

# First Things

Issue No. 7

A weekly publication of First United Methodist Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

February 21, 2021

## Lenten Daily Devotions

On Ash Wednesday, FUMC began emailing daily devotions, which will run through Easter, to everyone on our email list. If you are not receiving these Lenten reflections and would like to, contact the church office. Those who are receiving them can opt out of the daily email by letting the church office know (dgallaher@fumcor.org). (Please do not “unsubscribe” to stop receiving these Lenten devotions. If you hit the unsubscribe button, our system will remove you from all future church-wide emails.)

## The Walk Sermon Series Coming to Contemporary Worship

During the season of Lent, our Contemporary Worship service will be offering a sermon series on Adam Hamilton's book, *The Walk*. Each week the pastors will focus on one of five essential spiritual practices rooted in Jesus' own walk with God and taught throughout the New Testament. This will certainly be a different take on the season of Lent, but our hope is that this series will help you to deepen your own walk with Christ in new ways as we prepare to celebrate Easter. If you have questions about this sermon series, contact Rev. Chris Black (cblack@fumcor.org).

The themes are:

- February 21 Worship and Prayer: A Living Hallelujah
- February 28 Study: The Importance of Listening and Paying Attention
- March 7 Serve: Here I am, Lord, Send Me
- March 14 Give: Where your treasure is...
- March 21 Share: Going Fishing, Reflecting the Light
- March 28 (Palm Sunday) Putting it all together: The Five Practices from the Cross
- April 4 (Easter Sunday)

## Drive-thru Girl Scout Cookie Booth

Come support Girl Scout Troop 21161 at its drive-thru cookie booth at the Vienna Road entrance Saturday, February 27, from 1:00–3:00 p.m. Help the girls earn a trip to Savannah.

## Thank You

Thanks for the kindness shown to our family during the loss of George. We appreciate our caring church family.

Sincerely,  
The Wilsons

## Our Church's Digital Transformation—Part 3

In December we began exploring our church's Digital Transformation; in January we looked at the Homebound. This month we look at Music.

The COVID pandemic has created serious challenges for worship music. Consider that for normal speaking we have to stay 6 feet apart, and singing involves much greater acceleration of air. But the further apart singers are, the harder it is to hear and blend with each other. Having singers wear masks muffles their voices. Then there's the visual aspect; it's hard, if not impossible, to shoot a video of a socially distanced band or chorus. Add to this the best practice that a group should only gather for 30–45 minutes at a time.

Take a minute to think: how would you tackle these challenges?  
[Insert Dramatic Pause or Fermata in music-speak]

The answer lies in Seth O'Kegley-Gibson, our Director of Music & Worship, and Jeff Kile, our Director of Contemporary Worship, together leveraging digital technologies in creative ways to make worship music. To begin with, all music is recorded and posted to the church's YouTube channel for people to watch and listen (more on that next month). So the goal is to create a quality audio/visual recording. There are two options: bring musicians together briefly to record, or have them each record their part from home and patch the pieces together later. Both have challenges, but Jeff and Seth are making it work.

That said, recent digital technologies enable it to work; if this pandemic had hit roughly 10 to 15 years ago, the music programs at our church would have had to stop completely until people could gather safely again. It is truly fortunate that our musicians have these new technologies on hand—and know how to use them—to record (from home sometimes), edit, and post the results for us to enjoy. That's no small feat, which I can attest to from having recently volunteered to be a “remote musician.”

All of this is heartening, but there is one challenge digital technologies still can't solve for us: the lack of an audience. Both Seth and Jeff lament the lack of spirit and engagement that a live congregation normally provides. Much of the worship comes from the full participation of everyone in body and voice, where God's spirit inspires musicians and listeners alike.

This lack of fulfillment must be what the Apostle Paul and his churches felt when he was not present to speak to them in person. He wrote letters and waited weeks or months for a reply—if one ever came. Until we can gather safely again, consider at least dropping a note to our musicians to let them know how their efforts are blessing you. One last note: your musical talents are greatly welcome; contact Seth or Jeff if you are willing to volunteer to sing or play!

This series on our church's digital transformation continues; next month we'll focus on Technology. Until then, stay connected!

If you have any thoughts, ideas, or suggestions, please email or call David (davidcfouche@gmail.com, 865.839.4119).

-David Fouché

## In Loving Memory

### Harold "Hal" Schmitt

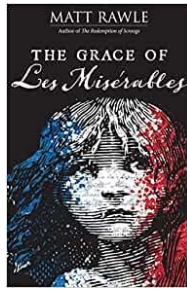
who joined FUMC on March 11, 1955, and died on February 11. We extend love and sympathy to his wife, Jonell, and daughters.

## Hospitalized

No one that we know of

## Our Gifts

Offering this Week	\$42,283
2021 Year to Date	\$208,693
2020 Year to Date	\$241,409
Special Offering	\$830



## Les Miserables Book Study

A Zoom class studying *The Grace of Les Miserables* by Matt Rawle began Thursday, February 18, at 7:30 p.m. Led by Jim Hardy and Terry Pfeiffer, this six-week class is examining the themes of grace, justice, poverty, revolution, love, and hope found in scripture, in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century novel, and in the Broadway show. As the imperfect and relatable characters interact, the class will examine how these ideals work together or in spite of each other in the world. It's not too late to join the class. Email Rev. Mark Flynn (mflynn@fumcor.org) to receive the Zoom link.

## February Special Offering: Family Promise of Roane County

Family Promise of Roane County works in collaboration with faith-based organizations, civic groups, and concerned neighbors to shelter, nourish, transport, and assist families with children who are experiencing homelessness. Local social service agencies refer families to Family Promise. Faith-based host congregations provide overnight lodging, meals, and hospitality during a family's stay.

## Pastors

Mark Flynn, lead pastor  
Chris Black, associate pastor  
Jenny Caughman, spiritual care

## Contact Information

865.483.4357  
www.fumcor.org  
Pastor on call: 865.272.9862



1350 Oak Ridge Turnpike  
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Permit #18  
Oak Ridge, TN  
37830

Return Service Requested



## Who is Michele Boliak and why did she send me a card?

Michele Boliak joined FUMC in August 2017. Michele sings in the choir and completed the 50-hour Stephen Ministry training in May 2018. Most Stephen Ministers serve by visiting a care receiver approximately once a week. However, this is not possible for Michele. Due to health issues, Michele uses a wheelchair and is unable to drive.

Many of you may remember Norma Jeanne Grassel, who called people on their birthdays. Michele has found her own way to honor FUMC members' birthdays and to serve our congregation through her card ministry. That's a lot of cards! She, who understands what it is like to be isolated, also sends cards to our homebound members on holidays.

Michele enjoys this ministry, "I feel like I'm contributing. While I can't go on mission trips, this is something I can do. Also, I know I like receiving something in the mail other than bills, so I like sending cards." Thank you, Michele! If any of you have unused cards around, bring the cards with envelopes or blank cards to the Church office Monday–Thursday from 8:00 a.m.—noon or you can contact Michele (865.250.9175).

## Scholarships Available

Each year, our church offers three scholarships for students: the Bruce and Phyllis Jacobson Scholarship, the Rebecca Taylor Scholarship, and the Jeanette Reynolds Scholarship. Those who have actively participated in our youth ministries at FUMC are excellent candidates for the Jacobson and Taylor scholarships, and those who are interested in full-time ministry work in the UMC are excellent candidates for the Jeanette Reynolds scholarship. Don't let an opportunity for help paying for college pass you by. Detailed information about the criteria for each scholarship and applications are available on the website (fumcor.org/scholarships). You can also email the Youth Director, Kayla Carico, (kcarico@fumcor.org) for more information.

## Lenten Book Study to Begin This Monday, Feb. 22

There is still time to sign up for Desmond Tutu's *Made for Goodness and Why This Makes All the Difference* book study on Monday evenings, from 7:00–8:00 p.m., led by Rev. Jenny Caughman (jcaughman@fumcor.org).

## Memorial Donations for Bill Mooney

Rev. William Mooney died on November 26, 2020. His obituary encouraged people to make donations in Bill's memory to current mission trips. While we do not have any trips scheduled due to the pandemic, we ask that you prayerfully consider making a donation in his memory to the Adult Mission Trip Fund in celebration of Bill's service to our church and its mission programs. You can donate by sending a check to the church with a notation for the Adult Mission Trip Fund.

- Adult Mission Trip Leaders

