

This January we spent time and effort getting up to speed on the decisions facing the United Methodist Church during the specially called General Conference this February. Let me start by saying THANK YOU for the way you are receiving the information and the positive spirit which resides within the church.

Three themes emerged as a result of the informational sessions so far and the many discussions we've had afterwards.

You are:

- 1) realistic about the difficulty of the decision,
- 2) confident that First Church will handle the outcome with grace and respect, and
- 3) hopeful that March will dawn with us as an even stronger local church and denomination.

I firmly believe this is a result of the process being bathed in prayer. So, let's keep praying and listening and focusing on what is in front of us. Let us not get distracted in speculating or playing the "what-if" game but stay grounded in making disciples. I am convinced that this is the way forward regardless of any vote outcome.

If you haven't been able to attend one of the sessions, there is still time. We included the schedule for February below as well as the web address for more information.



### **Informational Meetings**

Informational meetings continue in advance of the Special Session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, which will be held February 23-36. Below is a list of the Sunday School classes Todd and Carol will be visiting and when they will be there. If you are not a part of a Sunday School class, please know you are invited to any one of these classes to hear this presentation.

February 3 – Meet in the Parlor  
Forum and Spiritual Growth

February 10 – Meet in Room 1  
BLT and FISH

February 17 – Meet in Youth Café  
Youth

### **Web address**

Find details about the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference online at [gc2019.org](http://gc2019.org).

## **Grow**

### **Children and Student Ministries'**

#### **Small Group Leaders and Relational Impact**

Did you know that on Sunday mornings in the children's wing there is a weekly competition between small group leaders and kids about who has the best socks? Did you know that when you walk past our new indoor playground during the last few minutes of children's choir rehearsal you can hear laughter and funny songs sung by small voices? These are silly but significant evidences of relational connections happening in our children's ministry. When it comes to discipleship, nothing has a greater impact on a child's or teenager's faith and spiritual formation than relationships. Think about it, whose word is going to have more of an influence in your life: someone you

know or someone you don't know at all? This is why our small group leaders, those people who consistently show up and connect with our children and youth on a personal basis every week, are one of the most important pieces of our discipleship pathway for kids at Downtown. They show up consistently to be present with our kids, and they strive to create a safe place for our kids to feel loved and know they belong. And I have to believe that this will have a positive long-term impact that doesn't stop at the walls of First Church Downtown. - *Cameron*

## Serve

### Downtown Student Ministries'

#### Super Bowl Fundraiser, February 3

Downtown Students will be hosting a fundraiser after church on Sunday, February 3rd. Students are raising funds to help support their serve project this summer with additional funds going to student ministry scholarships. Everyone is welcome to come to the Fellowship Hall and enjoy some soup after the Sunday School hour and after the 11 AM service.

**Backpack Program:** The February suggested donation is individual pasta meals (please no dry mac and cheese). The collection basket is in the Gathering Hall near the Welcome Center. Contact Cindy Dominick, [cdominick@twc.com](mailto:cdominick@twc.com) or Lisa Oates, [lisa.m.oates@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.m.oates@gmail.com) for more info. Thank you!

**Altar Flowers** – We are taking reservations for altar flowers for 2019. We have the entire month of March as well as many other dates available. The flowers purchased and donated by you are delivered to our shut-ins who appreciate the thoughtfulness of our congregation. If interested in purchasing flowers or in volunteering with us, 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.

**Our next God's Table meal** will be on Tuesday, February 19, 2019. Please bring a dish and a friend to our Fellowship Hall around 5:30 pm. This monthly meal is open to anyone who is hungry. Plan to stay and help prepare and serve the meal, if you are able. For more information, contact Melinda Kemp, 859-333-8095 or [melindakemp@twc.com](mailto:melindakemp@twc.com).

**The Belle Bennett Circle** will meet on Wednesday, February 13, at 10 o'clock AM in the Parlor. Our speaker will be Dana Stefaniak, Resource Development Director/ Habitat for Humanity. Our church has been involved in working with Habitat for many years, Dana will give us information on how our community works with building a home for a deserving family. Come join us, you are welcome. If you need a ride or more information call Joyce McKinney, 224-4609.

**Roses are Red, Violets are Blue, Sugar is Sweet and We So Appreciate YOU.** That's right, it is February and we would love for you to come and visit us for our First Church United Methodist Women's "Sweet Sunday Bake Sale." The date is Sunday Morning, February 10th in the Welcoming Area. There will be an array of home baked items for you take home or enjoy right then. Thank you, *Judy Mathis*, President of FUMW

There are **four new prayer guides** in the Prayer Carousel in the Gathering Hall. "30 Days of Prayer for Cities" and "30 Ways to Pray for People in Authority" provide specific prayers for the places we live and for those we've elected to govern us. "Prayers of Hope and Wholeness for the Seriously Ill" is a helpful resource for praying for all our friends and family who are facing significant illness. And "Life-Giving Prayers for Your Church" gives great guidance on praying for our own First Church as we endeavor to be the Body of Christ in our community and around the world. Pick them up today!

You may also pick up a "2019 Global Prayer Guide" as well. This resource is designed to help you pray more specifically for our brothers and sisters in Christ who risk rejection, imprisonment and even death as they obediently serve the Lord in dangerous and difficult areas. You'll learn about the specific countries, about the plight of Christians there, and who the persecutors are, whether the government or other religious majorities.

When persecuted Christians are asked how American believers can help them, their most common reply is “Pray for us!” The Global Prayer Guide will help you do that in a more informed and targeted way. Pray for the persecuted church in a different country each day for about two months, and then start over. Pick one up by the Prayer Carousel.

### **Church Family**

**Welcome to the Family!** We are happy to welcome Harrison Pickens, son of Clay and Kelsey, who was born on January 17, 2019 and to welcome Piper DeLucia, daughter of Steven and Ashley and sister to Elayna and Deacon, who was born on January 17, 2019.

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February 2019

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## February Calendar Highlights

- 3: Souper Bowl fundraiser for Downtown Student Ministries summer Serve project: Fellowship Hall, after Sunday School hour and 11:00 service.
- 12: Administrative Council meeting, 6:00 pm, Offerings Sanctuary
- 17: Voices Concert, 4:00 pm: UK Men's Chorus and UK Chorale