

From Our Pastor

Set My Heart Free

As we begin this New Year, we have so many reasons to be thankful. Looking back over the last year we see how God has faithfully opened doors for ministry. As those doors were opened, each of you have played a vital role in helping our church to continue to grow numerically and spiritually. But you have also made a greater impact in our community by touching lives. You saw the needs of the community and you were a bridge to the Gospel. God has set our hearts free and set our hearts on fire.

As I was praying about our theme for the coming year, God reminded me of this verse Ephesians 1:7, “We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Through his blood our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God’s grace is so rich.” I believe God wants to *Set Us Free in 2023* and it’s all because of what Christ has done. As Christians, we have freedom over sin and darkness when we follow Christ.

As I continued praying about the theme for the coming year, the Lord led me to Psalm 119. This is one of the most beautiful psalms in the Bible and it declares the greatness and glory of God’s Word. Beginning in verse 25, the psalmist cries out to God to revive his soul, according to your Word. The psalmist felt as if he was near death and his life was in crisis. So, he seeks solace in God’s Word. This too is where we should go when our lives are in turmoil because God uses His Word to bring revival to our lives. Revive us again, O Lord!

The psalmist continues as he asks the Lord to teach him His Word and give him understanding. James reminds us in the New Testament that, “if any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously.” Too often we neglect to ask God for the things we need. We forget that He is God our provide and is ready to supply all of our needs. Jesus said, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Then the psalmist says to the Lord, “I have chosen the way of truth.” When we are faced with temptation or a major decision in our life, it is always best to choose the way of truth. Charles Spurgeon said, “Men do not drop into the right way by chance; they must choose it, and continue to choose it, or they will soon wander from it.” A life of truth is about our daily decisions. Every day our choices either turn us toward God or away from God.

Then in verse 32 the psalmist declares, “I run in the path of your commandments, for you have set my heart free.” The psalmist understood that if he were to give himself entirely to God and to cling to His word, then he could trust God with complete confidence. His confidence is that God would set his heart free through His holy word and when Jesus sets you free, you are free indeed!

May God bless you and your family in the month of January and throughout the coming New Year. May God set your heart free in 2023.

In Christ’s arms, Brother Matt

Mark your calendars...



Sunday, January 1—Happy New Year!!!

(No Sunday School) Join us for one worship service at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary.  
*(The church offices will be closed on Monday, January 2)*

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3 at 10 A.M.—Volunteers needed to take down and pack away our beautiful Christmas decorations.

The Wednesday Morning Bible Study will resume this Wednesday, January 4 at 9:30 a.m. in Wesley Hall. If you haven’t been participating, now is a great time to start! Hughett always has an interesting topic to study and discuss. Invite someone!

Wednesday Nights kick off Wednesday, January 4 as:

- ♦ The children and youth meet after school
- ♦ Delicious meals resume at 5:15 p.m.
- ♦ The Verse By Verse Class resumes at 6 p.m.
- ♦ Choir Practice at 6 p.m. in the Chapel.
- ♦ Beginning Wednesday, January 11: Brother Matt begins Phase 2 of The Discipleship Study in the library at 6 p.m.
- ♦ On Sunday, January 15—Thad Hankins will begin teaching Phase I of The Discipleship Study during Sunday School at 9 a.m. in the classroom across from the Joy Class.

\*\*\*\*\*

EXTRA SPECIAL SUNDAY COMING UP!!!!

10 a.m. worship service only!  
On Sunday, January 29, 2023,  
Michelle Willis from our Elmore County Pregnancy Center will be with us in the 10 a.m. worship service. She will share a brief update on all that the center is doing to promote life in the river region. **Brother Matt will bring another of his awesome messages and after the 10 a.m. worship everyone is invited to a Celebration POTLUCK Luncheon in the FLC.** Begin planning now what awesome foods you would like to share. **It’s going to be a great time celebrating all that God has done through FUMC in 2022 and anticipating all that will take place in 2023!**



# January

January 1—Holy Communion  
 January 8—Jonny McCune  
 January 15—(Available)  
 January 22—Eddy Brantley  
 January 29—John & Scarlotte Holmes



## WANT TO WALK DURING THE WEEK?

A group of walkers gather behind City Hall at 8:00 a.m. on Mondays,

Wednesdays and Fridays each week to walk around the park and through town if anyone wants to join in the fun!



## **Calling all 2023 High School Seniors!!!**

May, graduation, and Senior Sunday will be here before we know it! If you would like your graduating senior to be recognized and celebrated by the student ministry, or know of a graduating senior who is part of our church family and should be recognized, **let Jamie know at [jamie@firstwetumpka.com](mailto:jamie@firstwetumpka.com)**

**by April 2, 2023!**

## SUNDAYS:

- Sunday Worship 8:00 A.M. (CHAPEL)
- Sunday School 9:00 A.M. (**NEW CLASS BEGINS JAN. 15th—see page 1**)
- Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M. (Sanctuary and Wesley Hall)

## WEDNESDAYS:

- Wednesday Morning Bible Study in Wesley Hall at 9: 30 a.m.
- Wednesday Night meal 5:15—6 P.M. (FLC)
- Children and Youth After School 3 P.M.
- Choir Practice 6 P.M. (Chapel)
- Verse by Verse Bible Study 6:15 P.M. (Cornerstone Classroom)
- **BEGINNING JANUARY 11—Brother Matt's PHASE 2 Discipleship Class at 6 P.M. (Library)**



**Our nursery located in the Education Building is available for all services.**

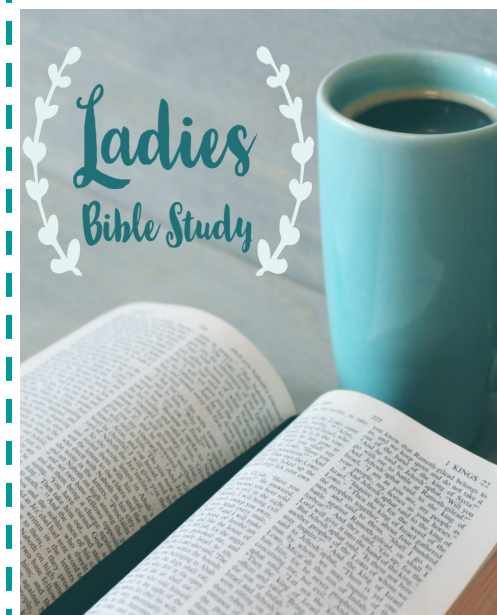


## **FOOD BANK**



While making your new years resolutions please consider volunteering with the **Elmore County Food Pantry or Elmore**

**County Food Pantry Thrift Store. Contact Larry Dozier, Mabrey Whetstone, Donna Matthews or the church office for more information.**

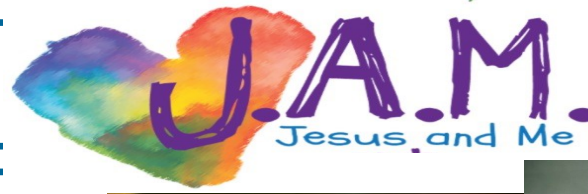


## **LADIES BIBLE STUDY**

We are searching for leaders for a morning and an evening Ladies Bible Study Class. We hope to get started in February.

**If you are interested in being a leader, or a co-leader please contact the church office asap.**





**Happy New Year!** We had a fun-filled December celebrating Christmas with a birthday party for Jesus. The kids enjoyed singing happy birthday to Jesus, birthday cake, brownies, and lots of other goodies. Our motto for the day was sugar 'em up and send 'em home. We also had our annual trip to see the zoo lights. The kids loved seeing all the lights, riding on the train, and enjoying a time of fellowship. The cold wasn't so bad because we had hearts full of Jesus and love.

This month our kids are learning about knowledge, which is learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do. Our kids will learn about the wise men, Jesus in the temple, Jesus' baptism, Jesus in the desert, and John the Baptist in prison. Our memory verse is *"The Lord gives wisdom. Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth."* Proverbs 2:6.

**Our next event will be our Valentine's Day party.** Stay tuned for more details.

Be sure to pray for our kids every day.

Your prayers are so appreciated!

**In Him,  
Ms. Michelle**





## Happy New Year!

If someone asked who you are, what would you say? Maybe you'd say your name. Maybe you'd say, "I'm a musician," or "I'm a basketball player," or "I'm a friend/son/daughter," or "I'm a human!" Those things would be true, but have you ever felt like you're still figuring out who you are, what you're good at, or why you're here? This month we are going to discuss and explore together stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the words of Paul, that will help us see why discovering who Jesus is helps us discover who we're meant to be. Not only is **Jesus distinct** from anyone who has ever lived, but **God made us distinct** too, with **distinct gifts** we can use to serve God and others, and unique **distinctions that are worth celebrating!**

It's a new year, and we are back this month to our regular, weekly student ministry fam hangouts (including all the love, encouragement, fun, and Christ centered, life giving conversations that happen during them)! Not only that, but our exciting winter camp at Blue Lake is this month too!! Thank you to you our church family for being so supportive at the fundraiser, by donating items/time/money before and/or after it, and for all your continued prayers and encouragement! We are truly blessed to be part of this church family!



**May, graduation, and Senior Sunday will also be here before we know it!**

If you would like your graduating senior to be recognized and celebrated by the student ministry, or know of a graduating senior who is part of our church family and should be recognized, let me, Jamie, know at [jamie@firstwetumpka.com](mailto:jamie@firstwetumpka.com) by April 2, 2023!

If you are a 7th-12th grader or know a student who is, we'd love for you, and them, to join in everything coming up and be a part of our awesome community! We can't wait to see you there! See or contact me if you want more details for yourself or a friend!

For all the other exciting, weekly, community building things happening this month as we continue to seek God's wisdom and move forward in His will together (like **our weekly family conversation guides and daily devotions to help continue faith building conversations at home**), check out our page on the church's website, and/or contact me through the email above if you have any questions! Please make sure you are on our text and e-mail list for all updates and access to other helpful tips, tools, and resources for growing a relationship with God personally and as a family!

In Him, Jamie









# Senior Adult Ministry

**Happy New Year**— the old is out, the new is in. Let's begin 2023 with love, joy, service and the love of God shining through us.



**Put Tuesday January the 10<sup>th</sup> on your calendar now, please.** This is Keenagers Planning day. We need you to volunteer in some way this year and we welcome any ideas you have. *If we all pull together it will be a wonderful year in all of our lives. God loves to see us work together, to show his love for each of us through our willingness to serve Him. God wants us to enjoy life and worship Him in any way we can.*

To close out the year 2022, on December the 6<sup>th</sup> Celestra did a wonderful job decorating (It was beautiful). Hunter Goff was at the piano and presented excellent music, along with singing, that everyone enjoyed. The food was out of this world. Thank you Celestra!

Last year was good, but next year is going to be a great one also. Let's all think what it is that you can do to make this possible. I need lots of help and ideas, so let your voice be heard. **No matter your age you can be a part of this wonderful group.**

I am so blessed to be involved with Keenagers and each person at FUMC Wetumpka. Everyone always has my back, and I could do nothing without the Lord and you.

## **Second Corinthians 5:17**

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

**Always Believe,  
Gloria (334-312-1764)**





*Christmas in Wetumpka...*





## READING THE BIBLE THROUGH: January

|   |          |          |
|---|----------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Reflect on God as Creator          |          |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Gen. 1-4                           | Ps. 1    | Matt. 1  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Gen. 5-9                           | Prov. 1  | Matt. 2  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Gen. 10-14                         | Ps. 2    | Matt. 3  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Gen. 15-18                         | Prov. 2  | Matt. 4  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Gen. 19-22                         | Ps. 3    | Matt. 5  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Gen. 23-25                         | Prov. 3  | Matt. 6  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Reflect on God as Healer           |          |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Gen. 26-27                         | Ps. 4    | Matt. 7  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Gen. 28-31                        | Prov. 4  | Matt. 8  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Gen. 32-34                        | Ps. 5    | Matt. 9  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Gen. 35-37                        | Prov. 5  | Matt. 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Gen. 38-42                        | Ps. 6    | Matt. 11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Gen. 43-44                        | Prov. 6  | Matt. 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Reflect on God as Provider        |          |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Gen. 45-47                        | Ps. 7    | Matt. 13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Gen. 48-50                        | Prov. 7  | Matt. 14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Ex. 1-2                           | Ps. 8    | Matt. 15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Ex. 3-4                           | Prov. 8  | Matt. 16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Ex. 5-6                           | Ps. 9    | Matt. 17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Ex. 7-8                           | Prov. 9  | Matt. 18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Reflect on God as Almighty        |          |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 23 Ex. 9-10                          | Ps. 10   | Matt. 19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Ex. 11-12                         | Prov. 10 | Matt. 20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Ex. 13-14                         | Ps. 11   | Matt. 21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Ex. 15-16                         | Prov. 11 | Matt. 22 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Ex. 17-18                         | Ps. 12   | Matt. 23 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Ex. 19-20                         | Prov. 12 | Matt. 24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Reflect on God as Alpha and Omega |          |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Ex. 21-22                         | Ps. 13   | Matt. 25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31 Ex. 23-24                         | Prov. 13 | Matt. 26 |



|       |         |            |       |         |          |
|-------|---------|------------|-------|---------|----------|
| 01/05 | Bailey  | Turner     | 01/13 | Lynette | Johnston |
| 01/05 | Bill    | Kolendar   | 01/15 | Bob     | Reneau   |
| 01/06 | Evon    | Blake      | 01/19 | Carol   | Turner   |
| 01/07 | Janie   | Flores     | 01/21 | Candace | Glass    |
| 01/08 | Jerry   | Barnhart   | 01/21 | Cathy   | Gieseler |
| 01/09 | Doretta | Strength   | 01/25 | Rebekah | Scott    |
| 01/10 | Trip    | Weldon     | 01/26 | Kaitlyn | Lawrence |
| 01/10 | Carolyn | Osborn     | 01/28 | Sara    | Kirby    |
| 01/10 | Lynn    | Warren     | 01/28 | Billy   | Bonner   |
| 01/10 | Kasey   | Emmons     | 01/30 | Tommy   | Head     |
| 01/12 | Wells   | Hutsler    |       |         |          |
| 01/12 | John    | Mann       |       |         |          |
| 01/12 | Donna   | Strickland |       |         |          |



|        |                              |
|--------|------------------------------|
| Jan 15 | Mabrey & Charlotte Whetstone |
| Jan 29 | John & Scarlotte Holmes      |

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

Phone: 334-567-7865

Email: [secretary@firstwetumpka.com](mailto:secretary@firstwetumpka.com)

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

## January 2023



### IN THIS ISSUE:

- From our Pastor
- Calendar of Events
- Our Children, Youth and Senior Adults
- Birthdays & Anniversaries
- Reading the Bible Through Scriptures
- Fresh Start Support Group
- Pictures, pictures, pictures!



Check out the January Calendar of Events page inside!

### Support Group

Fresh Start meets at 6 p.m. each MONDAY in Wesley Hall. Children's activities are provided! If you know someone who is struggling, please let them know that the **Fresh Start Recovery Group** is here for them. For more information please contact Paul Henderson at 334-201-5428.



Connect with us any time on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and our website at [@WetumpkaFirst](https://www.WetumpkaFirst.com) and [www.WetumpkaFirst.com](http://www.WetumpkaFirst.com)