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The Circuit Writer
July / August 2024

First United Methodist Church
"Our Mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the
transformation of the world"

In Person Sunday Service at 9:00 A.M. & Saturday Night at
6:00 P.M.
11:00 A.M. Coffeehouse Worship Service

You can also join us online at: www.havenfirstumc.org Or like us on
Facebook and join us there.

Pastor's Pen

Praying for more of God in Our Church

Dear Congregation,

Back in the early 1970s, Jim Cymbala was pastoring a small congregation of just 20 members, called the *Brooklyn Tabernacle*. The church was struggling, the previous pastor had quit, and someone – nobody knew who – was secretly stealing some of the offering. They were in a tough neighborhood and could hardly pay their mortgage much less their pastor. Pastor Jim was himself struggling, overwhelmed with the problems of the small church and feeling helpless.

He tells the story of what happened to change the church in the book *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Hearts of His People?* (Zondervan, 1997, 2018). One Sunday night, he was trying to preach but the spiritual atmosphere was so oppressive he simply could not go on. Hardly five minutes into his message, he said, "I'm sorry . . . I . . . I can't preach in this atmosphere. . . . Something is terribly wrong. . . . I don't know what to say—I can't go on. . . . Carol [*his wife*], would you play something on the piano, and would the rest of you come to this altar? If we don't see God help us, I don't know. . ." (p.18, Kindle ed.).

With those words, he stopped, feeling embarrassed but not knowing what else to do. The people responded and came to the altar to pray. He describes what happened next: "I leaned into the pulpit, my face planted in my hands, and sobbed. Things were quiet at first, but soon the Spirit of God came down upon us. People began to call upon the Lord, their words motivated by a stirring within. "God, help us," we prayed. Carol played the old hymn "I Need Thee, Oh, I Need Thee," and we sang along. A tide of intercession arose." (p. 18). As the people prayed, one young usher came running to the altar sobbing. He knelt and prayed, saying, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I won't do it again. Please forgive me." He was the one who had been stealing the offering.

This was the church's first spiritual breakthrough. Pastor Jim learned an important lesson that night: "That evening, when I was at my lowest, confounded by obstacles, bewildered by the darkness that surrounded us, unable even to continue preaching, I discovered



an astonishing truth: God is attracted to weakness. He can't resist those who humbly and honestly admit how desperately they need him. Our weakness, in fact, makes room for his power." (p.19).

The church continued to struggle, as did Pastor Jim. The attendance was growing, but it still struggled with problems, including finances, and Cymbala's own sense of inadequacy, including health problems.

While away in Florida convalescing, he sought God, and heard him say, "If you and your wife will lead my people to pray and call upon my name, you will never lack for something fresh to preach. I will supply all the money that's needed, both for the church and for your family, and you will never have a building large enough to contain the crowds I will send in response." (p. 24)

Cymbala took the message back to the church: "While I was away, I was calling out to God to help us—to help me—understand what he wants most from us. And I believe I've heard an answer. "It's not fancy or profound or spectacular. But I want to say to you today with all the seriousness I can muster: From this day on, the prayer meeting will be the barometer of our church. What happens on Tuesday night will be the gauge by which we will judge success or failure because that will be the measure by which God blesses us." (p.27).

After that, Tuesday prayer meeting began to grow. The new prayer emphasis became the most essential work of the church. Members began to pray and intercede in earnest, asking God to come, to help them, and God began to move. Hardened and broken people by the hundreds were drawn to the church and their lives transformed by the love of Christ. Many of those joined the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, which has been heard by millions of people. Today, weekly worship attendance is about 10,000.

Does God want to move in our own region to transform lives by the love of Christ? Absolutely. How will he come? The same way: in answer to the earnest prayers and intercessions of his people. No trouble is too great for him to overcome in answer to our prayers! Prayer must be the most important work of *our* church if we want to see God moving in power. As your pastor, I call each of you as members of the body of Christ to join in this, our most essential work. Let's make *our* prayer meetings the barometer of our church!

Yours in the love of Christ! Pastor Chris Fisher



Worship & Preaching Schedule July -August 2024

**Sunday Worship: 9:00AM Live & Online
11:00 AM Coffeehouse Worship in Fellowship Hall**

Saturday Worship: Live at 6:00 PM

Theme: *The Book of Revelation*

**Coffeehouse Theme: *Lyrics of Life, a study of the
Psalms with Lisa Harper***

- July 7** ***7th Sunday after Pentecost***
Guest Preacher: Mr. Dwight Dros;
Rev. Ralph Saunders officiating Holy Communion
9:00 AM w/ Holy Communion
11:00 AM Coffeehouse w/ Love Feast
- July 14** ***8th Sunday after Pentecost***
Message: Revelation 9:1-21
- July 21** ***9th Sunday after Pentecost***
Revelation 10:1-11
- July 28** ***10th Sunday after Pentecost***
Revelation 11:1-14
- Aug 4** ***11th Sunday after Pentecost***
Revelation 11:15-19
9:00 AM w/ Holy Communion
11:00 AM Coffeehouse w/ Love Feast
- Aug 11** ***12th Sunday after Pentecost***
Revelation 12
- Aug 18** ***13th Sunday after Pentecost***
Revelation 13
- Aug 25** ***14th Sunday after Pentecost***
Revelation 14



Communion Offerings

- July 7** **The Vineyard**
Aug 4 **Pastor's Discretionary Fund**



Church Prayer Ministry Updates

7 Things to Pray about in July – August 2024

- 1) Pray for more of the Holy Spirit in our church, that people would experience more and more of his healing presence and power among us. Many are already praying! Pray about joining the Wednesday night prayer meeting and being part of our corporate intercession.
- 2) Pray that God's Spirit would come like fresh wind and fresh fire to our church, drawing people to himself, make them aware of their need for him, hungry for him, and transform their lives. Pray that we will be able to rely on his strength, not our own, that we would be aware of our weaknesses and need for him, and God's abundant grace for us.
- 3) Pray for your fellow believers in the body of Christ, for those with special needs, including those needing healing, the weak, the struggling, those in captivity. Pray for godly wisdom, strength and steadfastness in the face of whatever challenges we face.
- 4) Pray for the salvation of the young people of our region,
- 5) Pray for our leaders, small groups, outreach ministries, and the missionaries we support.
- 6) Pray for those in authority in the church and among the nations.
- 7) Pray for God's kingdom to come, and his will to be done more fully, more completely, more powerfully, right here in Schuylkill County and in our church and sister churches.

Weekly prayer team ministry continues.

We continue to recruit prayer teams to pray for one hour a day for one week for the Kingdom of God to come more fully in our church and our community and beyond. You can also pray together in your own homes via video chat or phone call.

Do you have a testimony to share?

Please consider sharing your story as part of our faith-stories series. Contact the office at office@havenfirstumc.org if you want to share.



empowering ♥ discipling ♥ encouraging

There's a book called *Community Serve* and there is a question inside: ***"If your church closed down today, would your community weep?"*** Schuylkill County has over 200 churches! We see churches on every corner, so what sets our church apart to make an impact and be missed?

The church can be a beacon of hope and a beautiful reflection of Christ on earth. Learn to rebuild trust and be the change you want to see in the church because WE are the church.

In September 2022, we kicked off our 1st Embrace Grace small group as we obeyed God's calling and love was given, the gospel was shared, and lives were transformed! So much so that many of our moms wanted to continue learning and doing live together.

*This past spring, a small group was formed as a place where our Embrace Grace alumni could do just that and our **MoMs: Moms on Mission** group was established. This small group is just for moms of little ones and has childcare provided. Their summer meeting schedule is **Tuesday, July 16 & Tuesday, August 20 from 6:00 PM - 7:15 PM**. If you or someone you know might be interested in joining them, please contact April Bergen or Ann Moyer.*

*Our 3rd Embrace Grace small group begins **Tuesday, August 13 at 6:00 PM**, and we ask you to join us in praying for these mamas and their babies. If you are interested in learning more about how you can be part of this life changing ministry, please contact April Bergen, Cindy Dros, Kristy Kraft, Nancy Kraft or Ann Moyer.*



Who's ready for summer camp?!?

Here's what you need to know before we go:

- **Departure is Monday, July 15 at 6:30 AM** and we will return on **Saturday, July 20 around 1 PM**. We'll send out an ETA upon leaving HCBC.
- **Any medications MUST be in their original packaging.** Medications will be collected by the camp nurse. **Please have them labeled with your youth's name.**
- Double check the packing list to make sure you don't forget anything!

Follow our Facebook page, visit www.havenignite.org or sign up for Flocknote to be in the know! **STAY UP TO DATE**



Where: R-Phil's Game

Friday, July 12
5:15 PM - ?

Those celebrating a birthday between April-August are FREE!
Cost for youth is \$15.00.
Cost for adults is \$35.00.

Admission includes the game, AYCE picnic buffet, pool deck & postgame fireworks!

Sunday, August 11 Youth Hike on Hawk Mtn.



Meet at church at 1pm. Flocknote sign-up for attendance/transportation and additional information.



a summer to remember

In 10 years, you'll be well out of your teen years. At that time, you occasionally will look back on the summers of your teen years and find that each summer took on its own personality. You'll find yourself saying, "That was the summer I _____." The blank will be filled with things from "got my braces off" to "worked my first job." So what will you remember about summer 2024? Here's an idea. Make this the summer "when I memorized Scripture." The word memorize may be the last word you want to hear as you finish a school year and launch summer vacation, but it also may be the best time to create a surge in committing verses to memory. Granted, the purpose of the Bible isn't to memorize it. Its purpose is to change us, but memorizing bite-sized portions creates a gateway for change. Here are a few to get you started...

"I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You. Praise be to You, Lord; teach me Your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from Your mouth. I rejoice in following Your statutes as one rejoices in great riches" (Ps. 119:11-14).

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" (Phil. 4:8-9).

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity." (Jeremiah 29:11-14)

The So What?!? Maybe memorization (of anything) is not your deal. I'll admit it's not mine, but think about the benefits of memorizing God's Word these passages highlight:

1. It helps you experience the peace of God.
2. Your mind will be stimulated for wholesome thinking.
3. It keeps you from sinning.
4. You see the joy in obeying God's Word.

SUMMER BUCKET LIST



Ways to Engage with Your Kids this Summer



TAKE FAMILY FIELD TRIPS

Whether you can take a day off work, or simply plan something fun in the evening, take a few hours to go to the zoo, visit a local museum, or find a baseball game to attend.

VOLUNTEER TOGETHER

Find local opportunities to serve others together, whether it's helping in a church ministry or community event.



READ THE BIBLE

Summer is a great time to spend time together reading your favorite book(s) of the Bible. How many scriptures can you memorize this summer?

ENJOY GOD'S CREATION

Spend time in the sunshine at the beach, go on a hike, catching fireflies or sleep under the stars!



BE A KID AGAIN

Blow bubbles, swing and slide at the playground, engage in a game of flashlight tag, sit on the porch enjoying a popsicle to cool off. Enjoy the fun of being a kid again!

METHODIST WOMEN MINISTRIES

UPCOMING EVENTS

We meet every second Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted or announced.



CALLING ALL BAKERS.

We are hoping to hold a bake sale for July 21st after the first service.

We need your help due to unforeseen illnesses/accidents within our

group. Please let us know if and what you can bake for us by July 7th. We'll publish a list of available goods by July 14th.

July 9th – regular meeting in room 6 1 pm

July 21st- bake sale following 9 am service- proceeds recipient will be announced by July 14th.

Aug. 13th- Sing A-long/ hymn sing at Providence Place Senior Living, Pine Grove. Followed by an ice cream social. Program begins at 2 pm. Come join



Faith Community Nurse's Notes

Brought to you by Ann Moyer RN, FCN

Insect Bites

The weather has become warm, the sun is shining and summer is here! The disadvantage to this is those little critters God put on the earth to provide sustenance for our friends, the birds, toads, frogs, etc... I am talking about insects of course! We two legged creatures find insects to be rather pesky, especially when they bite us!

When an insect bites or stings the skin, a mix of saliva and sometimes venom enter the bite puncture, depending upon the species of bug. This causes an immune system response. This response may be mild with minor redness, itching, and swelling at the site, to more intense swelling, pain and itching which include welts. Some people may experience burning, tingling, or numbness in the area. Most reactions are localized and may be treated at home. Folks who have systemic allergic reactions will need immediate treatment. Severe reactions include shortness of breath, tightening of the throat, swelling anywhere on the face, severe weakness or turning blue in color. If someone has a known allergy and carries an epi pen, use it.

General first aid for most bites and stings include:

- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Apply a compress or ice pack to the area for 10-15 minutes.
- Remove the stinger if present by scraping across the area with a straight-edged object such as a credit card. Do not use tweezers to remove the stinger because the venom sac may be affected, releasing more venom.
- Oral antihistamines such as Benadryl and Allegra may be taken.
- Anti-itch creams like hydrocortisone and pramoxine hydrochloride may be applied to soothe the itch.
- Oatmeal baths may be helpful as well as 100% Aloe Vera at soothing irritated skin.
- Mild pain may be combated with the use of Over the Counter medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol).
- Resist scratching the bite as this can lead to a bacterial infection.
- Observe the bite areas for any increased redness and significant swelling as it may indicate an infection.

As with most things, prevention is always wise but not always easy. Some steps that may be taken to decrease the likelihood of an insect bite:

- Wear lightweight protective clothing with long sleeves and pants when visiting wooded areas.

- Avoid provoking insects whenever possible.
- Refrain from wearing perfumes and other scented products outdoors.
- Exercise caution when eating and drinking outdoors, especially when drinking sweet beverages.
- Use appropriate insect repellents.
- If picnicking, keep garbage cans covered.

Praying that you will have a safe, healthy and "bite-free" summer.



Who are Stephen Ministers and what do they do?

Stephen Ministers are people who care for others who are experiencing a challenging time in their lives.

Currently, we have 10 active Stephen Ministers and 8 people being cared for by a Stephen Minister. Since the program began in 2015, 28 people have received care. Each of our Stephen Ministers have taken a 50 hour course to prepare them for their ministry.

This fall, we are planning on holding the Stephen Minister training course. Please pray about joining us. Everyone who has taken this course has greatly benefited by the teachings. It gives you a greater confidence in talking with friends and family.

If you have any questions about this ministry, or know of someone who may benefit from our program, please contact one of our Stephen Ministry Leaders - either Lynne O'Connell (570-449-2355) or Nancy Kraft (570-617-4431).

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

~ Galatians 6:2 NIV

One More Time!

These results of the previous church name balloting were presented to the Administrative Board at their meeting on June 24, 2024. The Board recommended a final vote to obtain a majority approval between the previous top two choices. The voting will be open until July 31, 2024, giving ample time for the congregation to cast their ballot. Voting is open to all members,

A page containing four (4) ballots is enclosed for your convenience. Additional ballots will be available in the Narthex of the church along with the official ballot box.

Please note that your name must appear on the ballot for it to be counted. Each person should cast their own ballot, meaning husbands and wives will each vote separately. Youth members are also invited to participate because the outcome affects them as well.

This is an important step that once completed will begin the transition away from the United Methodist Church.

respectfully,

John Fatora
Renaming Committee Chairperson

Vineyard Update

The Vineyard is a wonderful ministry where we have the opportunity to bless many people, and in turn, receive a blessing ourselves.

God is moving in this ministry. Over the past few years, we have experienced a continuous increase in the number of individuals and families that we have been blessed to serve. The Vineyard is open the first Wednesday of the month from 10:00 in the morning until noon. This year we have been serving between 75-85 households a month.

Each month we provide a box or two, depending on the family size, of nonperishable food items. Gradually over time, we were able to start providing fresh fruits, vegetables and meats, along with some personal hygiene and household items.

The Vineyard ministry has been able to bless the folks who come to us on our monthly distribution day through a number of groups, individuals, and other outlets to which we are very grateful. They include:

1. Individual donations from members of our congregation of food or cash. The communion offering was also designated to the Vineyard one month.
2. The United Methodist Women collected for us in November and the youth collected food and money on Souper Bowl Sunday in February.
3. Right now, there is a fundraiser taking place in the Comfort Room. Kathy Hackman has created

and donated washable, reusable, one-of-a-kind hand-made tote bags, made from donated blue jeans. They are on display, for sale, in the comfort room. The suggested donation is \$10 - \$20. All of those proceeds go to the Vineyard.

4. One occasion, we receive donations of non-food items such as personal hygiene items and other household items from a ministry outreach in Bernville.
5. We shop local stores such as Bill's for produce. We shop other local stores, as well, such as Boyer's, always looking for sales and good prices on items we need. We also shop at Aldi's.
6. We make a trip to Lancaster to a ministry called "Blessings of Hope." There we are able to purchase food items for \$.31 per pound (based on what is available that month).

As the number of folks we serve each month increases, so does our need for donations. If you would like to help support this ministry, we would be very grateful. Here is how you can help:

A list of the items that we would especially appreciate on a monthly basis can be found along with this article. Please place your donated items in a bag or box labeled "Vineyard", and drop them off in the church kitchen or refrigerator as needed.

Monetary donations are also greatly appreciated. Please mark cash donations

specifically for the Vineyard. If you use a check, please mark the memo: "Vineyard." Thank you.

Finally, starting in March or April, a short service was added just prior to the distribution time each month. This service begins at 9:30 with a time of fellowship, beginning at 9:00. Coffee and small breakfast items are served. The service consists of a prayer, Scripture reading and a short message. This message may be presented by the pastor, another individual, or may be in the form of a video. Questions and comments often follow. Monthly volunteers are needed to "host" this fellowship time by offering to donate breakfast items and/or to set up, serve, and clean up after this 'Refreshment" time. If this is an area where you feel you might be interested in serving, please see Marcy Hudock or notify the office of your interest.

Thank you and God bless. We anticipate additional news on The Vineyard in future issues of the church newsletter.

Vineyard Items Needed on a Monthly Basis:

Food Items

- Canned tuna or chicken
- Peanut Butter
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Cereal
- Canned soups/stews
- Baked beans (and other canned beans)
- Canned fruit
- Cheese (block or shredded)

- Butter (tub or sticks)

Non-food Items

- Garbage bags
- Disinfectant cleaners
- Dishwashing liquid
- Toothbrushes/toothpaste
- Bath soap
- Shampoo and conditioner



WEEKLY PRAYER MINISTRY

Thank you to the following people who have committed to pray for our church family, church future, community, country and other needs for one hour each day for a week.

Below is the Prayer Calendar for July and August:

June 30- July 6: Dolores Morgan

July 7-13 – Ruth Noecker

July 14-20 – JoAnn Daum

July 21-27 – Barb Brady

July 28–August 3 – Ann Moyer

August 4-10 – Lynne & Doug O'Connell

August 11–17 – Suzie Rudiman

August 18–24 – Darlene Beers

August 25–31 – Dwight & Cindy Dros

Volunteers are always appreciated and needed. If you would like to sign up for a week of prayer, please call Darlene Beers or the church office.

Dear FUMC,

Thank you for your generous gift! I appreciate your support and all your prayers. I will definitely have to read the book you got me!

Thank you again!

Josh McClelland