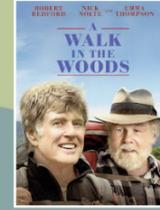


WHAT'S INSIDE

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Love God. Serve People. Make a Difference.

First United Methodist Church

The Flame

SEPTEMBER 2021

A word from our pastor

Rev. Dane Womack



Happy September Paragould FUMC! As I write this article I am reminded of the oft-quoted Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." That is an overstatement, but the sentiment rings true. This past week I was overjoyed to see the back-to-school pictures flooding in from family and friends across the state including here in Paragould. Smiling and optimistic faces of young students preparing for a return to the classroom is an encouragement to all of us. At the same time, I received an update from our local hospital Arkansas Methodist Medical Center CEO Barry Davis outlining the alarming situation developing therein. ICU capacity was over the limit. The hospital was scrambling to open additional COVID units. And while there are ample beds and rooms, there are too few staff. I find myself with a foot in both worlds at this moment. On the one hand, these are fun days. My kids, like many, are thrilled to be back in school. On the other hand, medical providers are begging for help in lessening the impact of this virus on our community. To this end, I invited two church members and community servants to offer an update on the situation from their perspective. In the following pages

you will find an article from Gene Weeks who is Superintendent of Greene County Tech Schools on how to help our community enjoy a great school year. You will also read reflections from Mauri Rogers who works as an APRN at the Paragould Doctor's Clinic on the importance of fighting COVID-19. Please join them and others in our community in supporting public health and keeping school running smoothly.

The most exciting news out of FUMC this past month was the hiring of Angela Newby as Director of Children's Ministries. Angela has been a faithful teacher in Children's Sunday School for many years. Outside of church, Angela is a teacher with the Paragould School District. Angela has the professional skills, deep familiarity with our church, and love for children that will make her a perfect fit for this position. Angela will be responsible for overseeing ministry with children ages Preschool-4th grade. This is a part-time position including Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings (seasonally), and various hours from home and/or special events. Similar to other part-time staff, Angela will work for the church outside of her full-time jobs' hours and we will respect those boundaries. Angela will do a wonderful job, but we will continue to need steady and excellent volunteers. You can reach Angela via her FUMC email: angela.newby@fumcparagould.org.

During these final weeks of summer, we enjoyed a number of fun outdoor activities including a church-wide pool party on August 11. I'll confess I was worn out by our little ones! How many times did we climb the pool slide stairs?! Too many to count! Rev. Chase organized a one-day retreat for 5th & 6th graders at Crowley's Ridge Park on August 14. Then the following Saturday the Youth joined in a one-day retreat at Lake Norfolk. Thanks to everyone attending and supporting these creative efforts. And thanks to Rev. Chase for his hard work. The Sunday before school we had great attendance as we prayed for students and educators in all of our services.

YOUTH SUMMER RECAP

Rev. Chase Burns

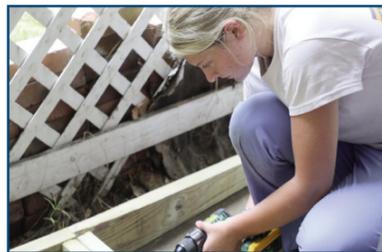
What an awesome summer we had in youth (5th-6th; 7th-12th)!!! Adaptive and Formative are the two words that come to mind when I reflect on this past summer with the youth. From such an odd year in 2020 to reimagining and rethinking how to engage with one another as we “Do Life” and “Live into our faith” as disciples of Jesus Christ!

Living Into Our Faith!

Leading up to the end of the spring semester, this year’s confirmation class worked hard in diving into our understanding and practice of faith as disciples of Christ who call themselves Methodist. We learned concepts of our heritage, components of Wesleyan Theology, our understanding of who God is and God’s grace within our lives and all of creation, and what it means to join and be a part of The United Methodist Church.



During OMP, several of our youth engaged in being the hands and feet of Christ within our own community as they gave their time, energy, and abilities to building ramps for those in need. Each morning began with quiet time and reflection of the day’s scripture and devotion. The work hours began shortly after devotion and continued throughout the day! Each night, we closed with dinner and a quiet reflection time on the day. The youth made life-long connections with other United Methodist youth within our community as well as life-long memories of connecting with our neighbors in showing the love of Christ through the work that was before them.



During Ready, Set, Read! (RSR) & Vacation Bible School (VBS), several of our youth gave their time and talents and served as leaders within these programs. From leading yoga in the morning sessions of R.S.R to serving as shepherds at VBS-the youth were engaging in making disciples of Jesus Christ via the next generation. What a great opportunity to live out our mission-right here at church!



Youth Sunday nights resumed following our back-to-back summer events (Ready, Set, Read! Ozark Mission Project, Vacation Bible School)! Each Sunday, we spent time together engaging in activities, sharing a meal, and doing a quick

check-in with one another. These nights have been a great opportunity for our youth to build relationships with one another, be at table with one another, and share their joys, concerns, and faith with one another. The Sunday nights took place both at church and at our hosting partners pools for “Swimming & Stories”!

Doing Life!

Our 5th and 6th students have had an awesome summer! Under the guidance of their leadership team, they began a new way to experience VBS on their level! Attending the opening and closing ceremonies of VBS and then engaging in activities, missions, and field trips during the week-our 5th and 6th students developed a

communication with one another that continued to grow throughout the summer!

Floating the Buffalo was a new experience for a good number of our youth (5th-12th) as well as our adult partners! We spent the night at Mt. Eagle (An ARUMC Retreat Center north of Clinton Arkansas), shared a devotion on observing creation and trusting God, packed our lunches for the next day, woke up before dawn, grabbed our to-go breakfasts, took pictures of the sunrise at Mt. Eagle, hit the road at 6am to get to our launch area, and set out on an adventure that none of us will ever forget! What a great experience and looking forward to our next floating adventure!

Our final two adventures for both our 5th & 6th / 7th-12th students took place at the lake(s). Our 5th & 6th students met locally at Crowley’s Ridge State Park. We shared lunch with an opening devotional, spent the day paddle boating/ swimming/ swatting mosquitoes; and ended our day with worship, hotdogs, and s’mores (and swatting more mosquitoes). What a great day we had in asking the question: “Where have I seen God today?”



Our 7th-12th students enjoyed our “Day at the Lake” at Lake Norfolk’s Rocking Chair Resort. The weather was kind-of iffy up until our morning worship session. With 66% chance of thunderstorms along with a nasty system moving through on our radars-we were rescheduling the day’s activities. We met at 8am for breakfast followed by a time of worship, scripture readings and reflections, and praying for our day. After our morning session, we noticed a small window of opportunity to hit the lake before the next system would reach us. We hit the lake, tubing and swimming in coves of the lake. We had a few light showers and then at 11am the sun began to shine. We broke for lunch at noon and noticed the rain systems were dissolving around the lake. It was sunny for the rest of our day! We spent several hours in the afternoon on the lake, came back to the resort to clean/pack-up/change, ate supper, had our closing devotion, grabbed some ice cream, and ended our day with a blessing for traveling home.

This summer was full of adaptations, reimagining and rethinking how to engage with one another as we “Do Life” and “Live into our faith” as disciples of Jesus Christ! I am so thankful for our youth at Paragould FUMC! Even in the midst of everything that has been going on in their lives over the past two years they continue to: spread the joy of God (You can see it in their laughter and in their growing relationships with one another); living into their faith (you can hear it in their prayers and thoughts shared in small groups), serving the church (volunteering to be a shepherd, acolyting, display servants hearts by doing small things without being asked); and be the hands and feet of Christ (you can witness it when they give their time to build ramps for neighbors). I am thankful for the witness of Jesus Christ carried out through our youth!

Finally, I am ever grateful for our youth partners. We CANNOT do this without you! Sunday school teachers, Sunday night partners, food partners, host partners, trip partners, worship partners, the list goes on. It really does take a village! I am thankful for your giving of your prayers, presence, gifts, services, and witness through our youth program. Keep investing in our youth- for they are the church of the NOW and Future!!



continued from page 1

In each newsletter I offer you a brief summary of some technical matters around facilities and finances. July was a typical summer month in terms of giving. Nothing significant to report, though as always we thank you and encourage you in your giving. With respect to facilities we continue to focus on water damage in the Sanctuary. The Trustees are moving forward with repairs to damaged roofs and interior plaster now though we had originally thought we might do it next year. It simply could not be put off any longer. The work is ongoing now and will take a few weeks. This includes some disruptions inside the Sanctuary (tape & plastic & dust) though not significant enough to displace worship. We will continue to worship around this work, but encourage you to avoid the west side of the Sanctuary including the entrance and hallway. More details on necessary work will be forthcoming.

Even better than Dickens’ Two Cities is Paul’s instructions in Romans 12. He writes, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.” This is helpful advice for any occasion but perhaps especially so at this time. We rejoice with those who rejoice. We celebrate the new school year and the activities that come with it! We are thrilled to have Angela as a staff member! Rejoice! We mourn the losses being experienced due to COVID-19. We lament the realities known by our healthcare providers including those in our community and church. Weep. There is much going on in the world and we must not claim to be wiser than we are. Yet, with a heart of love we can empathize with all. Rejoice. Weep. Celebrate. Support.

Grace & Peace,
Rev. Dane Womack

Updates on Healthcare

By Mauri Rogers, FUMC Member & APRN (Paragould Doctors' Clinic)

It's that time of year that so many people look forward to - the start of a new school year, the beginning of football season, cooler weather, and anticipating fall holidays. Unfortunately, we are heading into our second year of a fall pandemic. The Delta variant of Covid-19 has been proven to be almost twice as contagious and more severe than the original Covid virus. People are longing for normalcy, but healthcare providers are asking you to be patient a little longer.

The healthcare community in our area is facing significant challenges. Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds are at capacity across our state, which means not only can they not accept more Covid patients, they cannot accept anyone who has a heart attack, stroke, trauma, etc. needing intensive care. I spoke to a colleague at UAMS who says they are transferring ICU patients to Denver and Indianapolis. Patients who need intensive care typically cannot wait the hours that it takes to transfer to a different state.

The good news is that we have the tools to fight this virus including wearing masks and practicing social distancing. This recommendation includes people who are fully vaccinated and those who have yet to vaccinate. There has been a big push to get more people vaccinated; however, it will be 5-6 weeks before those people have immunity.

There are 3 approved vaccines, but I want to share a bit about the 2 messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccines developed by Pfizer and Moderna that have shown to be more protective against the Delta variant. Other vaccines, like the flu vaccine, contain a dead virus which then compels our immune system to recognize and learn to fight off that virus. With mRNA vaccines, a patient is not given any part of the Covid virus, rather the vaccine gives one's immune system the blueprint on what to do if the Covid virus is encountered. It does not stay in your body for a long time and it does not change your genetic material.

The vaccines have an overwhelming amount of evidence showing their safety and efficacy against Covid-19 and its variants. Both mRNA vaccines have over 90% effectiveness, which is remarkable compared to other vaccines. For comparison, the influenza vaccine is usually 40-60% effective. The Covid vaccines are very safe. A patient is much more likely to contract a serious complication from a Covid infection than the mRNA vaccine. An example of a complication is myocarditis, which is inflammation of the heart muscle. The incidence of myocarditis after receiving the mRNA vaccine is 0.000001%, whereas, the likelihood of developing myocarditis after a Covid infection is as high as 15%.

Though you may be young and healthy or have known many people with only mild symptoms, I encourage you to take this virus seriously. A people of faith, this is an opportunity to practice Jesus's greatest commandment: love thy neighbor as thyself. I implore you to get vaccinated and take precautions against Covid. Do it for your friend who is taking chemotherapy. Do it for your coworker who is pregnant. Do it for your young child who is not eligible to get vaccinated yet. Do it for your spouse who has high blood pressure. Let's work together to put this pandemic in the past. If you have any questions about any of these matters, please reach out to me. Stay safe and God bless.

By Gene Weeks, FUMC Member & Superintendent of Greene County Tech Schools

With challenges come opportunities, and that is the case with the start of the 2021 - 2022 school year. This might not be the circumstances that we wanted to start the school year under, but it's the cards we have all been dealt so we owe it to our kids to do the very best we can for them. As adults we really need to set a great example for our kids and that starts with our attitude. Never underestimate how being positive around our kids and being a cheerleader for our young people can give them the boost they may need to have a good day or get through a tough situation. Every day we will not only come in contact with the students in our community, but also teachers, bus drivers, principals, coaches or maybe a school custodian. You will never know what a kind word, thank you, or just an "I'm thinking of you or praying for you", will do to get someone over the hump. I ask everyone to lean into the challenges that this pandemic presents to our community and do the little things that will help us all come out on the other side stronger and more united. It could be to get vaccinated, wear a mask in shared spaces, make a contribution to a backpack program, donate school supplies or support your favorite student programs such as fine arts, athletics, Elementary PTA's. Let's all stick together and remember that God still moves stones. In ending I want to share Isaiah Chapter 40 verses 29 - 31:

He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.
Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 1

*6:00 pm Chancel Choir
*7:30 pm Praise Team

Friday, September 3

10:00 am Threads of Faith

Sunday, September 5

*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, September 6

Office closed for Labor Day

Wednesday, September 8

6:00 pm Choir Practice
7:30 pm Praise Band Practice

Friday, September 10

10:00 am Threads of Faith

Sunday, September 12

*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 Meeting
5:00 pm Missions Meeting
5:00 pm Youth
6:00 pm SPRC

Monday, September 13

1:00 pm Young at Heart movie club

Wednesday, September 15

*6:00 pm Chancel Choir
*7:30 pm Praise Team

Friday, September 17

10:00 am Threads of Faith
Yopp/Barnhill wedding rehearsal

Saturday, September 18

Yopp/Barnhill Wedding

Sunday, September 19

*8:00 am Early Worship
*9:00 am Contemporary Worship
10:00 am Sunday School
*11:00 am Traditional Worship
5:00 pm Youth
5:00 pm Finance Committee
6:00 pm Trustees

Monday, September 20

Young at Heart Game Night

Wednesday, September 22

*6:00 pm Chancel Choir
*7:30 pm Praise Team

Friday, September 24

10:00 am Threads of Faith

Sunday, September 26

*8:00 am Early Worship

*9:00 am Contemporary Worship

10:00 am Sunday School

*11:00 am Traditional Worship

5:00 pm Youth

Wednesday, September 29

*6:00 pm Chancel Choir

*7:30 pm Praise Team

*Nursery Provided

YOUNG AT HEART

Upcoming Activities

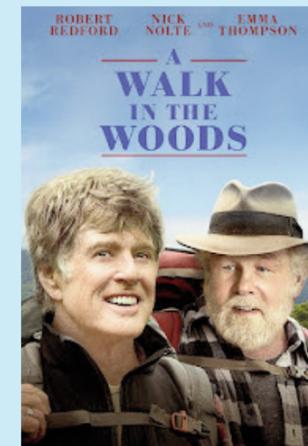
Movie Club

Monday, September 13

1:00 pm 3rd floor movie room

Movie: "A Walk in the Woods"

Popcorn and candy provided (bring your own drink)



A look Ahead

FALL PROGRAMMING-Be on the lookout for information concerning classes, choirs, and youth! Right now we anticipate coming back October 6.

YOUNG AT HEART—Game nights are returning! Join us on Monday, September 20 at 5:30 pm in the Welcome Center for a time of games and fun!



Our Witt House Food

pantry is open:

Tuesday 4:30-6:00 pm

Friday 9:30-11:00 am



Angela Newby Named New Director of Children's Ministries

Having a long history in administration and working with children, Angela Newby, long-time church member, took on the role of Director of Children's Ministries in August. That position had been held by Kaylee Pillow,



who added that to her responsibilities with youth. When Kaylee quit to go back into the healthcare industry, the search began for a part-time person who would work with preschool-4th grade students. It ended up being a perfect fit for Angela, a teacher in the Paragould school district for nearly 25 years. Angela will add this job to her current one and will work on Sunday mornings, Wednesday nights when activities are in session, and various hours from home and/or special events. "I am thrilled to be part of the FUMC staff as the new Director of Children's Ministries! I have always had a passion for children and growing them in their faith journey. My hope is to strengthen the great things we already have going on with our

children at FUMC Paragould as well as dreaming big for our future and following the Holy Spirit's guidance in leading our children to love God, serve people, and make a difference! Thank you for this opportunity!"

Angela has already been working in administration with children's programs having been one of the founding members of the successful Ready, Set, Read! summer program, a program she began with Danielle Honeycutt a few years ago. Summing up the program in her words: "If we can get books into the hands of children and teach them about Jesus and serving and loving our neighbors, we have done our jobs." That same heart for children will be a great fit at FUMC where Angela hopes to build relationships with children and families and extend that to the community.

Angela has been a member of FUMC for many years. She came with her husband Nathan before they married, finding FUMC to be a welcome place, and a great place to raise a family. She had bounced back from Baptist and Church of Christ churches, but felt she had found a fit with Methodism when she saw the open communion. "It made me know this was the church for me," she said.

Angela met Nathan in the 10th grade; they have been married for 23 years. They have a son Owen, a junior at Paragould High School and member of the marching band. Nathan has been employed at Lowe's for 23 years. He and Owen like to hunt and fish. Angela is a graduate of Ridgecrest (now Paragould) High School and is a member of the UMW and the International Reading Association.



Angela with husband Nathan and son Owen



Promotion Sunday



Our kids showing it's "cool to be in Sunday School!" on promotion Sunday, August 15. Below: praying for children, teachers, and school administrators



Finance

A Dollar A Week

Year to Date 2,022

2021 Budget 1,250,857

Building Contributions: \$7,625

General Contributions: \$57,785

Loan Balance: \$3,566,215

Memorials

- Paul Combs** by Bob Branch
- Gretta Jernigan** by Clifford & Beverly Gordon, Robin Pattern, Shelia Ragsdell, Gary & Barbara Roberts, Phyllis DeGenova, John Bellack & Angie DeGenova, Natalie GeDenova
- Steve & Bettye Lou Johnson** by Jim L. Wilbourn Families
- Iris Wheelis** by Mary Ann Stallcup
- Loretta Kuenzel** by Mary Ann Stallcup
- Dr. Tory Lee Stallcup** by Mary Ann Stallcup
- Kay Goodwin** by Mike & Mary Harvey

Honorariums

- Danielle Honeycutt** by Bob Branch
- Angela Newby** by Bob Branch
- Carolyn Samuel** by Frank & Courtney Vandiver
- H.T. & Linda Moore** by Pat Chesser, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Fisher

SYMPATHIES TO:

Jerrod and Audra Brown and family on the death of Jerrod's grandfather, Jerry Buck.

Jeff and Kerry Combs and family on the death of Jeff's father, Paul Combs.



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



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