall of 2019. The entirety of the project cost nearly \$7m. The construction loan closed at ~\$3.7m. Nearly half of the necessary funds were raised before/during construction. And the debt has been reduced by ~20% since the loan closed. This is a healthy ratio of cost to debt for a church our size, but FUMC’s leaders recognize the challenge debt creates. Second, the Sanctuary faces maintenance issues including water leaks and damage. Some of these repairs have already begun. We can and should also take steps to further improve the Sanctuary worship experience including technology and accessibility. The Sanctuary cornerstone is dated 1925 meaning we will celebrate its centennial in 2025. We ought to prioritize renovating the Sanctuary where necessary so that it may continue to be a faithful and historic place of worship in downtown Paragould and Greene County. The former nursery at FUMC on the first floor connects to the Welcome Center. Third, FUMC needs to renovate these spaces to develop an office suite, workroom, and meeting rooms. It will make the staff more efficient and promote better teamwork and safety to have everyone located on the first floor. A “debt reduction campaign” is more effective if there are other matters included to encourage enthusiasm. In this case, the necessary maintenance on the sanctuary and office suite renovation would serve as an impetus for fundraising along with debt reduction as part of preparing for a centennial celebration in 2025. Over the next few months, you will be hearing more about our plans to raise funds, pay down our debt, and complete these projects. Please be in prayer for our church and this process.

There is plenty more to share, but I think that will do for now! As we begin this new year I am feeling very grateful for all we have come through and how God has guided us in my limited time at Paragould FUMC. These victories give me every confidence concerning our future! Though this newsletter is filled with dates and numbers and building issues and fundraising goals, we must not let these technical matters take the place of the priority of faith practiced by following Jesus. Our church says we will “Love God, Serve People, and Make a Difference”. Let it be so in 2022 and beyond!

Rev. Dane



Veritas will be held at the Embassy Suites Northwest Arkansas - Hotel, Spa & Convention Center in Rogers, AR the weekend of February 25-27, 2022. We have room for 12 girls, 12 boys and 6 adults. Register by JANUARY 23rd on the app to secure your reservation!



After the children’s Christmas pageant, the Kinders musical duo gave a concert, and then Santa came to visit!

Christmas Eve Services

FUMC was host to more than 600 people in person and more than 100 at its four worship services on Christmas Eve.



Volunteer Spotlight

Dixie Lawrence, long-time church member and busy mom of three, was tasked with two big projects just before the holiday season hit. First, she was asked to be in charge of the church float. Soon after she was asked to take on decorating the Worship Center for special events. She managed to do both in big fashion.

"I was excited about the parade," she said. "It was just fun." Her focus was on the Nativity scene. "We needed something fun to draw people in and make people want to come here. Bright, colorful and fun. And what's better than happy birthday, Jesus?" The float had a blow up Mary, Joseph and Jesus with an arch of balloons that held several children who rode on the float. Church members joined the float at the parade beginning and passed out 400 coloring books to children along the route.

"I love doing parties and showers. I love doing things over the top," she said. Dixie brings a "more is more" approach to everything she does and the Worship Center is no exception. She bought 2 huge Christmas trees to pair with the two existing trees and draped 15 yards of dark purple fabric among three Christmas wreaths, filling up the stage with light and color. She also added decoration to the sides and in the Great Hall.

"It's a big space, so we needed big things to fill it. The focus was on Advent, so we worked in purple," She said. "What I wanted didn't exist so I created it." She started with the signs at the top and added in the rest. She found the right fabric after several tries, found other elements in the trade shows that she and her husband travel to with their work, and picked up the trees in Fayetteville. She even got on the lift to hang the lights. But, she insists, it was a group effort, as was the float. "I do feel honored and I appreciate everybody who helped," she said.

In the future, Dixie would like to see a Nativity scene at the back of the Worship Center, and wreaths on the side. She would like to see the hallway get a bit more attention and add photo areas. "Anything to bring life to it," she said. She also plans to enhance the space in Easter and Pentecost.

Dixie has always been a fan of fun and surprise, even marrying her husband, Ryan, in a surprise wedding ceremony. In June that year the couple thought Ryan might be deployed to Afghanistan, and wanted to move up the date of their wedding. They did a lot of sneaking around to plan and execute a ceremony in a very small amount of time and married in August. "What if nobody knows," said Dixie, in talking about the event. Her guests were told to come to a black and white engagement party and Dixie came out in a wedding gown. "The best part was pulling one over on my mom and sisters."

Dixie's flair comes by her honesty. Her mother is Cheryl Draper, an artist who painted the huge mural that was in downtown Paragould for several years until wind knocked it over in parts; it was finally taken completely down a few years ago. Dixie and Cheryl designed and painted the main wall in the current youth space, as well. "I like things fun and not ordinary."

Dixie has been a member of FUMC since 1990 when she was in the 6th grade. "I only feel home here." She and Ryan have three children: Barrett, 9, Brooks, 7, and Blaire, 1.



Above, right: Dixie Lawrence in the Worship Center in front of her designs. Above: the float she created for the Christmas parade, the Worship Center that Dixie decorated.

JANUARY CALENDAR

Sunday, January 2

- *8:00 am Early Worship Service
- *9:00 am Contemporary Service
- *10:00 am Sunday School
- *11:00 am Traditional Worship Service
- 4:00 pm Hospitality Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 4

- 4:30-6:00 Witt House open

Wednesday, January 5

- 9:30 am Women's Bible Study
- 6:00 pm Leadership Orientation
- 7:30 pm Praise Band Practice

Thursday, January 6

- 10:00 am Prayer Ministry

Friday, January 7

- 9:30-11 am Witt House Open
- 10:00 am Threads of Faith

Sunday, January 9

- *8:00 am Early Worship
- *9:00 am Contemporary Worship
- *10:00 am Sunday School
- *11:00 am Traditional Worship

Monday, January 10

- 1:00 pm Movie Club for Young at Heart
- 6:30 pm Cub Scouts

Tuesday, January 11

- 1:30 pm Glenna Rose UMW Meeting
- 4:30-6:00 pm Witt House open

Wednesday, January 12

- 9:30 am Women's Bible Study
- 6:00 pm Choir Practice
- 7:30 pm Praise Band Practice

Thursday, January 13

- 6:00 am Breakfast Club for High School Jrs. and Srs.
- 10:00 am Prayer Group

Friday, January 14

- 10:00 am Threads of Faith
- 9:30-11 am Witt House open
- Youth leave for Senior High Trip to Memphis

Sunday, January 16

- *8:00 am Early Worship
- *9:00 am Contemporary Worship
- *10:00 am Sunday School
- *11:00 am Traditional Worship
- 5:00 pm Youth

Monday, January 17

- Church office closed
- Youth return from Senior High Trip to Memphis

Wednesday, January 19

- 9:30 am Women's Bible Study
- 6:00 pm Choir Practice
- 7:30 pm Praise Band Practice

Thursday, January 20

- 10:00 am Prayer Ministry

Friday, January 21

- 9:30 am Witt House Open
- 10:00 am Threads of Faith

Sunday, January 23

- *8:00 am Early Worship
- *9:00 am Contemporary Worship
- *10:00 am Sunday School

*11:00 am Traditional Worship

- 3:00 pm NED UMYF Meeting
- 5:00 pm Youth (Council Meeting) at Brick Oven Pizza

Tuesday, January 25

- 4:30 pm Witt House open

Wednesday, January 26

- 9:30 am Women's Bible Study
- 6:00 pm Choir Practice
- 7:30 pm Praise Band Practice

Thursday, January 27

- 9:30 Prayer Ministry

Friday, January 28

- 9:30 am Witt House Open
- 10:00 am Threads of Faith

Sunday, January 30

- *8:00 am Early Worship
- *9:00 am Contemporary Worship
- *10:00 am Sunday School
- *11:00 am Traditional Worship
- 5:00 pm Combined Youth Event

*Nursery Provided

YOUNG AT HEART

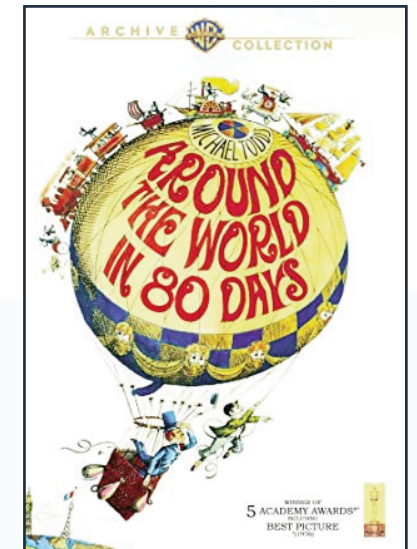
Upcoming Activities

Movie Club

Monday, January 10

1:00 pm 3rd floor movie room
Second half of "Around the World in 80 Days"

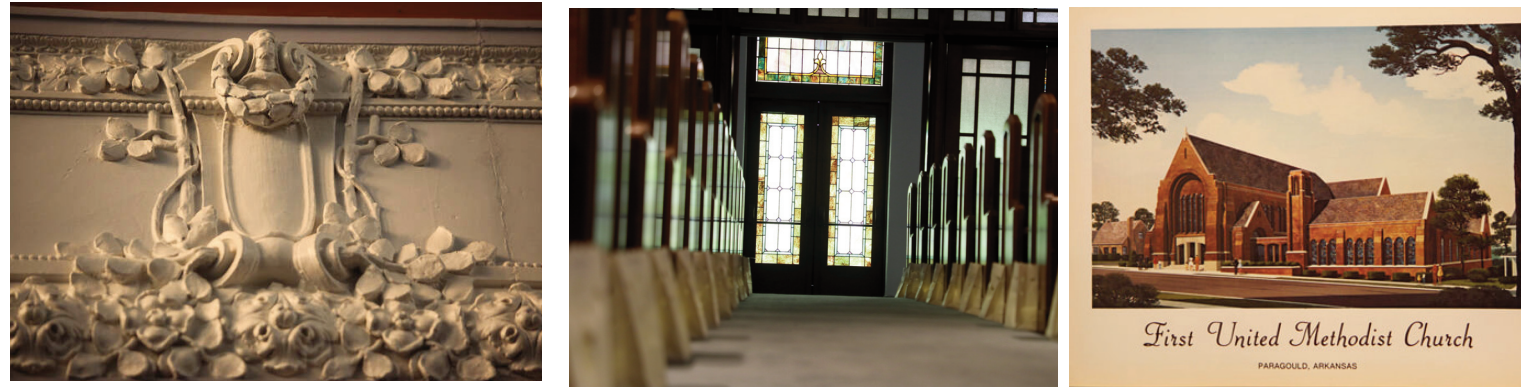
Popcorn and candy provided (bring your own drink)



Connect Wednesday

Be on the lookout for information regarding our Connect Wednesday programs.

A short history of FUMC's sanctuary



FUMC's present church building was begun under J.B. Evans, 1923-26. The lot and parsonage were contributed by Sarah Wyse Cook, Branch wrote. The new church was described as a "noble structure of rare beauty," with a total cost of \$125,000, which included a \$10,000 pipe organ. "This building was first occupied by the congregation on Sunday, Nov. 21, 1926. In October, 1933, the 50th anniversary of methodism in Paragould was celebrated. The membership had grown from 13 members to more than 800."

Robin Patten, long-time church member, past financial secretary and outreach coordinator from 1986-1994 at FUMC, said under the stairwell in the old boiler room used to be a coal chute from the outside. She believes the church was built without bathrooms. She said the Wirta Potter Chapel was built for the church's organist, who played for every occasion at church, including weddings and funerals, and also played for Rotary. "She dedicated her life to the service of our church," Patten said.

In 1979, the church facility expanded with the construction of the chapel, bell tower and fellowship hall, the History records. The stained glass windows in the chapel were designed by Rhonda Crow, associate pastor at the time. Each window depicts a significant biblical event or story. The bell tower contains the original church bell and is rung on special occasions.

First Methodist Church was formed with thirteen members in the summer of 1883. On August 18, 1883, the church was given some property on the southeast corner of Second and Emerson. That summer and fall and frame building was erected. This was the first church building in Paragould. It was built during the time when Paragould covered 12 blocks south and east of Court and Second Streets.

A new building began in 1894 on the northeast corner of Third and Emerson.

Construction at the present site began in 1924. The first service was held on Sunday, November 21, 1926. That same week the North Arkansas Conference held its session in our building. The cornerstone was finally placed in April 1931.

The building was created even before the Paragould City Hall and Fire House, both of which were built in 1890, and the electric plant, which followed a year later.

This piece was originally written by Kelley Huffman for our website.



SAVE THE *Date*

2022

JANUARY 5, 6-7:30PM 2022 LEADERSHIP ORIENTATION

JANUARY THROUGH MAY "NEXT 100 YEARS" CAMPAIGN

JANUARY 14-17 SENIOR HIGH TRIP TO MEMPHIS

JANUARY 17 FUMC OFFICES CLOSED

FEBRUARY 25-27 YOUTH @ VERITAS. ROGERS. AR

MARCH 2 ASH WEDNESDAY

MARCH 4-6 CONFIRMATION RETREAT

APRIL 17 EASTER SUNDAY

MAY 1 SENIOR SUNDAY

MAY 26-28 RETREAT & FLOAT TRIP BUFFALO RIVER

JUNE 5 PENTECOST & CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

JUNE 12-17 OZARK MISSION PROJECT

JUNE 19-24 READY. SET. READ! ELEMENTARY LITERACY PROGRAM

JUNE 26 - JULY 1 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

CAMP TANAKO -- ARUMC STUDENTS SUMMER CAMP

JULY 17-22 ELEMENTARY CAMP (3RD-6TH GRADE)

JULY 24-29 JR HIGH CAMP (6TH-8TH GRADE)

WWW.FUMCPARAGOULD.ORG



Remember our youth as they head to Memphis, TN for a trip January 14-17!

Finance

2021 Budget 1,250,857

Month ending November, 2021
 General Contributions: \$ 81,691
 Building Contributions: \$ 19,000
 Total year to date contributions: \$1,083,280

Month of December, 2021 (through 12/26/21)
 General Contributions: \$117,580
 Building Contributions: \$88,870

Building Loan Balance: \$3,199,062

A Dollar A Week 2021: Total: \$4,775 (through 12/26/21)

Memorials

- Randall Jenkins** by Kay & Herb Bland, George & Susie Cook, Joe & Jackie Barnett, Bruce Branch, Beth Golsen, Fred & Martha Jean Swindle, Larry & Denise Chipman, Rhonda & Scott Monroe, Beth Pace, Stan & Carol Phillips, Theresa & Kristin Kirk
- Bernice Gibson** by Larry & Denise Chipman
- Chris Stidham** by George & Susie Cook, Theresa & Kristin Kirk
- Kelly Mangrum** by Shirley & David Wilson
- Jerry Buck** by George & Susie Cook
- Ann Black** by George & Susie Cook, Theresa & Kristin Kirk
- Gretta Jernigan** by George & Susie Cook
- Jan Parker** by George & Susie Cook, Theresa & Kristin Kirk
- Carlene Lynn** by George & Susie Cook, Church Girls,
- Paul Combs** by George & Susie Cook
- Loretta Kuenzel** by George & Susie Cook
- Richard Misenhimer** by Judy Smallwood, Theresa & Kristin Kirk
- Bill Draper** by George & Susie Cook
- Glen Pillow** by Theresa & Kristin Kirk
- Kay Goodwin** by Theresa & Kristin Kirk

Honorariums

- Scott & Rose Gramling** on their marriage by Fellowship Sunday School Class
- Iona Stone** by Mary Ann & Laura Stickler

livestreaming:

Find us online/Facebook

Our 9:00 and 11:00 worship services are live streamed each week on our website: www.fumcparagould.org/worshiponline. You can also find us live on Facebook on Sunday mornings.

Bishop Gary E. Mueller
District Superintendent John Fleming
Pastors Dane Womack
 (william.womack@arumc.org,
 Chase Burns (chase.burns@arumc.org)
Music Director Brian Pearson
 (eaglebandguy2@gmail.com)
Director of Children's Ministries
 Angela Newby
 (angela.newby@fumcparagould.org)
Dir. of Media/Communications Karoline Risker
 (karoline.risker@fumcparagould.org)
Organist Bernard Raley
Church Administrator Denise Chipman
 (denise.chipman@fumcparagould.org)
Custodian: Greig Lynn

Office Phone 870-239-8541
 Office Hours: 8:30-am- 4:30 pm
 (Fridays close at noon)

First United Methodist Church
 404 West Main Street, Paragould, AR 72450
 info@fumcparagould.org **870.239.8541**
 Office Hours: 8:30-4:30 Monday-Thursday
 8:30-noon Friday
 www.fumcparagould.org



Non-Profit Organization
 US Postage Paid
 Paragould, AR 72451
 Permit No. 157

First United Methodist Church
 P O Box 667
 Paragould, AR 72451
 RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED