



THE CONNECTION
January 2024
Newsletter

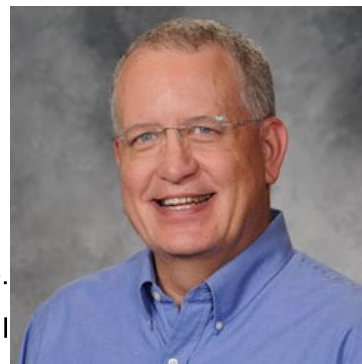
FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

I Am Thankful for a God Who Loves Us!

To many people, life is full of “co-incidences.” And while some events are indeed a co-incidence, some are more. Much more.

I believe some of these events in life are a gift of God. Through them He’s showing us that He’s real and that He loves us. These are moments of grace.

I’d like to share what happened a few days ago as I write this.



Those of you who attend the 11 o’clock service know that we have had some sound system problems here and there for a while. While I am preaching (or another time- but I really notice while I’m preaching), the sound will suddenly cut out. Admittedly, it’s distracting to everyone at a minimum and frustrating as well. Was it human error? Was it a mechanical failure?

After this happened a few times, we determined it was a mechanical failure- but where? There are at least 5 or 6 possibilities. The last time it happened was Dec 3 while I was preaching. Since the Facebook stream was normal, that narrowed the possible culprits.

The next Saturday, Scott Forn, Scott Sallberg and I were in the Main Sanctuary troubleshooting. After a few hours, we narrowed the culprits down to about 2 or 3 possibilities. And now, the only way we could isolate the real source of the problem and be sure was if it failed again and then the operator did a few quick checks. We had a plan. But when would it happen again? Until then, a couple of weeks would go by between intermittent failures.

Having done all we could do, Scott Forn and I went to the CRC to check something over there. While there, Scott Sallberg came over and said the problem was happening again... right now! Come back and check.

We rushed over before it would start working properly again and we finally had a clear culprit- an important channel on the sound board was unreliable. The whole board would have to be replaced. And we all **rejoiced** that the system failed while we were all here using it instead of the random events in worship. We believed it was a gift from God- it was a gift of unusual timing.

But the blessing was not over. Within a day, our church had a donation for a new board and it was ordered. God provided through His faithful people.

I think events like this happen often in our lives- if we have eyes to see. Far too many people ignore these events and chalk them up to interesting coincidences.

I think they are **God-Incidences** where He reveals His presence, His power, His mercy and His grace. They are gifts.

Yes, even when things go wrong. In this case, we needed that old board to fail WHILE we were testing it. And God did just that.

He loves this church.

And He loves you.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

-Pastor Ronnie

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Office Holiday Schedule

Our church office will reopen for the New Year on **Jan 2, 2024**.
Happy New Year from your FMC staff!



Community Dinner, Church Council & Chili Cook Off

The 8th Ave Methodist Men will be holding their annual Chili Cook-Off on **Wed, Jan 17** at the Crossroads Center. Please have your chili entry to the CRC by 5:00PM to be judged.

Please bring a desert to share if you are able.

Our FMC Youth will be serving baked potatoes & toppings to go along with the chili.

A donation box will be set out to help cover the cost of the meal.

All proceeds will go towards our FMC Youth Ministry.

Youth, Kids St. and Chancel Choir will meet at usual.

Dinner will begin being served at 5:30PM, the Church Council will begin at 6:30PM.

We will also have our Winter Small Groups table out for your perusal.

These begin on Jan 24 so come sign up- we're saving you a seat!



Winter Study Groups

Don't forget to sign up for a class!

Two new classes are being offered on Wednesday evening and Pastor Ronnie

is offering his “studying the bible” on Tuesday Morning. Our Winter Small Groups table in the Cross Road center will be out for your perusal at our CommUNITY Dinner or you can sign up at firstcrestview.com These begin on **Jan 24** so come sign up- we’re saving you a seat!
-Margaret Larson

Winter Study Groups



MINISTRY UPDATES

Youth Ministry

2023 is already done! Hello, 2024! Last year was a year filled with Joy and Fellowship in our youth group. I have seen so many of the youth grow in their maturity and love for Christ. It has been such a blessing and privilege to watch the kids deepen the faith and understanding they have of Christ. I am proud of all of them and I look forward to many more memories to be made and lessons to be taught.



This past year, we finish the Gospel of John, went through the whole book of Exodus, and made it half-way through the Book of Acts. We will continue in Acts for the first part of 2024, and then we will begin our studies in the Book of Revelation.

In February, we will be having our “Righteous Relationships” meeting. This is a time where Pastor Ronnie speaks to the youth about the importance of having biblically healthy relationships with people. This is an important learning opportunity for the young people of our church! It reminds them how important it is to wait until marriage for sex and how to set boundaries with others. We only offer these talks once every couple of years, so I highly recommend all youth participate even if they attended in 2021.

Our Discovery Weekend is right around the corner! We will be having Discovery Weekend this year from Friday, April 5th - Sunday, April 7th. Our High-Schoolers Only Lock-In to prep for this event will be on Sunday, February 18th after church until the following morning.

We will kick things back off with a Game Night on Wednesday, January 10th!

We will not meet on January 3rd due to it being so close to New Year’s.

I can’t wait to start things back up and see everyone on the 10th!

This is going to be an awesome year for our youth!!!

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

Soup Kitchen Ministry

Thank you all for all you support volunteering in the First Methodist Soup Kitchen.

So you may or may not be aware...

we are:

Over 15 years feeding the hungry-
Prepare over 3700 homemade hot meals in a year (not soup)-

Serve 52 Saturdays in the year-

With over 520 volunteers/year-

With over 10 leads, 1 coordinator, 2 office super staff, 1 super maintenance engineer-



Fundraising and collaborating with community businesses help with food donations-
Equates to over 1800 hours of service/year.
And we hand out over 350 homemade hats/scarfs during the winter months, from Yarnies and GFWC Northwest Florida Service Group donators
Bless you all for serving and donating to such a worthy cause.
Saving people's lives, one meal at a time.
Donator's welcome, please go through the church office.
Happy Holidays,
-Deb Lubas /Soup Kitchen Coordinator, 401-742-4898

Benevolence Ministry

It is so wonderful the love and generosity of our church. All year the outpouring of money and food for benevolence has amazed us.
The angel tree was stripped of tags in one evening!
The parents faces light up when they see the overflowing gifts for their children.
The shut-ins are equally thrilled with their gifts and that they are remembered even though they can no longer attend church.
It is due to the generosity of our members that Benevolence can meet so many needs.
Thank you from the FMC Benevolence Team!
Margaret Larson, Vicky Anchor, Kristen Sallberg & Peg Harkness



Yarn Ministry

January tends to be a little chilly around these parts and we are hoping that all of the Christmas gifts of handmade hats, scarves, shawls & blankets are doing what they were meant to do- keep folks warm and touch their hearts with Jesus' love!
Over 600 items were made in 2023 alone- that's a lot of dedication & stitches isn't it?
The New Year always holds so much possibility- what's around the corner?
Only God knows, but we are praying for blessings upon our little ministry that continues to reach out to our church family and community with loads of yarn & good cheer.
This past year we supported the Crestview Pregnancy Center, Emerald Coast Hospice, Crestview Animal Shelter, Eglin's Fisher House, FMC's Benevolence Ministry & Soup Kitchen Ministry.
If you are looking to get plugged into a fun ministry and to learn to crochet or knit, or use these talents that you already have, we are here for you!
Yarnies will meet on Tuesdays, **Jan 9 & 23** at 6:00PM in Rm 213 (Yarnia).



-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, Jan 3**, at noon, at Hideaway Pizza downtown...all are welcome!



CALENDARS

January Greeters, Ushers, Liturgists

Morning Glory / Christ Chapel 8:30AM

Greeters:

Jan 7- Lowell & Maryrose Scott
Jan 14- Deborah Watson
Jan 21- Mike & Betsy Roy
Jan 28- Kit Callahan

Ushers:

Jan- Gary & Melanie Zick

Contemporary / The Crossroads Center 9:45AM

Greeters & Ushers: Aimee Keller & Dan Taylor

Liturgists (In Sunday order): 1. Allen Bell 2. Dan Taylor 3. Nell Sutherland 4. Jody Woodward 5. Dan Taylor

Traditions / Main Sanctuary 11:00AM

Greeters:

January 7- Steve and Kathy Fowler
January 14- Margaret Larson and Judy Beard
January 21- Susie Wingate and Jayne Hager
January 28- Glenda McMasters and Jamie Davis

Ushers:

January 7- Rollin Anderson and Tom Giovanini
January 14- Dax Reeves and Tom Saunders
January 21- Steve Fowler and Rollin Anderson
January 28- Dax Reeves and Tom Giovanini

Side Aisle Ushers:

January 7- Steve and Kathy Fowler
January 14- Margaret Larson and Judy Beard
January 21- Susie Wingate and Jayne Hager
January 28- Glenda McMasters and Jamie Davis

Office Door Greeter:

January 7- Connie Stapp
January 14- Gary Johnson
January 21- Connie Stapp
January 28- Gary Johnson

Lock Doors:

January 7- Burt Colt
January 14- Margaret Larson
January 21- Eddie Hager
January 28- Tom Giovanini

Liturgists:

January 7- Mike Steen
January 14- Scott Sallberg
January 21- Paul Adams
January 28- TBD

Important Dates in January 2024

Jan 2- Church office opens for the New Year!
Jan 3- Crestview Prayer Network 12:00PM Hideaway Pizza
Jan 5- Women's Service Group 10-12:00PM Asbury Rm/CRC
Jan 7- Youth 12:15PM Conf Rm
Jan 8- 8th Ave Methodist Men 6:00PM FH
Jan 9- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM
Jan 14- Trustees 3:00PM FH, Finance 5:00PM Rm 212
Jan 15- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Church Office Closed
Jan 17- CommUNITY Dinner/ Chili Cook Off 5:30PM CRC, Church Council
6:30PM CRC
Jan 21- Kids Committee 12:15PM Kid's St.
Jan 22- Feb newsletter deadline
Jan 23- Yarn Ministry 6:00PM
Jan 24- Winter Small Groups Begin

**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 February

Feb 2- Women's Service Group 10-12:00PM Asbury Rm/CRC
Feb 4- Long Range Planning 3:00PM Asbury Rm
Feb 7- Small Groups Begin
Feb 11- SOUP-er Bowl Sunday!
Feb 12- 8th Ave Methodist Men 6:00PM FH
Feb 13- Worship Committee 5:30PM Conf Rm, Yarn Ministry 6:00PM Rm 213
Feb 14- Ash Wednesday service 6:30PM Main Sanctuary
Feb 19- Staff Retreat / office closed, March newsletter deadline
Feb 20- Missions 6:30PM Rm 213
Feb 27- 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 for any updates or changes

A MOMENT OF REFLECTION



Winter in All of Our Lives

There is a winter in all of our lives,
a chill and darkness that makes us yearn
for days that have gone
or put our hope in days yet to be.
Father God, you created seasons for a purpose.

Spring is full of expectation
buds breaking
frosts abating and an awakening
of creation before the first days of summer.

Now the sun gives warmth
and comfort to our lives
reviving aching joints
bringing colour, new life
and crops to fruiting.

Autumn gives nature space
to lean back, relax and enjoy the fruits of its labour
mellow colours in sky and landscape
as the earth prepares to rest.

Then winter, cold and bare as nature takes stock
rests, unwinds, sleeps until the time is right.

An endless cycle
and yet a perfect model.

We need a winter in our lives
a time of rest, a time to stand still
a time to reacquaint ourselves
with the faith in which we live.

It is only then that we can draw strength
from the one in whom we are rooted
take time to grow and rise through the darkness
into the warm glow of your springtime
to blossom and flourish
bring colour and vitality into this world
your garden.

Thank you Father
for the seasons of our lives.

- Author Unknown

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 reopen for the New Year on Tuesday, January 2.
Closed Monday, Jan 15 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

First Methodist Staff Contacts

Staff:

Pastor - Pastor Ronnie Bearden
drronbearden@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-
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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



