

The Church Tower
First United Methodist Church
January 2025



*Strengthening and sharing our Christian
faith through fellowship and service.*

A Note from the Pastor ... Happy New Year!

It's a new season, a new year, and now what?
Resolutions, diet-plans, exercise, improved prayer life, more time with family & friends,
less on social media ... you get the idea.

What if this year in addition, or, perhaps, in place of our good resolutions we take the
time to renew our faith? John Wesley felt this was so important that he did this each
year. Our modern Covenant Renewal Service comes from the original service first held
in 1663. Wesley used the service with the Methodists in 1753 and it continues in Wes-
leyan churches to this day.

"It was an occasion for a variety of spiritual experiences ... I do not know
that ever we had a greater blessing. Afterwards many desired to return
thanks, either for a sense of pardon, for full salvation, or for a fresh
manifestation of His graces, healing all their backslidings" (January 1, 1775).
In London these services were usually held on New Year's Day.

~ John Wesley, excerpt from his journal

The first time I experienced this service was on December 31, 1999. In the silence was
the palpable presence of God. I pray God's presence will make itself known to each of
you throughout this new year.

Below you will find Wesley's Invitation and Covenant Prayer for your own personal use
during your time of devotion.

WESLEY'S COVENANT SERVICE

INVITATION

Commit yourselves to Christ as his servants.
Give yourselves to him, that you may belong to him.
Christ has many services to be done.
Some are more easy and honorable,
 others are more difficult and disgraceful.
Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests,
 others are contrary to both.
In some we may please Christ and please ourselves.
But then there are other works where we cannot please Christ
 except by denying ourselves.
It is necessary, therefore,
 that we consider what it means to be a servant of Christ.

Let us, therefore, go to Christ, and pray:

**Let me be your servant, under your command.
I will no longer be my own.
I will give up myself to your will in all things.**

Be satisfied that Christ shall give you your place and work.

**Lord, make me what you will.
I put myself fully into your hands:
put me to doing, put me to suffering,
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and with a willing heart
give it all to your pleasure and disposal.**

Christ will be the Savior of none but his servants.
He is the source of all salvation to those who obey.
Christ will have no servants except by consent;
Christ will not accept anything except full consent
to all that he requires.
Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing.

Confirm this by a holy covenant.

To make this covenant a reality in your life, listen to these admonitions:

First, set apart some time, more than once,
to be spent alone before the Lord;
in seeking earnestly God's special assistance
and gracious acceptance of you;
in carefully thinking through all the conditions of the covenant;
in searching your hearts
whether you have already freely given your life to Christ.
Consider what your sins are.
Consider the laws of Christ, how holy, strict, and spiritual they are,
and whether you, after having carefully considered them,
are willing to choose them all.
Be sure you are clear in these matters, see that you do not lie to God.

Second, be serious and in a spirit of holy awe and reverence.

Third, claim God's covenant,
rely upon God's promise of giving grace and strength,
so you can keep your promise.
Trust not your own strength and power.

Fourth, resolve to be faithful.
You have given to the Lord your hearts,
you have opened your mouths to the Lord,
and you have dedicated yourself to God.

With God's power, never go back.



And last, be then prepared to renew your covenant with the Lord.
Fall down on your knees, lift your hands toward heaven,
open your hearts to the Lord, as we pray:

COVENANT PRAYER

The people kneel or bow.

**O righteous God, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
see me as I fall down before you.
Forgive my unfaithfulness in not having done your will,
for you have promised mercy to me
if I turn to you with my whole heart.**

God requires that you shall put away all your idols.

**I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all,
covenanting with you that no known sin shall be allowed in my life.
Against your will, I have turned my love toward the world.**

In your power

**I will watch all temptations that will lead me away from you.
For my own righteousness is riddled with sin,
unable to stand before you.**

Through Christ, God has offered to be your God again
if you would let him.

Before all heaven and earth,

**I here acknowledge you as my Lord and God.
I take you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my portion,
and vow to give up myself, body and soul, as your servant,
to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.**

God has given the Lord Jesus Christ
as the only way and means of coming to God.

**Jesus, I do here on bended knees accept Christ
as the only new and living Way,
and sincerely join myself in a covenant with him.**

**O blessed Jesus, I come to you,
hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked,
unworthy even to wash the feet of your servants.**

I do here, with all my power, accept you as my Lord and Head.

**I renounce my own worthiness,
and vow that you are the Lord, my righteousness.**

I renounce my own wisdom, and take you for my only guide.

I renounce my own will, and take your will as my law.

Christ has told you that you must suffer with him.

I do here covenant with you, O Christ,
to take my lot with you as it may fall.
Through your grace I promise
that neither life nor death shall part me from you.

God has given holy laws as the rule of your life.

I do here willingly put my neck under your yoke, to carry your burden.
All your laws are holy, just, and good.
I therefore take them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions,
promising that I will strive
to order my whole life according to your direction,
and not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.

The almighty God searches and knows your heart

O God, you know that I make this covenant with you today
without guile or reservation.
If any falsehood should be in it, guide me and help me to set it aright.
And now, glory be to you, O God the Father,
whom I from this day forward shall look upon as my God and Father.
Glory be to you, O God the Son,
who have loved me and washed me from my sins in your own blood,
and now is my Savior and Redeemer.
Glory be to you, O God the Holy Spirit,
who by your almighty power have turned my heart from sin to God.

O mighty God, the Lord Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
you have now become my Covenant Friend.
And I, through your infinite grace, have become your covenant servant.
So be it.
And let the covenant I have made on earth be ratified in heaven.
Amen.

You are advised to make this covenant not only in your heart, but in word; not only in word, but in writing. Therefore, with all reverence, lay the service before the Lord as your act and deed. And when you have done this, sign it. Then keep it as a reminder of the holy agreement between God and you that you may remember it during doubts and temptations.

Grace & Peace!



January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Church Office & Preschool reopen Thursday, Jan. 2</p> <p>Church Office & Preschool closed Monday, January 20 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day</p>			<p>1</p> <p><i>Happy New Year's Day!</i></p> <p><i>Church Office & Preschool Closed</i></p>	2	3	4
<p>5</p> <p><i>Sun. School 9 am</i> <i>Worship 10 am</i> <i>Choir 11 am</i> <i>Handbell 11:45 am</i></p>	<p>6</p> <p><i>Bible Study—</i> <i>10:30 am Zoom</i></p>	7	<p>8</p> <p><i>Chapel—10 am</i> <i>Bible Study 6pm</i></p>	9	10	11
<p>12</p> <p><i>Sun. School 9 am</i> <i>Worship 10 am</i> <i>Choir 11 am</i> <i>Handbell 11:45 am</i></p>	<p>13</p> <p><i>Bible Study—</i> <i>10:30 am</i></p>	<p>14</p> <p><i>Church Council</i> <i>1pm</i></p>	<p>15</p> <p><i>Chapel—10 am</i> <i>Bible Study 6pm</i></p>	16	17	18
<p>19</p> <p><i>Sun. School 9 am</i> <i>Worship 10 am</i> <i>Choir 11 am</i> <i>Handbell 11:45 am</i></p>	<p>20</p> <p><i>Bible Study—</i> <i>10:30 am Zoom</i></p>	21	<p>22</p> <p><i>Chapel—10 am</i> <i>Bible Study 6pm</i></p>	23	24	25
<p>26</p> <p><i>Sun. School 9 am</i> <i>Worship 10 am</i> <i>Choir 11 am</i> <i>Handbell 11:45 am</i></p>	<p>27</p> <p><i>Bible Study—</i> <i>10:30 am Zoom</i></p>	<p>28</p> <p><i>Book Club</i> <i>7pm</i></p>	<p>29</p> <p><i>Chapel—10 am</i> <i>Bible Study 6pm</i></p>	<p>30</p> <p><i>Book Club</i> <i>7pm</i></p>	31	



January

1/02 Gina Moore

1/03 Kaitlyn James

1/05 James Michener

1/16 Mallory Joyce

1/21 Deedra Hussein

1/25 Mahla Swinford

1/28 Susanne Daley

1/30 Kim Webster



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH TOWER REPORT JANUARY~2025

As we begin New Year 2025, let us thank God for His creation of our beautiful world. The seasonal changes make our lives eternally interesting and inspiring. The awesome tapestry of fall colors; the quiet stillness and beauty of winter snow; the emergence of new spring growth; and the warm summer days observing mighty oceans as we linger on warm sandy beaches. How grateful and caring we should be. As stated in Psalm 8:6~"you have made me ruler over the works of your hands...". God has given us a great responsibility to be stewards over His entire creation. Let's work hard to please Him in 2025. Let's each do our part to keep our share of this world beautiful.

NEWS FROM DECEMBER:

Our unit was represented by four ladies at the Dec. 7th Advent Breakfast at Providence UMC. Those attending were Claire Smith, Sandra Crick, Cathy Nicholson and Deedra Hussein. They enjoyed a warm breakfast followed by an enriching program presented by Rev. Lisa Blackmonson.

On Thursday, Dec. 12th, from 12:00-2:00, we provided snacks for CNU students during a stressful exam week. We thank all of you supportive church members who contributed snacks for this special outreach. We passed out over 250 goodies to students. They were most grateful. The Dodsons, Millers and Waters helped with this project.

IMPORTANT JANUARY DATES:

Our first Leadership Committee Meeting will be Wednesday, January 8th at 1:00 in the FH. MMBS (Monday Morning Bible Study) for 2025 will begin again on Monday, January 13th at 10:45. It will be presented on Zoom. You are welcome to join us. Call Jane Waters (757-874-4888) if interested.

United Methodist Day @ Richmond General Assembly will be Thursday, January 30th, at The Pace Ctr. From 7:30-3:00. Registration deadline is 1/17th. Please call me, Jane Waters, if interested—757-874-4888. It would be great if we had a few representatives from our group at FUMC-Newport News.

UPCOMING CIRCLE MEETINGS:

Circle #5~Sunday, Jan. 12th at Cathy Nicholson's House @ 12:30.

Circle #7~Tuesday, Jan. 14th in Parlor @ 1:00

Circle #6~Wednesday, Jan. 15th in Parlor @ 11:00

The Micah Mandate~"What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

Jane Waters
UWIF Leadership Team

First Church's Homebound Members

Joanne Bates
5 Pin Oak Road
Newport News, VA 23601

Mary Lou Carter
4 Susannah Drive
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A.Y. Cooper
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The Chesapeake
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14301 Brandermill Woods Trail
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440 McLaws Circle, Rm 131
Williamsburg, VA 23185

Edith Layman
Edgewood Park at Newtown
5501 Discover Park Blvd
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Lynda Rainey
Hampton Health & Rehab
Room #123
2230 Executive Drive
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Norman Shields
113 Battle Road, Apt. 105
Yorktown, VA 23692

Billie Way
Golden Living
Bayside of Poquoson
1 Vantage Drive
Poquoson, VA 23662



Lord,
Hear Our
Prayer

Praise GOD, from whom all blessings flow!

FOUNDATION 2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF GIVING = \$52,000

In 2024, FUMC Foundation was blessed to be able to award a Total of \$52,000 in outreach mission grants. These gifts included \$45,000 in Community Grants to area nonprofit organizations; \$1,000 for the *President's Award given to 2024 recipient Thrive Peninsula* and named in memory of past FUMC president Virginia E. Preston; and an additional \$6,000 to the *VA Conference of the UMC for Hurricane Helene Disaster Relief*.

These gifts were given in Christian love and in the name of First United Methodist Church and will provide vital support to these 26 nonprofit organizations.

2024 FOUNDATION FUNDING RECIPIENTS

Alzheimer's Association – SE VA Chapter

2024 Community Grant: \$500

American Red Cross, Coastal Virginia Chapter

2024 Community Grant: \$2,500

Bacon St. Youth & Family Services, N NewsHamp

2024 Community Grant: \$1,500

C. Waldo Scott Center for H.O.P.E.

2024 Community Grant: \$500

Community Brain Injury Services

2024 Community Grant: \$1,500

Community Knights, Inc.

2024 Community Grant: \$4,000

CRU Military – Hampton Roads Ministry

2024 Community Grant: \$1,500

First United Methodist Preschool

2024 Community Grant: \$1,500

Greater Hampton Roads Diaper Bank

2024 Community Grant: \$1,000

Habitat for Humanity of VA Pen & Gr Wmsbg

2024 Community Grant: \$2,000

Lackey Clinic

2024 Community Grant: \$1,000



FOUNDATION 2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF GIVING CONTINUED:

LINK of Hampton Roads, Inc.
2024 Community Grant: \$3,000

Lustgarten Foundation
2024 Community Grant: \$500

Peninsula Agency on Aging
2024 Community Grant: \$3,000

Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center
2024 Community Grant: \$1,500

Peninsula Rescue Mission
2024 Community Grant: \$4,000

Salvation Army -- VA Peninsula Corps
2024 Community Grant: \$1,500

The Faison Center -- Peninsula School
2024 Community Grant: \$500

THRIVE Peninsula, Inc.
2024 Community Grant: \$2,000
2024 FUMC FD President's Award: \$1,000

Tidewater Arts Outreach -- Pen Art Programs
2024 Community Grant: \$500

United Campus Ministries @ CNU
2024 Community Grant: \$2,000

United Methodist Committee on Relief/ UMCOR
2024 Community Grant: \$4,000
**Advance #901 670 for US disaster relief*

VA Conf, UMC for Hurricane Helene Disaster Relief
2024 Special Grant: \$6,000

VA Living Museum
2024 Community Grant: \$1,500

VA Peninsula Foodbank
2024 Community Grant: \$1,500

YMCA of the VA Peninsula -- Hunnicutt Center
2024 Community Grant/Youth Memberships: \$2,000





First United Methodist Church

Worship with our Family on Sunday mornings!

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Church Staff

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Lutz, *Pastor*

Kim Webster, *Pre-School Director*

Kevin Wilson, *Business Administrator*

John T. Allsbrook, *Director of Music Ministries*

Belinda Young, *Administrative Assistant*

Rick Clifton, *Custodian*



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Church Office: (757) 595-0383

Website: www.firstumcnewportnews.com

Pastor Elizabeth: pastor@firstumcnewportnews.com

Pastor's phone: Mobile: (757) 335-2649 Home (757) 595-5630

Church Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:30 am—2:30 pm