



THE MESSENGER
OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2020
Our Mission: Love God, Love Neighbor, Serve the World

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
134 CUSTER AVENUE
VANDERGRIFT, PA 15690

724-568-5575
firstmethodist@comcast.net
firstumcvandergrift.org

Worship at 11:00 am until further notice



Thanksgiving will be a very sad one for many who lost loved ones this year. However, we must not forget that we have much for which to be grateful during this time of uncertainty and confusion.

A PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

Generous God, I am so grateful for everything that you have given me. Thank you so much for the loved ones in my life, and for the many ways in which I am cared for and supported on a day to day basis. Thank you for the opportunities where I can serve and give to others. Thank you for the rich tapestry of colors throughout creation, for the beauty that is all around me, and for the skies and the ever-changing environment that surrounds me. My heart is so grateful for all that you have bestowed upon me within my life. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. It is in your name that I sing my praises! Amen.



5:30 pm on the first Monday of every month.
 October at New Beginnings pavilion.
 Subsequent months on ZOOM.

DOLLAR \$ DINNER

4-6 pm the third Wednesday each month.

FREE CURBSIDE LUNCH

11:30 am, Saturday, October 10
 (6-inch hoagie, chips, snack cake, water)
 Please bring a non-perishable item for the food pantry.

FAMILY PROMISE

Currently there are no families participating in Family Promise. However, if you wish to volunteer at any time in the future, contact Crissy/Keith Riffer at 724-567-6438 or Sandy Crooks at 724-236-0930.

LLOYD BEIGHLEY COMMITTEE

6:30 pm, first Wednesday of the odd months of the year.
 Next meeting: November 4
 Lloyd Beighley Committee will sponsor a **free curbside lunch** on Saturday, October 10. Please bring a non-perishable food item to donate to the food pantry.



SEWING GALA

Canceled until further notice due to COVID-19.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Special Meeting scheduled for 6:30 pm, Monday, October 19, to discuss the book Small Church Checkup.
 6:30 pm, 3rd Monday every other month:
 Next regular meeting: November 16.

BYKOTA CIRCLE

Will meet at 7:30 pm on
October 1 and December 3.

In October BYKOTA plans to address cards for shut-ins for Halloween and Thanksgiving. They have 18-20 on their list. If you know of anyone who would appreciate a card, or who has recently suffered an illness or has had surgery, please let Ann, Jodi, or Marcy know and they will be included on the list. They have also been sending cards during the COVID Pandemic to let people know they are not forgotten by the church, as many are hesitant to attend church for health reasons.

In December they will wrap gifts for their HOPE Center family. Every year BYKOTA sponsors a family, and Jodie has graciously volunteered to shop for them again this year. In addition to our HOPE family gifts, we plan to make and send small gifts and Christmas cards to our shut-ins and/or those who live alone.

NEW BEGINNINGS DINNERS

3rd Saturday every month
Take-Out Only

Menu

October menu undecided.

Adults \$9; Children \$5

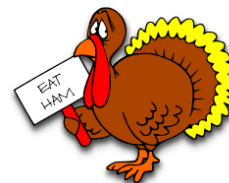
November: Sorry, free turkey dinner canceled.

ANNUAL CHARGE CONFERENCE

6:30 pm, Tuesday, October 13, at Mt. Zion
United Methodist Church, Girty. Rev. Greg
Golden will preside. The Kiski and the Elderton
Charges will be in attendance.



Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday,
November 1. Set clocks back one hour before
going to bed the night before.



RON'S TURKEYS

You may donate to Ron's Turkeys any time
through Sunday, November 15.
Your donations will go to the New Hope Food
Pantry to help to pay for turkeys for those who
obtain food from the food pantry.



Food Pantry
Donations Needed

**The New Hope Food Pantry is
always in need of donations
of food or money so that they
can buy food.** Food is

distributed from 9:30 – 11:30 am on the third
Tuesday of every month. All non-perishable
items as well as paper products are needed.

WOMEN IN MISSION

Women in Mission continues to collect items
needed for UMCOR Health Kits. They also
collect toiletry/personal care items for both
boys and girls for the A-R Viking Closet. Lists
of needed items are available at both
churches.



A Community Sponsored Program

Kids are always hungry.

These little kids need your help!

The Food 4 Kids Program provides weekend
food for pre-K through 3rd grade kids. Food
items are not being accepted at this time.
However, donations of money are always
appreciated. To donate money, make your
check payable to Food 4 Kids and mail it to:

Food 4 Kids

c/o First Evangelical Lutheran Church
PO Box 275, Apollo, PA 15613



There is no information to provide regarding
Operation Christmas Child at this time.

OUR SHUT-INS

Willavene Brubaker

Pleasant Ridge Personal Care Home
981 Pleasant Hill Road
Leechburg, PA 15656

Thelma Detar

151 Goodview Drive
Apollo, PA 15613

Helen Marinelli

Oak Skilled Nursing
Room 35A, 5225 Wilson Lane
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Ione Mink

Rosebrook Assisted Living
723 S. Pike Road
Sarver, PA 16055

THANK YOU

Thanks to everyone for all of your cards, support, and well wishes that were sent my way when I made my move to Rosebrook several months ago.

Ione Mink



CONGRATULATIONS

Jim and Peggy Fulton celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary in June. They were married on June 21, 1958, the last couple to be married in the old church before it was remodeled. Rev. Smeltzer officiated the ceremony. Congratulations to Jim and Peggy.



Special prayer requests, hospital notifications, etc., should be directed to:
Church Office 724-568-5575
Pastor Sara 724-882-9672
Jane Perkins 724-568-2270



*In Sympathy
To the Families of:*

Gillen Geary

who died on April 11, 2020,

Richard Albright

who died on March 21, 2020,

John Parsons

who died on June 2, 2020.

A memorial service for Gillen Geary is scheduled for 11:00 am, Saturday, October 24, at the Oakmont United Methodist Church.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

2	Mattie Empfield	17	Savannah Krauth
6	Walter Frederick	23	Lauren Hoover
9	Robert Baustert	27	Richard Castle

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

Bryan and Tamara Baum

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3	Khloe Taylor Radebaugh	15	Danielle Stewart
3	Matthew Robison	18	Nicholas Tatar
3	Gregg Knabb	18	Thelma Detar
5	Susan Shaner	19	Sara Boyer
8	Madison Troup	23	Amanda Short
9	Adam Short	28	Larry Hoover
13	Sierra Piper		

DECEMBER

3	Ezekial Young	16	Gwenneth Mottura
4	Amy Snyder	16	Rebecca Pietron
4	Joyce Moore	23	Carol Parsons
6	Janessa McElfresh	25	Jesus
7	Dave McElfresh	25	Matthew Troutner
9	Les Walsh	26	Ashley Young
9	Betty Leeker	26	Verna Cuglietta
12	Cathy McElfresh	28	Laura Mae Cuthbert
12	Lang Marks	28	Peggy Fulton
13	Jane Perkins	30	Randy Spillers

Laura Cuthbert will celebrate her 100th birthday on December 28, 2020.



Sacred Space



Recently I have been a part of several conversations amongst other clergy where “sacred space” was discussed. Some of these conversations were specifically in regards to worship experiences and the other was literally about finding a geographic/physical location that was sacred to those of us participating in the conversation.

Many of us consider sacred space (especially for worship) to be the church sanctuary. The place most of us have gone to all of our lives on Sunday mornings to pray, sing, hear the Word of God proclaimed, and to fellowship with our sisters and brothers in Christ. I personally also find “sacred space” when I walk along a flowing stream or sit beside a waterfall. Different things connect us in different ways to the time and place we find sacred.

And yet this year, “sacred space” has been transformed for so many people throughout the world. For several months, the only option we had for “sacred space” was our living rooms or offices as we “zoomed” church. In June, the parking lot at New Beginnings became “sacred space” for some of us. And how wondrous it has been to worship outside under the sun in the beauty of God’s creation. Some people have returned to the “traditional sacred space” of the sanctuary at Vandergrift when we moved back into the building in July.

If you are either unable or unwilling to return to worship in person (whether it be inside or outside) and choose to join us virtually, I would urge you to create a “sacred space” (if you have not already done so) in whatever place you use to be a part of the worship time we offer. Light a candle, have your Bible and your hymnal (if you have one) with you so you can turn to it at the appropriate time in the service, hang a cross upon the wall or stand it up on the table, or have a plant or flower arrangement in honor of God’s beautiful creation in the space. All these items can add to the atmosphere of your worship experience.

And if you are joining us virtually, I would encourage you not to just “watch” worship but participate fully each Sunday. Our world continues to evolve and change and I urge each of you to continue to be patient and **faithful** in your support and participation in the life of the church.

With much love and many blessings,

Pastor Sara



COVID 19 & Church Finances

First, I would like to thank all the members and friends of the Kiski Charge (New Beginnings and First UMC, Vandergrift) for their continued prayers, presence, and financial support. As we have heard it said many times this year: we are living in unprecedented times. Who would have ever imagined our church buildings being closed for months at a time? And while the building may have been closed, the church itself was alive and well.

We have adapted worship, Bible study, Messy Church, book study, and meetings to virtual formats and/or outside events. We have all been operating on a huge learning curve. Thank you for your patience, your encouragement, and your diligence in stepping forward when needed.

Some of you have inquired about the church finances especially considering that what we know as church attendance has changed as well as giving patterns. But through your faithfulness and some "outside" help, we are holding our own through the pandemic.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security ("CARES") Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. It is the third relief package enacted by Congress in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and the most extensive of the three pieces, providing \$2.2 trillion in relief funds to state governments, business, non-profits and individuals.

Paycheck Protection Program ("PPP"): This piece of the CARES Act provides a safety net for small businesses with less than 500 employees, creating an incentive to keep those employees working. It will effectively work like a federal grant program, such that the Employer (churches in our case) will NOT ever have to repay the loans, so long as the funds are fully utilized to pay qualified payroll and non-payroll expenses.

Key provisions of the Paycheck Protection Program: Covers payroll costs, healthcare premiums and benefits, employee salaries, mortgage interest (but not prepayments or principal payments), rent payments, utilities and other interest payments; Covers up to 24 weeks for these qualified expenses; and pays the Employer the lesser of 2.5 times the average monthly payroll or \$10 million.

Both New Beginnings and First UMC applied for and were approved for the PPP program. New Beginnings was awarded a larger amount because that church is the paying agent for the pastor's salary. That was a benefit to both churches. All the money awarded to both churches has been fully used according to the guidelines established by the federal government. Soon, we will be applying for the forgiveness portion of the program.

I would encourage you to continue to be faithful in your financial support to the church. I am so pleased to report that giving at both churches is ahead of where we were last year at this time (in spite of the pandemic). **Way to go! THANK YOU!** If you are unable to join us for in-person worship and instead worship virtually, please remember to send in your gifts.

As you know, we are not through this yet. We continue to adapt and look for new and unexpected ways to continue in mission and ministry. Please watch for email, Facebook, and snail mail updates as we move forward.

Task Force Update

Task Force Members:

Geri Ibrahim, Jack & Shirley Schwab, Royanne Brayshaw, John & Carole Copeland, Char Headlee

Mary Ellen Ankeny, Mark Mottura, Robin Davis, Dale Frederick, Tina Mottura, Joan Rinaldi, Keith Riffer

Pastor Sara

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of the task force. Leadership from both churches participated in our meetings that are held via ZOOM. It has been very helpful to have a wide range of experience and opinions as we have met. There is much to balance as we try to satisfy both the state requirements and the protocols and guidelines as established by our Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi and the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. And to be completely honest, we have not always agreed but we are trying to find the best way forward through this ongoing situation.

At our September meeting, we agreed that the first Sunday of November we would resume in-person worship **in the sanctuary** at New Beginnings. Because the actual space at New Beginnings is rather small and we still must socially distance, we will be requiring people to make a reservation each week to attend worship. Please email or call the church to reserve your spot: 724-478-4525 or nbumcapollo@gmail.com Face masks must be worn. If you do not have one, one will be provided for you.

We will still be live streaming the worship service so if you have the capability to worship virtually we would encourage you to do so. This will allow folks who do not have the technology for virtual worship to continue to be a part of our worshipping community. We will be having people from both New Beginnings and First (Vandergrift) participate in leading the service along with Pastor Sara since we are streaming to **and** for both congregations.

We have been so blessed since we started parking lot church that we have had almost entirely great weather. Thank you to everyone who helped make that happen. Dale Frederick, Jack & Shirley Schwab, John Copeland, Mark Mottura, and Patti Albert (along with various worship leaders and bathroom monitors) have been a true blessing. Their flexibility and willingness to adapt to new situations has been wonderful.



Saturday, October 31

1 – 3 P.M.

New Beginnings UMC

1559 State Route 56 East, Apollo

- Safety precautions will be in place. All adults are asked to wear a mask.
- All cars in the lineup must have someone to distribute candy.
- The walk through will be one-way only.
- A bagged lunch will be provided for everyone.

If you wish to include your car in the Trunk or Treat lineup, please arrive at 12:30 p.m.





Advent Fellowship & Devotions

Lessons from St. Francis

December 1, 8, 15, and 22

5:30 PM @ New Beginnings UMC

1559 State Route 56 East, Apollo

A light meal will be served then we will adjourn to the sanctuary for a time of reflection as we journey through the season of Advent in preparation for Christmas! We will also enjoy a time of singing some of our favorite Christmas carols & hymns.

- Safety precautions will be taken.*
- Masks are required.*

A combined ministry event of New Beginnings UMC & First UMC (Vandergrift)



LIVE NATIVITY*

Walk-through Event

(Including Live Animals, Scripture,# & a bagged snack)



Saturday, December 12th

4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

New Beginnings United Methodist Church

(in cooperation with First United Methodist Church, Vandergrift)

1559 State Route 56 East

Apollo, PA 15613#



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***Social Distancing & Masks Required #**

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