



## A Note from Pastor Bill

This is the April newsletter! Just a day or so ago it was Easter! What a wonderful Easter celebration we experienced! As I reflect on the amazing celebration that is Easter, I often consider how quickly we lose our Easter excitement with the normal day-to-day chaos of life and the many pressures that weigh so heavily on our shoulders - impossible schedules to maintain, endless doctors appointments, family commitments, etc. It is so very easy to quickly pass by the excitement of Easter and return to the struggle that is Lent. In so many ways, we live in a Lent world instead of an Easter world. How can we change our hearts to be an Easter people? That's a tough question!

In our recent study of Hebrews, we touched upon one of my favorite verses in the Bible. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." This scripture speaks to me about how to live into the Resurrection life in a post-Easter world. Sounds like a good sermon series. Yes, it actually is! Welcome to the April worship series. This conversation reminds me of a story I heard years ago. I will do my best to repeat it here for you.

*There once was a man who was lost in the desert, dying for a drink of water. He stumbled upon an old shack — a ramshackle, windowless, roofless, weather-beaten, dilapidated old shack. He looked about this place and found a little shade from the heat of the desert sun (reminds me of Jonah from the Old Testament and the leaf that covered his head as the sun beat down upon it as he awaited God's judgment upon Nineveh). As he glanced around in the sweltering heat, he saw an old, rusty water pump about 15 feet away in the blazing sun.*



*He stumbled over to it, grabbed the handle and began to pump up and down, up and down, over and over, again and again. Nothing came out. Nothing!*

*Disappointed, he staggered back. He noticed off to the side an old jug. He looked at it, wiped away the dirt and dust and read the message written on it: "You have to prime the pump with all the water in this jug, my friend. P.S. Be sure you fill the jug again before you leave."*

*He popped the cork out of the old jug and sure enough there was water. It was almost full of water! Suddenly, he was faced with a decision. If he drank the water, he could live. Ah, but if he poured all the water in the old rusty pump, maybe it would yield fresh, cool water from deep down in the well — all the water he wanted. Yet, he would risk having no water and possibly dying.*

*He studied both options. What should he do — pour it into the old pump and take the chance on fresh, cool water or drink what was in the jug and ignore its message? Should he waste all the water on the hope of those flimsy instructions written no telling how long ago?*

*Reluctantly he poured all the water into the pump. Then he grabbed the handle and began to pump. Squeak, squeak, squeak. Still nothing came out! Squeak, squeak, squeak. A little bit began to dribble out, then a small stream flowed, and finally it gushed! To his relief, fresh, cool water poured out of*

*the rusty pump. Eagerly, he filled the jug and drank its refreshing contents.*

*Then he filled the jug for the next traveler. He filled it to the top, popped the cork back on and added these words to the little note: "Believe me, it really works. You have to give it all away before you can get anything back."*

What a lesson in faith! We find ourselves living in a tradition passed down to us, generation to generation, embracing the first proclamation by Mary Magdalene, "He is Risen!" This changes us and changes the world

forever! Yet, we find ourselves living in a world that would rather drink the water in the jug to save themselves instead of living in faith. Let's remind ourselves that we are an Easter people! That's why we worship on Sundays - Resurrection Days! Let's live into our Faith and make a difference in the world. Let's prime that pump!

HE IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Bill

# Children's Ministry



## Ark Kids Serve: Wednesday Night Meal

Mark your calendar for April 3. Ark Kids will be serving nachos during the Wednesday Night meal. Kids are welcome to serve, clean up and we will be collecting ingredients to make this the best nacho night ever!

## Wednesday Nights @ Fellowship



## Fellowship Moms Connect

Calling all Fellowship Moms! We hope you can join us on April 14th at 5pm for a "Favorite Things Party". Bring an appetizer and one of your favorite things (max \$10). Everyone will go home with a new favorite thing and a list of favorite things.

## VBS

We are so excited about VBS this year (June 3-6, 2024) and with your help it will be the best year ever. Our theme is "Start the Party" and registration will open when we have enough volunteers. You can sign up to volunteer by emailing [betsy@fumctc](mailto:betsy@fumctc) to sign up to help.

Ark Kids had a fun-filled month. Our drama ministry team is currently working on bringing "The Prodigal Son" to life and they will perform during Children's Chat in the coming weeks. Younger students are helping create props for the show. We also played "Capture the Flag" on March 6 which was fantastic.







### **Prayer Buddies**

On the third Sunday of every month buddies pick up their mail from the permanent bulletin board near the children's area. Make sure to drop a letter in the mail for your buddy this month!

### **Urgent Need for Sunday School Teachers, Assistants and Substitutes**

In order to maintain our high safety standards at Fellowship, we need more volunteers in children's ministry. We are in desperate need of teachers and assistants for all areas of children's ministry: Nursery, preschool and K-5th. Also, occasionally our regular teachers need to be absent so if you are able to fill in please send [betsy@fumctc.com](mailto:betsy@fumctc.com) an email. All curriculum is provided and you will have the opportunity to spend time with the FABULOUS kids. All volunteers participate in our ministry safe screening program.

Thank you for praying about whether you can serve in this area. Email [betsy@fumctc.com](mailto:betsy@fumctc.com) for more details.

### **Palm Sunday**

On March 24, Ark Kids and their families participated in a palm parade at the start of the service. Thanks to our volunteers for helping line up kids. We appreciate you!



# Youth Ministry

## Monthly Spotlight



1. Introduction: Can you share a bit about yourself? (Name, age, how long you've been a part of the youth group)



My name is Jaylee Clements, I am 13 years old and I have been a part of the youth group for two years.

2. Involvement and Contributions: What activities or roles have you been involved with in our youth group and the wider community?

Here at the church I have helped provide food for the Youth Group on Sunday evenings and I have helped with VBS. We have gone on a mission trip to Waco, Texas. There we helped the community by sorting food, providing food for the homeless, pulling weeds at a nursing home and sorted clothes at the thrift store.

3. Personal Journey: How has being a part of the youth group impacted your life or faith journey?

I have learned more about God and how he has saved us. This has helped me grow closer to God and has allowed me to have more faith in him and his plan for my journey.

4. Achievements and Proud Moments: What is one achievement or experience in the youth group that you are particularly proud of?

I have a couple achievements and experiences that I am proud of. First and foremost, I am proud of my relationship with God. It feels great to be saved! I am also proud of all the great friends I have made in the Youth Group. I love every one of them! Lastly, we are learning quite a bit about the Bible. While I don't know a whole lot about the Bible, I'm always looking forward to learning more.

5. Challenges and Growth: Can you share a challenge you've faced and how you overcame it, particularly in relation to your youth group activities or personal growth?

As many of you know, I recently had brain surgery. This is not something that was easy for me to face. However, with lots of prayer, bravery, friends and family, I was able to endure and overcome. My Youth Group and my Church support was outstanding and I will be forever grateful!

6. Inspirations and Influences: Who in our congregation or community has inspired you the most, and in what way?

Mrs. Ann! I cannot say enough about her. Mrs. Ann is magnificent in every way and she has a wealth of knowledge that I hope someday to have. She knows how to break things up so I can understand her lessons easier. She is a great leader in our Church for not just the kids, but for us all. Thank you, Mrs. Ann, for being awesome!

7. Hopes and Dreams: What are your hopes for the future, both personally and for our youth group?

For me personally, I pray to continue to grow spiritually and to stay involved with my Church. I want to help my Church and my Youth Group grow. I would love to see more Youth gain the experience that I am getting by joining our Youth Group.

8. Advice and Wisdom: What advice would you give to younger members of our youth group or to someone considering joining?

Be good, have faith in God, get to know your Church elders and get involved in the church as much as you can. By being involved you can go to Sunday School, Wednesday night dinners, join Children's Choir, join the Youth Group or volunteer for Vacation Bible School amongst many other opportunities.

---

## A Note from Pastor Bob

I have known a number of people who think that the world would be much better if we just put daily prayer back into our local schools! They reason that they had daily prayer, and the schools weren't dangerous or mean back then. The theory is that the Supreme Court eliminated prayer from school...now look at how bad schools are!

But we also remember that we could pray when we needed to do so. On the days we showed up after skipping our homework, maybe sleeping a bit late, only to find that our teacher was going to give a "pop quiz" ...and we were pretty sure that we wouldn't pass it! What we some of us did then was to whisper a quick prayer. It went like this "O God, please get me through this one Lord." And if you were in the full bargaining mode, you might even add, "then I'll be good, from now on, honest!"

I have been discussing with you about how the Christian Nationalists, have usurped many aspects of religion in pursuit of religious freedom as they define it. Prayer is one of the tools/weapons they like to use to prove their stance. They usually say that the "terrible" and "evil" government eliminated prayer many public places but specifically from "our" schools. The government "plan" is one step further to subvert our

Christian heritage! Perhaps a question could be asked to clarify this position, "did the school prayer rulings ban all forms of religious activities in public schools?" The Christian Nationalist would answer "yes". From this position they conclude that the absence of prayer absolutely explains today's bad behavior by young people which is compounded as they become adults and contribute to the many ills of our society.



But the Court rulings did not limit religious activities in public schools!! It is important to remember that the Supreme Court never struck down truly voluntary prayer in public schools. It did, however, invalidate school-sponsored practices that required participation, by declaring those practices are deeply coercive.

But Public-school students have the right to take part in voluntary religious activities that do not cause a disruption or infringe on the rights of others. They may pray silently during the school day, read religious books during their free time and talk about religion with willing friends. In fact, many schools have voluntary religious clubs alongside other types of

student-run organizations. Further, public schools may teach religion objectively as an academic subject, and even discuss its role in history, art, and literature.

I once explained this concept to a Disciple Class some years back. Many of my “students” were older than I and were very concerned about the safety and teaching of their grandchildren. They didn’t want them to be exposed to all sorts of serious social issues in their schools. The usual claim was that none of those problems happened in their day...they were positive that our present issues arise mostly because the school day wasn’t starting with prayer.

I explained what the Supreme Court decision actually was. But then I posited to them, a “work around” the court’s rules. What if we asked our local schools to have a daily prayer led by differing religions? For example, Monday would be a Jewish prayer, Tuesday would be a Buddhist prayer, Wednesday would be a Moslem prayer, Thursday might be a Hindu prayer, but Friday would be a Christian prayer.

My class considered the matter and decided that my solution was unacceptable. Why, they said, would we want our children and our grandchildren to be forced to hear these prayers of other faiths? I softly said, “what makes you think that all the parents of the children of those different faiths want their children to be forced to hear a Christian prayer every day?” After a few moments of reflection, the class agreed that the Courts ruling on prayer was a fair interpretation of how religion should be treated in our public arena.

I struggle with the Christian Nationalist positions. It seems that their idea of religious freedom for them is that we all have to think of any religious precept in light of their terms, and their conditions. That concept, my friends, is a violation of the first amendment. Remember we have both freedom of, and freedom from, religion. And that is guaranteed! YIC, Bob



## Upcoming Wednesday Night Dinners

Come for food and Fellowship in Legends Hall every Wednesday Night during the school year. Dinner is served from 5:00-6:30.

### **April 3 - Nacho Bar**

Hosted by our Children and Youth Ministries

### **April 10 - Breakfast/Brunch Potluck**

Come bring your favorite breakfast & brunch food, and share it with others!

### **April 17 - Baked Potato Bar**

Hosted by our Church Administrative Board

### **April 24 - BBQ Potluck**

Come bring your BBQ & , and share it with others!

### **May 1 - Pizza, Pizza, Pizza**

### **May 8 - Casserole and Dessert Potluck**

Come bring your favorite casseroles & desserts, and share it with others!

### **May 15 - Summer Kickoff Tailgate Party**

---

## Missions Opportunities

Please contact Karen, our office administrator ([karen@fumctc.com](mailto:karen@fumctc.com) | 817.430.1500) for information or ways to connect and serve



### **Snack Sack Donations**

Food donations for children at Lakeview and Medlin schools. Please contact Ginger Dennie for more info at [ginger@fumctc.com](mailto:ginger@fumctc.com)

### **Desserts for the Roanoke Senior Center**

FUMC has partnered with the Roanoke Senior Center and provides desserts the 2nd & 5th Wednesday of each month. If you would like to partake, please donate desserts to the Roanoke Senior Center by 10:45 am on the 2nd & 5th Wednesday of each month.

### **Roanoke Food Pantry Donations**

This partnership helps those in need right here in our own community. Please see the back page for this month's needs.

### **Pop Tabs for the Ronald McDonald House**

The pop tabs go to help fund the Ronald McDonald House in Dallas. This 13 bedroom house provides housing for traveling families who have a sick child being treated at a nearby hospital. Pop tabs are being collected on the Missions Bookcase in the narthex.





How you can help serve our community needs!  
Purchase any of the items below:

**Pancake Syrup**

**Grape Jelly**

**Spaghetti Noodles**

**Refried Beans**

Bring them to church and place them in the labeled bins in the narthex. Deliveries will be made to the Roanoke Food Pantry throughout the week.

Thank you for your generosity!

## **Recurring Weekly Events:**

### **Sunday**

- 9:00 am Modern Worship
- 10:00 am Sunday School for all ages
- 11:00 am Traditional Worship
- 4:00-6:00 pm Middle School Youth Group
- 5:30-6:45 pm Adult Bible Study
- 6:00-8:00 pm High School Youth Group

### **Monday**

- 10:00 am Creative Christian Women

### **Tuesday**

- 6:45 am Men's Bible Study (at Dove Creek Cafe)
- 8:30 am Men's Bible Study (at Dove Creek Cafe)
- 7:00 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal

### **Wednesday (August -May)**

- 5:00-6:30 pm Wednesday Night Dinner
- 5:30-6:15 pm Children's Bible Study
- 6:00-7:00 pm Adult Bible Study
- 6:15-7:00 pm Children's Drama Team
- 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal