

FOREST FIRE

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

September 2026

A Word from Pastor Drew

"Clothed with Kindness

Colossians 3:12-17

12As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 13Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

This is a devotional about kindness, simple kindness. I'm talking about the woman who runs the cash register at the store. She's had a hard day. Her face is lined with weariness. Her hair is soaked with perspiration. She's beginning to be irritated at the customers, and you're next in line. I'm talking about the guy who brings all his problems from home to the office and spreads them around. I'm talking about the neighbor who is lonely, desperately lonely, but whose loneliness becomes an incessant and inconvenient demand.

There are people around all of us every day who serve as the occasion to show kindness. Sometimes we do; sometimes we don't, but you know what I'm talking about. I'm talking about kindness, simple kindness.

Now, when the Bible uses the word kindness, it doesn't mean the best part of me expressed toward others. It means ***something that would not be possible were it not a gift from God***. When the Bible uses the word kindness, it means looking at other people in the light of what God is doing in the world. It's a refusal to treat people according to the customs and mores and the traditions of the status quo of the world around us and an insistence on seeing them and treating them in light of who they will become in God's future.

Many years ago, in the 1840's, a Missouri country congregation listened to a sermon by a young preacher who had walked twenty miles to deliver it. Exhausted, famished, this youth faltered, floundered, and failed. The people were disgusted. They did not know he had walked 20 miles. When the service was over nobody offered him food or shelter, but as he started down the long road with a breaking heart, the janitor, who happened to have been a former slave, asked him to share his humble meal in a nearby shanty. Years passed. The young exhorter became known as a preacher, and his churches increased in size, and eventually he was elected Bishop. And so, after a full generation, Methodist Bishop Enoch Mather Marvin, a man of world-wide reputation, once more stood in that very same location to dedicate a great country church. The whole community was assembled; it was a tremendous event in their lives. When the service was ended, many crowded about offering lavish hospitality, but the Bishop waved the all aside and, looking all around him, found the old janitor still there. And he said, "When I was here years ago, I was none too good for you, and I am none too good for you today. I will go with the one who was kind to me." And he went again to break bread in that janitor's home.

How will we receive our Lord? Christ comes to us unawares, in those who are most vulnerable, most broken, most in need of our kindness. Jesus warns that he will say to those who were never moved by compassion:

“Depat from me, you cursed, for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me.”

Our judgement would seem to be by such simple acts of loving kindness. Not by grandiose acts, not by well publicized stunts before the multitudes. Not with any reward in mind. Just the simple deep-seated disposition to be patient and kind toward those who have no power to do for themselves.

Pastor Drew

Friendshipfrom Ron & Marilyn Pennel



This is chapter 2 for Marilyn Kemp and Ron Pennel.

In chapter 1, Ron was married to Judy Pennel (Jackson-Madison County Library) and the father of two girls. He had a career in education, non-profits, and government. Marilyn was a teacher for 35 years and the mother of two. Her husband, Bill, was a teacher at Jackson State Community College and a marathon runner. After over forty years of marriage each and within a span of two years, Ron and Marilyn's spouses both died, leaving them alone. What is so strange about this whole situation is that they vaguely knew each other! They were both at Lambuth College together for one year, and Marilyn was a friend of Judy's, but they had never even spoken to each other. A belated sympathy note provoked Ron to look her up in the Lambuth annual. You can guess the rest of the story!

In chapter 2, both are retired and have been married for almost 10 years. They share six grandchildren: Caroline and William Prewitt; Rainey, Ryan, and Porter Fellows; and Cash Kemp. One of Ron's daughters (Carrie) is the librarian at JCM, and Emily is an administrator for a large power company in Little Rock. Marilyn's daughter (Elizabeth) is a veterinarian, and her son, William, is a dispatcher for FedEx.

Forest Heights United Methodist Church has been a blessing to our chapter 2 life. We have found a whole group of people who are loving and accepting. Perhaps the most appealing characteristic of Forest Heights is that it gives opportunities for service. If you want to do something for someone else, the folks at Forest Heights will find you a place where you are needed. It also helps that our church is a part of the United Methodist Church, a church to which Marilyn and Ron have always belonged.

Friendship, from one to the other Be blessed

Nurture Area News

An big thank you to all who helped prepare and serve during our Fellowship Lunch on August 23rd. Our Grill Masters, John, Bill, and Colt (Bill's grandson), provided delicious burgers and hot dogs, and Janette and Paul's Baked Beans were a hit. Thank you too, to the Pooles for the ice cream cups and Marcia Tate for sharing Amy's surprise birthday cake for our dessert.



Our thanks to Jordan and Margaret for leading us in the Cokesury Hymn Sing. What fun we had raising our voices in song.



Our Children's Center will receive \$1,657.00 from your donations given at the lunch. This generous gift will be used to fill their supply cabinet for the Fall term. Thank you Forest Heights for your continued sharing of God's gifts of love and caring.

Our Chancel Choir has begun rehearsals for the Christmas Cantata, *"This Is Christmas"* by Mary McDonald. The cantata, will be held on December 13th in the afternoon. Come, join us!

The Sojourners Class will begin it new Quarter of study on September 6th. The title for this season is "Faith and Faithfulness" based on the Book of Hebrews. This discussion based class is led by five teachers who share insights and knowledge in engaging and thought provoking styles. We meet in the Resource Room on the second floor of the main building at 9:30 each Sunday. Everyone is welcome!

On September 16th, Pastor Drew will begin a 6-week study called *"Introducing the Bible"* by William Barclay. Books for the study can be ordered from Amazon for \$11.07 plus shipping. If you prefer to order the books individually, you will have to pay the additional tax charges. The church can order the books tax free. There is a signup sheet on the communication desk for those who wish to have the church order books for them. Please put your name and the number of books you need on the sheet. The church's order will be placed on September 8th. This allows time for the order to be received before the class begins. You can pay the church for your books when you receive them.

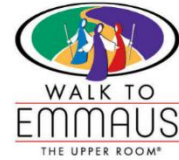
With the start of the new school year, our Young Adults Bible Study, led by Rev. Harrell Nation will again be meeting in the Resource Room every Tuesday at 5:30. They invite everyone, particularly those who are unable to come to the daytime study, to come on Tuesday evenings to join them.

Outreach / Missions

Room at the Table: we continue to welcome 70 - 80 men, women, and children to our table at Studio 45. Thank you to Cheryl and Callie for being our featured chefs in Aug. Marianne Archer and Pam Finney will take the helm in Sept along with our faithful team of servers. Room at the Table will be Sunday, September 27. Please see the sign up sheet on the Communication Table to see where you can serve.

Supporting RIFA “Pack the Bus” A small RIFA school bus bank will be placed on the counter by the coffee pots in the Fellowship Hall during Fellowship Time each Sunday. This bus is for you to contribute your pocket change to help the RIFA Backpack ministry. Place your change or bills in the school bus bank through the month of September. At the end of the month, the bus will be returned to RIFA for their ministry to feed Jackson-Madison county school children needing weekend meals. Any check contributions should be sent directly to RIFA.

The Walk to Emmaus is a wonderful 72 hr. spiritual renewal weekend coordinated by The Upper Room of the United Methodist Church. This falls retreat dates are: MEN'S RETREAT, OCTOBER 1 - 4 and WOMEN'S RETREAT, OCTOBER 15 - 18. Both retreats will be held at Lakeshore in Eva, TN. Please see Pastor Marcia Tate, or Kevin or Susan Wheatley if you are interested in attending.



Drew,

Once again, Forest Heights is privileged to welcome the Emmaus Community to host the opening and closing services at our church. Your Walk to Emmaus actually begins here at Forest Heights!

Amy's Closet: With school starting again, our teachers are needing your support – both in prayer and with material supplies. Let's fill Amy Tate's closet again this year. Please bring your items to the church office. (Did you know, you can order on AMAZON and have it delivered directly to the church – saves gas and time!) Her needs list includes:

- Notebook paper
- Pencils
- Pocket folders
- Kleenex
- Hand Sanitizer
- Disinfectant wipes



Welcome new members We want to welcome Hugh and Michelle Archer as our newest members at Forest Heights. They and their grandson, Emerson, have been attending Forest Heights for some time and joined the church on August 2nd. Hugh and Michelle are familiar faces to many of us. Hugh is a brother of John Archer Jr. and the son of retired pastor, John Archer Sr., whose affiliation is with Forest Heights. Michelle mentioned that their children grew up in Forest Heights' Preschool and Emerson is part of the Preschool's Summer Program. We are so happy to have them join us.

AED Training

Training on the Automatic Electric Defibrillator purchased by the church for medical emergencies was held Monday evening, August 3rd, at 5:30 p.m., in our Fellowship Hall. Janet Compton instructed 17 members of the congregation on the correct procedures if a medical emergency should arise.



The AED has been assembled, the batteries installed, and has been placed in its cabinet just outside the double doors on the west side of the Fellowship Hall.

The folks at the training agreed that we hope we will never have to use it, but are grateful that it is available if ever needed.



United Women in Faith

The United Women in Faith held their annual dinner meeting on August 20th. We enjoyed the buffet and discussed the upcoming activities for the rest of this year.

Thank you to everyone who supported the casserole sale held by the United Women in Faith. With your support we had proceeds of about \$900 which will be donated to the Reelfoot Rural Ministry Christmas Store teen room.

FROM THE SPRC

One of the duties of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) is to evaluate/review the church staff annually to encourage effective ministry. Those evaluations will occur during September and October. The committee does not oversee or manage the staff; that is the responsibility of the pastor. However, the SPRC is responsible for the communication of the ministry goals and priorities of the congregation with the staff and evaluating the work of the staff members. As such, your input is welcome at any time. Please feel free to contact Marianne Archer, SPRC chairperson, with anything you wish to share. You can contact her at 731-935-9696 or marianne.archer@outlook.com.

MEET THE CHURCH STAFF *For the next few months, a different staff member will be highlighted in this section of the newsletter. This month we focus on Our pianist – Margaret Harrison*



A few months ago, you were introduced to Margaret Harrison in the “Friendship” column of this newsletter. You read how she grew up in a Methodist preacher’s family and continued to center her life around the church. She realized at an early age that she wanted music education to be her career, and she followed that dream as a high school music teacher and then as a church musician. Margaret has served in many ways, in many churches, always answering the call to use her God-given gift of music.

Margaret’s family is so important to her. She has two daughters, eight grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren (plus spouses of children and grandchildren). They have a house full whenever they get together! Several of those family members have shared their musical talents with us at Forest Heights in worship. We are especially appreciative that she brought her grandson, Jordan, to us, not knowing that we would soon need a music director. What a legacy, not only of music but also of ministry, Margaret has passed down!

Margaret came to Forest Heights, looking for a traditional worship service, thinking she had retired from leading music. But God had other plans! It just so happened that we were restarting our handbell choir. Margaret agreed to play with us, and it wasn’t long before she was asked and agreed to direct the handbell choir. At almost the same time, she offered to help with our women’s Tapestry ensemble, and that also turned into a directing position. Did you know she does both of those “jobs” as a volunteer? In addition, she was in a rotation playing the Clavinova keyboard on Sunday mornings, joining the pianist in accompanying the congregational singing. Then, about a year ago, our pianist resigned, and Margaret agreed to take this paid staff position while continuing her “volunteer” directing jobs as well. Goodbye, retirement! We are so fortunate to have someone of Margaret’s talent and experience in our music program, and, especially, as our pianist. God led Margaret to a church where she was needed, and she answered His call once again. Thank you, Margaret!

Happy Birthday & Anniversary

September Birthdays

3	Bill Wyatt
7	Mike Poole
15	Rev. John Archer Sr.
16	Carol Bryant
17	Richard Gullledge
20	Woody Williams
24	Roy Morgan Jr.
26	Richard Hudson
29	Greg Clanin

September Anniversaries

20	Brenda & Richard Gullledge
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Calendar for September 2026 - find the **Weekly Calendar** under the “**Events**” tab on fhumc.com

September	1	5:30 p.m.	Resource Room	Young Adult Bible Study
		6:00 p.m.	Gym	Wheatley Team
September	2	11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
		12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
		5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Choir Room
September	6	9:15 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Fellowship Time
		9:30 a.m.	Resource Room	Sunday School
		11:00 a.m.	Sanctuary	Worship
September	7	Church Office Closed – Labor Day Holiday		
September	8	5:30 p.m.	Resource Room	Young Adult Bible Study
		6:00 p.m.	Gym	Wheatley Team
September	9	11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
		12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
		4:30 p.m.	Bell Room	Handbell Practice
		5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Choir Practice
September	10	5:30 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	SPRC Committee meeting
September	12	8:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall & RR	Emmaus
September	13	9:15 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Fellowship Time
		9:30 a.m.	Resource Room	Sunday School
		11:00 a.m.	Sanctuary	Worship
September	14	10:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Worship Committee
September	15	5:30 p.m.	Resource Room	Young Adults Bible Study
		6:00 p.m.	Gym	Wheatley Team
September	16	10:00 a.m.	Resource Room	Bible Study – Introducing the Bible
		11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
		12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
		4:30 p.m.	Bell Room	Handbell Practice
		5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Choir Practice
September	17	3:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	United Women in Faith
		5:30 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Special Church Council Mtg.
September	20	9:15 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Fellowship Time
		9:30 a.m.	Resource Room	Sunday School
		11:00 a.m.	Sanctuary	Worship
September	21	October Newsletter Articles due in office		

Calendar for September 2026 cont.

September	22	5:30 p.m.	Resource Room	Young Adult Bible Study
		6:00 p.m.	Gym	Wheatley Team
September	23	10:00 a.m.	Resource Room	Bible Study – Introducing the Bible
		11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
		12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
		4:30 p.m.	Bell Room	Handbell Practice
		5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Choir Practice
September	26	6:00 p.m.	Sanctuary	Emmaus
September	27	9:15 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Fellowship Time
		9:30 a.m.	Resource Room	Sunday School
		11:00 a.m.	Sanctuary	Worship
September	28	10:00 a.m.	Fellowship Hall	Worship Committee
September	29	5:30 p.m.	Resource Room	Young Adult Bible Study
		6:00 p.m.	Gym	Wheatley Team
September	30	10:00 a.m.	Resource Room	Bible Study – Introducing the Bible
		11:00 a.m.	Choir Room	Tapestry Practice
		12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	Ladies of the Yarn
		4:30 p.m.	Bell Room	Handbell Practice
		5:30 p.m.	Choir Room	Choir Practice