

FOREST FIRE

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

March 2025

A Word from Pastor Drew

“And Nathan said to David. “You are the man!” (2 Samuel 12:7)

As a prophet, Nathan was called by God to speak truth to power – always a dangerous calling. He approached David not with a detailed list of David’s wrongs, but with a story. Sometimes we see ourselves more clearly in stories than we do when someone is pointing their finger at us in anger, allowing us to become guarded and defensive. Stories draw us in without us even noticing it. For Nathan, it was a strategy borne out of genuine concern and love both for David and for God. What he wanted was not to trick David into pronouncing his own judgment, but to make certain that what David heard in the story Nathan told was translated into what David felt about his own actions.

Nathan told David of a poor man who had a pet lamb. That man loved that lamb like his own child. But one day, a rich man, who had many lambs of his own, came and took that beloved lamb away from the poor man to slaughter it and feed it to his guests. David could see that little lamb and he could feel the pain of the poor man. David became angry at the evil which the rich man had done and declared that he should be put to death for doing such a terrible thing. “But David,” Nathan said to him, “*you* are that man!”

Nathan’s parable caused David to wake up from his self-righteousness and insulation. He had taken the wife of a loyal soldier for his own desires, and then had the soldier killed in battle to cover his sin. David was acting like the emperor in his new clothes, parading around in his sin with no one willing to or able to hold up a mirror and show him that the royal immunity to which he felt entitled was invisible. But Nathan helped David to see himself and to see what he had done. And unlike the emperor who continued to parade around with no clothes, David repented. You don’t have to be a poet or a prophet to tell stories that transform the imagination, to put a new spirit in others. By virtue of our baptism, we Christians are already armed with stories that can witness to the goodness of God’s future. We have heard the greatest story of all, the story of God’s love and grace, a story of Christ’s birth, life, death, and resurrection. There is now always a story of hope, of light shining into the darkness, of death being defeated and of suffering, pain, and despair lasting only a night because we know and testify to the goodness of joy coming with each morning. That is our story.

That is the foundation of our prophetic voice, called upon to transform both our neighbor and our neighborhood, powerful enough to change those who hear it, and powerful enough to transform those who tell it.

Drew

Friendship



Anita Roark has been a Methodist all her life, starting in infancy at Malesus Methodist Church, where she spent her “growing up” years, and sang in the youth and adult choirs. When Anita’s last church of 18 years recently disaffiliated, she knew that she wanted to continue to worship with as many of her former congregates as possible. Very fortunately for her, that decision led to Forest Heights UMC.

At Forest Heights, Anita joined family members including Linda Montgomery (mother-in-law), Dan & Susan Montgomery (in-laws), and over 35 friends from her former church. She gained a wonderful minister in Drew Brewer, who is down to earth and always has a sermon that you can relate to your own life. Anita wasted no time taking advantage of the many opportunities available at Forest Heights, including those in the music ministry and missions. She joined the Adult Sunday School Class, and always attends and learns from Drew’s educational and thought-provoking Bible Studies.

Anita is the daughter of Joe Roark (deceased) and Sue Johnson Roark (93 years old). The oldest of three children, Anita had two brothers – Allen (deceased) and Andy. Anita was fortunate to grow up in the historic mill village of Bemis, TN, where the mill whistle let you know when all children had to be home for the night (9pm whistle). With the exception of 15 years in Memphis, Anita has lived her life in Madison County.

Anita met her husband, Michael Montgomery (son of Rev. Harold & Rebecca Montgomery), at South Side High School. Several years later, they married and will celebrate their 31st anniversary this year. Michael attends Grace Bible Fellowship Church in Huntersville. Anita and Michael spent 20 years living in and renovating their pre-Civil War home in Mercer, TN, before moving back to Jackson. They have traveled extensively during the last 30 years, agreeing that their two favorite trips were to Egypt and to the Holy Land.

Anita is a graduate of South Side High School, Jackson State Community College, Union University, and was in the last graduating class of “Memphis State University,” where she earned her Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling. In Memphis, she worked at Ward Archer Advertising, at the in-house advertising agency for Schering-Plough and at Media Services. While in Memphis, Anita volunteered over 1,300 hours in the Veteran’s Hospital Emergency Room, was a short-term “baby hugger” at LeBonheur, and in 1986 was fortunate to join, along with Michael, in the coast to coast human chain fundraiser, *Hands Across America*.

After moving back to Jackson, Anita first worked as a Licensed Psychological Examiner, primarily in area school systems. Her last 24 years prior to retirement were spent at West Tennessee Healthcare, where she was the Marketing Manager in the inpatient rehabilitation center for 10 years (where you saw miracles happen *every day*), then as the first Director of the Patient Experience the last 14 years. What brought joy to Anita's work was being able to share stories of *incredible kindness* about staff and physicians throughout the organization who went far and above anything expected to make things better for patients and families. Some of these "Hearts Afire" stories are still hanging on the walls at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital. Read one sometime if you want to be truly inspired by depths of caring and compassion!

In her free time, Anita enjoys reading, attending concerts & plays, delivering Meals on Wheels, and watching Perry Mason (she has every episode memorized!). She's an officer of the Bemis Historical Society and of the Bemis Book Club, the longest continuously meeting book club in Madison County. Anita has long felt that her greatest gift is her smile - a gift that she effortlessly shares with all.

Friendship, from one to the other Be blessed

Nurture Area News

Save the date:

**Third Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Tuesday, March 4
5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.**

Shrove Tuesday, also known as Fat Tuesday, is the final day before entering the more somber season of Lent and is a time for feasting and fun.

A delicious meal of pancakes, sausage, fruit, coffee, juice, and King Cake will fill out our menu for the gathering. Make plans to enjoy fellowship and this complimentary meal in our Fellowship Hall. This is come and go event but you can stay as long as you like. We will be welcoming families from our Child Care Center as special guests. Invite a friend or two to join us. See you on March 4th. For addition information see Kitty Hawkins or Sue Wyatt.

Why pancakes? Around A.D. 600, Pope Gregory prohibited Christians from eating meat and animal products during the forty days of Lent. In response, believers made pancakes to use up their supply of eggs, milk, and butter. The tradition continues. Yum!

Ash Wednesday Service

We will mark the beginning of the Holy Season of Lent, forty days not including Sundays, until Easter, with a service of Word, music, and imposition of ashes on Wednesday, March 5, beginning at 11:30 a.m. in the sanctuary of our church. Ash Wednesday focuses our hearts on repentance and prayer through personal and communal confession. We invite you to this meaningful service.

Spring Women's Bible Study

Women of Forest Heights are invited to a small group Bible study entitled, *The Cup of Our Life A Guide for Spiritual Growth* by Joyce Rupp. This study will begin on Monday, March 10 at 6:00 p.m. and continue through April 8. We will meet in the foyer area of the Fellowship Hall each Monday evening.

An ordinary cup is used symbolically as a sacred vessel to connect the ordinary and the spiritual throughout the study. Please bring you favorite mug or cup to our first meeting. Also be on the look out for a mug or cup that you won't mind breaking for our final session.

Books have been ordered and are \$13 per copy. Kindle editions are available as well. Let us know if you are coming by signing up with Sue Bryant in the church office.

Fifth Sunday Bring-a-dish Fellowship will be held, after worship on Sunday March 30th. We look forward to gathering as a church family for a meal and fellowship. A program highlighting the United Methodist Committee on Relief will be given during the meal. Bring a dish or two to share. Beverages will be provided.

United Women in Faith

Due to the cold, snowy weather, UWF has not met yet during February. Information from our February and March meetings will be available in the next newsletter. All women in the church or from other churches are welcome. UWF will meet on February 27th and March 20th. Those coming to the meeting on February 27th, bring a pair of scissors that you can use to cut paper.

In Sympathy

Our Christian sympathy to the family of Karen Johnson who passed away on February 21st. May God surround you with comfort and peace. Her memorial service will be Saturday, March 1, in our sanctuary. Visitation starts at 11:00 a.m. with the memorial service starting at 12:00 noon.

March Birthdays

5	Gail Crocker	14	Ruth Shelton
10	Dan Montgomery	15	Peggy Sheffield
13	Cheryl Thomas	18	Linda Montgomery
13	Jerry Ervin	19	Marcia Law
13	Janette Chaplin	20	Luke Finney

Outreach Area News

Are you “in the loop” for communications from our church, district, and the conference? You can access information about activities at Forest Heights in many different ways: announcements during worship and church meetings, our Sunday bulletin, and the PowerPoint display in the fellowship hall. Our church website – fhumc.com - has a wealth of information. You can learn about upcoming activities, learn more about our missions and outreach, our music ministries, and our pre-school. You can read our church newsletter as well as the Tennessee-Western KY Conference Newsletter. There is even a link you can click on to view our worship services on YouTube. Follow us on Facebook for more information and pictures.

Still hungry for more information? Try these websites:

District Newsletter: subscribe by contacting msriveradmassistant@gmail.com

Conference Newsletter: TWKUMC.org (update your preferences at the bottom of the page)

Global Missions and UMCOR: umcmmission.org

United Women in Faith: uwfaith.org

BE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER!! March 30th is **UMCOR Sunday!** By supporting UMCOR, you're helping to alleviate human suffering, promote sustainability, and advance hope around the world. Join us in supporting the incredible work of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Gifts given on UMCOR Sunday cover UMCOR's administrative costs. This support ensures that 100% of donations given to UMCOR throughout the year can be directed toward on-the-ground relief and recovery efforts, allowing UMCOR to effectively respond to crises and provide assistance where it's needed most. Together, we can bring hope to those in need worldwide.

Please write your check to Forest Heights UMC and put UMCOR in the memo line.



Thank you for your generosity in providing funds for Area Relief Ministries Warming Shelter. We were able to provide hot chili (really HOT chili), sandwiches, and chips each day the shelter was open.

Forest Heights will host **Room in the Inn, on Sunday, March 2nd, and Tuesday, April 8th.** Join us by providing needed items or by helping serve a hot meal. The sign-up list is on the communication desk by the office.

Calendar for March 2025 - find the **Weekly Calendar** under the “**Events**” tab on fhumc.com

Mar 2	6:00 p.m.	Jackson 1 st UMC	Room in the Inn
Mar 3	10:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Worship Committee
Mar 4	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Mar 5	9:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
Mar 5	10:00 a.m.	Resource Room	Bible Study – Book of Luke
Mar 5	11:30 a.m.	Sanctuary	Ash Wednesday Service
Mar 5	4:30 p.m.	Sanctuary	Bell Choir Practice
Mar 5	5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Chancel Choir Practice
Mar 6	5:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Men’s Emmaus Send off
Mar 9	5:00 p.m.	Sanctuary	Men’s Emmaus Closing
Mar 10	6:00 p.m.	F.H. Foyer	Women’s Bible Study
Mar 12	9:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
Mar 12	10:00 a.m.	Resource Room	Bible Study
Mar 12	11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
Mar 12	4:30 p.m.	Sanctuary	Bell Choir Practice
Mar 12	5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Chancel Choir Practice
Mar 17	10:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Worship Committee
Mar 17	6:00 p.m.	F.H. Foyer	Women’s Bible Study
Mar 18	5:30 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Pre-School Staff Meeting
Mar 19	5:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Pre-School Training
Mar 19	9:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
Mar 19	10:00 a.m.	Resource Room	Bible Study
Mar 19	11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
Mar 19	4:30 p.m.	Sanctuary	Bell Choir Practice
Mar 19	5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Chancel Choir Practice
Mar 20	3:00 p.m.	Resource Room	United Women in Faith
Mar 20	5:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Women’s Emmaus Send off
Mar 23	5:00 p.m.	Sanctuary	Women’s Emmaus Closing
Mar 24	6:00 p.m.	F.H. Foyer	Women’s Bible Study
Mar 26	9:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
Mar 26	10:00 a.m.	Resource Room	Bible Study
Mar 26	11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
Mar 26	4:30 p.m.	Sanctuary	Bell Choir Practice
Mar 26	5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Chancel Choir Practice
Mar 31	10:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Worship Committee
Mar 31	6:00 p.m.	F.H. Foyer	Women’s Bible Study