

# FOREST FIRE

The Monthly Newsletter of Forest Heights United Methodist Church  
863 West Forest Ave., Jackson, TN 38301

January 2025

## A Word from Pastor Drew

*“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.”* (Isaiah 60:1)

At Christmas, light has now come into the world through Jesus Christ. So, as Isaiah reminds us, *“Arise, shine for your light has come.”* In other words, God has acted, so why do you still sit there? You are free now. You have a glorious future. So, arise and shine, for your light has come. What I want to suggest to all of us on this first month of the New Year is that in the Bible that is a commandment. *Rise and shine.* Even if you don't feel like it. It's a command. *Rise and Shine.*

I don't know about you, but I find that really hard to do at times. I'm not at all thrilled when someone comes to me early in the morning and says, *“Rise and shine!”* I can rise, alright, but I don't start shining until about 10 or 11 in the morning. The poet W. H. Auden once said that *“the rooster gets up early in the morning and crows at the crack of dawn because it has a brain the size of a pea.”* The assumption is that the more intelligent you are the harder it is to get up and get going, but that's not true. The problem is not intelligence, it's discipline.

Sadly, in religion and morality we are more likely to be guided by our feelings, rather than shaped by our discipline. Some call the *“triumph of the therapeutic.”* The idea that, if I am just honest about my feelings, that's all that is required to have a fulfilled life. My feelings are somehow legitimized by my honest recognition of them.

Well, confession used to be the *first* step of a new life. But the *second* step was *repentance* – changing, going in a different direction. But now there is only confession. Salvation has come to be seen as accepting yourself the way you are now. There is no real determination to be a better person than you are right now.

We live in a time when the daily wisdom tells us that we are the product of our past, or of our environments, or our genes, some kind of destiny placed upon us, and we can't do anything about it. When you live with anything for a while, it doesn't seem so bad. You get used to it. And when somebody asks you to change, it's difficult. Because if you're living in bondage, at least you know what to expect. At least your life is familiar to you.

Richard Rohr, in a brilliant analysis, says that what has happened to us is that *the subjective self has become the objective truth.* What a terrible analysis! We are told that what is most real about us is our internal life, our feelings. Our feelings become the objective truth, the only reality there is.

The Christian faith stands strongly against that and says that the most important fact about your life is not what has happened to you in the past, and not even the way you are right now. The most important fact about your life is what God is offering you now. God has given you the future. God has given you a new life. But you've got to get up and move toward it. May we commit to doing so in this new year!

Drew

## Friendship



About 18 months ago, John and Marianne Archer found a new church home at Forest Heights UMC, but that wasn't their first connection to this church. In 1986, their first child, Kent, was born, and they looked for a quality daycare that would feel like family. They found that at Forest Heights. Three years later, a second son, Scott, would also find a place at Forest Heights. Scott's early friendship with Adrian Thomas continued into elementary school, and he was excited to join Adrian on the Forest Heights church league basketball team with Adrian's dad, David, as their coach. So, you see, when John and Marianne joined Forest Heights as members, they easily felt connected to a church from their past.

As many of you know, John and Marianne are both "preachers' kids," moving around West Tennessee and Western Kentucky, but neither of them lived in Jackson as children. Jackson became their home when they married after attending Lambuth College. They lived in Memphis for a little over a year; then, they returned to Jackson where John began working in the IT department at Quaker Oats. John worked for 35 years at the same desk but for four different companies as the business went through a variety of mergers and buyouts. He always stayed in IT but went from programmer to systems analyst to network administrator. Marianne found a teaching job for a year in nearby Dyersburg but then was able to move to the Madison County School System, teaching for a year at West High School before transferring to North Side High School as a math teacher. She later had the opportunity to become a school counselor and continued in that position until she retired. Now that they are both retired, John and Marianne enjoy being with their kids and grandkids (just ask them about Hazel and Ezra), traveling with friends and family, and being involved in the activities and ministries of the church.

When they visited Forest Heights in the spring of 2023, they were joined not only by several friends displaced from another congregation but also by Marianne's mom, Nancy Wheatley, and John's dad, John Archer, Sr, followed soon by Marianne's nephew, Sam Comes. Recently, Marianne's brother and sister-in-law, Kevin and Susan Wheatley, joined Forest Heights and the family connections continue. But they found other friends and connections at Forest Heights as well. In addition to the Thomases as already noted, they met Rethel Miller, who was a friend of Marianne's grandmother at St. Andrews. They knew Jerry and Ann Jeffords, good friends of the family, were members. (Jerry had even been their first pastor as a married couple in Memphis.) They reconnected with Pam Finney who had been Marianne's supervisor in the school system, and with Paul who they knew from Lambuth. And did you know that Drew Brewer was their Sunday school teacher as young adults at Aldersgate UMC? And that Marianne played the piano for the children's choir that Elaine Jones directed? John and Marianne felt very welcomed, both by those they already knew and by those who became new friends, and immediately included in the life of the church. They are so appreciative of the opportunity to worship and serve with the congregation at Forest Heights United Methodist Church.

## Serving Each Other and Our Community

### Nurture Area News

A big thank you to all who helped prepare the church for the Advent and Christmas Seasons. The sanctuary greens and Chrismon Tree added much to our worship experience. You all are indeed a blessing to us.

We also thank the Women of Faith for hosting the reception following the Christmas Cantata. The Fellowship Hall looked festive and the “treats” delicious.

### **Christmas Caroling update:**

On Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, thirty-five carolers met to enjoy the songs of the season. Two groups visited seven of our homebound members and another group gathered around the piano to sing. A delicious meal of chili and soup was enjoyed by all following the singing. Laughter and conversation filled the air as the singers enjoyed food and fellowship. Thank you to all who contributed to the meal.

### **Opportunities for Service**

Opportunities to serve as greeters, ushers, and fellowship hosts are available for 2025. If you are interested in serving, please call or text Sue Wyatt (731-343-4019).

Hands are needed to take down the garland, Chrismon Tree, wreaths, and other decorations on Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 9:00 a.m. We appreciate the help all who can come.

### **Holiday Church office hours:**

Office will be closed January 1, but will be open again on January 2nd.

### **Just a Reminder**

Meals from our Freezer Blessings ministry continue to be available to our members. You can pick up a meal for yourself or deliver it to members who may need a meal as they go through a time of recuperation, rehabilitation, or dealing with a tough life experience. Find them in the Freezer Blessings freezer located in the room across from the kitchen. Instructions are on the freezer for your convenience.

The Sojourner Class invites you to join them at 9:30 each Sunday morning for their discussion-based class. Beginning December 1<sup>st</sup>, we are using a study entitled, “Following Jesus”. Rev. Laura Whitman is the writer of this series and will focus on three topics: Compelled by our Faith, Jesus’ Beloved Community, and Partners in Jesus’ Mission. Our team of five teachers present well prepared and thought-provoking lessons. We look forward to having you join us. We meet in the Resource Room on the second floor of the main building.

### **Calendar for Wednesday Bible Study Thru Holiday Season 2025**

Jan 1 – No Bible Study – Happy New Year!

Jan 8 – Jan 29 - No Bible Study

Feb 5 – Study of Luke resumes thru Holy Week

### **United Women of Faith**

The United Women of Faith hosted the reception following the Christmas Cantata. It was a wonderful having so many come together with their expressions of joy for the season.

The next meeting for UWF will be Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, in the church Fellowship Hall.

## Outreach Area News

**MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES** During our fall Outreach planning meeting, our committee discussed mission opportunities for 2025. We wanted a flexible plan that covered a variety of needs, one that allowed for emergency response if needed, and yet would not overtax our congregation – Tall order, yes? Here is the calendar we developed. Hopefully, this will help you plan your missional giving.



### **Our Outreach/Mission Calendar for 2025**

1<sup>st</sup> quarter: School supplies for our teacher, Room in the Inn

2<sup>nd</sup> quarter: Room in the Inn / Room at the Table, UMCOR emphasis

3<sup>rd</sup> quarter: Room at the Table, School supplies for our teacher, Christmas Shoebox

4<sup>th</sup> quarter: Candle burning (Women of Faith), Room in the Inn, Reelfoot Toy Store

Our Room in the Inn schedule will be: Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your continual support for this fantastic ministry.



**ADOPT A TEACHER:** Many of our teachers have difficulty obtaining supplies for their classroom and purchase them from their own pocket (or do without). Many community organizations have school supply giveaways for students, but we are unaware of anyone supporting our teachers. Our Outreach team decided to adopt one of our own teachers and help her with classroom supplies. Amy Tate teaches 11<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History at Northside High School. Her classroom could use the following items:

Pencils, sharpened  
Erasers  
Pocket folders (any color)  
Wide-ruled notebook paper  
Disinfectant wipes  
tissue

### **January Birthdays**

2 Mary C. Wright  
2 Huck Huckabee  
13 Marianna Warmath-Lewis  
27 Elaine Ervin

### **January Anniversaries**

26 Francis & Gordon Eubanks

## Calendar for January 2025

Jan 1 Church Office Closed – Happy New Year

|        |            |                     |                        |
|--------|------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Jan 5  | 5:30 p.m.  | 1 <sup>st</sup> UMC | Room at the Inn        |
| Jan 8  | 9:00 a.m.  | Fellowship Hall     | Ladies of the Yarn     |
|        | 10:00 a.m. | Choir Rm            | Tapestry Practice      |
|        | 4:45 p.m.  | Sanctuary           | Bell Choir Practice    |
|        | 6:00 p.m.  | Choir Rm            | Choir Practice         |
| Jan 13 | 10:00 a.m. | Fellowship Hall     | Worship Committee      |
| Jan 15 | 9:00 a.m.  | Fellowship Hall     | Ladies of the Yarn     |
|        | 10:00 a.m. | Choir Rm            | Tapestry Practice      |
|        | 4:45 p.m.  | Sanctuary           | Bell Choir Practice    |
|        | 6:00 p.m.  | Choir Rm            | Choir Practice         |
| Jan 16 | 3:00 p.m.  | Fellowship Hall     | United Women of Faith  |
| Jan 19 | 12:00 p.m. | Fellowship Hall     | Church Council Meeting |
| Jan 22 | 9:00 a.m.  | Fellowship Hall     | Ladies of the Yarn     |
|        | 10:00 a.m. | Choir Rm            | Tapestry Practice      |
|        | 4:45 p.m.  | Sanctuary           | Bell Choir Practice    |
|        | 6:00 p.m.  | Choir Rm            | Choir Practice         |
| Jan 27 | 10:00 a.m. | Fellowship Hall     | Worship Committee      |
| Jan 29 | 9:00 a.m.  | Fellowship Hall     | Ladies of the Yarn     |
|        | 10:00 a.m. | Choir Rm            | Tapestry Practice      |
|        | 4:45 p.m.  | Sanctuary           | Bell Choir Practice    |
|        | 6:00 p.m.  | Choir Rm            | Choir Practice         |

You can always find the **Weekly Calendar** and more details about **Upcoming Events** under the “**Events**” tab on [fhumc.com](http://fhumc.com).

### Notice of Address Changes:

We failed to get the correct address for Roy and Jackie Morgan into the Directory addition.

Their correct address is: 67 Buckingham Cove  
Jackson, TN 38305

All other information on the Directory addition pages for the Morgans is correct

Ann Jeffords has moved to Charter Assisted Living after her fall. Her new address is:

1200 North Parkway

Apt. 140

Jackson, TN 38305

Telephone #: 731-736-2639 (she no longer has a cell #)

### Thank you

I want to thank the congregation of Forest Heights for the Christmas remembrance I was given. To have your loving care means so much to me. My church family truly helped make my Christmas special. God is good,  
Sue Bryant