

Lent has been long in coming this year. Easter is set, in the western Church, as the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. April 20, which is Easter this year, is the second-latest date possible. We will begin Lent with a service of repentance and preparation in the Sanctuary at 6:00 P.M. on Ash Wednesday, March 6. This is one of the high holy moments for our church family and one that I would encourage you to attend.

This Lent we will focus on the Cross of Christ and its implications for eternity and today. Well before the Cross became a universal sign of hope, it was a sign of Roman execution. Before we hung them in our places of worship and upon our necks, enemies of Rome were hung on them and executed. The cruel sign of the peace of Rome has been transformed into the Christian sign of

eternal peace. Two kingdoms with competing agendas and yet both unified by two pieces of wood nailed together.

Why did Jesus have to die? What does it mean that our sins are forgiven by his sacrifice? How can we better understand our Christian faith in light of the crucifixion? We will address all these questions and more Sundays during Lent.

As a way to prepare our hearts, we will be publishing a series of devotional readings on my blog at [jtoddnelson.com](http://jtoddnelson.com). Feel free to bookmark the page or even sign up to receive the latest posts directly in your inbox.



## Worship

### How We Worship

Lately I have been thinking about our worship services and how easy it is to enter worship each week...there is comfort and beauty in the known and we know our worship style. But even though we at First Church-Downtown don't tend to change our Order of Worship very often, there are reasons we order it the way we do, and I thought it might be helpful to spend some time sharing about why we do what we do...So, over the next several months or so, I will share about our worship elements and why they are important to our coming together each Sunday.

Many worship services are centered around a four-fold pattern of worship and ours is no different. Although the heading may be a bit different depending on the church, the ideas are often similar: Gather—Word—Response—Send. Each of these will house the essentials of our worship services and each is meant to draw us into relationship with the Triune God and with one another.

According to the United Methodist Book of Worship, the pattern of worship is “rooted in Scripture and in our United Methodist heritage and experience. It expresses the biblical, historical and theological integrity of Christian worship...” From the moment we step foot into our historical sanctuary, we begin our pattern of worship. As the prelude or Choral Call to Worship begins our service each week, we are invited into this four-fold pattern of worship. The beginning of each service invites us to prepare our hearts and our minds for worship, even as it is an act of worship.

So, as you enter the Sanctuary this Sunday, I invite you to notice the pattern and order of worship...notice how the opening music is a time of preparation and opening of your heart and mind for all God has prepared. Come, now is the time to worship.

Worshiping with you,  
*Carol*

## Grow

**On Sunday, March 10**, in the Fellowship Hall, our Mixed Media Sunday School class will host Mike and Sherri Morrissey, missionaries to Thailand. Mike and Sherri are both elders in the Kentucky annual conference appointed to serve through Thailand Methodist Mission. Come learn more about their work with Blessing Home, an anti-trafficking ministry; Pioneer Pastors Program, establishing Thai-led churches; and Abundant Life, providing financial training among families.

## Family Ministries

In March, all of our kids and students, from babies to high school, will have a shared theme, Made. This theme is developmentally appropriate for each phase the kids and students are in. The theme verse is Psalm 139:14; "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

Our preschoolers and toddlers are asking and answering the question: Who made you? God made me. Preschoolers need to learn now that they are wonderfully made by God, in His image. This makes them very important and motivates them to respect themselves and others.

Our elementary kids and preteens are learning about Individuality: Discovering who you are meant to be. Every person is an original reflection of God in how they love, care for others, imagine, create, and solve problems. Jesus lived this out in the way He loved all people, and helped people feel like they had value no matter who they were or what they had done. We can reflect this in the way we live out how God created us.

Our middle schoolers and high schoolers are learning about God's plan for sex in our lives. God wants us to understand how we can make better choices, live better lives, and treat both ourselves and others in a way that honors the fact that God says we are all fearfully and wonderfully made. *Cassidy Hasty*, Family Ministries Lead

## Serve

### Souper Bowl 2019

Our annual soup fundraiser hosted by Downtown Student Ministries was a huge success! With your help we raised over \$1300 to put toward our summer serve project and youth ministry grants. Thank you so very much for your support!

**Backpack Program:** The March suggested donation is individual fruit cups. The collection basket is in the Gathering Hall near the Welcome Center. Once again, the Lexington Singers are partnering with our Backpack program and will help serve the students by collecting food and money donations for the program at their concert on March 10. We are grateful for all who help care for these students each week. 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.

**Altar Flowers** – We have plenty of dates available for the purchase of altar flowers in the months of May through December. If interested in purchasing altar flowers, 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, March 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, March 13 in the church Parlor at 10 o'clock in the morning. Our program will be presented by Polly Ruddick, Director of Homelessness Prevention for Fayette County. This should be a very informative presentation, giving us insight to the homeless situation in Lexington. We hope you will join us. For more information or if you need a ride contact Joyce McKinney at 224-4609.

**Thank you so much** for your continued support of our FUMW "Sweet Sunday" Bake Sales. The bake sales have generated financial giving to worthy causes such as to name a few Salvation Army, Hope Center, Nathaniel Mission, High Street Neighborhood Center Golf Scramble, Redemption House, Methodist Home, Back Pack Ministry, Vacation Bible School. Thanks to your generous and giving hearts our board met recently and our treasurer mailed financial support to the Salvation Army and The Redemption House. The Lord Loves A Cheerful Giver.

**Mountain Mission pickup, March 18.** Place donations in the closet in Room 12 (basement) before then. Urgent needs include socks and underwear, men's shoes, and Easter outfits and supplies for Easter baskets.

Pick up a "2019 Global Prayer Guide" at the Prayer Carousel. This resource is designed to help you pray more specifically for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are part of the Persecuted Church—those 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.

**Each Sunday** during our worship services, there are members of our congregation in the Prayer Room, interceding for all the prayer requests that are turned in during the service, and praying for our church and its ministries. Some of our intercessors pray at either the early or late service one Sunday a quarter; others pray at one of the services one Sunday every other month; others pray one Sunday each month. We currently have five specific openings for the rest of this year. We encourage you to pray about the possibility of becoming an intercessor.

## Church Family

**Welcome to the Family!** We are happy to welcome Caroline Louise Schumacher, daughter of Carter and Katherine and sister to Sadie, who was born on January 29.

## Downtown Budget Updates

At the recent Administrative Council meeting, our 2019 budget was approved. Changes for this year include increases for utilities, paper products, and furniture and fixtures, as well as increases in insurance and staff expenses.

Also, Downtown Leadership Team has approved our Downtown Serve allotments for this year. 2019 Serve funding recipients and amounts are:

Bret and Meredith Nathaniel (CRU)	\$12,000
Estonia	\$ 8,400
Nabil Samara	\$ 6,000
Habitat for Humanity	\$ 6,000
Redemption House	\$ 5,000
Backpack Program (SOLFC)	\$ 3,500
Nathaniel Mission	\$ 3,000
Rise Against Hunger	\$ 2,500
Mike Powers, Francis Asbury	\$ 1,000
CenterForm (Heinz ministry)	Easter offering
Goshorn Family, Peru	½ Christmas offering
Christmas Blessing	½ Christmas offering

In addition to these recipients, your giving also supports our church-wide Serve partners: High Street Neighborhood Center, God's Table, Room in the Inn, our annual conference Mission offering, and local benevolence.

## Some Notes from the Office

We have recently updated our online giving option. If you would like information about online giving, our Financial Secretary, Ryan Barr, is the go-to person and will be happy to orient you to the process. You can reach Ryan at 859-233-0545 x 246 Mondays – Thursdays or at [ryan@1stumc.org](mailto:ryan@1stumc.org).

We want to welcome Barbara Mack to the office volunteer team – we are thankful for her presence on Wednesday afternoons! Also, please join us in thanking Carolyn McDowell-Burgess for her time on Mondays recently – she has helped keep things running while Peggy Whyte has been away. Lisa Oates, Evelyn Christensen, Tim Mowery, and Dorothy Christian round out the team who regularly answer the phones and handle many of the daily office details, and we are grateful for them all!

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March 2019

## March Calendar Highlights

- 6: Ash Wednesday Service, 6:00 pm, Sanctuary
- 10: Mike and Sherri Morrissey, Thailand Missionaries, 9:50 am, Fellowship Hall  
Voices Concert, 4:00 pm, The Lexington Singers and LS Children's  
Chamber choir  
*This concert will support our Backpack Ministry by collecting food and cash donations.*
- 31: Voices Concert, 4:00 pm, UK Women's Choir