

From Our Pastor

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions

Every day we are faced with choices and decisions that guide our lives. Some of those decisions are insignificant and trivial, while other decisions are vitally important and potentially life-changing. However, researchers say it's almost impossible for our minds to process more than seven bits of information at any given time. Well, it is no wonder I have such a hard time deciding on what breakfast cereal to buy at the supermarket. And when it comes to really difficult decisions, it is no surprise that we want to gather as much information as possible before rendering our decision.

Remember the old joke about the psychiatrist who asks his patient if he has trouble making decisions? And the patient says, "Well, doctor, yes and no." We have all been there. Eggs or pancakes? Golf or church? The front page or the crossword puzzle? Even on Sunday mornings: decisions, decisions, decisions! I like to think of life as just one decision after another. From the most mundane decisions, what kind of deodorant to buy, all the way up to whom will I marry?

Those choices and decisions are like a tug of war, an exhausting battle between our gut feelings and our reasoned thoughts. Science writer Jonah Lehrer says, "For a long time people have said that the best way to make a decision is to be rational. And yet, in recent years, scientists have discovered that the rational brain can only take in a few bits of information at any given moment. So, you start giving it too much information and it starts to short-circuit and sputter." However, even with our limited capability of making decisions, we should never think that we are at a disadvantage. You are not the victim of the world, but rather the master of your own destiny. It is your choices and decisions that determine your destiny.

As Christians, the choices and decisions that we make help us to either draw closer to God or they move us further away from God. They help us to embrace our God-given purpose in life or they set us adrift on the waves of this world. These decisions help us to achieve and accomplish great things in our lifetime or they leave us destitute wishing we had taken advantage of lost opportunities. The psalmist reminds us, "Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you." When we commit our life to the Lord, and trust him in every area of our life, he will help us make those decisions.

My prayer for you and your family during the month of February is you will trust in the Lord to help you make the choices and decisions that will draw you closer to him.

In Christ's arms, Brother Matt

www.bible.com

**Psalms 37:5 NLT;
Commit everything
you do to the Lord .
Trust him, and he
will help you.**

ALL MEMBERS INVITED TO VOTE ON THE RECOMMENDATION TO DISAFFILIATE FROM THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.

***Voting will take place in the Sanctuary
on February 12, 2023 at 2 p.m.***



***In order to vote you MUST BE A
MEMBER of Wetumpka First United
Methodist Church. If you would like to
verify your membership status,
or become a member of the church,
please contact the church office at
334-567-7865.***

**Below are websites to access if you want to learn more
about the changes within The United Methodist
Church. If you have any questions that you would like
answered before the meeting feel free to call the church
office at 334-567-7865.**

Wesleyan Covenant Association

<https://wesleyancovenant.org/>

Good News Magazine

<https://goodnewsmag.org>

The Confessing Movement

<https://confessingumc.org>

United Methodist Action

<https://theird.org/united-methodist>

February

Thank you for providing beautiful altar flowers:

February 5—Communion

February 12—Lisa & Maggie Van Wagner

February 19—Sam & Susan Legvold

February 26—Leighton & Jennifer Greenlee

What is Lent and Why Is It Important?



Lent is the 40 days (not including Sundays) from Ash Wednesday to the Saturday before Easter. Lent is a time of repentance and self-reflection that offers an opportunity to go deeper with God. We focus on the great sacrifice of Jesus as we prepare our hearts and minds for the resurrection of Jesus.

**Lent begins with
ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP
February 22 at 6 p.m. in the
Sanctuary.**



SUNDAYS:

- Sunday Worship 8:00 A.M. (CHAPEL)
- Sunday School 9:00 A.M.
- 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)
- Brother Matt's PHASE 2 Discipleship Class at 6 P.M. (Library)



Our nursery (located on the first floor in the Education Building) is available for all services.

Are You Connecting?
Join us for Sunday School each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. for fellowship and to study God's Word. *There's a class for all ages!!!*

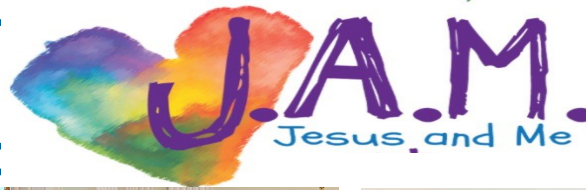


Calling all 2023 High School Seniors!!!
May, graduation, and Senior Sunday will be here before we know it! If you would like your graduating senior to be

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. DEADLINE APRIL 2.**



SAVE THE DATE!
**Tyler Bridal Tea
Sunday,
April 30th**



Happy February! This month our kids are learning about respect. They will learn that respect is showing others they are important by what you say and do. Our kids will study about Jesus' disciples, the importance of loving your enemies, the story of Martha and Mary, and the Roman commander with great faith. Our memory verse is, *"Do to others as you want them to do to you."* Luke 6:31. We encourage you to ask your kids about these Bible stories after we cover them and how they can show respect to others. Feel free to reach out to me if you would like ideas to help your kids grow in their faith at home.

Our 2nd-6th graders are learning the books of the Old Testament on Wednesdays. Each week our kids learn 4 new books of the Bible. We are so proud of how far each one has come memorizing those books! They are already becoming better at finding scripture in the Bible. You can help your child at home by having them study and recite the books with you. When our group learns all the books of the Old Testament, they will receive a fun prize!

Get ready to PaRtY! Our Valentine's Day celebration is set for Wed, Feb 8th during regular children's after-school ministry. We would love to have kids of all ages come (even those below Kindergarten). We will have yummy snacks and a great time of fellowship! Please reach out to me if you have a child who would like to attend who does not normally attend on Wednesday afternoons.

Confirmation class for our 6th graders begins Sunday, Feb 5 immediately following the late service. Lunch will be provided. Jamie and I are so excited to help our 6th graders grow in their relationship with Christ! Please contact me if your child is not signed up yet and would like to attend. Confirmation Sunday is on Easter so get ready to celebrate soon!

In Him, Ms. Michelle



Have you ever been hurt badly by someone? When we're treated cruelly or unfairly, we can feel like we want justice, but what does "justice" really mean? Is it only about handing out consequences and punishment to the people who have wronged us, or could it be about something more? How do we balance forgiveness and grace with truth and consequences? There's someone in the Bible's Old Testament whose life has a lot to teach us about justice. This month we'll explore and discuss how the story of Joseph helps us see that **God's justice is love in action**; when we're wronged by others, we can **hold on to hope**; we can trust that **integrity can withstand injustice**; and learn to practice justice that **restores what's broken**.

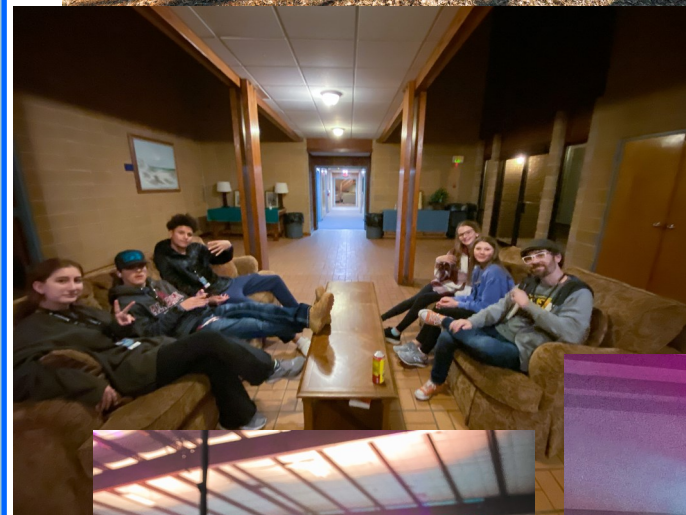
Alongside talking about how God's justice is love in action, we will also celebrate His amazing, unconditional love for us and everyone around us at our annual Agape Day Party, volunteering and the Elmore County Food Pantry, an Art and Games hangout, and all our regular/weekly encouraging, fun filled, story sharing, Christ centered hangouts!



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 by April 2, 2023!

If you are a 7th-12th grader or know a student who is, we'd love for you, or them, to join in all the exciting things coming up and be a part of our student ministry family!

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

Thank you to everyone that attended the volunteer meeting in January. We had a great meeting with lots of ideas and people volunteering for lots of things to do.

I would like to make sure that everyone knows that the Keenager events are for Everyone. Young or old, if you are available when something is going on you are invited. If you have not attended before make this February your starting time.



February the 14th at 12 noon in the family life center will be our Valentine's luncheon. We will have soup and sandwiches and fancy desserts. Please join us for a fun social time and great food.

Please note on February the 16th we will have a new event added to our calendar. GAME DAY. On the first day we are asking everyone to bring a brown bag lunch. Drinks and desserts will be furnished. We can discuss food that day. **Game day will be the third Thursday of each month** in the family life center from 10 A.M. until 2:00 P.M. This will be a fun day so do not miss it!!!



John 1:4

In Him was life, and that life was the light of mankind.

Always Believe, Gloria (334-312-1764)

You Matter to Kingdom Work



In January we had a joyous celebration of God's Kingdom work done through our congregation during the past year. THEN - we enthusiastically launched another year of our commitment to follow where God leads us to serve! Kingdom work happens when every member of our church family responds to God's call to give our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. **Bottomline: You matter to Kingdom work! We each matter!** Through our individual and collective generosity, God has granted us significant growth – in our numbers, in the depth of our spirits, and through our community impact - all for His glory.

We are a family of earnest prayer warriors in all circumstances. We rejoice and build up each other, which creates a welcoming environment for receiving Christ and prepares the way for his Kingdom work to be done through worship, discipleship and study, fellowship, and outreach. Our mission and ministry areas of service include Children's Programming, 1335 Student Ministry, After-school Programming, Sunday School Classes, Bible Studies, Kitchen Team, Homebound, Bereavement Team, Hispanic Ministry, Keenagers, Vacation Bible School, Adult and Children's Choirs, Fresh Start Ministry, Disaster Relief, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Sisters in Service, Angel Tree, Elmore County Food Pantry, Elmore County Pregnancy Center, Live Nativity at Christmas on Coosa, Breakfast for WHS athletes, Digital Outreach, Trail Walks, Fall Festival, Candy Crawl, House of Holidays, AND MORE. Teams of volunteers also serve our worship services, maintain our facilities, and serve on committees. During his weekly 306 Devotionals, Rev. Walter Albritton beckons us to encourage and pray unceasingly for our pastor, for our staff, and for each other as we do Kingdom work. Lord, we know we matter to you. Here we are. . . use us for matters that glorify you.

Doing Kingdom work with you,
Your Stewardship Team
Dennis, Sonya, Andrea, Matt & Margie



Heartfelt THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

On Celebration Sunday you saw pictures of the various ministries within the church outreaching to the community.

We could not successfully carry out any of these ministries without YOU, our amazing volunteers! THANK YOU! Looking for a place to volunteer? Call the church office and let us know what God has placed on your heart. We will be happy to get you in touch with the ministry leaders.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Join the Prayer Shawl Ministry on Fridays from 10 a.m. until 12 noon upstairs in the Education Building. You can learn a new craft, bring your crafting projects with you, or just come for the sweet fellowship.



Do you have:

- A new email address?
 - A new mailing address?
 - A new phone/cell phone number?
- Please update any changes with the church office.



Serving our community...

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

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.



Michele Willis, executive Director of our Elmore County Pregnancy Center came and spoke at our January 29th Celebration. She spoke about how the center strives to meet the needs of moms and dads and how they share the love of Jesus freely with them. The pregnancy center is a non-profit organization that operates on the generosity of individual donors and organizations. The center provides **FREE** pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, supplies & education for moms and dads.

Ways to get involved:

1. Pray for the staff and the people that come through their doors.
2. Purchase a “Choose Life” car tag for \$50, with \$40.25 going directly to the pregnancy center.
3. Help financially. To give online visit www.hopewetumpka.org/donate
4. They are always in need of boys clothing, newborn up to 4T.
5. Volunteer—lots of opportunities to help.

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 Reflect on God as Lord of All
- ☐ 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 Reflect on God as Counselor
- ☐ 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 Reflect on God as Faithful
- ☐ 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 Reflect on God as Author
- ☐ 27 Num. 10-12 Ps. 25 Luke 2
- ☐ 28 Num. 13-15 Prov. 25 Luke 3



02/01	Diane	Tyler	02/16	Kimberly	Kolendar
02/01	Caleb	Justiss	02/18	Caroline	Macon
02/01	Damon	Abernethy	02/18	Spencer J	Coleman
02/03	Beth	Coleman	02/21	Suzanne	Jones
02/03	Sanford	Brannan	02/22	Asenath	Coker
02/04	Diane	Lockwood	02/23	Jo	Glenn
02/06	Lyness	Justiss	02/23	Joseph	Macon
02/10	Sonya	Arnold	02/23	Jacob	Macon
02/10	Jackie	Patton	02/25	Ted	Watts
02/12	Sally	Blackwell	02/26	Celestra	Rowell
02/12	Michelle	Abernathy	02/26	Mariella	Easterling
02/13	Jenni	Greenlee	02/27	Ronald	Lee
02/15	Susan	Legvold			



02/07	Lee & Janice Cash
02/14	Hilton & Barbara Knight

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

Website: www.wetumpkafirst.com

February 2023



IN THIS ISSUE:

- From our Pastor
- Our Children, Youth and Senior Adults
- Birthdays & Anniversaries
- News from our Stewardship Team
- Reading the Bible Through Scriptures
- Fresh Start Support Group
- Pictures, pictures, pictures!

IMPORTANT!

MEMBERS of FUMC...don't forget our very important meeting on Sunday, February 12 at 2 p.m. Plan now to be present. *More details on page 1.*

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