



First United Methodist Church of Bartow

GOOD NEWS

Volume 20, Issue 1

January 2018

THE PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

2018: New Year and New Blessings

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:18-19

2017 was the year of our 150th Anniversary. What a joy it was to celebrate so much ministry we have done along the years! We look back and rejoice in so many conversions, baptisms, confirmations, weddings, Sunday school classes, friendships, lives that have been saved! Our church has been a vehicle of blessings!

This might be surprising, however, but the Bible also teaches us to "forget the former things" (Isaiah 43:18). This does not mean that we have to be ungrateful. Rather, we should not "dwell on the past" or "rest on our laurels." Realize that our God's mercies are new every morning, and therefore we can look forward to the future with desires and expectations for ever-new blessings.

As we begin the year of 2018, we should know that God wants to perform new miracles amongst us. Our hearts are open to receive all that the Lord wants to give us. This will require faith to trust that God can inspire our imagination. To put it in contemporary words, we have to be ready to "think outside the box." We do this in prayer so that our new ideas are truly inspired by the Lord. Only the Holy Spirit can guide us to that new movement of the Lord in our midst. As my father, Bishop Rodriguez, likes to say, "undertake ambitious projects for the Lord and expect even greater blessings from God!" Our God can make "a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland" (Isaiah 43:19). That is the God we believe in!!

I invite our church to pray this way for 2018: "Father, prepare our hearts to receive the many blessings you have in store for us. Increase our faith as we work for you. Allow us to live within the excitement of your presence. In your name we pray, Amen."

Have a blessed 2018,

Pastor Armando



As an example of the "new things" God can do amongst us, think of the inspiring Christmas Music and Dinner program we had on December 20th!! This picture is from that program. Many thanks to Bonnie Allen and all who made it possible!

**January - November
Finance Report**

General Fund

Summary for November

Income	\$16,371.87
Expenses	\$18,955.39
Net Income	(\$2,583.52)

Summary Year to Date

Balance 12/31/16	\$9,691.39
Net Income YTD	(\$2,050.16)
Balance YTD	\$7,641.23

Building Fund

Fund Balance 12/31/16	\$25,482.52
Year to Date Income	\$8,376.86
Year to Date Interest	\$112.47
Year to Date Expenses	\$5,043.08
Year to Date Surplus/(Deficit)	\$28,928.77

Building Fund Balance 11/30/17 \$28,928.77

2017 Finance Review

As this newsletter is being sent out we do not have December or year-end giving figures. We hope that with a good December offerings and the March to the Manger will enable us to make substantial contributions to our Missional Commitments.

2017 Gifts & Offerings

Those who would like to make contributions that will be credited in the 2017 fiscal year should have their checks dated by 12/31/17 and need to be received in the church office by Wednesday, January 3, 2018 or the Sunday morning offering, January 7.

2017 Statements of Giving will be mailed to individual donors by the end of January.

2018 Offering Envelopes

2018 Offering Envelopes will be available on Sunday, January 7 before and after Worship in front of the sanctuary. Please stop and pick up your box of envelopes and use them to help us record your gifts.



Across the Courtyard

by Nadine Waters Robbins

Church Historian

Breaking News! The “Runaway Brides” have returned: after an unknown hiatus, the large framed collage of FUMC brides has reappeared. Formerly housed in the “Bride’s Room” in our church Annex, this “notorious nuptial” assortment now resides in its new dwelling place in our Educational Building Library.

Close examination of this “bevy of brides” reveals that small numbered stickers had been affixed to the glass over each bride’s photograph. This seems to indicate that somewhere there exists a “key” to the identification of individuals whose holy wedlock spans more than a century at FUMC.

Since this “key” has yet to materialize many of the young ladies shown can not be readily identified. As one of those pictured (bottom left corner) I decided to try my hand at naming some of my “collage companions”. Many of those pictured have since departed our FUMC congregation as they began the new phase of their lives.

In addition to “yours truly”, two of our current members, Elsa Huff and Betty Fitzgerald, are among the assortment of “nuptial newbies”. Also included is a wedding photo of Betty’s mother, Betty Waugh, which abuts her daughter’s picture.

Long-serving former FUMC pianist/organist Marion Harrison and her sister, Karen, are among those pictured. Some other prior FUMC members (maiden names) shown are Fran Hunt, Delores Dozier, Pearl Jean Alexander, and Harriett and Bruce Reese. One of the couples visible in this collection of “Methodist Marrieds” is Edna Earle and Steve Stevens, now united together in an eternal union in their heavenly home.

Recently at our 150th Anniversary History Fair attendees assisted with identification of some participants at our church’s 1983 Centennial Celebration which was held to commemorate the Anniversary of our first Church Building. (This building, dedicated on March 11, 1883 was a wooden frame structure located on the corner of Floral Avenue and Church Street). Hopefully, some of our observant FUMC members can assist in naming some of those brides of yesterday.

Note: Next time you stop by our Church Library, sharpen your sleuthing skills and see if you can recognize some of the individuals in our “matrimonial montage”. Just be sure to close the door tightly so the brides don’t run away again!



Choir Notes
by Bonnie Allen

Choir News

This is a day of new beginnings, a time to reflect about the past year and its accomplishments. There have been many memorable moments. For choir, the musical and all the special music that was done for Christmas was a great remembrance. Our Homeland celebration in the Fellowship Hall was great. Last January, I said in my newsletter article, that we never know what is going to happen to us. Little did I know that only a short time later Ken would have two major surgeries. He is making a great recovery, and so that episode in our lives resulted in success. Many in our congregation are suffering with illnesses, but hopefully, next year they will be able to say, Thank you, God, as Ken and I have done so often this year.

Looking forward to this new year gives us pause as we set new goals, and fulfill our dreams. I truly believe that our minds are powerful. What we think is what we get, so it is very important to keep our thoughts positive. That is a difficult task when the hard times hit. I have a list of affirmations that I read almost every day. Thoughts such as:

I am a victor, not a victim! God has equipped me for the work He has called me to do. I am equipped, anointed, and empowered by His Holy Spirit. I have many more, but won't list them all. Many I got from Joel Osteen's books.

I have also read, "Whatever the mind can conceive, can be achieved". So as we go forward this year, my prayer is that God will reveal to each one of us the particular job that he wants us to do. Our Pastor keeps calling us to go beyond the borders of our own little world, to reach out to those who don't know God, and to share our stories. I reached out to invite two couples that I know do not go to church. I probably would never have asked, but after Pastor Armando's sermon, I got brave. I asked, and guess what, they came. I don't know what the outcome will be, but it gives me courage to ask again.

Another really glorious thing that happened this year was the Hurricane. "What", you say??? We got hit hard with lots of damage, but thanks be to God our Father, and State Farm Insurance, I think we will come out better than we were before. God is soooooo good!!

He loves us so much, and He can make all things new again. I am very thankful!!

Another lovely memory of 2017 was the beautiful wedding of Ina and George Ogden. They are very much in love with each other, but also with God their Father. Second chances are God's sweet blessing!! We are so happy to have them in the choir.

Last year, we were celebrating Kaitlyn and Ricky Gattie and their lovely wedding. This year we are celebrating her graduation from Southeastern University, and her first teaching job. We all can see that she is a gifted teacher, so we send all our love and congrats to her. Amy Whitehurst also graduated from USF with tremendous honors. She was one of 21 students out of 500 to receive an award for 4.0 grades for the entire 4 years. She will be a great English teacher!! It is so nice that she will have Heath Petersen as a mentor, if she needs one. Did I say that God is Good?

These are a few of my reflections today as I write this article. There are so many more, but time and space are limited. Ken and I watched the Castaway movie last night. At the end, he is rescued, but his true love had married someone else. He was alone again. He said that when he was stranded on the island, he told himself to just keep breathing. Sometimes we have to get to that point where we just keep breathing, taking steps, living one moment at a time. He was so thankful for a cup of ice. I think that we should take stock of all the hundreds, yes thousands of blessings that we take for granted. We are a blessed nation, and I hope that 2018 will be great again. Whatever comes, our future is secure, because God holds us in the palm of His Hand.

Happy New Year!! Love, Bonnie

**Family Night Dinners
in the Fellowship Hall**



**January
Birthdays**

Wed., Jan. 3 Cleo's chicken casserole, salad
Servers: Kathy Wood

Wed. Jan. 10 Covered dish + chicken (\$2/piece)
Servers:

Wed. Jan. 17 ABC Pizza & salad
Servers: Elsa Huff

Wed. Jan. 24 Covered dish + chicken (\$2/piece)
Servers: Cheryl Layton & Clarice Roth

Wed. Jan. 31 Covered dish + chicken \$2/piece)
Servers:

NOTE: We could use another person or team to take one week a month for a covered dish night.

Sanctuary Undecorating Party
will be 4:00 pm Sunday, January 7.
Many hands makes light work.
Come join in the fun.

Women's Bible Study
6:30pm, Monday, January 8, at 870 Lila St
(Soup provided, bring a salad or hor dourves)

Finance Committee
6:30 pm Thursday, January 4 in the Library.

2018 Church Leaders
Service of Dedication

Sunday January 14, 11 am Worship Service

Staff-Parish Relations Committee
5:30 pm Tuesday, January 16 in the Library.
Agenda: Updating Annual Church
& Community Profile

First Methodist School Board
7pm Tuesday, January 23 in the Library.

Lunch Bunch meet at
Catfish Country after worship on Sunday, January 21.

New Members
Welcome new members to FUMC-Bartow:
Cynthia Etheredge, Amy Fitzgerald, Shawn Fitzgerald,
Shirley Pittenger, Dano Rololewicz

1- Casey Cardosa	17 - Megan Wiggins
Paige McCraney	Bill Wright
Kane Klins	18 - Sam Draper
5 - Bob Pfeiffer	Diane Pannebaker
6 - Kathi Colvin	25 - Eric Presnell
8 - Aaron Presnell	Janet Young
9 - Mary Beth Packard	29 - Paisley Snell
10 - Talesha Clements	31 - Bailey Whitehead
Laurie Morey	
14 - Erin Johnson	
Layla Cardosa	

♥ **Anniversaries** ♥

9 - Eddie & Jennifer Hartsaw
23 - Dick & Jean Thompson
23 - Bill & Barbara Hess
31- Wayne & Leah Snell

Please remember these in your prayers, visits and other expressions of Christian love.

Not at home: Laurie McCraney (CH),
Dot Pattridge (B)
CH = Carpenters Home, Lakeland
B = Bartow Center

At home with medical issues:
Ed & Beverly Etheredge, Marjorie Gay,
Walt Heidel, Jimmy & Melissa Hicks,
Helen McMahan, Marianne McMillin,
Sylvia Mears, Bill Mills, Ann O'Berry,
Ruth O'Berry, Sara Odom, Bill Poe,
Carolyn Presnell, Holly Sutherland,
Janice Warren, John & Pat Wright

In military: Chris Brooks, Victor Orem

Needing prayers: Melanie Hardin,
Pastor & Staff, District Supt. Candace Lewis,
Bishop Ken Carter, Christian, Dawn & Joshua
Williams, Pioneer Missions, Indonesia
Cuba Covenant Sister Church: Iglesia Metodista
de Santa Cruz del Sur, Camaguey, Cuba

Sympathy

*We extend our Christian love and sympathy
to the family of
Rev. David Groves
who passed on to eternal life on December 2*

*and to the family of
Katherine Sutherland
who passed on to eternal life on December 2*

*In memory of
Rose Blount
Dorothy Carroll
June Kloster
Roy Lowe
Donald Odom
by
Wayne & Leah Snell*

Memorial Gifts

*Gifts have been received by
First UMC
in memory of
Ortelle Bowden
by
Her family for the Children's Choir*

*In memory of
Meromay Davis
by
Ann Weld Friskie*

*In memory of
Katherine Sutherland
by
Loy & Susan Conner
Adele Durrance
Class of 1950 for Care Committee
Randy Cruse
Information Services Department
Patricia Revell & family
David & Linda Read
Steve & Tula Richardson
Sharon Sandstorm
Col & Mrs. Jack Sutherland
John & Reda Walker*

*In memory of
Mr & Mrs Jim Kennon
by
Carol Ann Thompson*

Notes from the Children's Choir

Oh, the wonders of children and what they say. Having 13 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren, I know anything can be said. Children are precious gifts from God and I love each one of them.

We learn songs, we laugh, we are loud, we learn to love each other, we get in "time-out" and we pray!!

Thank you all who send your children and grandchildren to children's choir. We plan to sing the 4th Sunday of each month, and sometimes will play the bells!!

On one more note – let me take this time to say a big thank you to the unknown person for the gift card!!! God Bless you!!!

Because of Him,
Sylvia

Thank you!

Dear FUMC,

My mother loved being a servant to the church and all the members there. She was so involved until her health kept her from all the activities she loved so much. Thank you for remembering her, for all the wonderful cookies, and showering of love. Our family is so grateful for all that you do.

Much love,
Suzi & Joel Willcockson
David Sutherland II
Holly Sutherland

Dear Care Group,

Thank you for calling and visiting with me, sharing your time, conversations and listening has been greatly appreciated. Thank you too for the fruit bowl and nice blanket.

Wishing you a joyous Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Sincerely,
Mary Grose

To "Anonymous":
Thank you. Bill Wright

Donations needed for soups:

Canned black beans, navy beans, red kidney beans, white kidney beans, crushed tomatoes, petite tomatoes, tomato sauce, sun-dried tomatoes, corn, chick peas, field peas; instant rice (Goya); broth: chicken, beef, vegetable; fiesta ranch dressing.

Thanks so much,
Kathy Wood

Happiness is not so much what you have
as what you are.

NEWSLETTER INFO DEADLINE

Information for February newsletter must be submitted by Monday, January 15th to be included. Thank You for your help in sending the *Good News* in a timely manner.

The FUMC Newsletter is published monthly by
First United Methodist Church of Bartow,
455 S. Broadway Ave., Bartow, Florida 33830