

## From Our Pastor

After a disconcerting year in 2020, I want to challenge our church to think outside the box. I want every person to consider and embrace the possibilities of what God can do through them for His glory in 2021. I encourage each of you to seek and understand the calling that God has placed on your life. To better understand your giftedness and strive to serve the Lord in that area. One of my favorite quotes by Albert Schweitzer, "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

In my lifetime, serving the Lord is one of the most fulfilling activities I have ever experienced. When we make ourselves available to God he opens doors to serve him and he gives us opportunities to grow closer to him. As we serve God we not only grow closer to him but closer to the ones we serve. We form lasting friendships with people and discover how much we have in common. Serving alongside other brothers and sister in Christ can often rekindle that inner spirit in our lives. We should all be thankful for those people and those moments that fan into flame our inner spirit.

I believe our inner spirit is what drives our commitment to God and his kingdom's work. Commitment is our promise to do something, followed by the tenacity to see it to completion. The great Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti relates this story from his childhood. "When I was a boy, my father, a baker, introduced me to the wonders of song. He urged me to work very hard to develop my voice. Arrigo Pola, a professional tenor in my hometown of Modena, Italy, took me as a pupil. I also enrolled in a teachers college.

*(Continued in the next column)*

On graduating, I asked my father, 'Shall I be a teacher or a singer?' 'Luciano,' my father replied, 'if you try to sit on two chairs, you will fall between them. For life, you must choose one chair.' 'I chose one. It took seven years of study and frustration before I made my first professional appearance. It took another seven to reach the Metropolitan Opera. And now I think whether it's laying bricks, writing a book--whatever we choose-- we should give ourselves to it. Commitment, that's the key. Choose one chair."

Our challenge this year at First Methodist is to: Recommitment your life to Christ, Recommit your life to the Church, and Make a difference in someone's life every day this year. If we all work together serving the Lord and others this year, we can turn the world upside down. May God continue to bless you and your family in the month of February.

**In Christ's arms, Brother Matt**



**WITH MUCH GRATITUDE...**

*Shirley Brannan would like to thank everyone for your encouraging words, phone calls, cards, prayers and for your helping hands during the time of her struggle with covid. She is feeling much better now as she continues her recovery.*

## Why is February 14 called Valentine's Day?



Valentine's Day began as Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine. The feast was first established by Pope Gelasius I in AD 496, to honor one or two saints named Valentinus for being martyred on February 14. Those familiar with this story have discovered that there were actually three saints bearing the name Valentine or Valentinus. Two were from Italy and one was from Africa.

While it is clear that the origin of Valentine's Day is connected to Christianity, there are those who claim paganism is the root. Those telling this story say Christianity took the Roman festival called Lupercalia and "Christianized" it. Nevertheless, Paganism may or may not have had anything to do with Valentine's Day. With the difficulty of determining which details are true, there is no denying that Valentine's Day has become the International Holiday of Love.

Whatever Valentine's Day is to you, it is for you to decide. Personally, I think it's a great opportunity as a Christian to celebrate love, whether it is with family, friends, lovers, or neighbors because Jesus said that people would know us by our love.

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:34-35).

My prayer is that God will give you many opportunities to express your love for God and others throughout this coming year. **In Christ's Arms, Brother Matt**

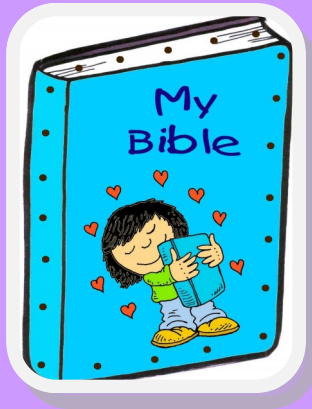


**Happy Valentine's Day!** This month our kids are learning about kindness, which is showing others they are valuable by how you treat them. Our memory verse comes from Colossians 3:12. *"You are God's chosen people. You are holy and dearly loved. So put on tender mercy and kindness as if they were your clothes. Don't be proud. Be gentle and patient."* How can you and your child show kindness to someone today?

Don't forget that we still have our Zoom Hangout each Wednesday evening from 5:30-6:00 p.m. We'd love to have your child join in the fun!

At Wetumpka First, we know how important it is for our kids to stay in God's Word. We want each child to have a children's Bible. If your child does not have one, please see me and I'll be happy to get a brand new one to you.

Blessings!  
Ms. Michelle



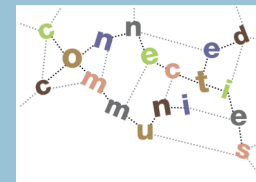
Whether it's a journey to Mordor, outer space, Narnia, or some other exciting location, we all love a great adventure story. Maybe that's because, deep down, we know we're designed to live an adventure story of our own — and with Jesus, we can. There is no greater adventure than the journey of knowing God more deeply, so this month we'll talk about specific ways we can do that: **by spending time with God, safely spending time with others in different ways, sharing our stories, and using our gifts to serve others.**

February will bring other exciting things for 1335 Student Ministry too! In addition to our multiple, weekly online hangouts, we'll have our annual Agape Day party (where we celebrate God's unconditional, life-changing love for us and others), and we'll start walking through the spiritually introspective season of Lent together through discussing what priorities can be changed in, or things and practices can be added to, our lives to grow closer to God and others. How exciting does that sound?!

Thank you again for being such a kind and caring church family by continuing to support your student ministry through prayers, kind words, and continued generosity!! You all have, in so many ways, used your blessings to truly bless others!

For all the exciting things happening every week, check out the hangout schedule on our page of the church's website, and/or contact me if you have any questions! Make sure you are on our text and e-mail list for updates regarding all things going on with the student ministry and to also receive weekly tools and tips for you and your family to use to grow closer to God! If you aren't on these lists, please let me know!

In Him,  
Jamie



# Senior Adult Ministry

**STRATEGIES FOR POSITIVE AGING.....**  
now isn't that a great topic...ha!

**1. CHANGE HOW YOU THINK!** Did you know that how you think will directly impact how satisfied you are with life. The beauty of this idea is that you have control over what you think. Nobody else.....

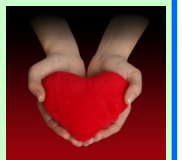
**2. BE SELECTIVE.** One of the benefits of aging is you get to be selective. You can choose the few things that matter the most to you and focus on them. Aging often gives you space and time to focus on what you excel at and what you value the most.

**3. CHOOSE GRATITUDE.** Positive aging is seen in people who go beyond regret, rigidity, worry and negativity. You can intentionally choose to cultivate habits of gratitude, forgiveness and altruism. Look for the positive in everyday life and you will find it.

**4. CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY.** Your words are just as impactful as your thoughts in changing your life. What you choose to say will impact your physical health, mental health, relationships and your happiness. Words are not just a way to communicate, words are much more than that.

**5. SPEND TIME WITH MULTIPLE GENERATIONS.** After spending the day with grandkids have you ever said "they keep me young". There is truth in that! Adults who develop close intergenerational connections report feeling less depressed, having better physical health and greater satisfaction. They also reveal more happiness with their current life and retain hope for the future.

These are all awesome tips for each day living to our best. Read these, try them and see the difference in your life. **TODAY IS A GOOD DAY. GIVE IT YOUR BEST. BE HAPPY. GIVE LOVE.**  
**'Til next month, Celestra**





## Our Renewal Has Only Begun

During the month of January, we launched a journey of renewal. Through prayers, Scriptures, Bible Studies, and worship, we sought to be renewed in our hearts, minds, spirits, and strength in the hope that God will lead and equip us for our next season of ministry together. This journey has only begun.

It is amazing how God has been working through us to love each other and our neighbors, even during overwhelming pandemic challenges that continue, as well as the turbulent, divisive unrest in our country. That said, God is still on His throne and has before our Church Family His dynamic vision to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world - beginning right here at 306 Tuskeena Street and to reach beyond. Toward that vision, our 2021 Ministry Plan has three life-changing goals: to grow numerically, to grow spiritually, and to grow our impact in the community. Our congregation will need to be "all in" to move forward with these goals - "all in" with our individual and collective commitment of prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

A concluding step of our Be Renewed discipleship initiative was to ask our church family to prayerfully consider a financial commitment to resource our 2021 Ministry Plan. We pray the Be Renewed emphasis inspired you to ask God to lead your response. God honors wherever you are on your giving journey - giving as He calls you to give and as you are able. Perhaps God is calling you to make an estimate of giving for the first time or calling you to grow in your generosity journey. Most of all, we pray you have a better understanding that giving is not just a financial decision - giving is a deeply spiritual one.

During worship on February 14<sup>th</sup>, we will announce the financial total of our estimates of giving; and, we will celebrate how our resources are directed to critical ministries to make a significant difference in people served - to feed His sheep. What matters more than the total is that 100% of our Church Family is "all in" - that together we commit to go where God leads us. If you have not completed an Estimate of Giving card, you may cut along the dotted lines of the attached card, or visit our website ([www.wetumpkafirst.com/commitment-card](http://www.wetumpkafirst.com/commitment-card)) to submit a card online. **To have your estimate of giving included in our February 14<sup>th</sup> total, you may drop off your commitment cards at the church office no later than noon on Friday, February 5 or place your card in the offering plate on Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup>.**

Serving God with you,  
Margie Roate and Your Stewardship Team



# Be Renewed

306 W. Tuskeena St. • 334-567-7865  
[www.wetumpkafirst.com](http://www.wetumpkafirst.com)

### 2021 Estimate of Giving

*Please contact me/us with information about:*

- ☐ Help with setting up online recurring gifts
- ☐ Making a gift of appreciated assets or from an IRA
- ☐ Giving through my/our Estate Planning (will, insurance beneficiary, etc.)

### MY / OUR COMMITMENT

*I/We will trust in the Lord with all our heart. I/We will honor the Lord with my/our first fruits. I/We estimate giving to the Lord's work/ministry through our church this year as follows:*

**2021 Annual Estimate of Giving** \$

I/We plan to fulfill this commitment:

☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Annually

Please print your information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*I understand this estimate of giving may be revised or canceled at any time at my request.*

### Reading the Bible Through –February

□ 1 Ex. 25-26	Ps. 14	Matt. 23
□ 2 Ex. 27-28	Prov. 14	Matt. 24
□ 3 Ex. 29-30	Ps. 15	Matt. 25
□ 4 Ex. 31-32	Prov. 15	Matt. 26
□ 5 <b>Reflect on God as Lord of All</b>		
□ 6 Ex. 33-34	Ps. 16	Matt. 27
□ 7 Ex. 35-36	Prov. 16	Matt. 28
□ 8 Ex. 37-38	Ps. 17	Mark 1
□ 9 Ex. 39-40	Prov. 17	Mark 2
□ 10 Lev. 1-3	Ps. 18	Mark 3-4
□ 11 Lev. 4-5	Prov. 18	Mark 5
□ 12 <b>Reflect on God as Counselor</b>		
□ 13 Lev. 6-7	Ps. 19	Mark 6
□ 14 Lev. 8-10	Prov. 19	Mark 7
□ 15 Lev. 11-12	Ps. 20	Mark 8
□ 16 Lev. 13-15	Prov. 20	Mark 9
□ 17 Lev. 16-17	Ps. 21	Mark 10
□ 18 Lev. 18-20	Prov. 21	Mark 11
□ 19 <b>Reflect on God as Faithful</b>		
□ 20 Lev. 21-22	Ps. 22	Mark 12
□ 21 Lev. 23-25	Prov. 22	Mark 13
□ 22 Lev. 26-27	Ps. 23	Mark 14
□ 23 Num. 1-3	Prov. 23	Mark 15
□ 24 Num. 4-6	Ps. 24	Mark 16
□ 25 Num. 7-9	Prov. 24	Luke 1
□ 26 <b>Reflect on God as Author</b>		
□ 27 Num. 10-12	Ps. 25	Luke 2
□ 28 Num. 13-15	Prov. 25	Luke 3



02/01	Caleb	Justiss	02/15	Susan	Legvold
02/01	Damon	Abernethy	02/16	Kimberly	Kolendar
02/01	Diane	Tyler	02/18	Caroline	Macon
02/03	Beth	Coleman	02/18	Spencer	Coleman
02/03	Margaret	Ebrecht	02/21	Suzanne	Krejcar
02/03	Sanford	Brannan	02/22	Asenath	Coker
02/04	Diane	Lockwood	02/23	Jacob	Macon
02/06	Jane	Gilliand	02/23	Joseph	Macon
02/06	Lyness	Justiss	02/23	Jo	Glenn
02/10	Jackie	Patton	02/25	Ted	Watts
02/10	Sonya	Arnold	02/26	Celestra	Rowell
02/11	Cheryl	Cummings	02/26	Mariella	Easterling
02/12	Michelle	Lowe	02/27	Ronald	Lee
02/12	Sally	Blackwell			



Feb. 7	Lee & Janice Cash
Feb 14	Hilton & Barbara Knight
Feb 27	Jerry & Sharon Potts

*If you are a member of FUMC and your birthday or anniversary is not listed, please notify the church office so that we can celebrate with you.*



# FIRST NEWS

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Website: [www.wetumpkafirst.com](http://www.wetumpkafirst.com)

## February 2021

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### Support Group

Fresh Start meets in the Family Life Center at 6 p.m. each Thursday. We do practice socially distancing. If you know of someone who is struggling, please let them know that the **Fresh Start Recovery Group is here for them.** Our goal is to help in overcoming problems, fears, and/or addictions. For more information, please contact Paul Henderson at 334-201-5428.



Find us online @WetumpkaFirst and [www.WetumpkaFirst.com](http://www.WetumpkaFirst.com)

