



Forest Heights United Methodist Church

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NEWSLETTER

February 2024

“And the Spirit immediately drove Jesus out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him.” (Mark 1:12-13)

The traditional and historical wisdom about the value of the “wilderness experience” is just about lost, I am afraid, certainly to popular American culture, and perhaps even to the Christian tradition that is charged with preserving it. Those of us who still belong to churches that still observe Lent may get a dose of it every year around this time, even if it is reduced to cutting down on how much time you waste each day, or putting a dollar in a box for every dessert you skip. But the kernel of the wisdom is still there: that anyone who wants to follow Jesus all the way to the cross needs the kind of clarity and grit that is found only in the wilderness.

From Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, Christians are invited to do without some things they are perfectly capable of having---such as rich food or other bad habits--and to take on some things that they are just as capable of avoiding--such as a strict moral inventory, or a lunch date with someone they are mad at.

“Lent,” is called, from an English word meaning “spring,” not just as reference to the crocuses pushing their ways out of the ground in the season before Easter, but also to the greening of the human soul--pruned with repentance fertilized with fasting, seeded with self-appraisal, mulched with prayer.

If you have spent a lot of time and/money trying to acquire whatever it takes to grow your soul without seeing any new buds, then maybe a little spell in the wilderness is worth a try—a few weeks of choosing to live on less, not more—of practicing subtraction instead addition—not because your regular life is so bad but because you want to make sure it is your **real** life—that one you long to be living—which can be hard to do when you’re existing on spiritual fast food and busyness.

Lent is a time to get serious about the things that really matter. May this season be a blessed one for you.

Drew

Nurture News -Serving Each Other

A **Big Thank** you to all who helped take down the Christmas decorations in our sanctuary and building. Your many hands did indeed make light work.

Worship Team

Your worship team meets every other Monday to plan meaningful worship services for our congregation. Members of this team are: Drew Brewer, Sue Wyatt, Elaine Jones, Sandy Thomas, Susan Montgomery,

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Ondra Farmer, and Margaret Harrison. Other teams under this group include our greeters, liturgists, communion stewards, communion servers, and ushers. We thank all who serve on these teams.

Servant Ministry Forms

Many of you completed this form in the past year. Please take a few minutes to fill it out again. It will also be an insert in the Sunday morning bulletin or pick up a new form in the office. This may provide new opportunities for you to consider ways to serve. Return sheets to the office no later than Feb. 18.

United Women in Faith (Formerly known as United Methodist Women)

The United Women in Faith is an organization of women organized in local congregations of the United Methodist Church whose mission is to seek to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities. If anyone is interested in helping to organize a United Women in Faith group at Forest Heights UMC or would just want to attend once the group becomes active, please contact Susan Montgomery by phone/text at 731-256-1833 or email at susanmontgomery@gmail.com. It would be helpful to know how many women in our church would commit to becoming a member and what dates/times would work best for everyone. Please contact Susan with your preferred meeting time (ex: 3rd Thursday of the month at 5 p.m., etc.)



Friendship

It is such a pleasure to introduce one of our new members, Sue Bryant, who transferred from Aldersgate United Methodist Church.

Susan I. Dawson was born in Clarion, Iowa on October 24, 1946. She attended Ballard High School, a school that was formed by consolidating four smaller community schools. It was located south of Ames, Iowa. Upon graduation, Sue continued her studies earning a degree in education from Iowa State. In 1979, she took the Quality Auditor position at Wester City Products. In 1988, she was recruited to start quality systems with Noma, located in Jackson, Tennessee. It was here Sue was promoted to Quality Engineer. She worked the last seven years of her career at Cub Cadet in Brownsville.

During her student teaching semester at South Hamilton High School in Jewell, Iowa, friends would gather. It was through those gatherings that she met Don who taught English at the same school where Sue was student teaching. When he asked her if she could golf, her reply was yes, but she didn't have clubs. He told her some would be provided. Over the years they became the best golfing buddies ever. Don had a great teaching career that spanned over 43 years.

The bride-to-be married Donald Stanley Bryant on June 22, 1969. Don and Sue loved to travel with their Gold Wing and Silver Wing Hondas motorcycles! They traveled through Lake Superior, up into Canada, then down to Wisconsin. They also visited Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon, and later rode from Iowa traveling to the Smokies! They spent many wonderful hours and days together for 52 years, until Don's passing in 2021!

Sue enjoys reading and going for walks. She enjoyed the warm welcome she received here at Forest Heights. That is one reason she decided to make this her home church.

Friendship from one to another.....Be blessed.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.



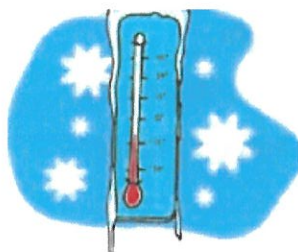
Outreach News- Reaching Out to Others

Room in the Inn Once again, Forest Heights will have the opportunity to host Room in the Inn on Sunday evening, February 25th. The menu and sign-up sheet have been posted on the church bulletin board by the office. You may sign up to provide food, to cook, or to serve as a host/hostess that evening. Whatever you do – you will be blessed.

Souper Bowl As we ramp up for one of the biggest football games in the USA, The Super Bowl, let us not forget the people in need around our community. Together we can tackle hunger in Jackson! During the month of February, we are asking you to bring cans of soup (or vegetables and beans to make soup) and place them in our Blessing Box. All donations will go to RIFA to be used locally. If you choose to give money for this project, please write a check to Forest Heights United Methodist Church and put Souper Bowl in the memo line.



For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, Matthew 25:35



2024 got off to a rough start with some historic cold temperatures. Jackson saw wind chill temps below zero. The cold temperatures gave the churches in Jackson an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ to those in need. Forest Heights collected bath towels for the warming shelters, and warm socks, t-shirts and under clothing for those in need. Several members assisted at the Women's shelter at the First United Methodist Church. We were able to minister to 14 women and over 50 men, many who sleep outside at the various encampments around Jackson or in the allies and doorways in downtown Jackson.



Ponder this while thinking about the homelessness in Jackson: This note of thanks was found on Facebook. Although it was written about another city, it could easily apply to Jackson. Read with a thankful heart.

Homeless has a Name ...

Our effort to understand the homeless is never wasted.

Their lives turn out one way, but it's not anything resembling the life their parents had imagined for them. It's nothing like the life they imagined for themselves. But I see in them what they've lost the ability to see in themselves.

Late last night I discovered there were 2 beds open at the small full-time shelter here in town. One for a man and one for a woman. The shelter is a bit overcrowded and although it's not perfect, it's not outside. I gave my number to the gentleman working there for the weekend. I don't give that out too often but here's the deal, the cold hard facts, emphasis on cold. Noon tomorrow the emergency shelter shuts down. The winter snap is ending and with it, many are heading back into the woods.

Why is there a need to get a shelter open full-time? Because the one shelter in the city rarely has openings, and it was just sheer luck that they had any beds available at all. Then I got a text that there's a men's bed open.

And I go looking for him. We sit down and we talk rules, guidelines, life, changes. And as he sat there with his eyes wide open, I saw it. That look. It was fear...

Young kid. I call him a kid because even though he's 25 he looks like he's 17. I see Kyle every day at The Agape' Mission of Bartlesville. He goes for the sweet potato pie 9 times out of 10. To be honest I had no idea if Kyle was ready for change or not. Change is difficult for anyone, and for those caught up in the consequences of their decisions you'd think it'd be easy. It's not.

Many of our unhoused neighbors just avoid the challenge of change.

Outside behind the laundromat. That was where Kyle was sleeping. Agape Mission for lunch - that was where Kyle was eating - once a day. And although I don't know much more of Kyle's story, I do know this, he's not sleeping behind the laundromat anymore!

I don't know Kyle's mother, but I sure wish I did. More than anything right now I wish I could call her and tell her that her boy isn't sleeping outside any longer.

I just got the text from the manager at the shelter letting me know that Kyle is all checked in. I thanked him and told him to tell Kyle that I'll check on him every week. And I will. I find that my emotions are all over the place. It took the frigid weather to get Kyle into the emergency shelter. Sure, I see him every day, but I never had the opportunity to sit him down and talk to him, encourage him, persuade him.

Please pray for Kyle. He's been clean "forever" - but in truth it hasn't been that long. I know he can do this, and I will visit him at the shelter to continue to remind him - that he can.

It's easy to watch the world through the eyes of the internet.

When time has allowed me to process all that I've seen since the emergency shelter opened on Thursday, I will share more. But for now, I know this to be true: We are the Light, a shining beacon for those that have lost their way in life. It's just that straightforward. The homelessness problem in Bartlesville will do one of two things: It will either get better for the homeless, and in turn get better for the city or it will get worse. But just to be clear, it won't go away. We can make it better, or we can watch it get worse. We are the solution.

Homeless Has a Name, it's Kyle, and he's not sleeping outside behind the laundromat anymore.

Save These Dates (Nurture and Outreach)

***February month long Collections for Souper Bowl of Caring**

***Sunday, February 4 New Times! Fellowship time begins at 9:15 and Bible Study begins at 9:30.**

***Tuesday, February 13 (Fat Tuesday) Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5pm – 7pm**

Come to Fellowship Hall to enjoy pancakes and the fixings with the congregation of Mission St. James Anglican Church. No fee but a love offering will be appreciated. This is a "Come and Go Dinner."

***Wednesday, Feb. 14**

1. Our **Bible Study** will begin, at 10:00 a.m. We will be studying the Scriptures of the Lenten Season. Drew will be using the Upper Room Devotional Book, Disciplines for our text. Books will be available in the church office in February. Cost \$12.00
2. **Ash Wednesday Service** will begin at 11:30. We have invited the Mission St. James Anglican Church to join us.

***Saturday, February 24 Handbell Festival Concert 2:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church on North Highland** Please come support FHUMC's own handbell choir as they participate in the festival with many other handbell choirs from churches near and far! Our handbell choir will be working all day on five songs for the concert.

***Sunday, February 25 Host Room in the Inn during the evening.**

Happy Birthday this month to:

Marilyn Kemp Pennel - February 14

John Archer - February 18

Carol Reeves - February 24

Don Senter - February 25

Other Information

Our Newsletter will be changing in exciting ways after our committee recently met! Present at our committee meeting included Drew, Sue Wyatt, Beverlyann Jetton, TJ Clanin, Paul Chaplin, and Kathleen Wilson. We are now calling our newsletter **Forrest Fire!** A new logo will be implemented next month. The newsletter's purpose is to inspire and inform our church family about activities, opportunities for service, important information, joys, etc. We want all committees and our church family to feel free to submit articles/ information for consideration to be included in each month's newsletter. Please submit items no later than the 3rd Monday of the month, preferably through email to Kathleen at KathleeninMilan@gmail.com. Space and other requirements may limit some items. If you do not have email, you can submit written information Kathleen Wilson in person or call her at 731-707-8817. We also want feedback from you about what you like, ways to improve, and concerns.

Servant Ministry Opportunities

Name _____ Phone # _____

Nurture Team – Sue Wyatt – 731-343-4019

Worship ___ Usher ___ Liturgist ___ Sound team ___ Greeter ___ Choir
___ Communion steward ___ Communion server

Education: teach ___ children ___ youth ___ adult
___ substitute teach ___ attend bible

Fellowship Events ___ plan events (meals, concerts etc.) ___ set up/cleanup

Sunday Fellowship Host ___ (make coffee and provide treats)

Prayer chain ___ email ___ telephone

Card Ministry ___

Pew Ministry ___ (replace pencils, pens, and visitor cards in pews)

Homebound Visitation ___

Bereavement Team: ___ provide a dish for meal after funeral ___ set up and clean up

Outreach Team – Beverlyann Jetton – 731-431-0165

___ Room in the Inn – monthly

___ Lenten World Hunger Offering - UMCOR

___ Blessing Boxes – ongoing

___ Christmas Shoebox Project - Back to School (supplies or back pack)

___ Reelfoot Christmas Store

___ Ladies of the Yarn

Witness Team – TJ Clanin – 731-695-0789

___ visitor followup (telephone call) ___ event planning

___ new member friend (partner with visitor to include in church events)

Please indicate the area(s) that you are interested in serving by placing a check mark on the line next to that area.