



THE
CONNECTION
March 2026
Newsletter

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

From the Pastor's Desk

Holy Week

One of the highlights of our church life together is the events surrounding Holy Week. If you are new to our church, you will want to be a part of these special activities.

Palm Sunday: March 29, 10:30 am. We will have one combined worship service in the Main Sanctuary at 10:30. Afterward, we will have a meal together and have a lot of children's activities. It's a great family day- come and join us.

Maundy Thursday: April 2, 6:30 pm. This is a special service which includes Holy Communion commemorating the night of the Last Supper and the arrest of Jesus.

Good Friday: April 3, 6:30 pm. A special Service of Shadows, historically called a Tenebrae Service. This spiritually moving service is built around scripture readings from the passion of Jesus from the Last Supper to His death. The service ends in darkness and silence. My pattern is to do this service every other year, so the last time we hosted this service was two years ago. Invite your friends because this is a memorable service.

Resurrection Celebration: April 4, regular schedule (8:30, 9:45, 11). He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!



Worship Space Changes Update

In December, I wrote a lengthy report on changes in our worship space. I want to now give you an update. We ask for everyone's patience knowing that not all changes will appeal to all people. However, we believe these will be positive improvements.

Remember, these are the objectives for the Main Sanctuary: increase the distance between some of the tight pews, re-align the pews, improve the choke point at the front corners, and restore the kneeling rail to access from behind for better prayer and communion.

-Crossroads Center

New worship banner locations have been added to the side walls. Not only does this visually add to the room, but it also cuts down on the echo improving the acoustics of the room. I've been asked how much the banners cost in case someone wants to make a donation. The ones for the CRC are currently running about \$200-\$300 each. My goal has been to use a more uniform style for new banners in all worship spaces. Let me know if you want to make a donation. They are currently being purchased from the memorial fund.

-Chapel

Worship banners have been added to the Chapel back wall. We have only just begun purchasing banners for this worship space. Banners for the chapel are \$150.

-Main Sanctuary

Screens

New TVs have been added and the old screen behind the altar has been retired. This has worked out well. There are only a couple of spots in the whole sanctuary where a person might not be able to see the very bottom of the TV screen. I've already adapted my sermon slides to appear a bit higher. We limited the screens to the current size because larger screens would require them to stick out from the false balcony edge (which I wanted to avoid).

Banners

New worship banners have already been in use now and I have received many positive comments. Banners through Easter have already been purchased. The main sanctuary banners are a bit larger and are currently running \$180.

Stage/Chancel

Information is still being gathered and cost estimates being obtained. Furthermore, the work may be done all at once or in stages.

After exploring options, the Trustees have voted to completely remove the stage addition and return the platform to its original size. The modesty rail at the front row will be completely removed (and thus special hymnal racks will be added which hang from the bottom of the first pew). The kneeling rail will be returned to its former position.

With the stage and the modesty rail removed, this will now allow all the pews to be re-spaced in an attempt to provide better access. The re-spacing will also make all of the pews more symmetrical. And as a reference/comparison: if the stage had been retained, we would have had to remove two pews per side (four pews total) in order to gain the same amount of space for re-spacing the pews. The Trustees did not think removing pews was the best option.

The changes will also allow a casket to be able to come through the side door at the portico for funerals (as was done years ago) as well as provide a much larger gap between the corner of the kneeling rail and the wall for much safer crowd movement (currently, only one person can move through that very tight spot at one time).

Furthermore, since all of the pews will be moved, we will adjust some of the short pews with handicap/wheelchair spots. Currently, in the front of the sanctuary, those wheelchair spots are in the center aisle and easily accessible, but they are on the outside in the rear- which is not easily accessible. When the pews are re-spaced, the rear short pews will be moved toward the outside and the wheelchair gaps moved to the center aisle. This will obviously affect a few folks in the current seating pattern.

Since we are going to all of this trouble, we will also do some functional flooring remodeling up in the area where the preacher and choir work (called the "chancel" area). We currently have black tile and a hodge-podge of wires, microphone cords, boxes etc. We will open up the floor and reroute/reinstall/consolidate the wiring.

And while we are up there, I hope the damaged bricks can be repaired as well.

Once the stage is removed and the chancel area is finished, then carpet will be addressed. It is possible that we will be able to use what we have. But the trustees will price and explore re-carpeting the entire lower floor of the main sanctuary, including up into the chancel area.

This will obviously be a big project. At present, the plan is to wait until after Easter. Because the work is so extensive, there is a possibility that worship for the main sanctuary will need to be moved to the Crossroads Center for a short time (hopefully no more than one or two Sundays). We have a wedding planned for late June and so all work will need to be finished well before that. Watch church communications for more details as the time gets closer.

I have been asked if people can donate to this project. The answer is yes. The largest single expense will be carpeting if all new carpeting is used. Mark gifts: "Sanctuary Renovation". We have some funds available from our endowment fund, but any gifts would offset that expense.

These changes will cause a few changes in our current worship behavior. People who sit on the short rows in the back will need to adjust seating when the handicap spots are moved to the center aisle. With no modesty rail, the children may move back one row to better keep them "corralled". I will move the puppets to a new spot since I will not be able to sit on the bricks as I do now. Serving communion at the kneeling rail (standing or kneeling as we used to do) may take a bit longer.

This will be a big project. Please pray for our leaders as they move forward with these decisions.

Indebtedness Update

I wanted to conclude this month with some other finance information.

Of those who gave electronically for the last 12 months, 66% check the little box for the parishioner to pay the fees for that transaction rather than the church (I personally give electronically and check the box). That box was something that was new last year.

I was amazed at the amount which has been saved. If you do not check that box, that's OK- this is a service the church provides. Thank you for your giving. But for those who do check the box, the church saved \$9,403 in fees in the last 12 months. Thank you for your generosity

By now, you may have heard the Disaffiliation Loan has been paid off. The finance committee is taking what we were paying on that loan and now applying it to the Crossroads Center mortgage principle. That balance is down to about

\$200,000 so the end is in sight (it was originally one million). If nothing extra is applied beyond our current plan, then that CRC loan should be paid off in about 4 years.

But of course, we would love to pay it off sooner! The next Stained Glass auction will be in March and all proceeds will go toward debt reduction. We also occasionally receive gifts earmarked for debt reduction. It will be truly exciting when we reach this debt-free milestone.

*My Hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness.*

-Pastor Ronnie

HEART FELT THANKS

SOUP-er Bowl Touchdown!

BIG thanks to all who donated to our Soup-er Bowl Sunday and on every Sunday! What a blessing your donations are to our church and community.
-Your Benevolence Team



A Warm Thank You!

The community and I especially appreciate the Yarn Ministry's loving hands making hats to keep them warm. As you can imagine the need for hats has increased with our cold weather upon us. Yesterday I filled up our soup kitchen box with the last of our winter hats. Yes I am also making hats, and it is taking a church of all our gifted hands to keep our soup kitchen people in need warm this winter. Bless you all!

-Deb Lubas / Soup Kitchen Ministry Coordinator



Colorful Thanks!

We received a thank you note from Laura Jo Hust's class to our Yarn Ministry for their donation of yarn & supplies. The students are learning to crochet! Way to be the blessing, Yarnies!



NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Palm Sunday Service & Children's Festival ***March 29****

One Combined Service at 10:30AM / Main Sanctuary
Adult Sunday school / 9:30-10:30AM.

Nursery & Kids Sunday School / 9:30 - 10:15AM, 6 wks-5th grade.

Kids will line up at 10:15AM in the Main Sanctuary
for the procession of the Palms.

Children's Church / 10:45 - 11:30AM.

Lunch Served / 11:40AM.

Children's Festival begins at noon with games, face painting,
bounce house & our annual Easter Egg Hunt.

Bring your Easter basket!

Maundy Thursday / Communion, April 2* 6:30PM / Main Sanctuary / FB Livestreamed

Good Friday / Tenebrae, April 3* 6:30PM / Main Sanctuary / FB Livestreamed

Easter / Resurrection Sunday, April 5* 8:30AM / Christ Chapel

9:45AM / The Crossroads Center / FB Livestreamed
11:00AM / Main Sanctuary / FB Livestreamed
Adult Sunday School 9:45AM & 11:00AM
Nursery, 6wks-3yrs / Kids St.
Children's Sunday School, 9:45AM / Kids St.
Children's Church, 11:00AM / Main Sanctuary

**Childcare available on Kids St. for ages 6 wks-4 yrs.*

**FB live-streamed at FirstCrestview*

Wesleyan Child Care Center Enrollment



Bake Sale

Cookies, brownies, cakes, and pies will be offered on Discovery Sunday, **April 12** in the CRC. All proceeds will go to our Women's Service Group Missions.



MINISTRY UPDATES

Wesleyan Child Care Center

This February, Wesleyan enjoyed a month full of learning, love, and celebration. Each class celebrated Valentine's Day with special parties while talking about God's love and how we can show kindness to others. We also focused on Dental Health Week, teaching students the importance of caring for the teeth God has given them. A local dental office joined us to share a fun and engaging presentation with our students. We are thankful for the opportunity to learn, grow, and partner with our community in meaningful ways.



- Osa Bell (WCCC Director) & staff

Children's Ministry

The Palm Sunday Celebration Easter Egg will be held on March 29. This will be a single service Sunday, and the celebration will be immediately after the service. We hope you will join us for a family fun day that will include a hot dog lunch, games, crafts, bounce houses, and an egg hunt after the service.



Save the date- Vacation Bible School will July 20-23, from 6:00-8:00, with a family evening on Friday, July 24. Our theme this year will be Rainforest Falls. Children will explore the true nature of God and discover what it means to be rooted in relationship with God. We will be setting up an Amazon wish list for supplies. Please be on the lookout for more information about this.

We would like to have a greeter on Kids Street on Sunday mornings for the 9:45 service and on Wednesday evenings. If you would like more information about this volunteer opportunity, please contact the church office.

We are looking forward to focusing on loving like Jesus this month on Kids Street.

Children's Ministry Team / *Vicky Anchor and Angie Woodward*

Women's Service Group

First Methodist Women's Service Group met on February 6, 2026.

Our guest speakers were Abigail Baumann and Drisana from Healthy Start. They have a home visiting program based on risk factors (determined by Healthy Start Screening). It is available to pregnant women, mothers, fathers, and care givers with children under the age of three. We discussed ways that our group can help this important group.



We are gearing up for an active 2026.

- We will be hosting the March Community Dinner on March 18, 2026. Our menu will be: Baked Spaghetti, Salad, Rolls and of course Deserts.
- On April 12, 2026, we will be having a Bake Sale in the Crossroads Center. We will be there for all services.
- We will provide breakfast for the youth on Discovery Sunday April 12.

Our fund raisers will be used to serve our church and community throughout the year.

All FMC ladies and friends of the community are invited to join us for our next meeting, March 6, 2026, at 10:00 in the Crossroads Center Asbury Room.

"Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing." Psalm 100:2

Soup Kitchen Ministry

BLESS YOU ALL for continuing to give and support our Soup Kitchen to provide delicious homemade hot meals each Saturday. Your donations keep us sustainable coupled with the nonprofit donations of bread and pastries allow us to continue to meet our goal to provide healthy full meal choices for our community in need. Did you know that:

- 100% of your Soup Kitchen donations are aligned with that goal, and
- 100% of our Soup Kitchen team consist of loving volunteers.



Sixteen years strong, feeding our community in need we are grateful for your support along with the community and businesses donating canned vegetables, bread, and desserts which help our meals go farther. The Crestview Bulletin Jan 2026 issue featured First Methodist of Church of Crestview Soup Kitchen as Feeding People in Need Warms our Hearts.

As we March through the Winter, we have additional volunteers who donate socks and gloves while our dear Yarnies share their labors of love with handmade winter hats and scarfs that keep people warmer and embraced with all our labors of love.

We welcome volunteers of all ages to donate their time in the Soup Kitchen. Many volunteers need community hours to qualify for scout patches, college credits and wish to give their time to the community and make a difference helping others in need. It is common to see parents and grandparents teaching their children the importance of giving their time helping people in need. It is common to have members from other churches and Eglin Airforce base military volunteer with us. We welcome volunteers so please contact Deb Lubas Soup Kitchen Coordinator to schedule your next volunteer opportunity with us.

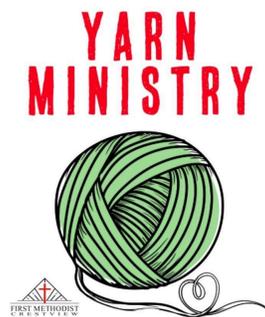
All our volunteers have a strong bond; they are all committed and passionate about loving others through giving, Matthew 25:35 – “I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.”

How to Support the Soup Kitchen? • Want to join us volunteering for the First Methodist of Crestview Soup Kitchen Mission? We invite you to contact us at greenhalghdj@cox.net or text 401-742 4898. • Want to donate food, please place them in the Soup Kitchen refrigerator or counter and text Deb at 401-742-4898. Want to donate socks or gloves please text Deb at 401-742-4898. • Want to donate funds to the Soup Kitchen? Contact the office at 850-682-2018 with Soup Kitchen indicated on the envelope or NOTES section.

Please continue to Follow us on Facebook @FirstCrestview or our website <https://FirstCrestview.com>. Respectfully, Deb Lubas, First Methodist of Crestview SOUP Kitchen Coordinator, 401-742 4898

Yarn Ministry

In this Holy season of Lent we ponder what we can fast from and/or add to our day that will bring us closer to Jesus. I love the prayer at the end of this newsletter. I am often thankful that the work done with our hands helps us cope with the hardness of daily life, the hard decisions we sometimes have to make, the hardness of this world. The time we take to slow down our hearts as we become creative softens the edges of what we see around us. Take a few moments today to fast from worldly cares and take on that which will help you take a deep breath and refocus on WHOSE you are, for God will surely bless you in your quiet creativity.



We adore what we do and who we do it for- thanks be to God!

Our meetings in March will be **Tues, March 10 & 24, at 6:00PM** in Rm 213 (aka Yarnia). We will not meet on our 5th Tuesday this month because it falls on Holy Week. Be sure to join our church family at our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services!

We're looking forward to connecting & reaching out to others to further God's kingdom through loads of yarn and love!

-Cathrin Owens

"May the kindness of the Lord our God be upon us; And confirm for us the work of our hands; Yes, confirm the work of our hands." Psalm 90:17
"We look for wool and linen, and work with our hands in delight." Proverbs 31:13

Crestview Prayer Network

Learn what is going on in the Crestview Christian community!

The Crestview Prayer Network meets the first Wednesday of each month to share fellowship and goings-on in the different churches in the North Okaloosa Area.



The next meeting for the Crestview Prayer Network will be **March 4** at noon, at Hideaway Pizza downtown.

Come pray for your hometown!

CALENDARS

March Greeters, Ushers & Liturgists

***March 29 / PALM SUNDAY SPECIAL SERVICE *
10:30 COMBINED SERVICE IN MAIN SANCTUARY**

Greeters and Ushers

3/29. Ed and Joanne Guzowski, Connie Stapp, Melanie Mathis

Ushers

3/29. Burt Colt, Tom Saunders, Mac McKinley, Dax Reeves

Office Door

3/29 Jim Hight

Lock doors and Lights

3/29 Dax Reeves

Morning Glory / Christ Chapel 8:30AM

Greeters

1- Debbie Watson

8- Peggy Harkness

15- John and Cynthia Leitschuck

22- Mike and Betsy Roy

Ushers

Lowell Scott & Mac McKinley

Liturgists (In Sunday order): 1. Alesha Dabbs 2.Kathy McKinley 3.Bob McCrory
4.Alesha Dabbs

Contemporary / The Crossroads Center 9:45AM

Greeters and Ushers

Greeters & Ushers: 1. Jan Lee 2. John & Marcy Pennell 3. Haley Smith 4. Keller family

Liturgists (In Sunday order): 1. Melvin Candelario 2. Aimee Keller 3. Nell Sutherland 4. Jody Woodward 5. Kathy McKinley

Traditions / Main Sanctuary 11:00AM

Greeters and Ushers

3/1 Rollin and Corolla Anderson

3/8. Glenda McMasters and Connie Stapp

3/15. Eddie and Jayne Hager

3/22. Steve and Kathy Fowler

Ushers

3/1. Tom Giovanini and Eddie Hager

3/8. Tom Saunders and Ed Guzowski

3/15. Dax Reeves and Tom Saunders

3/22. Dax Reeves and Burt Colt

Office Door

3/1– 3/29 Jim Hight

Lock doors and Lights

3/1. Dax Reeves
3/8. Burt Colt
3/15. Mac McKinley
3/22. Eddie Hager

Liturgists (In Sunday order): 1. Phil Estrem 2. Kathy McKinley 3. Margaret Larson
4. Sarah Fordyce 5. Mike Steen

Important Dates in March

March 4- Crestview Prayer Network 12:00PM Hideaway Pizza
March 6- Women's Service Group 10:00AM CRC
March 8- Daylight Savings (clocks forward one hour on Sat, March 7)
-Children's Committee 12:15PM Kids St.
-Youth 12:15PM Conf Rm
March 9- 8th Ave Methodist Men 6:00PM FH
March 10- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213
March 15 thru 18- Stained Glass Auction
March 15- Trustees 3:00PM FH
-Finance 5:00PM Rm 213
March 18- CommUNITY Dinner 5:30PM CRC Hosted by WSG
-Church Council 6:30PM CRC
March 21- Game Night for Grown Ups 4:30-7:00PM CRC (request nursery by
March 15)
March 23- April Newsletter Deadline
-Office Closed / Staff Retreat
March 24- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213
March 29- One Combined Worship Service 10:30AM Main Sanctuary
-Palm Sunday Children's Celebration & Lunch (after worship)

**FH- Fellowship Hall, Conf Rm- Conference Room, CRC- The Crossroads
Center, Youth Rm- Youth Room*

Please see firstcrestview.com calendar for any updates or changes

Looking Forward to April

April 1- Crestview Prayer Network 12:00PM Hideaway Pizza
April 2- Maundy Thursday service 6:30PM Main Sanct.
April 3- Women's Service Group 10:00AM CRC
Good Friday service 6:30PM Main Sanct.
April 5- Easter Sunday
April 6- Easter Monday / office is closed
April 12- Youth Discovery 9:45AM CRC
Women's Service Group Bake Sale CRC
April 13- 8th Ave Methodist Men 6:00PM CRC
April 14- Worship Committee 5:30PM Conf Rm
-Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213
April 15- Small Groups end
April 18 - Game Night for Grown Ups 4:30-7:00PM CRC (request nursery by
4/12)
April 20- May newsletter deadline
April 21- Missions 6:30PM Rm 213
April 28- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213

**FH- Fellowship Hall, Conf Rm- Conference Room, CRC- The Crossroads*

A MOMENT OF REFLECTION



The Fasting / Feasting Life

Fast from judging others;

Feast on Christ dwelling in them.

Fast from fear of illness;

Feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute;

Feast on speech that purifies.

Fast from discontent;

Feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger;

Feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism;

Feast on hope.

Fast from negatives;

Feast on encouragement.

Fast from bitterness;

Feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern;

Feast on compassion.

Fast from suspicion;

Feast on truth.

Fast from gossip;

Feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm;

Feast on prayer that sustains.

Fast from anxiety;

Feast on faith.

- Author Unknown

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH INFO

Sunday Morning Worship Schedule

Morning Glory at 8:30AM

Christ Chapel

The Well / Contemporary at 9:45AM

The Crossroads Center / FB Live

Traditions at 11:00AM

Main Sanctuary / FB Live

First Methodist Office Schedule

Mon - Thurs 9:00AM- 4:00PM

Staff Meetings Mondays 9:30-11:30AM

Lunch 11:30-12:30PM

Office Closure

April 6 / Easter Monday

First Methodist Staff Contacts

Staff:

Pastor - Rev. Ronnie Bearden, drronbearden@hotmail.com
Associate Pastor - Rev. Kathy McKinley, fmcassociatepastor@gmail.com
Church Administrator - Angie Arnold, firstcrestview@gmail.com
Church Secretary - Cathrin Owens, office.firstcrestview@gmail.com
Children's Ministry, kidsstreetcrestview@gmail.com,
Youth Ministry - David Smith, firstcrestviewyouth@gmail.com
Facilities Manager - Chris Woodward, fmfacilities599@gmail.com
Custodian - Jody Waddell, fmcustodian@gmail.com
Music, Contemporary - Rikki Ordinario
Music, Traditional - Kevin Lusk
Organist - Leon Curenton
Wesleyan Child Care Center - Osa Bell /
Director, wesleyanchildcare@gmail.com

Ministry Addresses:

Soup Kitchen- Deb Lubas, fmsoupkitchen@gmail.com
Women's Service Group- wsgcrestview@gmail.com
8th Avenue Methodist Men- David Ordoñez
8thavemethodistmen@gmail.com

First Methodist Church

599 Eighth Ave, Crestview, FL 32536, 850-682-8994

For all the latest from FMC please visit:

Website & calendar: www.firstcrestview.com

App store: FirstCrestview



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