

One of the highlights of my week happens during the children's moment. You may have noticed by now that I frequently make my way to the front and sit among the kids. It is my way of saying you are important and valued. It is also my way to see them up close and personal for a few minutes and hear the comments that sometimes make parents cringe!

Let me say that I don't believe children are the future. Not for a second. I believe that children are the present! They bring joy by their laughter. They remind us that true faith is innocent and whole-hearted. Children make the Downtown campus buzz with their running through the halls and crawling under the pews! Jesus said, "let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." And so we fling our doors and, I pray, our hearts open to them.

Let me ask something of you...would you add our children and youth to your daily prayers? Many of

our children and youth are having to grow up quickly and face pressures that can be overwhelming. The violence that pervades schools is real. When I attended school the only drill was a fire drill. Did you realize that they now have "active shooter" and lockdown scenarios that they regularly practice? I can't wrap my mind around that.

I've been asking myself what to do and keep coming back to the same answer from 2 Chronicles 7:14. *"if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."* The answer may not stop with prayer, but it definitely starts there.

I know you love our kids as much as I do. To love someone means to help them thrive. I pray that we continue to pour out our lives in such a way to do just that.



## **Serve**

### **Rise Against Hunger**

It was cold outside (again) on Saturday, March 24, but the Fellowship Hall was filled with warm fellowship and a strong sense of purpose. The set-up crew was at church by 7:30, and the project began with the unloading of supplies – enough soy protein, rice, dried vegetables and vitamins to create 10,152 meals. Soon the Fellowship Hall was ready: round tables filled with containers of food to be portioned into labeled bags, and scales, sealers, and boxes waiting. As packing volunteers (ages 3 and up) arrived, they were directed to sanitize their hands, put on caps or hair nets, and listen for their work instructions. Jennifer, the representative from Rise Against Hunger, reminded us of the reasons for the work: 1 in 9 people in the world experiences hunger, 1 in 3 people worldwide is adversely affected by vitamin and mineral deficiencies. As these meals are distributed around the world, they will provide needed nutrition and encourage children to enroll in and attend school and adults to learn a new trade.

Once instructions were complete and everyone was in place, we prayed for God to bless those who would receive the meals, and the music began. We sang (and perhaps even shuffled our feet) along as we scooped, poured, weighed, sealed and boxed. And then, around 15 minutes in, the music stopped: it was time to sound the gong and cheer for the first 1,000 meals. More music, more packing, more cheers, and soon we were celebrating 10,000 and talking about how fast it all went and wondering when we might do this again.

You may be wondering how we came to participate in this project. Pastor Todd would be quick to point out that this all came about because of a member who shared her passion. Evelyn Christensen learned about this opportunity through a family member and thought our church would be willing to do the work and pay the cost

to provide these meals. She brought the idea to Bryan Mullins, our Downtown Serve coordinator, who investigated dates and coordinated with Rise Against Hunger. 60 people set time aside to come on a Saturday and set up, pack, and clean up. The costs of providing the food and transportation were covered by, well, us all. Funds for the project were allocated out of our Downtown Serve funds, which come from our regular budgeted giving.

**On April 1, we will collect a special Easter offering** to support the CenterForm ministry of John and Katheryn Heinz in Atlanta. “CenterForm is a community of creative, forward-thinking, socially-engaged Christians who are committed to working together to seek peace, wholeness, justice, reconciliation, health and joy.” Some of you remember John and Katheryn from their ministry with us when they were in Lexington. You can learn more about their work in Atlanta at [www.centerform.org](http://www.centerform.org). Thank you for your generous support.

**Altar Flowers** – April 15 is available for the purchase of altar flowers, and we also have other dates available throughout the remainder of the year. If interested, please contact Mike and Sheila Green at 859-271-4789 (Home), 859-533-5282 (Cell) or [greenlex1961@yahoo.com](mailto:greenlex1961@yahoo.com). God bless.

**God’s Table**, our monthly potluck dinner for our friends in the community, will be on April 17, 2018. Please bring a dish and a friend to our Fellowship Hall around 5:30 pm. Plan to stay and help prepare and serve the meal, if you are able. For more information, contact Melinda Kemp, 278-3570 or [melindakemp@twc.com](mailto:melindakemp@twc.com).

**The Belle Bennett Circle** will meet Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 10:00 AM in the Church Parlor – Room 107. The guest speaker will be Casey Neely, Development Coordinator for the Methodist Home. Casey will present an overview of the Methodist Home, including new developments, inspirational stories and volunteer opportunities. Please attend, meet Casey, and enjoy the current news of the Methodist Home!

## **Church Family**

**First United Methodist Church welcomes our new members** with a reception in the Gathering Hall on Sunday, April 8, 2018 from 9:30 to 10:00 am between the early worship service and Sunday School. Come and meet our new members and help them feel at home in our downtown fellowship. We are so glad to have each of these new members be a part of our church family.

**Thank you!** As another season of Wednesday night dinners concludes, we want to thank everyone who has been a part of setting up, cooking, and cleaning up this year. We are especially grateful for Laura Ferrell’s leadership and organization of the various teams.

**Congratulations to Emily Wright!** Emily recently spoke at the state capitol on World Down Syndrome Day and will continue her advocacy this month when she attends the National Down Syndrome Society’s 2018 Annual Buddy Walk on Washington Advocacy Conference and the 2018 Adult Summit.

## **A Note from the Office**

As we move into spring and summer, many of our groups adjust their regular meeting times. If you have a standing reservation for a room and will not be using it because your group takes time off, please let the office know, so we can adjust our calendar and know of room availability. If you already have a targeted date to resume regular meetings, we can make that addition to the calendar as well. Please email Barry or Daphne or [info@lstumc.org](mailto:info@lstumc.org) with requests for room use or adjustments in schedules. Thanks so much!

APR 29 6:00



## NIGHT OF PRAISE

John Rutter's  
*Magnificat and Feel the Spirit*

featuring the First United Methodist Church  
Chancel Choir and Orchestra



### Night of Praise

Sunday, April 29, 6:00 PM

The music department will pull out all of the stops when the choir and orchestra present this amazing, free concert. Free Advanced Seating tickets are now available at the Welcome Center in the Gathering Hall. Pick up a few to use to use as invitation cards for friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers. Nursery will be available.



**April 2018**

We are a church that makes disciples - across the street and around the world.



First United Methodist Church  
200 West High Street  
Lexington, KY 40507

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Permit No. 5

Todd Nelson  
Sr./Downtown Pastor  
todd@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x 224

Carol Cooper  
Assistant Campus Pastor  
carol@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x 227

Cameron Bibb  
Family Pastor  
cameron@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x 229

Brock Terry  
Minister of Music  
brock@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x 240

Chad Foster  
Executive Pastor  
chad@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x 225

Alexis Scott  
Treasurer  
alexis@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x 223

Beckie Sigmon  
Financial Secretary  
beckie@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x 223

Barry Prince  
Communications/Assist  
barry@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x227

Daphne Maurer  
Administrative Assist  
daphne@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x 246

Cassidy Baas  
Downtown Fellow  
cassidy@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x 246

Debbi French  
Director, Kid's Day Out  
debbi@1stumc.org  
233-0545 x 233

Dr. David Cooper  
Organist  
davidcoopertls@yahoo.com

Church office  
233-0545  
info@1stumc.org

***The deadline for the May newsletter is April 17. Please send submissions to info@1stumc.org. Thank you!***



***March 30***

***Good Friday Service of Tenebrae, 7:00 PM***

We will gather in our candlelit sanctuary to remember Calvary for our service of Tenebrae. Candles are gradually extinguished as we are reminded of the ultimate sacrifice Christ made. Everyone is invited to this powerful service of reflection and preparation for Easter. Nursery will be available.

***April 1***

***Easter Sunday, 8:30 and 11:00***

We will celebrate the resurrection by worshipping together at our regular service times. Our Chancel Choir and brass ensemble will present special music at both services.