



## The MESSENGER



“Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!” – *Psalms 117*

### A Word From Your Pastor

#### “Come Home for Christmas”

John Maxwell once said, “*Where there is no hope in the future, there is no power in the present.*” It is those who can find hope in the future that have the strength and are empowered to flourish in the present. As we lean into the season of advent, we remember that Advent is the commemoration of God’s Promise of the coming of Christ. It is the beginning of our time of waiting, an anticipation in hope of Heaven on Earth. During this season, we gather to watch, wait, worship and work.

In Luke 21:25-36 Jesus clearly defines our time in waiting as a time of suffering. Yet, He calls us to not be afraid but rather to get up and to hold



our heads up high. Jesus is saying *“Be strong and courageous. Get up, look up, remember my word, and move forward.”* That is what it means to live the resurrected life. Courage is the resolution to act in the face of uncertainty. It is interwoven with hope. In fact, courage is the action that births hope and hope produces resilience. Dr. King spoke of resilience as an act of faith: *“With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.”*

This hope is a confident belief based not on things experienced but on the word of God that the future He speaks will come to pass. Hope gives us joy, peace, and patience in the present. Romans 8:24-25, ESV says, *“Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”* Romans 5:2 says, *“We rejoice in hope of the glory of God”*. Romans 12:12 says, *“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”*

First Methodist, you are a resilience Church called to a hope that transcends the current reality. I know God desires for us to grow and be a transforming community of faithful believers. So, in this Advent season as we wait patiently for our Lord’s coming, I pray that *“The God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope (Romans 15:13) and come home for Christmas.*

Pastor Tiffany McCall

### **Fall Outreach Reflections:**

A part of living in the Christian life is our commitment to serve God and one another. In February of 2021, I shared my vision with the leadership of the Church. My vision causes for us to focus on discipling the next generation of believers. This is in response to the great commission *“Go <sup>[a]</sup>therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* (Matthew 28:19)

Many of us who believe in Jesus and have the security of a Church family often assume that everyone in the world knows who He is and what He did to save them. Unfortunately, this is not the case. *“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”* (Romans 10:14-15)

It is a great joy that I share our Fall Ministry reflections with our church family. We have certainly pivoted through a difficult season. Our school Church partnership is blooming! We are now serving John E. Ford School weekly through online story time. This allows us the opportunity to be present in the homes of many. Additionally, we fed ten families for Thanksgiving, assisted in the school’s character parade, hosted our first pack-and pray when we packed fifty hygiene bags for our middle school students, and we are still receiving shoe donations for the sweet students in need. Praise God, we are blessed to be a blessing!

### **Giving Tuesday**

Today, Tuesday, November 30, 2021, is **Giving Tuesday**. Giving Tuesday is the International Day of Generosity. This is your opportunity to connect

with our ministry and show love for the next generation. There are several ways to share, and we are grateful for your sharing and participation.

### **Volunteer Commitment time**

- Participate in the "Pack & Pray" opportunities (see calendar).
- Become a Storytime Reader - we read on zoom weekly from a pre-approved book list. Contact Tiffney Funches at [tiffney@fumc-jax.org](mailto:tiffney@fumc-jax.org) .
- Research our Church history with the community to help us prepare for our bicentennial celebration.
- Participate in virtual Candid Conversations to get to know the next generation. Contact Maya Francis at [maya@fumc-jax.org](mailto:maya@fumc-jax.org) .

### **Support the mission of the Church:**

- With your annual pledge and outreach contributions.
- Help us create a Reading and Math Lab / Support Center" in our Education building. We will need \$6,000. Your donation will help us support the ministry for the next generation by funding computers, books, and a complete makeover of our first-floor classrooms.

---

Strengthen your faith and connect with your church family!

---

## **COMMEMORATING BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH**



### **Patsy Partin - I will never leave you or forsake you.**

“You have breast cancer...” the doctor told me after a biopsy. I was in shock for a while but soon began a series of tests and more doctors’ appointments.

After the shock of the diagnosis, my initial concern was how to tell my 90-year-old mother, who’d cared for my father during his battle with melanoma. Although it had been many years since my father died from cancer, Mother often spoke of the pain of watching him suffer. I wanted to spare her my news. She was told as gently as possible and with much emphasis on the advances made with treatments and better options than my father had with his type of cancer. She seemed to accept the news well and perhaps this was helped by her having some dementia. I was grateful that she rarely mentioned it.

My doctors and I made the decision for me to have a mastectomy, followed by six months of chemotherapy. The chemo treatments were difficult but I got through them with the help of my faith, family, and friends. Prayers and the knowledge that God would be with me helped sustain me.

Fortunately, my two brothers and I have always been close so they were there for me in every way. This church was incredibly supportive with prayers, cards (I still have each one), food, and countless phone calls.

God's presence was very real to me and in times of uncertainty, I would often say to myself His words, "I will never leave you or forsake you." No one can answer the question all cancer patients want to know: Will there be a recurrence? All I know is that whatever happens, I will be okay.

Patsy Partin

---

### **Kim Keffer - Never give up. God is good!**

My first round with breast cancer was 20 years ago in 1999 which involved surgery, heavy chemotherapy, and radiation. The chemotherapy resulted in my having to spend a week in the hospital due to the loss of white blood cells but I was blessed as I did not succumb to infection problems.

I walked into this diagnosis with the hope that I would survive and with a lot of prayers and a great deal of support from my friends, I was able to get through it. The only time I became really upset was when I lost my hair. Vanity, thy name is woman.

Unfortunately, the cancer mirror-imaged and returned, just as the doctors had warned me that this might happen. This time, I was a little more informed about the procedures I needed to endure. This time it was radiation and surgery. Once again I was blessed to have support from good friends and lots of prayers to lift me up from - you guessed it - Dick and Mary Petry, and many friends from FUMC who were my mainstays as I had no family in Jacksonville.

When we moved to Georgia, and as I was a new patient and seven years out from the last surgery, I have to have mammograms and visits to the oncologists and surgeon every six months. I have been cleared through two six-month visits, and at 82 years of age I am cancer-free!

Never give up. God is good!

Kim Keffer  
Cancer Survivor

---

### **Kitty McGill - God was and will always be with me.**

Looking back to Oct. 2009 & reeling from Jake's diagnosis of prostate "cancer", I had no idea that I would hear those same words at my annual

checkup: breast “cancer. I remember thinking "Why me, Lord? I know we all go through tests of our faith, but this is more than I can manage right now." I remember praying to God to help me because I did not know what to do next. How am I going to be there to help Jake through his treatment? St. Vincent’s could not contact my primary care to start treatment.

God answered my prayer and sent a primary care physician from 'The Terry Cancer Center' to ok the start of steps to recovery that same day. HE sent a consult to hold my hand through the needle biopsy when Jake couldn't be there, a surgeon who explained all the options so I could decide; and a praying oncologist who heard my desire to endure radiation and chemo so that I could be there for my husband, see my five grandchildren graduate and start families of their own, and continue working and serving at FUMC. My church family also supported me by taking over my Director of Children’s Ministry duties, helping me in the church office, bringing meals & chemo soup. The pastor even went with us to Jake’s initial consult.

I thought if I made it past 10 years, I would be free of the “cancer” but that was not to be. In February 2020 cancer took my right kidney. A state of calm and peace washed over me this time. I did not ask why or how because I knew that HE had it under control. I can do all things with God who gives me strength.

God was and will always be with me in this life and into the next.  
In His Service,  
Kitty McGill

---

## **NOTES FROM THE CHOIR LOFT**

Blessings In the Name of Jesus!  
Our wonderful Music Ministry consisting of the FUMC Sanctuary Ensemble and the FUMC Male Chorus, is awaiting the arrival of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by preparing songs and anthems appropriate for the Advent season. We are joyously anticipating the birth of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, by also preparing songs and anthems appropriately for His arrival into the world.



Please come and worship with us on Sunday morning, either in person or Zoom or Facebook, to hear the glorious music performed by our Music Ministry. They sing to the "Glory of God."

Merry Christmas to one and all!!!

Fredricka H. Taylor  
Director of Music

## **PARISH NURSE: "Being At Peace"**



*"Like water which can clearly mirror the sky and the trees only so long as its surface is undisturbed, the mind can only reflect the true image of the Self when it is tranquil and wholly relaxed".*

Indra Devi

Sometimes when the holidays are approaching, we can feel the tension of juggling many items on our to-do list, making us nervous, tired, and sometimes irritable toward the people around us. Dealing with additional stressors, like COVID safety and limited supplies and foods, affects our decision-making on how to accomplish our goals while keeping everyone happy. In keeping with this issue that is affecting me as well, I googled for information on having spiritual peace that would help me cope and enable me to function within spiritually peaceful self and surroundings.

There has been research on spiritual health as a component of health-related quality of life (Bredle, Salsman, Debb, Arnold, & Cella, 2007). Spiritual health includes a connection between faith, peace, and spirituality. The researchers found many examples that demonstrated the presence of spiritual health as an important component of a healthy lifestyle, many of them focusing on chronic disease. They use a questionnaire (Functional Assessment of Chronic-Illness Therapy-Spiritual Well-Being), that includes the following topics:

- *I feel peaceful.*
- *I have a reason for living.*
- *My life has been productive.*
- *I have trouble feeling peace of mind.*
- *I feel a sense of purpose in my life.*
- *I am able to reach down deep into myself for comfort.*
- *I feel a sense of harmony within myself.*
- *My life lacks meaning and purpose.*
- *I find comfort in my faith or spiritual beliefs.*
- *I find strength in my faith or spiritual beliefs.*
- *My illness/stress has strengthened my faith or spiritual beliefs.*
- *I know that whatever happens with my illness/stress, things will be okay.*

In reading these topics in the questionnaire, you may start to think "yes" or "no" with each topic, allowing you to analyze your spiritual health. As part of the analysis, you might think about ways that you can increase your spiritual time and practice.

Tracy Smith (2021) suggests using boredom as a spiritual practice! Boredom sounds like a negative term, but she is using it to help us understand that we don't need to be busy during every minute of our day. She listed some examples of using time to do things that nurture our spirit. Some of these activities include the following:

- In the car – silence, no radio, texting, or phoning
- In line at the grocery store – no texting, working on a meal plan, or phoning, just looking at the candy bars or reading tabloid headings.
- While waiting for a meeting to start, or when getting someplace early – take a walk, notice natural surroundings.
- In between tasks – getting up and walking around a bit,
- In the shower – extra-long shower!

Plan some space for boredom in your daily plans! Activities can be creative, like using art and interaction with family and peers to change the time from using needless activities and technology to using the time for spiritual health. Faith, peace, and spiritual health will all be improved, as you include these activities in your walk of faith through self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer.

Celebrate Recovery, Step 11: We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

*“Let the message of Christ dwell in you richly.” Colossians 3:16.*

Be well, do good,  
Nancy O’Rourke RN, MSN, EdD  
Parish Nurse

---

*See more upcoming events  
Donate to keep our community thriving*

---

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS INVITATION



FIRST UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH DOWNTOWN

# CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

Saturday, December 11th  
6-8PM at FUMC

FUN WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND  
NEIGHBORS.  
MUSICAL GUEST AND SPECIAL  
PERFORMANCES  
FOOD, SHOPPING, AND MORE!

225 East Duval Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202



Every 2nd and 4th Friday at 6:00 PM

# GET WELL JAX

HEALTHY PRACTICES OF  
FAITH, FITNESS, AND FAMILY

*Fun for the whole family!*



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF JACKSONVILLE

(904)356-5618

[office@fumc-jax.org](mailto:office@fumc-jax.org)

[firstumcjax.org](http://firstumcjax.org)

Follow Us

