

First Family News

AUGUST 2025

1001 Juliana Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101

email: fumcjuliana@wvdsi.net

Phone: 304-428-0111

Dear Beloveds,

This summer has been full of chaos in our world, and I am confessing to you that my heart has been very heavy. We have lost several people across our charge as they have inherited eternal life. Some of them we could not honor by celebrating their lives. Rest assured that All Saints Day in November will be a celebration of life for all these dear ones.

There is chaos and pain everywhere. People in WV are entering a second decade without drinkable water. Hope in the Mountains, an organization that our conference is working with is still doing whatever they can to provide clean water in the Southern Coalfields with the help of many dedicated United Methodist clergy and laity. Floods have been devastating in Southern WV and in Northern WV and, indeed worldwide. We are still collecting items for Flood Buckets. We have some items, but I would like to fill 10 Flood Buckets by the end of the summer. That is ambitious for us, but not impossible, and we have help from Logan Memorial as well.

The news is full of pain. Among other situations, the children of Gaza and their families are starving. I wonder if any amount of aid can save them at this point. My heart is full of prayer for those who are caring for the people there—medical personnel, communities of faith, neighbors and friends—they are all starving as well. I want to go and cook and feed people. I have always wanted to feed people.

I think the desire to cook for others and to feed them is something that I got from my Grandpa Thorn. During the hard times of the depression, he would leave boxes of farm fresh food on the front porches of people in need. He thought no one knew who was doing it, but everyone knew. I heard about it most when he passed away at nearly 93 years old. People would say to me, “you know your grandfather kept us fed during the depression.” The best I can do in a world where people so far away from me are starving--because their neighbors do not want them where they are--is feed people here in our community. Last Monday evening as I was serving at Latrobe St. Mission and talking to the residents there, I felt my heart heal just a bit. The people there are so precious and appreciative for the meals we serve there, but it is the joy they offer me and others that is the best part of this ministry. They give me so much more than I give them.

I wish I knew how to solve all the problems of our world just now. There is so much more to be concerned about, and I am sure so much more that you and I can do, but the most important action of love is to pray and to listen. In praying for our world, we express to God the pain and anguish, concern and even guilt we feel when we think about our world. The other part of praying is listening to God, and in listening to God we will be nudged by the Holy Spirit to follow more deeply the path of Christ and do what we can. Prayer leads to acts of love. I am a firm believer in that.

One of my favorite prayers is a prayer that is a canticle attributed to St. Francis. If you are having problems staying focused in praying, pray this prayer and know that I am praying it with you. When we focus

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

on Christ being present with us and in us and through us, we begin to see each other and the world as Christ sees us. May it be so.

Canticle

Christ, as a light illumine and guide me.
 Christ, as a shield overshadow me.
 Christ under me; Christ over me;
 Christ beside me on my left and my right.
 This day be within and without me,
 lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
 Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
 in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.
 This day be within and without me,
 lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
 Christ as a light; Christ as a shield;
 Christ beside me on my left and my right.

Peace to all,

Pastor Alicia

There are quite a few revisions to the **FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERS & FRIENDS** list. I will be emailing an updated list to all soon.
 Please submit any changes that you are aware of by August 15. Thank you, Cindy

A Fall Retreat



Last March I (Pastor Alicia) was asked to lead a retreat for the clergy and their families for the Southern District. The theme was Celtic Christianity. I worked hard on that retreat, and I had a lot of fun putting it together and sharing it with the participants. Because I put a lot of work into it and because I like leading retreats, I decided that I would offer the retreat to the members and friends of First Church and Logan Memorial. I do not have the place or the cost arranged yet, but I do have a date. Friday October 24 and Saturday October 25 will be the dates. There will be more information next month with all the details provided. Please consider being a part of this retreat. It will be fun!

GUSTKE CENTER needs for August:

Socks and underwear for both males and
 females for ages 12-18.
 Thanks for your support.

Choir Practice and Bell Choir
 Practice will resume
 September 4th.
 Thursdays
 Bells 6 pm
 Choir 7 pm
NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

PRAYER FOR STUDENTS

Loving God, watch over our children as they begin their new school year. Bless them with joy at seeing friends, excitement at new experiences, and a love of learning. Give wisdom and patience to teachers as they serve their students.

In Jesus' name, Amen



The **Kroger Community Rewards** Staff has informed us that we received \$29.88 in rewards for the period of March 1st to May 31st with 17 households participating.

Bible Study to resume in September

Do you remember Disciple Bible Study? Did you participate in Disciple Bible Study in the 1990s or into the 21st century? In my 38 years of ministry, Disciple Bible Study was the best study for people who really want to delve into the study of the scriptures, to consider the context of the people hearing the words for the first time, and what these words say to us today. I led all four levels of Disciple numerous times across the years. I even led a Youth Disciple Bible Study for 6 high school boys. That group was challenging, but I bonded with them over debates about the scripture. I am still in touch with most of them today.

Two years ago, Disciple Bible Study was updated for our times. Coming out of COVID times, the study was restructured, videos were updated, and it was formatted to offer the weekly meeting on zoom so that people from all over can join. My professor and friend, Dr. Bruce Birch, a retired Old Testament professor from Wesley Theological Seminary, who is considered an expert in First and Second Samuel, worked on this updated version, especially the Old Testament section. While I was working on my Doctorate degree, Bruce was doing initially word on the new Disciple Bible Study. We talked a lot about it, and I began to catch Bruce's enthusiasm for the possibilities.

So this fall, I will be offering a class in what has been named Disciple Bible Study Fast-track. The cost of the student materials is \$18.00. The materials are online. The videos are online. The weekly meeting is on zoom. So that means that anyone can join us from anywhere. If there are times that a participant is away for a period of time, the weekly meeting is still within reach. There is no heavy, expensive textbook because all the materials are online.

We will begin the study on Wednesday, September 17th at 7:00 pm. I am hoping that some of Logan folks will join us and some of our regulars who worship with us on livestream will join us. Friends and family members from anywhere can join us. I will cap the participants at around 15 to 20. I hope that we can get at least 12, and I am willing to do it for 10 participants. The study is 24 weeks long, but I will build in breaks around holidays and for special Advent and Lenten studies. I am excited about the possibilities.

LECTIONARY READINGS

August 3

Hosea 11:1-11

Psalms 107:1-9, 43 (UMH 830)

Colossians 3:1-11

Luke 12:13-21

August 10

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

Psalms 50:1-8, 22-23 (UMH 783)

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Luke 12:32-40

August 17

Isaiah 5:1-7

Psalms 80:1-2, 8-19 (UMH 801)

Hebrews 11:29—12:2

Luke 12:49-56

August 24

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalms 71:1-6 (UMH 794)

Hebrews 12:18-29

Luke 13:10-17

August 31

Jeremiah 2:4-13

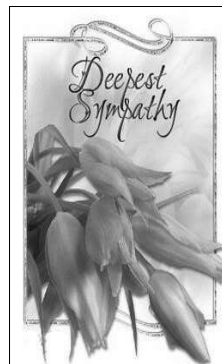
Psalms 81:1, 10-16 (UMH 803)

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Luke 14:1, 7-14

Grief is just love

with no place to go.



**We have had several
members of First
Church reach their
Heavenly home
in the recent past.**

DAVID HAUGHT—He died on May 29 at his residence. He joined the church in 2009. He was 71.

SANDRA LESSIG—She died on July 1 surrounded by the peaceful comforts of home. She joined the church in 1948. She was 86.

DR. YOUNGER (BUD) POWER—He passed at the Arcadia Valley Nursing Facility on July 3. He joined the church in 1973. He was 88.

BARBARA PHILLIPS—She passed on July 16 at her home. She joined the church in 1973. She was 85.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR COMFORT FOR
THEIR FAMILIES.
MAY THEY REST IN
ETERNAL PEACE.**




GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN.

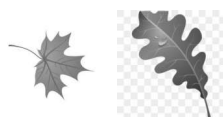
MARK YOUR CALENDARS



- 7 Young at Heart Event on ESTATE PLANNING, 11:30 am
(must have pre-registered)
- 22 SEW-IN, Fellowship Hall, starts at 9 am
- 23 SEW-IN continues until 3 pm
- 25 Latrobe St. Mission dinner, prep in the kitchen, 2:30 pm, serving at the Mission,
6 pm

*The air may cool, but the warmth of
summer lingers in the heart.* 

With every golden leaf waiting in the
wings, summer
bows out gracefully.



PUM NEEDS FOR AUGUST:

toilet paper and cleaning sup-
plies (all-purpose cleaner; dish
soap; bleach; laundry products)



Charlie & Marilyn Casto

August 7

Bob & Sarabeth Harris

August 19

Weekly Opportunities

Sunday: Sunday School, 9:15 am
Worship, 10:45 am

Thursday: Contemplative Knitting,
parlor, 3 pm

Saturday: Women's Zoom Prayer
Group, 8 am

VOLUNTEERS FOR SERVING
as Liturgist or Greeters/Ushers
are always needed. **Please call
the office and offer your help.**

THANK YOU.

**While Pastor Alicia is away
on vacation, (August 1—15)
Rev. Dina Andrews
and Deborah Shaffer will be
filling in for her.**

Blessed Birthday Wishes to:

7-James Greene
8-Judy Crichton
10-Paul Hoblitzell
19-Deborah Shaffer
20-Charlotte Clinton



Prayer List

AMERICA

ISRAEL /PALENTINE

UKRAINE

Barbara Phillips family

Carol Power

Charlie & Marilyn Casto

David Hennen

David Taliaferro

Dennis & Ervleen Shaffer

First UMC

Gary Parsons

Jan Davis

John Hathaway

Johnnie Ferrebee

Lee Carrico

Logan Memorial UMC

Margaret Stemple

Marie Butler

Mike Brannock

Nathan Corathers/family

Pekka Siltanen

Sarabeth Harris

Scot Harper

Sharon Hennen

Tish Oney

Wanda Ashcraft family

Texas and WV flood Victims

THANK YOU LETTER

We received a very nice letter from Rev. Dean Cole who is now the Pastor at East Vienna, Wesley and St. Johns in Vienna. He sends many thanks to our church for our prayer support during his four years in seminary and for the prayer blanket given to him. He sends blessings and peace to our church. The letter is posted on the bulletin board near the church office.

WOMEN'S CARE CENTER NEEDS

Needs for the Sweet Blessings Boutique; fragrance free baby wipes, size 3 diapers, size 4 diapers and size 5 diapers. Feel free to drop donations off at Women's Care Center Monday-Friday between 9am and 5pm (closed daily from 12:30 pm—1:15 pm)

JOIN IN THE NEXT

SEW-IN

Friday and Saturday

August 22 & 23 @ 9 am



At the Underwood Shelter at Fort Borman Park on September 14th. It starts at 4 pm. More details in the September newsletter.

Lighthouse Certification Status

It seems it has been years instead of months since Church Council unanimously approved to begin the process of becoming a Lighthouse congregation. What is Lighthouse designation? It recognizes the churches who have prayed, studied, and completed various steps to become an official congregation who is open in mind, spirit, and the door open to all people who are seeking a congregation that welcomes them. It boils down to how can we show folks radical hospitality. At this time we will also focus on people whose church has permanently closed, divided, or has been impacted by decisions of General Conference 2024.

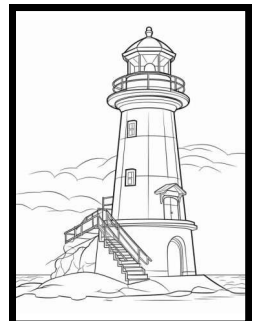
There are specific steps congregations must take to receive recognition. We are in the home stretch. The next step is a meeting with Rev. Amy Shanholtzer, our new District Superintendent and Ken Willard, of Conference staff for Congregational Vitality. A tentative meeting has been set for Sunday, August 24. They will tour the church and help show us how we can be more welcoming from appearance of the exterior/interior, ADA compliance, attitude of the congregation, and our programming.

Please plan to be with us as we head to the finish/beginning line. We will finish the requirements and paperwork, but the joy of welcoming new friends into our fellowship is just really beginning.

Rich and I had not planned to visit First Church on that morning of April 2016. We were running late and decided to attend since we lived only two doors from the church. Most of you now know that Rich and I were members of First Church for a brief time in 1981-82. Sadly, Rich's work took us away much too soon. That didn't seem to matter when we walked in on that April morning. We were warmly welcomed as though we had never left. You do not know how much we needed that at that particular time. The crowning touch was a couple of weeks later Rev. Rhodes, at the end of the service, asked Rich and me to come to the front and then asked you, the congregation, to come forward and encircle us to pray for Rich as he prepared to leave for General Conference 2016 as one of WV's lay delegates. I cannot begin to explain the calm and peace we felt that day. We also knew we had found our new forever church family.

First Church is very good at showing love and acceptance. The Lighthouse process will help us do it a little bit better. At this time we will become the first recognized Lighthouse congregation in the Little Kanawha District.

Deborah Shaffer



CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Alicia Randolph Rapking

Director of Music: Jimmy Sundquist

Financial Secretary: Rebecca Crooks

Administrative Asst.: Cindy Lucas

Handbell Choir Director/Organist/Pianist: Jimmy Sundquist

Custodian: Rob Bauer

Office Hours: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tues. thru Thurs.

Friday 9 a.m. to noon

Phone: 304-428-0111

VOLUNTEER STAFF

Certified Lay Minister: Deborah Shaffer

Contact Information

Admin. Assistant:

fumcjuliana@wvdsl.net

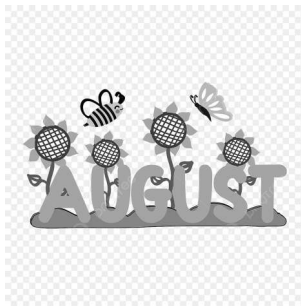
Financial Secretary:

finsecretary@wvdsl.net

Pastor Alicia:

aliciarapking@gmail.com

Website: fumcparkersburg.org



FIRST FAMILY NEWS

AUGUST 2025

First United Methodist Church

1001 Juliana Street

Parkersburg, WV 26101