

THE FIRST WORD

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

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A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR SEAN

WRITTEN BY PASTOR SEAN DEVOLITES

Hey friends,

"I know what I want to be when I grow up."

Our kids have said this to me a couple times over the last few weeks. It is fun to hear their dreaming, their reasoning, and their plans even when those things change every few days.

Their answers have varied from a Jedi, a police officer, a teacher, or President of the United States. Inevitably, these conversations lead them to ask me a consistent question. "Daddy, what do **you** want to be when you grow up?"

It is good for all of us grown-ups to ponder this question,

because it means that we can remember we all still have some growing up left to do! To be in a space where we too can dream, can reason, and can plan for the days, weeks, months, and years to come.

It is also good for the Church (think, the universal Church) to dream, reason, and plan too.

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FUMC CONTACT INFORMATION

OUR LEADERSHIP

Rev. Sean Devolites
Pastor

JoEllen Smith
Admin. Leadership
Team Chair

Stacey Stickley
Lay Leader

Becky Starliper
Treasurer

LOCATIONS

Sunday Worship Location
The Village at Orchard
Ridge
400 Clocktower Ridge
Drive, Winchester, VA
22603

**Outdoor Worship &
Events**
APR Outdoor Campus
362 Apple Pie Ridge Rd.
Winchester, VA 22603

Office Campus
1824 Roberts St.
Winchester, VA 22601

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 1516
Winchester, VA 22604

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During most of November and leading up to Advent, we'll spend time doing that as a church community together in worship.

The Connectional Table and Council of Bishops of the UMC have shared an updated Vision Statement for us that details how we can love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously as disciples of Jesus Christ. We'll spend time reflecting on what that looks like, how we can do it, and how that vision can help us have a sense of who we want to be as we grow up together.

We remain thankful for how we continue to grow up

together sharing space at The Village at Orchard Ridge each Sunday at 10 AM. If you need any assistance connecting to in person worship or other activities, please reach out to me or to our Communications Manager, Caroline.

Thank you for being a part of our Church, for serving Jesus each day, and for choosing to grow up with us.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Sean

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First UMC's Becky Starliper reported that Sept. 2025 income totaled \$28,250.66 while Sept. 2025 expenses totaled \$16,901.27, leaving a monthly net total of \$11,349.39.

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

We had a lovely lunch last month at the Railway Cafe and due to the Thanksgiving holiday, we will not meet in November. We will plan to meet for fellowship in December to celebrate the Christmas holiday, just stay tuned! If you have questions, or would like to be included in the email communications, feel free to send a message to sherryroe1@verizon.net.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES!

Confirmation classes begin this weekend, Sunday, November 9th from 2-3:30 p.m. at the church office (1824 Roberts St.). Please be in prayer for our confirmands over these next few months!

CHRISTMAS JARS



CHRISTMAS JARS

BY MIRANDA
DELMERICO

Three years ago, First Church started a tradition by helping some people in need around the holidays. The inspiration came from the book, *Christmas Jars* by Jason F. Wright, that speaks of random acts of kindness in ways that celebrate Christmas in a counter-to-commercial way. These random acts remind us that some in our community may be in need; it may inspire us to see ourselves and our community differently.

A Christmas Jar is a pickle jar, peanut butter jar, Mason jar, plastic bag, or any other container for which to collect spare change each day. Christmas Jars will be collected

December 14, 2025. The combined jars will be shared anonymously with someone in need reminding them that God's love is being shared; there is hope for the future.

Christmas Jars will be available at worship services for you to take home. A Christmas Jar will also be available at church for individuals who might want to deposit some spare change or bills in jars at worship service instead.

A movie adaptation of *Christmas Jars* will be played for First UMC and guests in December, stay tuned!

At our November 2nd worship service, we lift up those who have passed away in the last year.

- Anne Marie Evans
- Carol Curtis
- Connie Beveridge
- David Boslaugh
- Gerry Sandy
- Glenda Berman
- [Elsie] Fay Delmerico
- Dr. James H. Laster
- James Mahan
- Jane McCallister
- Jim & Jean Moyer
- John Shepard
- Joseph Simons
- Kay Muterspaugh
- Nancy Albert
- Penny Byler
- Steve Lobell
- Dr. Verne Collins



VETERANS DAY

BY KATHY L. GILBERT

Did you know that the United Methodist Church (UMC) provides spiritual resources for veterans and families?

The UMC offers many spiritual resources for veterans and their families that can be used year-round. Our United Methodist Communications has been one of the sponsors for **America's Sunday Supper**, to focus on supporting military families. **Strength for Service** has been a resource and comfort for soldiers and their families since 1942. After Sept. 11, 2001, **United Methodist Men** took over support of the project. The devotional is for armed forces personnel and was written for use during World

War II and the Korean conflict. The book was updated and reprinted in 2002 thanks to Evan Hunsberger, an Eagle Scout, who found his grandfather's worn copy and **made it his mission to get the book updated and republished.**

If you or someone you know is a veteran who would benefit from any of these resources, reach out to our Leadership Team or visit **Resourceumc.org**.

PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH PRESENTATION

October was Pastor Appreciation month and we are so grateful that the First Church family made it special for our Pastor Sean! The gifts, cards, and items collected for Pastor Sean will be presented to him on Nov. 9 at our 10 a.m. worship service, we hope you can attend.



HISTORY OF HYMNS: WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN

BY C. MICHAEL HAWN

“When the Saints Go Marching In” is a song deeply rooted in the African American community, with a rich history that transcends cultural boundaries. Like many folk-related songs, it has a parallel life in the White tradition. Some collections designate it as an African American Spiritual. Though the song’s origins may be untraceable, its prominence was solidified when Louis Armstrong (1901–1971) included it on the recording *Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday* (Decca, 1938). This jazz rendition, featuring Armstrong singing only the refrain and playing the trumpet, marked a

significant moment in the song’s journey.

The first known recording, however, was a 78-rpm single titled “When All the Saints Come Marching In” by the Paramount Jubilee Singers (Paramount, 1923). This early twentieth-century mixed gospel quartet version accompanied by a pump organ was rereleased on the album *Black Vocal Groups, Vol. 2* (Document Records, 1995). Despite the stated title, the text sung by the quartet is “When the saints go marching in” throughout the recording. The stanzas, alternating with the refrain, reveal a sinner’s search for Christ.

Though the song is primarily associated with the Dixieland sounds of Louis Armstrong, Black and White performers alike have recorded numerous renditions of

“When the Saints.” Among the most popular are a lively Black gospel version by Mahalia Jackson, a gospel quartet arrangement featuring Elvis Presley, a medley by Johnny Cash, a reflective arrangement by Bruce Springsteen, and an upbeat White gospel version by the Gaithers, to name a few. Numerous university and professional sports teams have modified it for use as an anthem in their competitions, especially in the U.K. and USA.



WHAT IS ADVENT?

BY UMC
COMMUNICATIONS

The word Advent is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming”. This is a translation of the Greek word *Parousia*. Advent is a season of preparation for the baptism of new Christians, the January feast of Epiphany. Epiphany is the celebration of God’s incarnation represented by the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:1), his baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist (John 1:29) and his first miracle at Cana (John 2:1). During the season of preparation, Christians would spend 40 days in penance, prayer, and fasting to prepare for the celebration. Originally there was little connection between Advent and Christmas. By the 6th Century, Roman Christians had tied Advent to the coming of Christ. The coming they had in mind was not the baby coming to Bethlehem, but his second

coming in the clouds as the judge of the world. It was not until the Middle Ages that the Advent season was linked to Christ’s first coming at Christmas.

Today, the season of Advent lasts for the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. At that time the new Christian year begins with the twelve-day celebration of Christmastide, which lasts from Christmas Eve until Epiphany on January 6. Advent 2025 begins on Sunday, November 30, and ends on Wednesday, December 24.

It seems like people prepare for Christmas earlier every year. Stores put out Christmas decorations before Halloween. Everywhere you go people are asking, “Are you ready for Christmas?” I think the answer to that question is: “Are you ready for Jesus?”. John the Baptist was sent by God to get the people ready to meet Jesus. In those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, “Repent for the

kingdom of heaven is near. This is He who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight paths for him.’” People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. (Matthew 3:1-3). We don’t like the words “repent” or “repentance”. They both mean we need to make a radical change in our life. Repentance involves an element of grief over the way we have lived apart from God and a decision to run toward the Father. This was God’s idea of the way we are to prepare for Christ’s arrival in the Book of Matthew. It is still God’s idea of how we are to prepare for the coming of His one and only Son. Let’s all get ready for Christmas!

Dear Lord, I want to be ready for Jesus this year – this day! I can’t do this on my own. I ask you to fill me with your Holy Spirit. Amen.



UMC ADOPTED A NEW VISION

BY UMC COMMUNICATIONS

Shaped by a profound Wesleyan heritage, the people of The United Methodist Church are stepping in faith into a new season of ministry. Since 2021, the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table have journeyed together in prayerful collaboration, seeking God's wisdom and discerning a hope-filled vision for this unfolding era in The United Methodist Church.

The UMC forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, *love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously* in local communities and worldwide connections.

- **Love Boldly:** We passionately love God and, like Jesus,

embrace and include people of every age, nation, race, gender, and walk of life.

[Matthew 22:37-39 | John 13:34-35]

- **Serve Joyfully:** With the heart of Christ, we journey alongside the most vulnerable among us, offering care and compassion with joy. [Psalm 100:1 | Nehemiah 8:10 | John 13:14-15 | 1 Peter 4:10]
- **Lead Courageously:** Following Jesus' example, we seek to resist and dismantle all systems of evil, injustice, and oppression, striving for peace, justice, and reconciliation. [Joshua 1:9 | Ephesians 6:10]

[...] This renewed vision is more than words—it is an invitation to embrace joy and hope as we live God's mission. It also provides us with a clear, Christ-centered framework for missional unity

and collaboration across our worldwide connection. We encourage the use of the vision statement in its entirety—rather than in parts—to ensure its full theological and missional impact is communicated clearly and consistently. In the months ahead, the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table will work with our General Agencies to create resources that inspire and equip pastors, congregations, and church leaders to live into this vision. These resources will be available at ResourceUMC.org/Vision.

First Church will discuss this new vision in greater detail and provide handouts at our 10 a.m. worship service on November 9.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep the following individuals in your prayers:

- Aleane Wine
- Alice Disque
- Andy Kiser
- Bryon Shepard
- Cecil Campbell
- Charles Ewing
- Danna Paul
- Deborah Colburn
- Deidre Kriewald
- Dorothy Uhler
- Dottie Holstine
- Dwain & Shirley Place
- Ed & Sharon Henshaw
- Ellen Suite
- Family of Glenda Berman
- Family of Jane McCallister
- Family of Judy Barton
- Family of Penny Byler
- Gary Fisher
- Harold Zeig
- Henry Rutherford
- Jamie, DK, and baby Wrenleigh
- Jean Markwood
- Jeff Orris
- Jesse Potts
- Josiah Dick
- Joy Costello
- Ken Freeman
- Lois Hofmann
- Marlene Fisher
- Mel Littlepage
- Phyllis Lee
- Sandy Jones
- Shelly Lee
- Terry Hannon
- Toni O'Connor
- Verle Malik
- Virginia Stanley

To add someone to our prayer list, please email us at fumcoffice@fumcwinchester.org

ACTIVE FAITH OPPORTUNITIES

- **Nov. 14, 5:30 p.m.:** Next Generation Youth Group Bonfire & Cookout at the APR Pavilion, ages 10-18 welcome!
- **Nov. 17 from 4-6 p.m.:** Volunteer to cook and serve dinner at the Winchester Rescue Mission! Sign-up sheets are at Sunday worship.
- **Nov. 20 from 1-3 p.m.:** Help pack and sort items at CCAP! We meet on site at 112 S. Kent St. Winchester, VA.
- **Nov. 23 at 11 a.m.:** 4th Sunday Fellowship at TVOR! Bring a dish or drink option to share.
- **Christmas Jars:** This holiday season, start a spare change Christmas Jar alongside First Church. We will anonymously give our jars to those in need within our community.

Ongoing opportunities:

- **Help lead our adult or children Sunday School(s)** at 9 a.m. on Sundays, contact Pastor Sean if interested.
- **Join the First UMC Choir,** rehearsals immediately follow Sunday worship on Nov. 2, 9, 16, and 30. All abilities are welcome!
- **Next Generation Youth Group:** Ages 10-18 are invited to join Next Generation Youth Group! Activities are planned to let your child(ren) socialize and explore their faith alongside kids from other local UMCs. Contact Robbin Wilfong if interested.

Folks are welcome to meet with Pastor Sean and Staff at 1824 Roberts St. during these office hours:

- Monday: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Tuesday: 10-1
- Wednesday: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Other availability by appointment.

NOVEMBER 2025

FIRST UMC SCHEDULE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26 REFORMATION SUNDAY 10 A.M. WORSHIP @ TVOR 4TH SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP AFTER WORSHIP!	27 DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT, KYUNGSUK CHO WILL VISIT FUMC WORSHIP & BE A GUEST SPEAKER!	28	29	30 NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER GOES OUT 	31 HALLOWEEN	1 ALL SAINTS DAY
2 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS 10 A.M. WORSHIP @ TVOR 11 A.M. CHOIR PRACTICE @ TVOR	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 ORGAN AND TISSUE DONOR SUNDAY 10 A.M. WORSHIP @ TVOR 11 A.M. CHOIR PRACTICE @ TVOR	10 PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH PRESENTATION FOR PASTOR SEAN	11 VETERANS DAY 	12 NO STAFF OFFICE HOURS TODAY	13  6:45 P.M. ADMIN LEADERSHIP TEAM MTG. @ ROBERTS ST. OFFICE	14  5:30 P.M. NEXT GENERATION BONFIRE & COOKOUT @ APR PAVILION	15
16 10 A.M. WORSHIP @ TVOR 11 A.M. CHOIR PRACTICE @ TVOR	17  4-6 P.M. COOK & SERVE DINNER AT WINCESTER RESCUE MISSION	18	19	20  1-3 P.M. VOLUNTEER AT CCAP @ 112 S. KENT ST.	21 DECEMBER NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE	22 9:30 A.M.-12 P.M. VIRTUAL OPEN TABLE MEETING FOR LEADERSHIP TEAM
23 10 A.M. WORSHIP @ TVOR 4TH SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP!	24	25	26 NO STAFF OFFICE HOURS TODAY	27 THANKS GIVING 	28	29
30 10 A.M. WORSHIP @ TVOR 11 A.M. CHOIR PRACTICE @ TVOR						