



The Story

June 2020

310 S. Main Street • www.fumclex.org • 336-248-2886

A Moment with the Pastor

Acts 21:5-7

⁵ When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray.

⁶ After saying goodbye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

⁷ We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day.

Once in while on my journey as interim pastor, I come across a thought written by someone else that fits the moments I find myself in. Such is the case that guides my prayers for myself, First United Methodist Church, and the greater church as a whole.

In short, we have to develop some practice where we're not flying solo. We're called to participate. If we try to get away to some place where it's just us and Jesus, or us and God, we're headed for trouble.

Participation is the essence of true spirituality: in particular: participation that is (1) not to our specifications, and (2) with people we did not handpick. That means we're called to open our hearts to everybody, to welcome everybody, to be available to everybody—if and when they want us. That is part of our vocation of love—and it is not for the faint of heart. —Excerpted from Holy Desperation by Heather King

When Donna asked for my June newsletter, I knew it would be the last thoughts where I address you as your pastor. My thoughts were to celebrate our journey together, believing it would be my last appointment before retirement. Wrong. Just when you think you've finished the race, God steps in and changes your path. The line that Heather wrote about participation, what I call vocation or the call, means we open our heart to God's voice and embrace the paths the divine opens. *That means we're called to open our hearts to everybody, to welcome everybody, and to be available to everybody—if and when they want us.* This is the great lesson I have learned from the people at First Methodist—*Without exception. God loves everyone.* It is your love that Cindy and I have felt from each of you to allow us to go.

I have heard it from many of you, and I appreciate your thoughts, but when I hear, "can't you stay with us," you are telling me something you don't realize. It is time to leave. How do I know? Over time I have realized my unique call and have learned to discern God's voice. There is an unspoken mantra I use to help me discern when it is time to leave. "If you want me to go, I get to stay, and if you want me to stay, it is time to go." My work is finished here. It is the part of my vocation of love God has given me, and it is not for the faint of heart. There are other churches that God calls me to participate in and share with them what you have taught us.

There are not enough words to express our gratitude and love for each of you. If I would begin to attempt to name them all, I would either forget, for there are too many to name, nor would I be able to adequately find the right words. Sometimes, there are no words. What makes this goodbye difficult is our current uncertainty of when we can gather again. Even if we could re-gather before I leave, there are so many restrictions. I am a hugger at heart.

What I would ask you to do for your next pastors, is do what you did for Cindy and I. Love them, accept them, embrace them, and grow together. It is not a question whether you will do this, because, this is who you are and you need no encouragement to do what comes naturally.

In the military we had a saying, we never say goodbye, we just say, see you later.

Thank you for your friendship, care, and nurturing.

May the peace of Christ be upon you.

Roger

Our Stewardship for God's Work Everyone is a part of God's stewardship.

Just a gentle reminder that you may continue to give during this "stay home" period we are currently observing due to COVID-19. You may send your tithes and offerings by mail, drop by the church office (*remember to be mindful of social distancing*) and online.



Online Giving For mobile device users, the QR (Quick Response) code will take you to a secure mobile site for Online Giving from your smartphone or tablet. **On your first visit**, you will need to create a profile.

Finance Team Income and Expense Report

Date	YTD Income	YTD Expenses	Net Income (Loss)
5/3/2020	\$192,903.93	\$145,706.05	\$47,197.88
5/10/2020	\$198,935.93	\$155,363.30	\$43,572.63
5/17/2020	\$205,929.27	\$161,935.96	\$43,993.31
5/24/2020	\$211,849.27	\$170,371.14	\$41,478.13

May 3, 2020 - An Announcement from Staff Parish Relations

To Our Congregation at First United Methodist Church:

The Staff-Parish Relations Team was pleased to share some exciting news May 3 during an 11:00 Zoom call. For those of you who couldn't join, I wanted to update you on our discussion.

Effective July 1, the Bishop is appointing Rev. Cheryl Skinner and Rev. Kirk Tutterow to be co-pastors of our church. Cheryl and Kirk are a married couple who currently serve at Trinity United Methodist Church in Kannapolis, Kirk as senior pastor and Cheryl as an associate.



Cheryl, originally from Maine, attended the University of Maine and Duke Divinity School. She has served in both associate and lead pastor roles in various locations, including Advance and Winston-Salem. Cheryl has trained as a Stephen Minister, in the Reynolds Leadership Program, and as a Certified Spiritual Director. She also has implemented concepts from The Way of the Child and the Godly Play curricula in her current position to enhance the children's ministry. Before entering the ministry, Cheryl was a biomedical research lab technician at UNC-Chapel Hill for ten years.

Kirk, originally from Newland, NC, attended NC State, UNCG, and Boston School of Theology. He has served churches across western NC in a variety of roles. Kirk has a daughter, Ellen, who is 23. He describes his leadership style as focused on team-building and collaboration, and has been trained in such programs as the Reynolds Leadership Program, Courage to Serve, Davidson Clergy Center, Called and Gifted to Lead, and RISE! He has been a RIOM Facilitator and Plowpoint coach and is currently enrolled in Launch and Lead through the Missional Wisdom Foundation.

We are thrilled that Cheryl and Kirk will be joining our church family. We are equally grateful to Roger Weisner for guiding us these last two years and look forward to his leadership until the clergy transition. And as always, we send our ongoing thanks to Donna Huskins, Alma Carlton, Lee Mabe, Amanda Bostick, and Phyllis Jones for providing the strong staff foundation that our church requires to be successful.

As I mentioned on the Zoom call on May 3, we welcome your brainstorming and ideas for how to welcome our new co-pastors. And feel free to let me or any member of SPRC (Minnie Dukes, Lynne Leonard, Betty Pope, Bob Pearson, Woody Smith, Eddie Allred, Lauren Hall, John McWhorter) know if you have questions.

Thank you for your support and prayers!
Jenny Varner, SPRC Team Leader
jennymvarner@gmail.com
336.309.1103

Staying Home, Staying Healthy and Staying Connected!

HOW CAN I STAY CONNECTED?

You are encouraged to visit the website: www.fumclex.org

Once on the website, click on the “word” across the top of the website to go to the section you are searching for:

Worship	Worship	Ministries	News & Events
Thought of the Week	Sermons on YouTube	Children	The Story
Scroll all the way to the bottom to read from the beginning.	Click on a blue sermon title to view & listen	Children's Message Stay at Home Pen Pal Fun Pages (Printable—click the blue link)	Calendar News

Prayer Breakfast Group

Prayer List updated weekly and sent via email & regular mail with a devotion.

Adult Sunday School via Zoom

Sunday mornings (10a-11a)

If you are interested in joining this meeting, **please send your email address to Roger at his email: rweisner@wnccumc.net**

<p><u>Church Staff Meetings via Zoom</u> Mondays (10:00a)</p> <p><u>Called Charge Conference</u> <u>Vote via Zoom</u> Sunday, June 7 (2:00p) Rev. Laura Auten, District Superintendent will preside. All members invited and encouraged to attend. Purpose: Incoming clergy compensation</p>	<p><u>Newsletter Articles Due</u> June 15 for July Issue</p> <p><u>Serve meal at Crisis Ministries</u> Tuesday, June 16 (5:45p) <u>Agape Sunday School</u> Contact: Carol Stott & Paul Crago Please contact Crisis Ministries for their protocol during this time.</p>
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Instructions to join a meeting via Zoom:

- The church office has established a Zoom account.
- You may join a Zoom meeting with a computer (desktop or laptop), Ipad or Iphone. **Make sure the church office has your current email address.**
- When a Zoom meeting is schedule, the meeting host will send an email invitation.
- You will receive an email with a [blue](#) Zoom link, please write down the Meeting ID and Password. Click on the [blue](#) link **minutes before** the scheduled meeting.
- Once **you have** clicked on **the** link, you will be sent to the [Zoom.us](#) website.
- Select **Join a Meeting.**
- You may be asked to **Sign Up** (*create an account*), but that is **not required** to **participate** in a **Zoom meeting.**
- You will select **Test Audio**, if requested.
- Type in the **Meeting ID** and **Password** when requested.
- Your screen may go black as you are placed in a waiting room. It is a safety protocol so please be patient. The host will admit you as soon as possible.
- You will be able to see and hear other participants as well as talk back and forth if you have audio (*microphone*) and/or visual (*camera*).
- Contact Donna Huskins if you would like to try a **Test Meeting.**

May 11, 2020 Letter - Gradual Reopening at First UMC

Early in May a Reopening Response Team formed to begin building a roadmap to reopening our church. In the past two months we have discovered new ways to conduct worship that will endure and evolve, but returning to in-person worship and connection with each other is important also. Thanks to Roger Weisner, Lee Mabe, Donna Smith, Barbara McWhorter, Paul Crago, Jenny Varner and Wayne Michael for attending the meeting and to David Stott, Ron Leonard and Mark Hinkle and others for playing important roles. We will need your help as well.

Here are the priorities for our mission so far:

Safety is paramount – we will issue and follow guidelines on cleaning, spacing, personal protective equipment and new processes for things like communion and collecting offerings. We will do many things differently for a while.

We expect a gradual return to opening. We will probably conduct this in 3 phases, the first of which is one worship service. We will also record and broadcast our service for the foreseeable future in which everyone can participate virtually. We will still do Sunday School on Zoom for some time.

Physical worship attendance will be limited in number, especially early on. It will include music but in different ways.

We will be led by guidelines issued by our Bishop and the state of North Carolina as to timelines. At this point, churches are allowed to open in phase 2, with limitations. We don't have a date to report to you at this time.

I feel it necessary to remind everyone that we all reach safety and peace of mind differently. We are not encouraging anyone to come to worship until you are ready and it is safe for you. In fact, if you are vulnerable in any way, please join us from home. On the other hand, if you are at home, please don't judge those who feel safe and a need to attend. We are all called individually and this group is trying to provide a means to worship for everyone. We are called to love each other, in this time more than ever.

We will continue meeting as we identify issues and build our plan. I will do my best to keep you informed. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me or anyone in this group.

Your sincere prayers are greatly appreciated,
Steve Jackson, Church Council Chairperson

May 18, 2020 - Update on Gradual Reopening at First UMC

Our work on reopening continued the week of May 11. Our team has been considering all the details of being safe and I want to say how thankful I am for their work and your prayers. Welcome to the next new normal.

While we still don't have definite dates for you, I can tell you we are targeting the end of May or the first Sunday of June for beginning in person worship. We will also offer broadcast versions of worship if you are not ready to come back. Look for Roger's homilies and messages on our website in addition to an electronic worship option. We will give you details on where to find all this soon.

We decided it is important to communicate the new normal procedures so everyone understands that we are not just unlocking the doors and picking up where we left off. Here are some new things to expect:

- Safety is still our first priority.
- We have developed a conservative plan of prevention. There will be one door to enter and exit the church, although exit doors will obviously not be locked. This is to avoid congregating.
- There will be no hymnals or bibles in the pews. We will not hand out bulletins at first. Bring your own electronic versions.
- We request everyone wear a mask, although physical distancing and hand washing are more important. You may sit with people who live under the same roof, but please do not sit or stand within 6 feet of anyone who is not part of your household. Ushers will help direct you where it is safe and we will have spaces marked. Please follow their requests.
- There will be no balcony seating at first.
- We will hold one worship service at 10:00 am. We will continue to do Zoom Sunday School but haven't yet decided when that will be held.
- Please limit bathroom use.

- We will not be passing the offering plate. Instead, please drop your offering in a box that will be located in the sanctuary. This is also a good opportunity to remind everyone that we have electronic giving options using the QR code in our newsletter and bulletin, or you can mail your gifts to 310 South Main Street or use a credit card (although it costs us for you to do that). I am also very happy and pleased to report that due to your generosity, our church-wide giving is AHEAD of budget at this point in the year!
- Here is something I never imagined – we will be photographing or videoing our congregation to facilitate something known as contact tracing. Just smile and show your joy at being together!

Roger met with GLAMA last week and reports that no other member churches are making plans to reopen. This gives me some pause as we don't intend to lead a charge against COVID 19, but I hope you value our foresight and planning as we prepare to conduct ourselves in the safest manner possible as we face the uncertainties of this virus.

Your continued prayers for our congregation are still needed and appreciated.

Sincerely,
Steve Jackson

May 25, 2020 - Update on Gradual Reopening at First UMC

I want to share an update on our Reopening Response Team plans. Your continued prayers and support for others' decision making around personal needs is very important. People who stay home aren't afraid. People who need to be with others aren't careless.

The reopening team met again May 21. We determined that our objective of returning to in-person worship in late May or early June lacks support by our team. In addition, we thought we would not be getting guidance from our Bishop, but instead we have heard clearly through our District Superintendent that they do not support reopening for the foreseeable future. What we decided to focus on instead is to develop our live broadcast and recording of worship to make it the best experience possible. Since we will continue this along with in-person worship eventually, this makes the most sense for now.

We will not return to in-person worship for the foreseeable future. I for one am not sure if this is best for us or not, but we cannot do anything until we have consensus. In the meantime, we will be working on making virtual worship the best it can be.

Steve Jackson

June 7, 2020 - Graduate Sunday

Our graduates will be recognized during the 11:00 am worship service recorded for YouTube and posted on our website and Facebook page. Also, since we are unable to gather in person, a page on our website will be dedicated to our graduates with their senior information, photos and videos of their Senior Tables. The page will be posted to the website by Friday, June 5. You may visit our website: www.fumclex.org and wait for the Graduate Banner to scroll by on our home page. Click on the Graduate Banner to view the page.



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Published Monthly
First United Methodist Church Newsletter

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www.fumclex.org



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Sympathy

Sympathy of the ministers and the members of the congregation is extended to Jimmy (Sandra) Shoaf upon the death of his sister, Majorie Jeanette Shoaf Jones, on May 10, 2020.

Sympathy of the ministers and the members of the congregation is extended to the family of Max Wood upon his death on May 22, 2020.

Sympathy of the ministers and the members of the congregation is extended to Mary Hooks and family upon the death of her sister, Hilda Brower, on May 26, 2020.

Prayer Requests

Kathy Baragona
Lacy Carol Belcher
Lloyd Brown
Sue Corn
Dean Davis
Jane Cook Harris
Judy Hench
Rachel Hendrix
Earl Hester
Creth Holman
Larlie Mae Knight
Chasen Martin
Shane Martin
Robert Phelps
John Scarff
Flonnie & Jimmy Thomason
Steve Weeks
Mary Louise Wilkerson
Dare Wilson

Shut-Ins

Dot Kinsey
Caroline McCree
Sandra & Jimmy Shoaf
Evelyn Sink
Dr. Hunter Strader
Mary Williams

Piedmont Crossing (Thomasville)

Health Care

Margaret McCrary Carver (hospice care)
Camille Lawrence
Barbara Proctor
Nancy Wilkinson

Residents

Jo Doris Beck
Herman Crabtree
Adrian Neal
Madeline Palmer

Benton House (Charleston, SC)

Janice Bacon (new location)

Brookdale (Lexington)

Joe Sink

Brookstone (Lexington)

Albert Gobble

Genesis House (Salisbury)

Julee Smith

The Laurels at Highland Creek

(Charlotte)

Carolyn Briggs

Rolling Green Village

(Greenville, SC)

Peggy Trollinger

Spring Arbor (Albemarle)

Bonnie Cates

Wood Haven (Albemarle)

Louise Pope

Extended Family & Friends

Nicholas Melomo
Jason, Stacy & Trent Heitman
Tempie Almstead (Abbotts Creek)
Lucy Huskins
Charles & Mary Lee
Maria Hilliard
Mark Milligan
Louise Michael
Tracy Michael
Dana Michael
John McCutcheon
Ron & Kristie Wooten
Shirley Langley Dennis
Emily Hounshell
Gail Hill
Peggy Wegwart
Paula Brooks
Larry Starnes
Clay Jensen, his parents & siblings
Jan Greer
Pat & Gary Leonard
Debbie Bowman
Clayton Hepler
Rusty Edwards
Norma S. Trotter
Jimmy McDermott
Shannon & Steve Ford

Sandy Balsler

Lynn Mack & family

Tami Robinson

Kelli Jones

Faye Graham

Kendall Conner

David Ogle

Kristin Harris

Claire Dowling

Anna Smathers

Pat Wilson

Jack Smith

Jane King

Breanna Wilson

Ethan Reavis

Jenny Rains

Jimmy Davis

Bentley Leonard

John Bruce Davis

Eric Leonard

Debra Ann Leonard

Betty Jean Whitaker

Len & Dottie Harris

Jordan Beswick

Regina Chrest

Bruce Thornton

Serving in the Armed Forces

Capt. Kacie Allred

SGT John Hall

Major Jarrad Thorley

SGT Alan Ingram

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