

# FOREST FIRE

**The monthly newsletter of Forest Heights United Methodist Church**

**April 2024**

**A Word from the Pastor** The Resurrection comes (to all who experience it) as the ultimate endorsement that **we are going to be okay**. It is a word that says: “The worst thing that can happen is small potatoes compared to the best thing that has already happened.” The Resurrection is God’s “yes” to life, and God’s “yes” to us.

That’s why the ultimate argument for the Resurrection has always been most evident, not in stories of the empty tomb nor the resurrection appearances, but in the change that the Resurrection produced in the lives of those who believed it. Not because life suddenly brought more to them, but that they suddenly brought more to life. **The Resurrection says: “No matter how much is piled on top of us, nor in front of us, its totality shall not be sufficient to defeat us.”** That is the good news of Easter!

Somewhere, several years ago, I read an account of the funeral service of Winston Churchill. I don’t know whether the incident is true or legendary, but it goes like this:

At the end of the committal service at the burial site in one of England’s great cathedrals, a bugler sounded “Taps” from some far corner.

“Day is done. Gone the sun, from the earth, from the sea, from the sky. Day is done, all is well; God is nigh.”

After the service and the notes of the bugle had died away, as the people stood standing in a moment of silence as people almost invariably do, almost ready to begin to walk away, from far up in the heights of the bell tower, as if coming from some other world, a second bugle sounded “Reveille”-the wake-up call.

Friends, Christians are a people **who have heard the call of the second bugle**. We have learned that good news can come to God’s people anywhere – and at Easter we remember that it came first and strongest and most enduringly from a graveyard. Thanks be to God.  
Drew

**For Your Information-** The Committee on Church Finance has approved a motion by the Church Trustees to purchase a new audio soundboard and our own videotaping equipment for the church sanctuary. We believe that the new system will become more necessary in the years to come as we continue worshipping together and sharing our worship services through the internet. The total cost for these items is \$7000, which we have decided to raise through “special giving.” Terry Bivens will purchase and install the equipment at no additional charge. Please prayerfully consider donating during the month of April to help us in this project. Checks maybe written to Forest Heights United Methodist Church and designate “worship equipment fund.”

Thank you and God bless you,  
Bill Wyatt, Chairman, Committee on Church Finance  
Drew Brewer, Pastor

## Serving Each Other and Our Community

### United Women in Faith



Come TOGETHER to:  
 FEEL the joy when faith-filled women unite.  
 NURTURE our souls through the strength of our sisterhood.  
 DEEPEN our relationship with God.  
 EXPLORE the power of love to make a difference.

We are excited the first meeting of United Women in Faith will be held in our fellowship hall Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. A snack supper will be provided while we discuss and share hopes and visions for our local group. All women are invited to attend!

### Bishop McAlilly's Retirement

The Episcopal office is now collecting notes, letters, and cards if you want to provide best wishes to Bishop Bill McAlilly as he prepares for retirement. These can be mailed to the Episcopal Office at 304 S. Perimeter Park Dr., Suite 2, Nashville, TN 37211. Please submit them by May 10.

**Room in the Inn/Room at the Table** The season for Room in the Inn will soon be coming to an end. Our last time to host these men will be on Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>. Please look at the sign-up sheet by the church office to see where you can help. Thank you so much for the outpouring of support for this ministry.

Although Room in the Inn will be closing for the season (and reopening in the Fall), our feeding/nutrition ministry will not end. Our ministry will shift its focus to providing food for the homeless/near homeless who are housed in several Jackson area hotels. We are calling this ministry Room at the Table. Once a month, Forest Heights will provide a meal at Studio 45 (formally The Scottish Inn). Our meals will be simpler as we will be feeding almost 100 men, women, and children. Once again, you will have an opportunity to provide food items and to serve. We will begin this ministry in May.

**Adult Sunday School Class** You are invited to a summer study of Adam Hamilton's book Words of Life- Jesus and the Promise of the Tenn Commandments Today. This 12-week study begins June 2 and continues through August. You are welcome to join the study on Sunday mornings from 9:30- 10:15. Five thought provoking teachers alternate leading the discussion of the weekly lesson. The class is held in the resource room on the second floor.

**Wednesday Bible Study** Many of those who had been studying during Lent celebrated the culmination of their study with a lunch at Old Country Store. All attending enjoyed the buffet and fellowship together. Watch for the next Wednesday morning study with Drew.



**Friendship** Leora Jean Ralston, one of our new members who transferred from Aldersgate, was born in Jackson on August 31, 1946. After graduating from high school in 1964, she married her high school sweetheart Gary Littrell, and moved west - all the way to Memphis. After three years, they were back home in Jackson. Gary and Jean were blessed with three wonderful children, Teresa, Jeana, and Chip. Although the marriage ended, Jean's family continued to grow, adding ten grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, two sons-in-law, and a daughter-in-law. Having her large family around her, whether all at once or one at a time, is a great joy for Jean.



Jean loves to read. As a child, the first books she loved were stories about nurses; Clara Barton and Florence Nightingale along with the Cherry Ames series being her favorites. She never became a nurse as she hoped, but her daughter-in-law and her granddaughter are RNs. Jean worked as a ward clerk at Jackson Madison County General Hospital during high school and later as a medical transcriptionist in the Pathology Department. In 1980 joined what would later become LabCorp and worked for them both in Jackson and Memphis for the next 23 years.

Jean married David Ralston in 1993, moving once again to Memphis, and became the Staffing Specialist in Human Resources at LabCorp there. The Ralstons were drawn back to Jackson again as Dave became the Community Development Director for the Jackson Housing Authority. After retiring from LabCorp, Jean began to substitute teach in Jackson, mostly in high schools. Jean will always keep fond memories of the students and teachers.

Due to health issues, Jean's mother moved in with Jean and Dave. Jean cherishes the time she was able to spend with her mother. In 2019, all that would change when Jean lost both her husband Dave and her mother within a month of each other. It was devastating and she truly believes that God was her comfort during her pain as He always is.

Jean has always been active in her churches. She became a Methodist when she married Dave, knowing she could never make a Baptist out of him. They were active at St. Paul's UMC in Memphis and later at Aldersgate. Jean enjoys being a part of Forest Heights and especially likes Pastor Drew's Bible Study on Wednesdays.

Always active, Jean held offices in the Madison County Jaycettes, United Way, Altrusa (a service organization), the American Association of Medical Transcriptionists, and recently the Red Hatters, and the Jackson Women's Club. For several years she has been a part of the Read Team at Nova Preschool. Serving meals at the Room in the Inn is a particular blessing for her. Jean adores her grandson's baseball games, reading, watching old movies, putting in the flowerbeds, and traveling. Last spring she checked off a bucket list item by traveling to Scotland and England. You just can't slow this woman down.

**FRIENDSHIP from one to another.....be Blessed.**

**Road Trip Ahead** Beverlyann is interested in visiting the Sager-Brown UMCOR Warehouse in Baldwin, LA (near New Orleans) this summer. This would be an overnight trip, returning late the next day. If you are interested, please see Beverlyann. The dates are flexible and just might fit your schedule.



## **Betty Lyons Retirement Reception**

Our longstanding FHUMC administrative assistant is retiring effective mid-May. We want to show our appreciation for her working here for 15 years. We are hosting a reception in her honor on Sunday, April 21 following our worship service. Reminders will follow in church bulletins.

**“One in the Spirit” Fellowship** is one of the main principles of a church. Forest Heights UMC wants to focus on the common purpose of connecting people by getting to know each other better. Please save the date of April 28 for an after church service “bring a dish” celebration with a short special presentation. You don’t want to miss it!

**The Church Council Meeting** will be held on April 14 at 12:30 following our worship service. A light lunch will be provided. All members of the church council are encouraged to attend with reports. Anyone can attend the meeting in the fellowship hall, but only council members may vote on any motions.

## **Happy Birthday to our church family members this month:**

Sandy Thomas – April 4  
Mary Louise Smith – April 6  
Linda Wilson – April 8  
Harold Montgomery – April 16  
Tommy Russell – April 19  
Marcia Tate – April 24

## **Calendar for April 2024 and beyond**

Month long-Donations for the new worship equipment

4/2 Baby Shower for Julie Holt, preschool director 5:30 in Fellowship Hall

4/9 Final host/serving for Room in the Inn

4/14 Church Council Meeting after worship in Fellowship Hall

4/18 United Women in Faith- first gathering! 5:30 in Fellowship Hall

4/21 Retirement Reception for Betty Lyons after worship in Fellowship Hall

4/22 Newsletter items are due to editor (This is one week later than usual!)

4/23-5/3 General Conference

4/28 One in the Spirit- luncheon and program

June 12- New summer book study begins for Adult Sunday School Class

June/July- Christmas Showbox emphasis

August- UMCOR giving

September/October- Coat collection for elementary children