

LOVING ALL PEOPLE INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST



TOWN HALL MEETING CELEBRATES 2018 AND LOOKS AHEAD

First Newton's 2nd annual Town Hall Meeting was held Sunday, January 27 in the Fellowship Hall. The evening included dinner, fellowship, a First Newton trivia contest and updates on the ministry, finances, and vision steps for First Newton. Church Council Chairperson Jim Richard introduced our new council members and also provided an update on our Preserve, Protect, Modernize renovation project. The Renovation Team has chosen to work with Wesley Development Corporation and an architect is currently developing preliminary drawings to present to the Church Council. Once those plans are received congregation wide listening sessions will be held to solicit input and answer questions regarding the renovation plan. George Wilkinson, Finance Chair, provided the group with a very positive financial update (details on page 2).

Rev. Willis provided an update on the action steps outlined in 2018 by the Vision Team. We celebrated the completion of four of our eight action items:

- Under the leadership of Debbie Rights, we developed a schedule for the Sunday Morning Experience that fosters interaction among all worshippers and maximizes resources. The new Sunday schedule began on June 10, 2018.
- Under the leadership of Lisa Johnson, Polly Pearson, and Brandy Burnette, we have formed a Hospitality Team to implement and coordinate intentional acts of welcome. Special thanks to the 100 people who accepted the Hospitality Challenge.
- Quarterly, we are offering a "Pastries with the Pastors" or "Pizza with the Pastors" event to provide periodic gatherings for prospective members to learn more about the church.
- Under the leadership of Melissa Ervin we have enhanced our nursery ministry.

The remaining four action items are in progress and updates will be provided throughout the year. For a complete re-cap of the action steps and progress toward God's vision for First Newton, pick up the handout that was shared at the Town Hall Meeting, available in the Welcome Center.

REMINDER: The next Church Council meeting will be held Tuesday, February 12 at 7 p.m. in the Gomedela Room. As a reminder, meetings are open for anyone to attend and meeting notes are available on the shelves in the Welcome Center.



FORGIVENESS SERMON SERIES

Anger has the power to consume all aspects of our lives, distort our sense of purpose, and destroy our relationship with God. There is freedom that comes with forgiving - even if the person we need to forgive is ourselves. Throughout February, this 4-week series will examine the challenges and gifts that come with learning to forgive and ask forgiveness.



ORIENTATION WEEK OF FEB. 4

It is not too late to sign up for the new *Making Sense of the Bible* study led by Rev. Willis. Orientation sessions will take place the week of February 4 (Monday evenings at 7 p.m., Tuesday mornings at 11 a.m., and Sunday mornings during the Sunday School hour at 9:30 a.m.). Sign up on-line at:

firstnewton.org/study



UPDATE ON THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC SEARCH

With the resignation of Sarah Luhrs, the Search Committee interviewed Ron Sinclair on January 30 and found his credentials to be impeccable and his experience to be outstanding. Ron recently retired from St. Luke's UMC in Hickory after 25 years of service. He has vast musical experience with choirs of all ages and is well respected at the District and Conference levels. Ron will begin serving as First Newton's Director of Music on Sunday, February 3. Please join us in welcoming Ron to the First Newton family.

- Mike Jenkins, Human Relations Chairperson



RON SINCLAIR

Ron lives on a small farm in Marion with Marcia, his wife of almost 50 years. In his spare time, Ron enjoys building furniture and turning wood blocks into keepsake wooden bowls. Ron and Marcia have one son, Chris who lives with his family near Swansboro, NC. After meeting with the choir, Ron said, "I look forward to becoming part of a very strong ministry team that serves this church. This is going to be fun!"



Photo courtesy of Jesse Salwen.

FRANKIE COOKE CELEBRATES 100

On January 6 Frankie Cooke turned 100 years old. When asked about her secret to living a long healthy life, Frankie said, "I eat a pimento cheese sandwich every day for lunch and I work out three days a week pulling back and forth on the machine, riding the bicycle and lifting weights." Since having a heart attack almost 30 years ago, Frankie has been faithfully working out three days each week at Fitness Plus on the lower level of the hospital. The staff there knows her so well that they threw her a surprise birthday party.

Frankie's family moved to Newton in 1925, when she was six, and First Newton became her church home. Her daughter Sherry describes Frankie as, "Easy-going, but feisty. She likes to have fun and has a good sense of humor." When Frankie's not working out, she enjoys painting pictures and her daughter added, "She sees the bright side of things."



On Tuesday, January 29 Rev. Lory Beth Huffman led an information session at First Newton regarding the Special Session of the General Conference taking place February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, MO. Rev. Huffman explained the Commission on a Way Forward and the three proposals they have prepared for consideration by the General Conference. If you were unable to attend, resources are available at www.wnccumc.com/commissiononawayforwardresources.

Please be in prayer for the laity and clergy delegates attending this Conference, for the entire United Methodist Church and for First Newton. There are several prayer resources available on the conference website or you may continue to pray as Rev. Willis prompted, "Lord, Thy will be done."

METHODIST WOMEN MEETING ON FEBRUARY 4

Francis Asbury traveled up and down the east coast for almost 40 years preaching the gospel to all who would listen. Beginning in the mid-1790s his journeys often brought him through the region that is now known as Catawba County. Come join the Methodist Women on Monday, February 4 at 2 p.m. in the Gomedela to hear about "Sacrifice & Service: Francis Asbury in Catawba County." Using Asbury's own words from his massive journals, John Smith will detail the times that the revered Methodist Bishop passed through or stayed in the region we now call home. Learn what the greatest circuit rider in American history did and said as he preached to our collective Methodist ancestors.

JOY MEETING ON VALENTINE'S DAY



The next JOY gathering will be Thursday, February 14. Refreshments are served at 9:30 a.m., and the program begins at 10 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The devotion will be led by Pastor Marcus Ollis from Beth Eden Lutheran Church. Jim Norris, from the Catawba Valley Bee Keeper's Association will present a program on the Health & Wellness benefits of honey, and the environmental concerns keeping bees healthy. The lunch menu is vegetable beef soup, pimento cheese sandwiches and brownies. RSVP to the Church Office (828-464-8422) by noon on Tuesday, February 12. For more info, contact Bev Underwood @ 828-465-0481.

PLEASE NOTE: There is a JOY volunteers meeting on Tuesday, February 12 at 2 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.



SUPER BOWL OF CARING

On Sunday, February 3 our Youth will be collecting non-perishable food items before and after each worship service to be donated to The Corner Table. We will also have a special basket offering during worship that will be given to support the ministries of ECCCM and The Corner Table. Please consider donating to help these wonderful ministries!

All 6th -12th graders are welcome to join the Youth of First Newton for worship and fun. Here's a look at our January schedule:

- Sunday, February 3 - Super Bowl Party at JR's 5:30 p.m. Bring a finger food.
- Sunday, February 10 - Youth Group from 3:30 - 5 p.m.
- Sunday, February 17 - Youth Group from 3:30 - 5 p.m.



Youth Winter Retreat Participants:

(Top row left to right) Adam, Freddie, Nick, Jamie (Bottom row left to right) Alexis, Abby, Elizabeth, Hayleigh, Anna, Camryn

YOUTH SHARE THEIR WINTER RETREAT EXPERIENCES

Ten of our youth participated in Winter Retreat 2019 January 19-21 at Camp Cedar Cliff in Black Mountain, NC. For two and a half days the group shared fellowship, small group discussion, worship, and fun.

"I love Winter Retreat because it's a feel-good, Jesus-loving community. The energy and vibes that the retreat gives off are radiant and something that I carry within me throughout the entire year to radiate to others. It's always a learning experience that so obviously brings each person there closer with their church, their friends, and (most importantly) Jesus," said Camryn Gantt.

"This was my fourth time going," said Alexis King. "The biggest take away I receive is being able to become closer to God and know that even though kids at my school may not believe in the same beliefs that I believe in, the people at winter retreat do and they embrace it. It is just comforting to know that there is a group that accepts you and does not judge you. They go on this journey with you throughout a weekend and help you de-stress and not worry about things that may be going on at home. Whenever I go and hear the message, I always think that was meant for me or I needed to hear that."



PARENTS NIGHT OUT: FEB. 15

The Faith & Fellowship / Faithbuilders Sunday School Class is providing FREE childcare for Parents Night Out on Friday, Feb. 15 from 5:30-8:00 p.m. in the Activity Room. Children ages 3-12 (who are potty trained) will enjoy dinner, movies, crafts and games while the parents enjoy a night out! Register at: www.firstnewton.org/PNO

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL is available for children ages 3 – 5th grade. These groups meet on the level below the Sanctuary from 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. Our 1st-5th graders are participating in the series: "Learning to Use My Bible." Children are encouraged to bring their Bibles to Sunday School as we will be making bookmarks and other fun things to help children become more familiar with the Bible.



k4C is an after school ministry for children in Kindergarten - 6th Grade and meets Wednesdays from 3:00-5:30 p.m. during the school year. Our theme this year at Kids for Christ is "Journey with Jesus." For more info, contact Shannon at deaconshannon@firstnewton.org

Here's a look at our February schedule:

- Feb. 6: Journey with Jesus - Parables
- Feb. 13: Field Trip to "Make and Take" art at Resource Warehouse/Gallery Hickory
- Feb. 20: Journey with Jesus - Parables
- Feb. 27: Mission Project at The Corner Table Soup Kitchen

NEWTON

METHODIST PRESCHOOL

NOW ENROLLING FOR FALL

Newton Methodist Preschool will begin accepting enrollment forms for our 2019-2020 School Year from our current students on Friday, February 1. Registration will be open to the public on Monday, February 18. You may contact Kristi Harvell, Preschool Director at 828-465-6397 for school tuition prices, to receive a school tour and to pick up a Preschool Application Packet. We would love to have your child join our fun and learning environment. We strive to provide the best care and the most positive opportunities available for your child.

2018 YEAR-END REPORT FROM THE FINANCE TEAM

During the January 27 Town Hall Meeting, George Wilkinson provided a financial report on the church's current state. The detailed hand-out is available in the Welcome Center. Highlights from the report include:

- We received \$52,048 income in the month of December 2018, with just 3 weeks of giving!
- We budgeted \$381,000 income for 2018 but received \$426,536.
- We were able to pay 100% of our Conference's apportionment of \$44,766.
- 88 Families have pledged \$327,530 for 2019. This is an increase of approximately \$42,000. We received 17 new pledges in 2019 totaling \$42,464.
- The Christmas Eve offering for ECCCM and Corner Table was \$700.

The January financial update will be available in next month's Newsletter. Detailed financial updates are shared at the monthly Church Council meetings and notes are made available in the Welcome Center. You may also contact George with questions at gwilkinson0228@gmail.com

AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE	JANUARY 2018	JANUARY 2019
Sunday School	60	51
8:30 Contemporary Worship Service	57	57
10:30 Traditional Worship Service	124	114
TOTAL WORSHIP AVERAGE	181	171

**Attendance from the former 8:30 a.m. service in the Sanctuary is counted with the Traditional Worship Service for the 2018 average.*

JANUARY MEMORIALS

Ed & Rachel Carter	General Fund
Pat Britt	General Fund & Garden Fund
Burt Hoage	General Fund & Garden Fund
Melba Nichols	General Fund & Garden Fund

JANUARY HONORARIUMS

John Coffey	Music Fund
Willis Greene	General Fund
Tom & Margaret Dixon	General Fund

FIRST CHURCH STAFF

Lara "Willis" Greene, Pastor | P: 828-461-5918 | E: willisgreene@firstnewton.org

Shannon LeMaster-Smith, Deacon, Minister of Discipleship - Children, Youth & Outreach
P: 336-460-1769 | E: DeaconShannon@firstnewton.org

Brandy Burnette, Church Administrator | P: 828-464-8422 | E: brandyburnette@firstnewton.org

Ron Sinclair, Director of Music | E: ronsinclair@firstnewton.org

John Coffey, Organist | E: johnnyjava@earthlink.net

Michael Roberts, Praise Team Director | E: jasper.angeline@gmail.com

Kristi Spencer, Communications Director | P: 704-607-3280 | E: kristispencer@firstnewton.org

Melissa Ervin, Nursery Director | E: melervin06@gmail.com

Kristi Harvell, Preschool Director | P: 828-465-6397 | E: newtonmethodistpreschool@gmail.com

Celebrations!

BIRTHDAYS

Cara Cadwallader	2/2
Gaye Keener	2/2
Jeff Hewins	2/3
Thomas Hollingsworth	2/3
Greg Bailes	2/7
Adrienne Binkley	2/7
Frank Reinhardt	2/7
Brooks Nichols Jr.	2/8
Vance Sigmon	2/9
Paulette Moss	2/12
Andrew Boylan	2/14
Carol Brown	2/14
Gabe Ervin	2/14
Vicki Yount	2/14
Christian Cambra	2/16
Ken Moss	2/16
Ken Simmons	2/17
Paiton Fair	2/18
Patricia Howard	2/18
Jim Byrd Jr.	2/19
Anna Cook	2/19
Priscilla Faucette	2/19
Lorene Martin	2/20
Flo Williams	2/20
Bobby Carter	2/21
Anne Hunsucker	2/22
Ivey Erin	2/23
Sydney Templeton	2/27
Erin Killian	2/28
George Wilkinson Jr.	2/28

ANNIVERSARIES

Rick & Ann Faust	2/10
Reid & Judy Ikerd	2/10
Wayne & Jackie Dellinger	2/20
Jimmy & Brandy Burnette	2/23
Bobby & Leslie Benson Jr.	2/26
Tim & Miriam Barkley	2/28

WEATHER ALERTS: We will communicate any changes to our church schedule via local TV (WBTV, WCNC, & WSOC), in addition to email, Facebook, and website postings. **NEW: Sign up to receive a text alert.** Simply text: @1stnewton to 81010.