







The Flame



A Word from Our Pastor

Greetings Paragould First United Methodist Church,

I want to begin with a point of personal privilege. Thanks to the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, Staff, and YOU for your support while I was away from the office for a few weeks following the birth of our son Stuart (March 31). He and Jill are doing well! Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, gifts, and meals! We are so pleased to share in this special time in our family alongside this church. Thank you for everything.

My being out of the office did not slow down activity at church! It has been a wonderful last few months, including a great Holy Week & Easter, Mother's Day, Connect Wednesday, Ladies Tea, Men's Breakfasts, and other ministries. Many thanks to the staff and volunteers who carried extra weight on these ministries this year. On Sunday, May 21, we celebrated our 2023 Confirmation Class: Molly Beliew, Avery Randleman, Tate Gray, Jackson Rogers and John David Honeycutt. More information and pictures of these ministries are in the following pages.



With respect to the financial health of the church, we continue to hold our own as our giving largely mirrors 2022. Year to Date Received General Funds for 2023: \$292,707 vs. 2022: \$314,048. Year to Date General Expenses for 2023: \$336,520 vs. 2022: \$316,328. You can see our giving is just below this time last year and our expenses are slightly above this time last year. Part of the increased expenses are timing issues (i.e. insurance payments) and facilities costs. Otherwise, everything is more expensive this year. Consider the Building Funds/Next 100 Years Campaign. Year to Date Received Building Funds 2023: \$176,119 vs. 2022: \$174,008. Year to Date Distributed Building Funds 2023: \$304,492 vs. 2022: \$46,101. You can see the giving toward the Building Fund mirrors last year. The distributions from the Building Fund is much higher this year because of significant end of year giving in 2022. Many gifts came in during December, then were transferred toward the debt in January which is a good thing. As always I want to thank you for your consistent financial support of your church. Your giving makes ministry possible - including the celebrations throughout this newsletter. We are seeing an increase in costs and expenses at the church, alongside other businesses and entities. Please continue to remember the church in your giving, even during a busy summer.

And for some very exciting news, I am writing this newsletter from our newly remodeled office suite on the first floor of our old education building. This area is the old nursery and before that it was the kitchen and fellowship hall. This is a cherished and well-used space in our building. How exciting to have all our offices together on the first floor! The project has gone smoothly including being on-time and at budget (~\$200k). We are

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thrilled with this improvement and welcome you to stop by soon! Other facilities and Trustees projects include: 417 W Main parsonage master bath remodel, continued paint and drywall repairs in the Sanctuary, replacing a 2nd floor HVAC unit, and other maintenance issues. The Trustees 320 W. Main Parsonage Subcommittee continues to research the best future for said property. We are now researching necessary repairs and maintenance on the organ. Always more to do on our many properties! Also under the purview of the Trustees is a Council-approved & updated FUMC "CHILDREN, YOUTH, & VULNERABLE PERSONS PROTECTION POLICY". Please read the included article on this matter closely.

On Saturday, May 13 our clergy and laity delegates met as an Arkansas "Annual Conference" to address congregations seeking disaffiliation. In total, 67 churches were approved to leave the denomination pending legal paperwork and fees. This is a difficult season for many. In our Arkansas Conference a limited number of congregations have or are leaving. The vast majority of churches are remaining UMC. The numbers vary in other Conferences. Arkansas is unique in that we are small and close-knit. It is my sense that most of our churches are "moderate" and are working to stay together and in connection with one another. However, this season of transition for Methodists will continue for months, if not years. We discuss these matters at every leadership meeting at FUMC and will continue to do so. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out.

You should be aware that Rev. Chase Burns is being appointed to Central UMC Fayetteville. We are saddened for Chase to be leaving us, but enthusiastic about the opportunities before him. Rev. Chase's last Sunday will be June 11 and will include a reception in his honor at 10am in the Welcome Center. I cannot thank Chase enough for his hard work and support of our church and its ministries. Chase has become a trusted colleague and friend. I know many of you feel indebted to Rev. Chase for his pastoral care and leadership in his time at FUMC. Thank you, Chase! We wish you all the best and trust God will continue to guide you in fruitful ministry for years to come.

FUMC's new Assoc. Pastor is Sarah Ellzey. Sarah currently serves as pastor of Lepanto, Trumann, & Marked Tree UMCs (three-point charge). Sarah's seminary degree is from Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University. Before serving as a Methodist pastor, Sarah worked as resident leader for an intentional Christian community housing project and other poverty-focused mission efforts in Waco, TX. I believe Sarah's background, skills, and focus are a great fit for FUMC. She has experience in counseling, preaching, and missions/service work. I could not be more happy to welcome her and her family to Paragould and FUMC. Some of you may remember Pastor Sarah from the ladies "Galentine's" event a couple months ago where she served as guest speaker. Her family has been to other events at FUMC, including OMP. Like Rev. Chase and other associate pastors before them, Sarah is pursuing ordination as an Elder in the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Sarah will preach on Sunday, July 9; we will host a welcome reception in her honor at 10am in the Welcome Center.

Included in the newsletter is a snapshot of the Paragould FUMC summer calendar. There are many ministry opportunities ahead of us, including Vacation Bible School-Superheroes! (June 11-15) and Ozark Mission Project youth service camp at Wynne (June 11-16). We are very excited to welcome renowned pianist Louis Menendez for a Bach Concert, June 19 at 6pm in the Worship Center. We are renting a Steinway for this special celebration! Invite others! Our community literacy camp, "Ready, Set, READ!", is June 26-30. Women's Bible Study (book of James) will meet Wednesdays, June 21-July 19 at 6pm. Men's Breakfast continues on the first & third Thursdays of the month at 6am at Iron Horse BBQ. Note the other key dates in July! I know summer is a busy time for all, but we look forward to seeing you at church as often as possible, including our special, seasonal ministries.

Rev. Dane Womack Senior Pastor, Paragould FUMC

Easter Activities

The church hosted the annual brunch and Egg Hunt the Saturday before Easter. On Easter Sunday, we worshiped with 671 people joining in person or via livestream.











VULNERABLE PERSONS POLICY

At a recent Church Council meeting, your leadership adopted a joint policy recommendation from the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and Trustees titled "CHILDREN, YOUTH, & VULNERABLE PERSONS PROTECTION POLICY". The new policy is posted at: fumcparagould.org/resources.html. Hard copies are available at the church office as requested.

This updated policy reflects the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church's new staff/volunteer training and certification titled "Safe Gatherings." Previously, each church did their own training including, for example, background checks. This new training and certification will be uniform across all churches and is far more thorough. The Conference is paying for the shared service.

What does this mean for Paragould FUMC? Our policies for protecting children, youth, and vulnerable persons on campus are largely the same. We follow common guidelines such as: one adult is never alone with children/youth; doors should be left open or have windows in them; adult staff/volunteers should always observe appropriate boundaries with vulnerable persons; and any concerns around these matters should be reported immediately. Details are outlined in the document linked above. I highly encourage each FUMC member to familiarize themselves with the church's policies.

The change for FUMC is the new training and certification program. Going forward, any church member who volunteers with children, youth, or vulnerable adults is *REQUIRED* to complete the "Safe Gatherings" training and certification. This program is an online module that can be completed over multiple sessions. Before completion you must submit a notarized form for a background check (Our Church Administrator Denise Chipman is a Notary Public.).

Rev. Chase and I, plus a handful of staff and volunteers, have completed the training. It is educational and helpful. We really hope to have most of our volunteers certified in the next few months. It would be great if Vacation Bible School volunteers would complete training before VBS!

Go to fumcparagould.org/resources.html for a tutorial and link to begin the training.

I fully support our new policy including this training. These changes are in response to the disturbing number of abuse cases across churches in the last few years. We are thankful the conference is helping to strengthen our efforts to provide a safe environment for all peoples. Of course this is, and should be, a top priority for our local church. Thank you for your support of these matters and completing this certification in a timely manner. If you have any questions, or need help accessing the online material, reach out to the church.

Office Suite Renovation

As part of the 100 years campaign, the former nursery area was renovated into an office suite. These are the former first-floor Pre-K, Kindergarten, and Nursery rooms. When the Welcome Center was added to FUMC, a doorway was created to connect to this future office suite. FUMC met multiple times with Ramsons Construction to prepare plans to remodel this The project was fairly simple in that it did not require major construction. The work included installing and rearranging interior walls, new carpet, ceiling, lighting, etc.

The renovation will help make staff more efficient and promote better teamwork by providing more unity and safety by having everyone working near one another on the first floor. The project was finished in May and includes offices for the Church Administrator, Director of Media/Communications, Associate Pastor, Senior Pastor, Director of Children's Ministries/Director of Youth Ministries shared office, a media room, and a conference room.







Rev. Dane

FAREWELL NOTE FROM Pastor Chase

Greetings, friends.

I want you to know how blessed I have been to have served at Paragould First UMC over the past four years! Paragould First UMC is a

congregation that cares deeply about the mission and ministries in our community. I have seen you embody the love of Christ for our neighbors in creative and beautiful ways. Through a global pandemic, we strengthened our outreach by improving our online worship and connections, being adaptive and creative, keeping our ministries open, and continued giving to those in need in our community!

I am so proud of the work that we have done together and how far we have come. There are signs of life springing up everywhere as folks have returned to worship, small groups are growing in numbers, children and youth ministries are engaging and growing in our connexion relationship with other UMC churches in our conference, and we are welcoming many new people into our faith community! We have so much to be thankful for, so much to look forward to, and so many blessings to experience together as we "Love God. Serve People. Make a



Difference." I will miss seeing you each week, working with our amazing staff, talented worship teams, and our warm and loving congregation. My time here has been such a gift, and I will forever treasure this season of ministry.

Friends, I have two humble requests: In the next couple of weeks, please pray for, Rev. Sarah Ellzey and her family as they make this transition. When they arrive, greet her and her family with open arms and the warmest of welcomes, just as you have me. May this ending be tied to a big bright beautiful beginning for them and for Paragould First UMC- and trust that all of this is in God's strong and loving hands. Christ is going ahead of us into whatever the future looks like, always breathing new life, and inviting us into a new beginning.

In conclusion, I find these selections from our Order of Farewell to a Pastor to be appropriate for such a time as this:

I thank you, the members, and friends of Paragould First United Methodist Church, for the love and support you have shown me while I have ministered among you. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

Eternal God, whose steadfast love for us is from everlasting to everlasting, we give you thanks for cherished memories and commend one another into your care as we move in new directions. Keep us one in your love forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grace and peace in the love of Christ Jesus!

Rev. Dr. Chase H. Burns

Chase's last Sunday will be June 11. We will have a reception in his honor at 10am in the Welcome Center.

NEW MEMBER



We are pleased to introduce our newest member, Judy Peel, shown here in the photograph with sons Allen and Jonathan.

"Both my boys are there and I've been attending over a year," Judy said of her decision to join. "I started attending on special occasions and I really like Rev. Dane. He's a great speaker." Judy adds that she knows many of the members at FUMC and felt very welcome.

Judy loves the fact that she goes to the same church as her boys. "It completes our family," she said.



Students can still sign up for Ozark Mission Project happening in Wynne from June 11-16. Limited spots available. This is a change from being a host church to serving in Wynne due to the tornado that hit the area. Open to adults and youth 6th grade and up. Sign up in the church center app.

CHILDREN & Youth Ministries

Hello FUMC Friends!

Spring has definitely sprung! You can see and feel it everywhere you go. It's hard to believe that the end of the school year is here. In my house, we just celebrated Owen graduating high school. Many plans, deadlines, and preparations went into that. I am so thankful for those in the church that have played a part in his upbringing. He and the other seniors are just another example of how children's ministry and those involved with it are such an important part of the church. I encourage you, if you have never participated in children's ministry, to give it a try. You never know what gifts you may have to share in this area! Contact me for more information!

Blessings!
Angela, Director of Children's Ministries
Angela.Newby@fumcparagould.org



June 11-15 from 5:30pm-7:30pm VBS "Hero Hotline"

For children entering PreK-6th grades

June 26-30 from 10am-1pm

Ready, Set, READ!

For children entering PreK-6th grades

Sign up for events in the church center app or online at www.fumcparagould.org/register.







CONFIRMATION

Five 6th grade students were confirmed into the church on Sunday, May 21. What does "confirmation" mean? United Methodists use the term confirmation to mark the first time a baptized Christian publicly "confirms" their intention to live the vows of the baptismal and membership covenant and so becomes a professing member of the local congregation and The United Methodist Church. There may be other occasions during one's Christian life when one may wish to re-affirm their commitment to live the baptismal and membership covenant faithfully. The process of preparing to confirm or profess one's commitment to live out the baptismal and membership covenant may include classes, retreats, service projects, and other spiritual exercises. This year's confirmation class includes: Molly Beliew, Avery Randleman, Tate Gray, Jackson Rogers and John David Honeycutt. Please hold them in prayer as they make faith commitments and continue to grow into their life of discipleship.



Congratulations to our Confirmands, John David Honeycutt, Molly Beliew, Avery Randleman, Tate Gray, and Jackson Rogers.

Upcoming Events JUNE-JULY

Sign up in the church center app for upcoming events, including Vacation Bible School, Ready, Set, READ, Churchwide Redbirds Game, Youth @ Assembly, and more.



Young at Heart Upcoming Events

June 12 at 1:00 pm Movie "Cat Ballou"

June 22 at 10:00 am Lunch outing to the Lorado Grocery and Grill

June 26 at 5:30 pm Game night

July Save the Dates

Youth Assembly July 17-21 Pastor Sarah Ellzey Reception July 9 Redbirds Game July 14 Ice Cream Social July 30



Ladies Tea Party

Ladies of the church were treated to a tea the Saturday before Mother's Day.

About 40 women and girls came to the event organized by Andrea Pearson.

Participants brought food to enjoy with the tea. The ladies had fellowship at the tables,

gave a short devotion at the end. Thank you to everyone who made the event possible.

each decorated in a different theme. Andrea











Graduating Seniors

Congratulations to our high school seniors who graduated in May! The six students led all three services and enjoyed a brunch in their honor in April.



Stephen Hall Benson

Hall graduated from Paragould High School. He was active in Key Club, Rotary, and a member of the National Honor Society. He is going to ASU and will major in engineering.



Isaac Malhon Cook

Isaac graduated from Paragould High School. He was a tennis player for 4 years in high school and was involved in Rotary Club. He was also a love-all serve-all volunteer tennis coach. He will be attending the University of Arkansas in the fall.



Katie Lynn Kasserman

Katie graduated from Greene County Tech High School with honors. Katie was a member of the National Honor Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Future Business Leaders of America, Rotary Interact, Key Club and the volleyball team. She is also an active volunteer. She plans to attend the University of Arkansas in the fall, majoring in Pre-Vet.



Samuel Nelson McHaney II

Nelson graduated from Paragould High School. He plans to attend the University of Arkansas and major in civil engineering. Nelson was involved in Student Council (president), Key Club, National Honor Society, Rotary Interact, Boys State, FUMC Youth Group; and sports: PHS Tennis, PHS Basketball, and PHS Baseball.



Owen Alan Newby

Owen graduated from Paragould High School. He was involved in the Paragould Pride Marching Band and Paragould Indoor Percussion. He plans to attend the Black River Technical College CDL program.



Henry Lee Thompson

Henry graduated with honors from Paragould High School. He attended Boys State where he was elected State Senator. Henry played football from 3rd - 12th grade. He was a member of the National Honor Society and Rotary Interact Club. Henry will attend the University of Arkansas and major in Finance.

Financial Report

General Contributions:

March: \$78,289 April: \$70,942

Building/100 Year Contributions:

March: \$40,131 April: \$10,718

A Dollar A Week total to date: \$2,718

Building Loan Principal Balance: \$2,779,836

In Memory of:

April Biggs by Bob Branch, Robin Patten, Charles & Donna Brazil, Sally Martin, John Wyatt, Janice Wilcox & Family, Kay & Herb Bland, Debbie DaVault, Gary & Beverly Biggs

Cody Noel by Bob Branch, Betty & Randy Hedge, Robin Patten, Larry & Denise Chipman, Janice Wilcox & family, Kay & Herb Bland, Debbie DaVault Ina Puckett by Larry & Denise Chipman Bill Brown by Russell & Martha McCain

Wib Newberry by Bob Branch

Roy McSpadden by Bill & Pat Phillips, Matt & Lesley Hobbs, Kay & Herb Bland, Janice Wilcox, Linda Black, Donis & Bonnie Hamilton, Pam Halverson, Charles & Donna Brazil, Nan Dickey, Mike & Mary Harvey Patsy Stairs, Mary Ann, Laura, Andy & Cheryl Stickler, Virginia Walls, Bill & Diane Brewer, John & Ann Honeycutt, Matt & Pam Cooper, Paula Parker, David & Rita Shelby, Kendall & Jennifer Shelby, Ed &

Stacy Ralston, Robin Patten, Gary & Beverly Biggs **Eva McClelland** by Debbie DaVault, Larry & Denise Chipman, Bob Branch, Mike & Tracy Finch, Kay & Herb Bland, Bob & Carolyne Childress

Ron Hall by Nan Dickey

David Barnett by Linda & Danny Futrell, Charles & Donna Brazil, Robin Patten, Bob Branch, Larry & Danies Chiaman, Alfred & Dahbie Hansen, John & Ann.

Denise Chipman, Alfred & Debbie Henson, John & Ann Hensycutt Mike & Tracy Finch

Honeycutt, Mike & Tracy Finch

Helen Hawkins by Alfred & Debbie Henson, Mike & Tracy Finch, Davey & Rena Jackson

Patricia Chipman by Janice Wilcox, Robin Patten, Linda & Danny Futrell, Bob Branch, Debbie DaVault,

Kay & Herb Bland, Gene & Jill Weeks, Bill & Pat Phillips,

Bob & Carolyne Childress

Mary Ann Stallcup by Linda Black

Pete Black by Linda Black

Ann Black by Linda Black

In Honor of:

H.T. Moore by Family of Wib Newberry **Stuart Womack** by Bob Branch **Sally Martin** by Linda Black

LOVE GOD. SERVE PEOPLE. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Bishop Laura Merrill

Co-District Superintendents Rodney Steele, Phil Hathcock

Pastors Dane Womack (william.womack@arumc.org,

Chase Burns (chase.burns@arumc.org)

Music Director Brian Pearson (eaglebandguy2@gmail.com)

Director of Youth Ministries

Mary Hickox (mary.hickox@fumcparagould.org)

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: Mike Rutherford



Church Office

8:30AM-4:30PM MON-THURS 8:30AM-NOON FRIDAY

Witt House Food Pantry

4:30PM-6PM TUESDAY 9:30AM-11:00AM FRIDAY

404 W. MAIN STREET

INFO@FUMCPARAGOULD.ORG 870-239-8541

OR VISIT WWW.FUMCPARAGOULD.ORG

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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