



THE CONNECTION

**April 2024
Newsletter**

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Welcome

I spoke to someone yesterday who I once pastored in another city. He was telling me about his current church. I asked how things were going. He said he and his wife liked it overall, but “those are not the friendliest people in the world.” He said that he and his wife attended there for almost a year before anyone spoke to them. And even still, they’ve been attending now for about two years and very few people speak to them.



Notice: They liked the preacher, but they attend in spite of the people.

That’s not a good combination- and most people don’t stick around as long as they have (his wife wants to stay, but he’s ready to look elsewhere). You need both in a healthy church: good preaching with pastoral leadership and a community of faith who love and care for one another.

It reminded me of a time when I was the guest preacher at a church in Florida. There were no ushers. There were no greeters at the doors. Bulletins were only laying on a table. I was in the pastor’s office and my sweet wife went to the entrance of the church. All the doors were shut (it was a mild sunny day, not summer), the lights were out in the foyer, no one was greeting anyone, and a small group of men were sitting in the foyer talking. They watched as Melanie opened the doors, turned the lights on, and started greeting people herself as they walked in (remember, she herself was a visitor!). Instead of being thankful, those men actually got mad at her! Needless to say, this was not a healthy church.

I’ve wanted to share some things with our congregation for a while, and this conversation with my former parishioner yesterday brought it to my mind.

This is a welcoming church! It is one of our strengths. I often brag about you in the community! When inviting people to come and worship with us, I even sometimes dare them to see if they can get in the door on time and then leave with no one speaking to them. I say, I don't think it will happen but I want to know if it does! I am so grateful to walk in on a Sunday morning and see people getting out of their seats and greeting each other and be welcoming- especially to people you don't recognize. This is a powerful ministry. And this is especially true since we have such a large number of first time visitors at our church.

But there are three dangers I wanted to highlight for you.

1. **Don't only greet those you know.** I once served a church that appeared to be one of the friendliest churches I have served. People hugged and greeted in a strong fashion each week. I say "appeared" because after a month or two, it somehow occurred to me that they were warmly greeting each other. However, if you were new, you got ignored. And I realized this was actually a cold church- if you were new. It took a lot of work to break that pattern.

One principle that we should all follow is: **Strangers before Good Friends**. Before worship, or during a greeting time, and after the last Amen, always seek out those who you don't recognize first- especially within about 10 feet of you. Welcome them and (even better) learn their names. Then, after you have given your attention to someone new, then you may greet your good friends.

2. When the Pastor might say, "**Turn and greet one another**" during the worship service, this can be a particularly difficult moment. Because people do not sit evenly spaced in worship, there can be pockets where someone is sitting and there is no one present for about 10 feet or more. Standing up front, I have seen people at this church (especially newcomers) at that moment in the service: they turn left, they turn right, forward and back, they look around and see no one to speak to, and some just sit down. It can be very awkward and disappointing.

As a church member, please be aware of this situation. Get up out of your seat and quickly move to someone like that. I was visiting a church in Richmond, Virginia, and at that moment in the service, a lady 3 rows back on the opposite side of the church, crossed the aisle, came forward and greeted my family. I was very impressed.

3. **Don't only eat with people you know.** It is good to enjoy a meal with friends. Absolutely. But imagine visiting a church, coming to your first or second Community Dinner, and you and your spouse sit at a table alone. No one asks to join you, and no one asked you to come join their table. Meal times can be particularly lonely times for visitors because many are quick to greet newcomers in worship, but not so quick to eat with them.

You have the power to grow or harm a church. Remember: if all visitors cared about was preaching or listening to the choir special, then they would watch online. By coming to an actual worship service, they are seeking something more. They are seeking a community- a place to belong with YOU.

My Hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus blood and righteousness.

-Pastor Ronnie

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Palm Sunday kids celebration such a fun day. A special shout out to the men's group and the youth for their assistance in making the day a success.

-Vicky Anchor & Children's Committee



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Office Closure

Our church office will be closed on Easter Monday, **April 1**.



Honoring Eva Fountain's Memory

On Monday, **April 1** at 10:30AM the Dogwood Garden Club will honor Eva Fountain's memory with a tree planting on her birthday in our Prayer Garden. All are invited to attend the short ceremony.



Discovery Candlelit Prayer Service

Everyone is invited to a very special youth led Discovery Candlelit Prayer Service on Saturday, **April 6** at 7:00PM in the Main Sanctuary.



Discovery Sunday

Our Youth will be leading our 9:45AM worship service at the CRC on Sun, **April 7**. The 8:30AM & 11:00AM will be preaching services with Pastor Ronnie. Make plans to attend this dynamic 9:45AM worship service and support our youth— ***you will be blessed!***



Sager Brown Mission Team Meeting

Our mission team will meet on Sunday, **April 14** at 12:00PM in Rm 213 on the Breezeway. Please see Pam Hight for more info or call her at 850-758-8201.



Parent's Night Out

Our next Parent's Night Out will be Friday, **April 26**, from 5:30-8:30 on Kid's St. You can sign up on the church website or on the church app. Spots are limited so sign up soon!



MINISTRY UPDATES

Children's Ministry

Save the date- Vacation Bible School will be held **July 29-August 1**, from 6:00-8:00. The theme this year is SCUBA: Diving into friendship with God. Please be prayerfully considering how you might support this event. This is our biggest outreach event of the year, and we will need lots of prayer, supplies, and volunteers. More announcements about this will be coming soon!



Youth Ministry

This month is one of the biggest months for our Youth program! Every year after Easter, we have a three day Lock-In for the youth of the church. It is based on the Emmaus/Chrysalis walls that many of you have been on before! The weekend is focused on bringing the youth closer to God and Discovering God's Love through the church. As of right now, we are set to have about 30 youth in attendance over the weekend. Other than our trip to Camp Baldwin in late July, Discovery Weekend is the biggest annual event that the youth have at First Methodist Crestview. This 3-day Lock-In is only a week away! If there is anyway that you would like to help, please reach o if to Paul Adams at firstcrestviewyouth@gmail.com. You can help by praying for our youth, volunteering as an adult chaperone, or donating supplies for the weekend. Anything helps! Also, please know that the whole church is invited to our special Discovery weekend Contemporary service at 9:45am on Sunday, April 7th, where two of our youth will be delivering the message. I hope everyone is able to come out and support our youth! We are also having a special candle-light prayer service Saturday night at 7pm on April 6th. The whole church is invited to this service as well! Please



reach out if you have any questions about Discovery weekend or would like to help out this year.

We do not have youth on Wednesday April 3rd. The high schoolers will be setting the room up for the weekend on that night so we will not be having a regular meeting, no middle schoolers will be allowed in the youth room until Friday, April 5th at 6pm when Discovery weekend begins. Our next normal youth meeting is on Wednesday, April 10th at 6pm. This is going to be an amazing weekend!! I can't wait to see what God has in store!

Thank you to all who support this youth program and if you have any questions or suggestions, please reach out to Paul Adams at firstcrestviewyouth@gmail.com.

-Paul Adams

Small Groups

New Small Group Alert!

Beginning on **April 3** Eddie Hager will be teaching 'In the Footsteps of Paul' based off of the video featuring David Suchet. Come for the fascinating video and insight into Paul's ministry. Sign up at the Community Dinner this Wednesday evening or at firstcrestview.com— we're saving you a seat!

Class synopsis: In this revelatory documentary, David Suchet (Agatha Christie's Poirot) sets off in search of one of the great figures of the Bible St. Paul the apostle. Controversial in his own time, Paul remains so today, a remarkable man of contrasts and confusions, a persecutor of Christians who experienced a miraculous conversion and an all-consuming drive to spread the faith. More than any other single person, Paul transformed Christianity from a small Jewish sect into the most powerful religion on earth.



Yarn Ministry

We have a new project underway! Our current adventure are 'Care Squares' for the Emerald Coast Life Center. Squares will be used by children & teens as a tangible source of comfort when they participate in therapy.

Yarnies will meet on Tuesdays, **April 9 & 23** at 6:00PM in Rm 213 (Yarnia). Since this month as 5 Tuesdays (YAY!!!) we will also meet on Tues, **April 30** at 6:00PM at Panera's- remember to bring your project.

-Cathrin Owens

"May the kindness of the Lord our God be upon us; And confirm for us the work of our hands; Yes, confirm the work of our hands." Psalm 90:17

"We look for wool and linen, and work with our hands in delight." Proverbs 31:13



Crestview Prayer Network

The Crestview Prayer Network meets the first Wednesday of each month to share fellowship and goings-on in the different churches in the North Okaloosa Area.



The next meeting for the Crestview Prayer Network will be **Wed, April 3**, at noon, at Hideaway Pizza downtown. Come pray for your hometown!

CALENDARS

April Greeters, Ushers, Liturgists

Morning Glory / Christ Chapel 8:30AM

Greeters:

April 7- John & Cynthia Leitschuck
April 14- Debbie Watson
April 21- Lowell & Maryrose Scott
April 28- Mike & Betsy Roy

Ushers:

April- David Bloom & Jacob Dabbs

Contemporary / The Crossroads Center 9:45AM

Greeters & Ushers: Aimee Keller & Dan Taylor

Liturgists (In Sunday order): 1. Allen Bell 3. Nell Sutherland 4. Jody Woodward

Traditions / Main Sanctuary 11:00AM

Greeters

APRIL 7- STEVE AND KATHY FOWLER
APRIL 14- MARGARET LARSON AND JUDY BEARD
APRIL 21- TOM AND EDIE GIOVANINI
APRIL 28- EDDIE AND JAYNE HAGER

Ushers

APRIL 7- TOM GIOVANINI AND TOM SAUNDERS
APRIL 14- EDDIE HAGER AND DAX REEVES
APRIL 21- ROLLIN ANDERSON AND STEVE FOWLER
APRIL 28- BURT COLT AND DAX REEVES

Side Aisle Ushers & Attendance

APRIL 7- STEVE AND KATHY FOWLER
APRIL 14- MARGARET LARSON AND JUDY BEARD
APRIL 21- TOM AND EDIE GIOVANINI
APRIL 28- EDDIE AND JAYNE HAGER

Office Door Greeter

APRIL 7- GARY JOHNSON
APRIL 14- CONNIE STAPP
APRIL 21- CONNIE STAPP
APRIL 28- GARY JOHNSON

Lock Doors and Turn Off Lights

APRIL 7- TOM GIOVANINI
APRIL 14- MARGARET LARSON
APRIL 21- BURT COLT

APRIL 28- DAX REEVES

Liturgists:

April 7- Scott Sallberg

April 14- Mike Steen

April 21- Paul Adams

April 28- Sara Fordyce

Important Dates In April

April 1- Easter Monday-Church Office Closed

April 3- Crestview Prayer Network 12:00PM Hideaway Pizza, Small Groups begin

April 5- Women's Service Group 10:00AM Asbury Rm/CRC, Discovery

Weekend Kickoff at 7:00PM in the Youth Room

April 6- Discovery Youth-Led Candlelit Prayer Service 7:00PM Main Sanctuary

April 7- Discovery Sunday! 8:30AM & 11:00AM are preaching services with Pastor Ronnie / 9:45AM CRC Worship Service will be led by our Youth in honor of Discovery Weekend, Long Range Planning 3:00PM in the Asbury RM

April 8- 8th Ave Methodist Men 6:00PM FH

April 9- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213

April 16- Missions 6:30PM Rm 213

April 22- May Newsletter Deadline

April 23- Worship Committee 5:30PM Conf Rm, Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213

April 23- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Panera's

**FH- Fellowship Hall, Conf Rm- Conference Room, CRC- The Crossroads Center, Youth Rm- Youth Room*

Please see firstcrestview.com calendar for any updates or changes

Looking Ahead To May

May 1- Crestview Prayer Network 12:00PM Hideaway Pizza

May 3- Women's Service Group 10:00AM Asbury Rm/CRC

May 5- Youth Committee 12:15PM Youth Rm, Trustees 3:00PM FH, Finance 5:00PM Rm 212

May 5 thru 7- Annual Conference at Crosspoint Methodist in Niceville

May 12- Sr. Recognition Sunday, Mothers Day

May 13- 8th Ave Methodist Men 6:00PM FH

May 14- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213

May 15- CommUNITY Dinner hosted by FMC Youth

May 19- Children's Committee 12:15PM Kids St.

May 20- May Newsletter Deadline

May 26- Happy Birthday Pastor Ronnie!

May 27- Memorial Day- Church Office Closed

May 28- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213

**FH- Fellowship Hall, Conf Rm- Conference Room, CRC- The Crossroads Center, Youth Rm- Youth Room*

Please see firstcrestview.com calendar for any updates or changes

A MOMENT OF REFLECTION



A Spring Prayer Canticle

Sun and cloud, bless the Lord.

Dew and rain, bless the Lord.

Flower and weed, bless the Lord.

Breeze and bird, bless the Lord.

Mist and meadow, bless the Lord.

Sunrise and sunset, bless the Lord.

Light and darkness, bless the Lord.

—*Bob Hostetler*

"Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who sends the thunderstorms. He gives showers of rain to all people, and plants of the field to everyone."

Zechariah 10:1

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH INFO

Sunday Morning Worship Schedule

Morning Glory at 8:30AM

Christ Chapel

The Well / Contemporary at 9:45AM

The Crossroads Center / FB Live

Traditions at 11:00AM

Main Sanctuary / FB Live

First Methodist Office Schedule

Mon - Thurs 9:00AM- 4:00PM

Staff Meetings Mondays 9:30-11:30AM

Lunch 12:00-1:00PM

The office will be closed on Easter Monday, April 1.

First Methodist Staff Contacts

Staff:

Pastor - Pastor Ronnie Bearden

dronbearden@hotmail.com

Church Administrator - Angie Arnold

firstcrestview@gmail.com

Church Secretary - Cathrin Owens

office.firstcrestview@gmail.com

Children's Ministry-

kidsstreetcrestview@gmail.com,

Family Discipleship-

fmsmallgroups@gmail.com

Youth Ministry - Paul Adams

firstcrestviewyouth@gmail.com

Facilities Manager - Chris Woodward

fmfacilities599@gmail.com

Custodian - Jody Waddell

fmcustodian@gmail.com

Music, Contemporary - Calli McGraw

calli.mcgraw@gmail.com

Music, Traditional - Kevin Lusk

Organist - Leon Curenton

Wesleyan Child Care Center - Osa Bell / Director

wesleyanchildcare@gmail.com

Ministry Addresses:

Soup Kitchen- Deb Lubas, fmsoupkitchen@gmail.com

Women's Service Group- wsgcrestview@gmail.com

8th Avenue Men- Jody Woodward

8thavemethodistmen@gmail.com

First Methodist Church

599 Eighth Ave, Crestview, FL 32536, 850-682-8994

For all the latest from FMC please visit:

Website & calendar: firstcrestview.com

App store: FirstCrestview



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