Celebrating and Looking Forward

As we head into a new year, I want to take some time to celebrate our ministry in 2017. There are so many reasons for us to give thanks and praise to God for what He is accomplishing in our midst. I also want to give thanks and praise for our leaders who continue to lead in ways that help us live out our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our vision statement is that we Connect in Community, Grow in Faith, Serve in Love as followers of Jesus. We lived that out well in 2017. We, like many churches, saw our worship attendance numbers go up and down throughout the year, but we continued to make connections with each other and with God. We ended the year strong with most Sundays in November and December with attendance over 150. When we connect with each other and learn more about each other, then our congregation is stronger and can serve well together. I believe that we are doing this each week. We also connect when we fellowship together over meals, coffee, and when we serve together. I pray we are able to continue to make strong connections with one another in 2018.

Our spiritual lives were stretched in 2017 thanks to Sunday morning Discipleship Groups and small groups that met throughout the year. I want to thank Helen Walters, Roy Ehram, Sharon Thieme, Linda Drake, Greg Andrews, Roger Thompson, and Mike Pettibone who faithfully lead each week to help others grow in faith. The studies, discussion, and connection that happens in these groups is vital in growing closer to God and to each other. I pray that more people will add these groups to their Sunday mornings and weekly schedules to deepen their faith journeys. We had small groups that met at different times during the year. I want to thank Mandy and Chad Poling, Derek Vrablic and Clint Knaub for leading these groups for adults and youth. I pray that in 2018 we will have more groups happening on a more regular basis and more people growing in faith as participants in them.

Our outreach to the Decatur community grew stronger in 2017. Through the Hope Chest and Fishes & Loaves we clothed and fed many in our community in need, and provided a safe place for persons to share in fellowship and receive prayer. We added A Better Life—Brianne’s Hope to our outreach which allows us to offer the love and support of Christ to those struggling with substance abuse. We continue to support Operation Help through gifts and volunteers, Love INC, the Hope Clinic, St. Mark’s food pantry, and Unfailing Love Clinic. We have persons serving in Youth for Christ, ringing bells for the Salvation Army, and in our schools. Vacation Bible School and the Trunk or Treat not only served children and families in our community and church, but also shared the Good News of Christ. I continue to praise God for how we reach out, and I pray that there will more opportunities for us to serve and love our neighbors in 2018.

I want to thank all of our leaders who served our church and helped live out our mission. I look forward to a new year where we will seek to follow God’s vision for First UMC in ways that lead us further along the path of faithfulness and that allow us to be a church that welcomes people and loves them where they are; also that allows us to be a church that serves those in need and helps transform lives and our community. Pray with me for wisdom and guidance for a great new year!

See you Sunday,
Pastor Amy

Our mission is To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World. At First UMC Decatur, we do that as we Connect in Community, Grow in Faith, Serve in Love as followers of Jesus Christ.
Thank You Notes . . .
A most gracious and humble “thank you” for the gifts and presents given to myself and Anna this Christmas season. I am honored to be your servant in ministry here at Decatur First United Methodist Church.

One request I have for 2018 and that is to consider being visitors to the home-bound, shut-ins and nursing homes. Pray for your opportunity to be blessed and your visiting a blessing to others. Join the current Double-Blessing Ministry here at Decatur First UMC. Have questions, call Pastor Joe at church or (260) 704-3030.

Dear Friends at First Church: Thank you for all the remembrances I received this holiday season. They were greatly appreciated. Also thanks to those who give of their time and talent in the Church office and to those who faithfully help with the newsletters each month.

God Bless You!
Janet Frauhiger

Dear Friends at First UMC, Thank you again for having the Agape Express Puppets at your church! What a joy to share and celebrate the Christmas message with you all! Thanks too, for your love offering towards this ministry.

In Christ,
Rick & Christine Garner

Celebrate Life!
Baby Shower for the Hope Clinic
We Love Babies
In support of Sanctity of Human Life month, our church is helping the local Hope Clinic by showering them with new Baby items during the month of January, so they can bless moms and dads who have chosen life for their child. The following items are always needed: diapers, wipes, baby equipment (crib, mattress, high chair, stroller car seat, etc.), crib sheets, bath items, laundry soap, potty chair/ring, pacifiers, teething toys, bottles and sippy cups, tableware, baby toys and baby clothes, and formula. Children’s books for infant through 3 years too! (please, no baby food, powder, or baby oil.) Bring your items starting January 7 through January 31 and place them in or near the boxes marked “Celebrate Life” at the rear of the Sanctuary. You can also bring gently used maternity clothes in sizes L and XL that are suitable for the work place. The Hope Clinic is committed to giving women, men, and their children HOPE! Thanks, and any questions, contact Charlie Brune at 724-9046.

Address
Bill Brown (former member)
Sage Bluff Health & Rehab
4180 Sage Bluff, Room 204
Fort Wayne, IN 46804
He would love to have visitors.

January Birthdays
1/04 Ryan Brickley
1/04 Angie Geimer
1/04 Rochelle McBride
1/04 Corey Wilson
1/06 Doug Rieth
1/06 Harriet Soldner
1/08 Stan Allison
1/08 Mia Jackson
1/09 Elva Smith
1/12 Carson Friedt
1/13 Don Heimann
1/15 Remington Everett
1/15 Mandy Poling
1/18 Nateshia Witte
1/20 Lily Johnson
1/20 Phyllis Mills
1/22 Chris Everett
1/23 Colleen Gaunt
1/23 Dot Vanhorn
1/24 Katie Gent
1/24 Jenny Littler
1/25 Deb Porter
1/25 Gail Taylor
1/27 Chris Covington
1/27 Linda Drake
1/27 Beverly Hill
1/28 Jason Brune
1/29 Richard Evans
1/30 Helen Walters
1/31 Jane Friedt
1/31 Brendan Gilbert

January Anniversaries
1/09 Stan & Jane Allison
1/13 Rod & Teresa Simon
1/25 Richard & Janet Evans

Christmas Poem
Let me tell you a story
Of Christ, born in glory;
In a humble stable forlorn,
Before the sweet light of morn.
A bright star marked that holy place,
For he was born to save the human race.
The Magi acknowledged his royal birth,
He was sent to save the earth.
Through the gifts they brought that special child,
he who would later be reviled.
The Wise Men, the babe was adored,
Yet we are the ones who reap the rewards.
Our Lord, he gifted us with his life.
To save his people from strife.
We thank our Heavenly Father up above,
Who gave us his only son with love.
—Anonymous

Sunday Soups are back!!!
On Sunday, January 21, we will have our first Sunday Soup of 2018. Plan to stay after the 10 o’clock worship service for chili and hot dogs and all the fixin’s in the Fellowship Hall. The proceeds from the lunch will go to our local mission projects. Hope to see everyone on the third Sunday in January for food and fellowship!!
The Christmas jar project was a big success. With all our projects that we done last year, we were able to help several families in the community who were less fortunate have a better year. We also received a large donation of school supplies and clothes from UUC church last year which helped supply these families.

The Hope Chest Staff
Thanks for your support
Tana’s Colorful Words
Learning With Music

Children at play develop creative thinking, playfulness, and find learning is fun! Did you ever give thought, as to how Music can help children in their learning?

Larkin, is learning while playing in the Purple Room. Repeating the sound by “singing” develops memory. A first step to encourage an interest in learning along with music appreciation.

Blue Room children singing and dancing express imagination, by using their voices and facial expression. This also helps them express their ideas with confidence. Music teaches Social Skills, Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, and Language.

Music knows no age, singing daily for at least 10 minutes reduces stress, clears sinuses, improves the efficiency of the cardio-vascular system, which increases oxygenation of the blood and improves alertness that can help you live longer.

Let’s all sing out loud, “Sing, sing a song make it simple to last your whole life long. Don’t worry …”

Until the come out again!

That’s A Fact
Choices Are Decisions

As adults we teach children the desired outcome which could be good or not so good. Giving a child choices can help them picture, in their mind, the desired outcome possibilities good or not so good.

Starting with a positive thought can be helpful in contributing to the best desired outcome. Even though we may be tired from our busy day, our attitude can create the final decision or outcome.

Flexible adults teach children how being flexible can help in their decision making and not create a melt down for the adult or child. As adults we help the child’s thinking process.

Encouraging children to listen to other’s advice is also another good way of learning decision making skills. Especially if the decisions being made will eventually affect others with a positive outcome.

Teaching, how to make good choices and being considerate of others can help everyone be more respectful in making choices. Good decisions or outcomes result in love, laughter, and smiles.

How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understandings to be chosen above silver.

Proverbs 16:16
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CONNECT—GROW—SERVE

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Sunday, January 21st