

First Family News

MAY 2026

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Dear Beloved Congregation and Friends,

It is May, or nearly so as I write this. I have always looked forward to May. When I was growing up, May meant that we could wear shorts and go barefoot. My mother was very strict about not going barefoot or wearing shorts until there had been so many days above 75°. Sometimes, April would give us a gift and there were the required number of days hitting that 75° mark, but always, we could count on the month of May. May also meant many more trips to my grandfather's farm, because the strawberries were ripe. When we lived close enough to the farm to go and return in one day, Saturdays during May meant that the whole family gathered to pick the beautiful, sweet red berries and then to cap and freeze them or make jam.

When I was quite young, before I could really do much with strawberries, I would go out into the strawberry patch on those very warm, North Carolina, May Saturdays. I would sit in the middle of the row, with a small quart, berry-stained basket, ready to pick my share for the day, but the smell of ripening fruit, the beauty of that special strawberry red, the curiosity I had for the berries still green, prevented me from being much help. My mother would scold me. My grandfather would laugh at me. I would eat the berries, ripe and red, straight from the plant. I would taste and see how good they were. It was magic. May magic.

When I became a teenager, it was my job to keep our family supplied in jam and jelly. I had two always hungry, older brothers and the snack available to them was peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. I didn't really mind making jam and jelly as the fruit seasons progressed. There was a feeling of accomplishment, of feeling of contributing to our family. I loved the smell of making strawberry jam, especially. I loved the sweetness of the berries, a smell so vivid it was almost as if I could taste it on my tongue as I stirred the hot mixture until it reached the right stage for canning. Skimming the foam off the top of the jam, before putting it into the pint jars, we used, was my favorite part. I knew that later, for supper, there would be piles of my mother's homemade biscuits, made nightly come what may, eaten with lots of butter and foam. Yum.

This year May feels so different to me. Of course, it is a month of transition—sorting through , not just seven years of accumulated stuff, but really through 37 years of ministry stuff, packing boxes, as well as trying to continue with the daily and weekly tasks of ministry. It isn't the first time that I have been at this place, but it is the first time—and hopefully the last time—I experience this time as preparing for retirement. Each day, I think deeply about what all this means to me and the questions that come to me are these:

How have I served God throughout the last 37 years of full-time ministry?

Has God been able to use me?

Has it been enough?

What now? How do I serve God now?

As I try to answer the question I find that there are so many ideas that I have swirling around in my head and heart. I have ideas for creating, for writing, for making liturgical art, for volunteering, for telling stories to and playing with Jack, for discovering people and places I have never been or seen. Every day as I think of these things, I want to plan, to make a list of things to do in retirement. However, as I approach May, I am reminded of the sweet, beautiful, red fruit of my childhood, the exquisite taste of the berries

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

that ripened on the vine with hints of sun and wind and soil and rain, and vividly, I am reminded of these words from Psalm 34:8:

O taste and see that the Lord is good

As I think about what these words are saying to me this May, I am also reminded of my star word of the year, that I chose in worship at Logan Memorial at the first of the year—or rather the word that chose me—REST.

*O rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him,
and He shall give thee thy heart's desires;*

*O rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him,
and He shall give thee thy heart's desires,*

and He shall give thee thy heart's desires.

Commit thy way unto Him, and trust in Him;

commit thy way unto Him, and trust in Him;

and fret not thyself because of evil-doers.

(from Mendelsohn's *Elijah*)

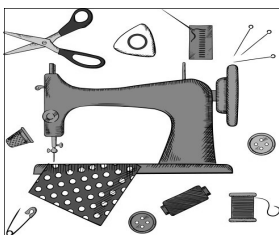
I can't plan my life in retirement in one single month. First, there is rest and then patience. Both rest and patience can lead us to understanding what our desires are and what God's desires are for us. However, we live in a world where rest and patience is not valued. Even in the church, we are always thinking about what else we can do, but sometimes we need to remember that we need to rest and be patient and in doing so, we do not miss the path or the opportunities that God is setting before us.

This is a lesson I am learning and thinking about in my last weeks of active ministry. It is also a good lesson for all congregations to learn. Sometimes it is important to rest and be patient and listen to God and in so doing, we are refreshed and inspired to follow the living Christ into the world that needs us and our love and compassion more than we can ever guess.

So, in these days of transition, I am praying for you beloved. I ask that you pray for me. And that you pray for Pastor Shari.

Peace,

Pastor Alicia



crafting

JOIN IN FOR THE NEXT **SEW-IN**

quilting

Friday and Saturday May 29 & 30

Fellowship Hall Starts both days at 9 am Dinner Friday evening

If you're not crafty, bring a jigsaw puzzle to work.

sewing



On Sunday morning, February 8, I fell as I walked across the bedroom floor and broke 4 bones in my foot and dislocated my ankle bone. It has been a long 2.5 months, and I am still hobbling around with a 4-lb. stability boot and a walker. It has been very difficult for me as I am accustomed to being active.

Thank you to all who kept me in your prayers, sent cards of encouragement, called, and reached out to me in other ways. You never know how important those gestures can be until you are in a vulnerable position. Thank you Church Family!

Deborah Shaffer

PARKERSBURG URBAN MINISTRIES NEEDS:
soups, milk (canned evaporated or dry powdered); canned spaghetti products (Ravioli, Beefaroni, etc.)

Homebound Birthday

Beverly Brannock May 30
1901 Niagara Street
Parkersburg WV 26101



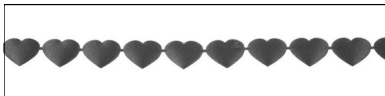
Michael & Beverly Brannock—May 31

BLESSED BIRTHDAY WISHES

May 9-Jimmy Sundquist
12-John Chaney
21-Susan Waters
29-Dean Waters
30-Mary Neal Christian



NO ONE EVER OUTGROWS
THE NEED FOR A MOTHER'S LOVE.



Geraniums for Mothers' Day

Geraniums are \$5 each. They may be picked up following the service on May 10. Please complete the order form below and submit to the church office by **May 5**. Again, any flowers that are left will be planted around the church. Money is due when order is placed. Make check payable to First UM Church with "geraniums" on the *For* line.

_____ Number of geraniums you want to order (\$5 each)

MY NAME _____

IN HONOR of: _____

and/or
IN MEMORY of: _____

Weekly Opportunities

Sunday:

Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.

Worship, 10:45 a.m.

Wednesday:

Zoom Disciple Study, 7 p.m.

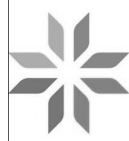
Thursday:

Handbell Choir, 6 p.m.

Sanctuary Choir, 7 p.m.

Saturday:

Zoom Morning Prayer Group, 8 a.m.



United
Women
in Faith

May 13
@ 2 pm
In the Parlor



Church
Council
Meeting

Tuesday
May 5, 4 pm
Assembly Room
ALL WELCOME.



PLEASE PRAY FOR PEACE!



Ada Franklin

Amanda Rubenstein

Andy Cordonier

Barrie Daniels

Carol Power

Cecil (Dina's brother)

Charlie & Marilyn Casto

David Hennen

David Taliaferro

Deborah Shaffer

Dina Andrews

Douglas Mitchell

First UMC

Gary Parsons

Jan Davis

Jaxson Harvey

Jim Rich

Karen Gorrell

Lee Carrico

Lisa Doyle Parsons

Logan Memorial UMC

Margaret Stemple

Marie Butler

Matt Taliaferro

Mike Brannock

Nathan Corathers/family

Pam Corathers

Ron Ferrell

Scot Harper

Sharon Hennen

Teresa Wade

Tish Oney



Dawn and
Jimmy
Sundquist on

the passing of Dawn's sister and
Jimmy's aunt, Denise Stone.

She passed at her home
in Little Hocking, Ohio
on April 17.

MAY 25



MAY LECTIONARY READINGS

May 3

Acts 7:55-60
Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 (UMH 764)
1 Peter 2:2-10
John 14:1-14

May 10

Acts 17:22-31
Psalm 66:8-20 (UMH 790)
1 Peter 3:13-22
John 14:15-21

May 17

Acts 1:1-11
Psalm 47 or Psalm 93 (UMH 781)
Ephesians 1:15-23
Luke 24:44-53

Additional Scripture for ASCENSION SUNDAY

May 17

Acts 1:6-14
Psalm 68:1-10,32-35 (UMH 792)
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
John 17:1-11

May 24

Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b (UMH 826)
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13
John 7:37-39

May 31

Genesis 1:1-2:4a
Psalm 8 (UMH 743)
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Matthew 28:16-20

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



- 1 May Day (Friendship Day)
- 5 Deadline for ordering geraniums for Mothers' Day
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING, 4 pm
- 7 Deadline for reservations for YOUNG AT HEART
National Day of Prayer
- 10 Mother's Day
- 13 Finance Meeting, parlor, 1 pm
United Women in Faith, parlor, 2 pm
- 14 YOUNG AT HEART, Fellowship Hall, 11:30 am
- 17 Ascension Sunday
- 24 PENTECOST SUNDAY, **WEAR RED**
Heritage Sunday
Aldersgate Sunday
- 25 MEMORIAL DAY
Latrobe St. Mission Dinner, 6 pm
- 29-30 SEW-IN
- 31 Joint Service with Logan Memorial for their 160th Anniversary, at Logan,
10 am
Trinity Sunday
Peace with Justice Sunday

You're Invited

The Spring Grove Cemetery Association will gather at the cemetery, located on Sayre Avenue off of Rosemar Road in Parkersburg, on Saturday, May 23, 2026 at 11 am to honor all buried there with word & song. Spring Grove Cemetery in Parkersburg, West Virginia, is the **only historically Black cemetery in Wood County**. Established in the late 19th century through the efforts of local Black citizens like Peter Brock, the 17.5-acre site serves as a vital record of the area's African American heritage. The congregation of Logan Memorial UMC invites the congregation of First UMC to join them for this occasion. Families & friends are invited to bring a friend & join us for an hour or so of fellowship with each other & our ancestors. Blessings to all.



Combined Service of Worship on May 31

On May 31, at 10:00 am, the congregation of First UMC will join with our sister congregation Logan Memorial for one service to celebrate the 160th anniversary of the organization and founding of what is now Logan Memorial United Methodist Church. Stephenson UMC will also join for this service. This service will feature sacred music, African American spirituals, the Logan Memorial Praise Band and the combined choirs of Logan Memorial, First UMC, and Stephenson UMC. There will be special speakers sharing stories and memories of the history and ministry of the church and a special blessing for the future. A reception will follow. Please plan to attend.

Parking is available for this service at the Community Bank parking lot. There is a diagram for the parking lot on the next page. Parking is welcomed in the numbered spaces that are NOT in the darkened area.



MEETING
May 13

1 pm in the parlor

to go over the
Salary Support Sheet
of the new pastor



Pastor Alicia will be out of town from May 24th thru 30th in North Carolina. Rev. Tom McDowell will be our guest minister on Sunday, May 24.

YOUNG AT HEART MAY 14 TIPS ON HIRING CONTRACTORS AND HANDYMEN

Hear advise from local professionals.

Fellowship Hall Doors open @ 10:45
Starts at 11:30 am

Lunch provided (donations appreciated).

Reservations required-call the church office by noon on May 7.



SIXTH ST

SIXTH ST

PLANTER	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	SIXTH ST. ENTRANCE
THESE SPOTS ARE LEASED BY HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES, PLEASE DO NOT PARK.													

JULIANA

9												
8				29	37					38	53	
7				28	36					39	52	
6				27	35					40	51	
5				26	34					41	50	
4				25	33					42	49	
3				24	32					43	48	
2				23	31					44	47	
1				22	30					45	46	

BANK TRUCK
BANK VEHICLE
CUSTOMERS
CUSTOMERS
CUSTOMERS

DRIVEWAY -->

	CUSTOMER PARKING	CUSTOMER PARKING	CUSTOMER PARKING	CUSTOMER PARKING	CUSTOMER PARKING	CUSTOMER PARKING	CUSTOMER PARKING	CUSTOMER PARKING	CUSTOMER PARKING	CUSTOMER PARKING
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DRIVE-IN

PARKING LOT ASSIGNMENTS

Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Alicia Randolph Rapping

Administrative Asst.: Cindy Lucas

Music Director: Jimmy Sundquist

Financial Secretary: Rebecca Crooks

Organist/Pianist/Handbell Director: Jimmy Sundquist

Custodian: Rob Bauer

Volunteer Staff: Deborah Shaffer, Certified Lay Minister

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

Friday 9 a.m. to noon

Phone: 304-428-0111

Contact Information

Administrative Asst.:

fumcjuliana@wvdsl.net

Financial Secretary:

finsecretary@wvdsl.net

Pastor Alicia:

aliciarapking@gmail.com

<https://firstumcparkersburg.org>

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