



in the First Place

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FEBRUARY - Family, Friends & Home

My house is in chaos 80% of the time. If it is not in physical chaos, with toys and clothes and socks (OH, THE SOCKS!) strewn everywhere, it is in emotional chaos with laughter and tears and cries bouncing off of the walls. I am not a person who is comfortable with chaos. Can I be messy from time to time? Of course, just stop by my office. But when it comes to mountains of laundry and minefields of legos, I get completely overwhelmed. If we are talking about our “brick and mortar life”, where our faith is the mortar that holds the bricks of our lives together, my home bricks are gratified with crayons and spaghetti sauce.

I know (hope?) that I am not alone. Even if you don’t have small children bringing a sense of chaos to your home and family, you probably have your own brand of unmet expectations or uncontrollable factors to deal with. Magazines, Instagram and HGTV tell us that our homes are meant to be immaculate and beautiful, our families warm and well-behaved, and our friendships bountiful and meaningful. I strive for this, and yet this projected perfection is simply unattainable. And that’s ok.

As we reflect on our “brick and mortar life”, we have to ask, where is our focus? When we work too hard to make sure our home brick is perfect, we forget that it is the faith mortar that holds our life together. In fact, it is not the perfection of our homes that brings us meaning and purpose, it is the faith that permeates our homes. It is not about having our house perfectly decorated, it is about how we use our home to extend hospitality to our friends and neighbors. It is not expected that we are always perfectly kind, patient, and loving with our families, it is expected that we freely exercise grace, saying, “I am sorry” or “I forgive you”. It is not the breadth of our social group that reflects our importance in this world, it is the depth of relationships where God’s love can live and flow. When we allow the mortar of our faith to bring strength and propose to our homes, our expectations shift and our lives change. This is what we are seeking this month as we examine the bricks and mortar of our home lives.

A few nights ago I heard a sound coming from my 3 year old’s room at 10 p.m. When I went to check on him, I found him sitting on the floor organizing his toy cars. I lost it. This was the third night in a row he refused to go to sleep. I yelled, I cried, and I firmly tucked him into bed. His big eyes and stunned silence was all I needed to understand that I had gone too far. So I took a breath and climbed into bed with him. I didn’t know what to say, so I started with, “I’m sorry”, a phrase I planned to quickly follow with “but...” as I explained the many reasons he deserved my harsh words and behavior. Before I could get it out of my mouth, he laid his head on my chest and reached for my hand. I closed my mouth, took a breath, and accepted the extraordinary gift of grace he gave me. A grace that was extended both from his small, sticky hand and the strong, loving hand of God.

Rev. Brittany Watson

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NEWS & EVENTS

Lucie's Place Sneak Preview
Sunday, Feb. 2nd at Noon

House Blessings in February
See details inside.

Teacher Bag Packing Party
This Sunday, 10 am in the Gym

WELCOMING STATEMENT

You are a child of God created in the Divine Image. You are welcomed, affirmed, and included at First Church, not despite, but because of your age, ability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This is how the Holy Spirit works: when you are welcomed, all are welcomed. When all are welcomed and embraced as the Body of Christ, the world is transformed into a place where all of God’s Children can THRIVE, finding the Trust, Health, Relationships, Imagination, Value, and Education they need. We are all children of God. Thanks be to God!

FUMC LR
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - LITTLE ROCK

NEW & EVENTS

"New Year, Fresh Start" Teacher Bags

Packing Party, January 26 at 10 am

We are preparing and packing "New Year, Fresh Start" bags for our teachers at Booker and Washington Elementary to help them start 2020 off on the right foot. We invite you to join us for the packing party on Sun., Jan. 26 at 10 am in the Gymnasium.

World Hijab Day Celebration with Islamic Center

8:30-10:30am, FirstCup Café, Come and Go

On Sunday, January 26 we will welcome our friends from the Islamic Center of Little Rock in FirstCup Café for a World Hijab Day celebration. Join us for coffee, a pastry, and conversation on the importance of the hijab for our Muslim friends. They will even have extra scarves to show you how to wear a hijab yourself!

SERVE the World Open Meetings

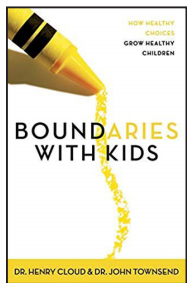
Sunday, January 26, 12:15pm Unity Room

Are you interested in the service, mission, and community engagement ministries of First Church? We have open meetings on the 4th Sunday of every month where you can hear about our ministries in Little Rock. Our gatherings are a time of sharing and hearing updates about programs as well as thinking faithfully about how we can love our neighbors even more deeply. There is a seat for you at the table. Contact Rev. Haley for more information or just show up!

Lucie's Place Sneak Preview - Feb 2nd at Noon

Ribbon Cutting & Open House - Feb. 10, 3:30-6:30 pm

After several years of building this partnership, Lucie's Place is finally opening in our building at 307 W. 7th Street. Before their grand opening, they have invited First Church for a sneak peek open house on Sunday, February 2nd at Noon. Stop by and see the completed transformation and how it will be used to transform Little Rock to a place where all children of God thrive. Then on Monday, February 10th gather at Lucie's Place at 3:30 pm for a ribbon cutting ceremony and stay for an open house.



Boundaries with Kids

Parenting Class- Join us for six Tuesdays starting on February 11th from 6-7 pm. This class will focus on the book "Boundaries with Kids" which offers great resources for those parenting kids of any age. Childcare will be available. Register online or email Rev. Brittany (bwatson@fumclr.org)

Community Engagement at FUMC, Little Rock

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

Did you know we started offering help with SNAP applications in the Community Café? Carol Roddy, our SNAP application specialist, has helped fill out nine applications in the last month.



The Teen Age, February 5

12-1 in the Cokesbury Center

This is a gathering for parents or any adults about some of the key components of identity formation, how adolescents describe themselves & learn to see themselves in relation

to others. Bullying will also be addressed. Dr. Alex Marshall, PhD, Asst. Prof. at UAMS College of Public Health will lead the session where we hope people can learn, gain insight & be equipped about the lives of teenagers. Lunch Provided.

Neighbor's Table

Share a drink and a conversation with your neighbor as we gather for this time of focused conversation. Each month we will be exploring the themes of our Bricks and Mortar Life in this unique time of guided conversation.

January 28: 6 pm at Rock Town Distillery

Topic: Brick and Mortar Life

February 25 at 6 pm at Stone's Throw in Stiff Station

Topic: Home Life

March 30 at 6 pm at Stone's Throw in Stiff Station

Topic: Beer and Faith (spots are limited, pre-register)

Caregivers Life Group

If you are a caregiver for someone you love, join us at noon in the First Cup Cafe on the third Wednesday of the month for a time of communal support. Come as you are, when you can. NOTE: Because of MLK Day, January's meeting will be on Monday, January 27.

House Blessings

Our homes mean so much more to us than just a place to sleep. They serve as a refuge, gathering place, storage facility, entertainment venue and so on. It is only natural to want God's blessing on a space that holds such significance in our lives. Simply put, a house blessing is asking for God's peace and protection in the dwelling place we call home. Recognizing God's presence in our homes is another expression of our brick and mortar lives. During the month of February there are 4 opportunities to have one of the pastors come to your home and lead a house blessing. Packets will also be available for you to take home and use at your convenience. You can sign up either on the journey card in the bulletin or by calling Sara in the church office, 372-2256.

- February 6, 6-8 pm
- February 9, 2-4 pm
- February 17, 6-8 pm
- February 28, 1-3 pm

Re-purpose Your Christmas Cards!

As you gather old Christmas Cards, please save for Betsy Hoffman. Betsy re-purposes these into Christmas Cards for the inmates. You may drop them off in the church office.

Church Women United Central Arkansas South "Human Rights Day Celebration"

January 31, 9:30 am Registration and 10 am Celebration

Westover Hills Presbyterian Church, 6400 Richard B. Hardie Drive
The theme of Church Women United's Human Rights Day is "UNITE TO SERVE." The speaker will be Breanne McLendon, the Executive Director of the Women's Shelter of Central Arkansas. Service to others and respect for human dignity are at the heart of Breanne's career. The Women's Shelter offers various services such as support groups for domestic abuse, legal advocacy, emergency shelter, child advocacy, food/clothing, transportation and crisis counseling. The Women's Shelter receives funding from the sale of the Broken China Jewelry. The ladies who make the jewelry see the process as changing broken china into beautiful pieces of jewelry that have a new purpose in life. It mirrors the path the victim walks to become a survivor.

Arkansas United Methodist Museum

Re-Opening Celebration, Sun, Feb. 2nd at 3 pm

The United Methodist Museum will have our grand reopening Sunday, February 2, 2020 with a special reception from 3:00 pm-5:00 pm of our new exhibit, Hymnals: Praise, Worship, and Grace through Song. The reception will be held in Fellowship Hall. The exhibit will explore the history of music in church and its purpose. The museum will open at 9:00 am on Sunday, February 2. Please feel free to drop in and view our galleries before the reception. The museum is located in the lower level of First United Methodist Church on Center Street. For more info contact the museum at 501-904-1280 or by email at ummac.lr@gmail.com.

YOUTH

Jan. 26- UMY Night. 5-7. Theme 'Hanging Around'

Feb. 2- YOUth Fellowship Lunch. We will gather at noon, then walk (weather permitting) to Vino's. Bring \$3. Finish around 1:30.



Registration is open!

\$105 (updated, lower cost than previously advertised) for a week of service and fun. Cost covers lodging, transportation, lunches & dinners in Nashville + some fun stuff. Register by Feb. 23

FRIENDS & FAMILY

Welcome New Members



We welcomed Audrey and Sean Morell into membership on Sunday, January 12th. Next time you see the Morells, give them a big FUMC welcome!

We welcomed Allison Fuller, Brian Shaddock and their daughter Ava into membership on Sunday, January 19th during First Tradition. Welcome Allison, Brian and Ava!



(Not pictured) We also welcomed Eric Zenor and Robert Kennedy into membership on Sunday, January 19th during First Tradition. Welcome Eric & Robert!

Sympathy

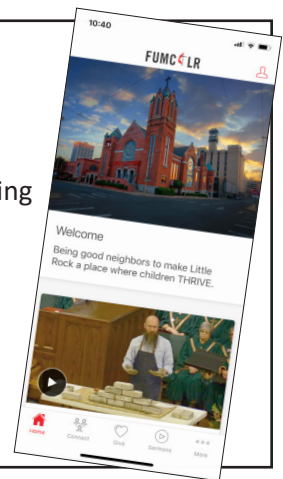
To Danielle Hopson and family following the death of her father, Bobby Hill, on January 19th.

Download the FUMCLR Church App!

As we head into our Brick & Mortar Life over the next year, we'll be sending notifications on our church app!

Instruction to download follow:

1. Text 'FUMCLR app' to 77977. Follow the link texted in the reply.
2. Go to The App Store and search for 'FUMCLR.'
3. Download and enjoy.



LifeGroup Ministry

Our LifeGroup ministry is an opportunity to gather with people who share your experiences in a casual and meaningful way.

Life Group: Caregivers meets on the third Monday of the Month at Noon in the Community Cafe - Jan is meeting Jan. 27

Life Group: Medical Professionals stay tuned for next meeting (email bwatson@fumclr.org for place)

Life Group: Downtown Moms second Wednesday of the month at noon in the Community Cafe

20-Somethings: First Sunday of the month at 10 am in the First Cup Cafe

We are slowly adding new groups, so if have an idea for a new LifeGroup please contact Brittany (bwatson@fumclr.org).

Follow us!
facebook.com/fumclr



The next issue of In the First Place will be published on February 6, 2020. Submission deadline is February 2.

Brick & Mortar LIFE

As we embark on our year-long focus of Brick & Mortar Life, we offer this prayer as guidance.

God, I give you my every day, ordinary life—my sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life. Receive this offering, so that everything about me is a reflection of you. In the construction of my life, may you be the mortar between the bricks, building me up and holding me together. Amen.