



# Crossville First

## United Methodist Church

The Church With the Window on the Heart of Our Town

### Praying for Discoveries

Rev. Drew Shelley, Senior Pastor

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

**Lent** is upon us! We're giving up things, taking up things, praying, studying, growing, worshipping, and seeking the face of God. We're also gathering in prayer about this opioid addiction problem here in our region. I've been quite moved by the folks coming and going from our little chapel. I know most of them (many are you), but I also see a lot of people from our community who are joining in this work. I am anxious to discover what God is doing with this Prayer Vigil. We will discover it together I am sure.

Please know that I am praying daily for you. We are all on a journey together, moving from the world's ways of death to Jesus' ways of life! It is a good journey, but often difficult, with calls for deep reflection and personal sacrifice. It is not for the faint of heart, but the reward is impossibly beautiful. We are called to share life and love with our Creator. Nothing could be better – living as people of hope and life in a dry and barren land!

Let us be faithful to our Lenten disciplines to grow in our relationship with God whom we know in Jesus. As we are strengthened and made more whole, we discover ways to offer more to those around us who seek *that something better* we have discovered in Jesus. Don't be afraid to share it!

I want you to know that people are paying attention to your witness and to your lives. They notice; and what they notice about you is deeply good. You are making a difference in Crossville and the world! It is a true gift to be one of your pastors.

Much love,  
Drew

### Prayer Chapel for Prayer Vigil

A prayer vigil focusing on the opioid addiction that is oppressing our community is underway Sunday to Sunday, February 18-25. The place for the vigil is the small chapel located in the Small Sanctuary at the Braun Street entrance or reached through the nave toward the back and down three steps.

The space offers an intimate setting for prayer, spiritual reflection, and ritual celebrations. History surrounds the room and holds meaning for its many designations since 1947. While its earliest function was a bride's room and a place to assemble before processing to the chancel, it was rededicated to be a chapel and has provided a sacred place for worship, weddings, and baptisms. The chapel's present setting reflects such purposes for at least the last three decades.

As the congregation reflects growth, the newest members might not know where to find the chapel. A pleasing discovery awaits. Whether the sun streams through the stained-glass window, or candles glow on the altar, the wooden pews and walls create an atmosphere for meditation and worship.

The chapel provides the most serene setting for praying in a weeklong vigil as we seek God's guidance in attacking the crisis and in searching for ways to comfort victims and families of opioid addictions. It is the right place to spend time in prayer in our vigil. Signing for prayer time means going to the church's website or contacting Jamie Smith at [jkepsmith@frontier.com](mailto:jkepsmith@frontier.com) or Gregg Rector at [gregg@crossvillefumc.com](mailto:gregg@crossvillefumc.com).



## A Place in the Family of God

Louis Davis, Associate Pastor

**Ephesians 2:17-19 (NKJV)—<sup>17</sup>And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. <sup>18</sup>For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup>Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.**

Have you seen the movie “Lilo & Stitch?” If not, I know for a fact that our girls would love to sit with you and watch that movie...many times in a row if you wish! In short, it is an animated movie about an alien who is designed to destroy, who comes to Earth, and who eventually learns the importance of being a part of a family. One of the main quotes from the movie that I thought was so important is this: **“Ohana means family. Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten.”** (Lilo & Stitch)

As the scripture from Ephesians reminds us, at some point in our lives, maybe even right now, we are/were far off. In other words, we were strangers and foreigners when it came to the Family of God.

We have journeyed together through the story of the Prodigal Son. Is it not wonderful that our God is always with us and ready to accept us back home? There is

nothing we can do to earn that love...it is a gift freely given to us because Jesus says we are worth it. Through Jesus Christ, we are no longer strangers or foreigners, but we are a part of something so much bigger than ourselves. We are a part of the family of God!

As we are now in mid-February, I want us to remember that, even when someone is different (which is everyone), we are to show him or her the love of Christ. We are to remind those who are ‘afar off,’ as well as to remind ourselves, that they and we have a place in the family of God.

Praise God that in the Family of God, no one gets left behind or forgotten.

May God bless you in every way as you show the love of God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit to everyone!

### The HALO Fund

Ann Looney, Piano Accompanist

**HALO—Honor A Loved One**—is a special fund created to support children in Cumberland County who deserve assistance in meeting goals which might not be attainable without a financial boost.

The fund offers a means for gift giving in appreciation of or in memory of an admired or beloved person.

Many times, a gift is selected because it symbolizes something associated with the intended recipient. For example, as a music teacher, I often receive gift items having symbols of music. After many years of teaching and performing, I have accepted more items imprinted with musical notes and scores than I can catalog. I’m grateful, but I’m also mindful that the gesture of the giver is something that could be paid forward to serve others.

The HALO Fund offers a grateful giver the opportunity to contribute to the fund rather than to purchase an item which might be inappropriate and less appreciated by the favored receiver. On the other hand, the HALO giving gesture increases in intrinsic value when the contribution is declared in a heartfelt message.

HALO Fund cards, created for writing notes to explain one’s gift, are available in the church office. For instance, a student can write a note to his/her teacher about making a gift to the HALO Fund instead of giving a present at Christmas or end-of-school.

The money in this fund helps students who need a financial nudge for camps,



school trips, band instruments, or items identified by others. In the past 18 years students were enabled to attend 4-H camp, take school trips to Washington, DC and other national landmarks, and be part of church group trips.

Recent gifts provided some band instruments to an elementary school and funded the equivalent of two students in one class of 24 at Brown Elementary to visit historic Charleston, SC. The classmates enclosed snapshots with a written Thank You signed by each child and the teacher.

### Blooming News

Julia MacManus  
Garden Club Co-Chair

The Garden Club is in seasonal hibernation, but we are planning for a blooming Spring. Throughout winter, Sharon Phillips has kept our outside planters full of ever-greens. Recently we added flowers painted on rocks to surround the ever-greens. Barbara Prichard and others painted these cheerful rock flowers and added messages like “Come Join the Garden Club” and “Think Spring.” Their artwork appears at the entrances on Webb Ave., office, narthex, and kitchen.



Please consider joining the Garden Club in 2018. We anticipate designating one day per month to garden and grounds beautification.

Look for our work day calendar, which is coming soon, and schedule your manicure after your dirt work.



## Next Generation Ministry

### Our Youth Celebrate Faith

Doug Hensley,

In mid-January the youth traveled to Pigeon Forge-Gatlinburg to the faith celebration called Resurrection, an annual event of worship and spiritual growth for youth and their mentors. Resurrection was hosted by the youth ministry of the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The group who attended from Crossville FUMC included both new and veterans of the event. They were Faith Hooie, Ryan Petrovit, Thomas Taylor, Anna Wiggins, Gareth Matthews, Jacob White, Isabella Mangano, Emily Welch, Tristan Robbins, Holly Tupper, Abigail Davis, Emily Farley, Anna Davis, Mason Stryker, Tyler Looney, and Brenton Hunter, accompanied by adults Scott Looney, Doug Hensley, and Jill Kemmer.

Our group had the opportunity to meet the headliner band, **I Am They**, who played the two days we attended. Part of the group was pictured with members of the band.

The keynote speaker, Rachel Billups, was inspiring, and impressed the youth with contemporary analogies. Any one of them who attended can now explain how Jesus is like chips and salsa.

Returning to the site of their fall retreat in 2017, where the youth constructed a replica of the Crucifixion Cross, they were rewarded to see that their work was still standing.



Front row: Members of the band, **I Am They**, Jon McConnell, Abbie Parker, Justin Shinn, Sara Parker, and Matthew Hein.



Left: October 2017 construction of cross replica.

Right: January 2018, Crucifixion Cross replica intact.

### Children and Families

Donna King

Our news focuses on staffing and activities in ministry with children and families.

**Nursery News:** We say goodbye to Connie Blankenship as she leaves her position in the nursery. We are grateful for her faithful service and loving care of the children. We welcome our new childcare staff: Elis Ulecka, Shirley Lechnowsky, and Lace Irvin. They bring much love and compassion to our program as they give excellent care of our precious

little ones.

Volunteers are essential to staffing our nursery. If you'd like to provide safe and loving tenderness, please contact Bettye Thornton. Her continuing oversight insures that coverage, timing, are special needs run smoothly. Bettye also makes awesome playdough and the kids love it! **WNL Mealtime and Pick Up for PK-6:**

The mealtime arrangements for PreK-Grade 6 children have them sitting with their teachers for a kid-friendly meal at 5:00 p.m. with table service being rendered by our awesome youth.

Class time for children's age groups starts at 5:30 p.m. and includes music, Bible activities, art, and supervised play, naming some fun things!

Safe pick up starts at 7:00 p.m. in designated locations. ASCP kids will be at the Webb Avenue entrance. PK-2 will remain in their classroom around the corner from the nursery. Grades 3-6 will gather in the hall by Room 226. For more information, contact Donna King.

## Inspired by the Holy Spirit

Editor

James McGrady (Jim) described being inspired by the Holy Spirit to give voice to deep yearnings to overcome separations and lostness. His response to write a prose poem led to its public reading by Pastor Drew at the close of the Society Meeting on February 11, 2018. The poignancy of the message and Jim's backstory are published here.

### Backstory

During the 8:30 a.m. church service on February 11, I was restless, had trouble being attentive. Then a "headline" came to me, "If only I could Write." I jotted the term on my worship bulletin; my restlessness disappeared; I was able to

focus. This all happened early in the order of worship, prior to Pastor Drew's sermon that culminated the series on the prodigal family.

Afterward, when my wife Jackie and I got into the car, I shared the inspired headline and said I knew I was supposed to write that day, but didn't know if it would be a song, a poem, or a story. I became more comfortable with not knowing, feeling confident that, when I got home and sat down with pen and paper, the message would come.

"If Only I Could Write" was the result, a poetic voice given to me through the Holy Spirit and written quickly with few

revisions.

I thank Drew for sharing this work with worshipers at the end of that evening's Society Meeting. I hope others see and feel what I did.

Months before composing this prose poem, I wrote two songs, "Carpenter" and "Stained Glass," and showed them to Kimberly White, hoping they will be shared publicly when the time is right. The two songs are special to me and were prompted likewise by the Holy Spirit.

### If Only I Could Write

James McGrady

February 11, 2018

If only I could write, I would tell you I am too afraid to talk to you.  
I would tell you I am lonely, tired, and not sure I am worth your time.  
I would tell you I am ashamed of my past, so I keep to myself.

If I could write, I would send a letter to my children to say how much I miss them.  
I would tell them I am sorry I didn't do a better job when they were young.  
Oh, if only I could write, I would tell my family how proud I am of them.

If I could write, I would let you know what a nice car I think you have,  
as I see you pull into the church parking lot. I would let you know I love  
the laughter I hear as you leave church with your family.

If I could write, I would tell you I was the person in clothes  
that don't look so great but are all that I have.  
I would share what has happened in my life to make me who I am.

If I could write, I would be honest and let you know how much I wish  
someone would invite me in. I would let you know  
I will not hurt you. I would love to have a friend.

If only I could write, I would tell you I am alone again.  
On the corner.  
Sitting on the bench.  
Walking down the road.  
Trying to get a ride.

The Parking lot is empty.  
Oh!  
If only I could write.

**Editor:** Jim McGrady's composition is posted in the church's Blog which is found on the church's website under the menu heading "In The Know." Along with related subheadings, the Blog is shown as "The People and the Stories of Crossville FUMC." The blog contains submissions from several members of the church whose stories are meaningful. If you want to contribute something to the blog, please submit your work to Anne Looney Cook at [sewrite39@yahoo.com](mailto:sewrite39@yahoo.com).



## From Your Lay Leader

Sharion Mercer

Through conversations at church, I recognize that many people are not familiar with the organization of the United Methodist Church and the terms we use to define it.

We, in the Crossville church, belong to the Caney Fork River District of the United Methodist Church in the Tennessee Conference. Districts are units within annual conferences and both terms reflect geographic areas.

We were known as the Cookeville District until redistricting occurred in 2017, when seven former areas became five, and each was renamed. Along with our Caney Fork River District are the districts now called Stones River, Red River, Cumberland River, and Harpeth River. Rev. Donna Parramore serves as our District Superintendent (DS). The office is located on the campus of the Tennessee Wesley Foundation near Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville.

In late autumn each local church holds a Charge Conference, which is open to all members of that church. The District Superintendent travels to every location to preside over the Charge Conference,

which is a prescribed annual meeting for accountability of the local congregation's viability.

The renamed five districts make up the Tennessee Conference with Bishop William T. McAlilly presiding as head. In June the Tennessee Annual Conference meets at Brentwood United Methodist Church in Brentwood, Tennessee, to which all churches in the conference send delegates. It is a three- or four-day event that involves the business of the conference and the voting on its issues. The gathering is also an opportunity for wonderful worship experiences, music, training classes, fellowship with other delegates, ordination services, acknowledgment of retiring and deceased pastors, and much more.

Delegates to Annual Conference are an equal number of voting clergy and voting laity (non-clergy). In 2018, Crossville FUMC is represented by Drew Shelley and Louis Davis as clergy and by Perk Thornton and me, Sharion Mercer, as laity.

All the Annual Conferences in the United States are grouped into five,

geographic Jurisdictions--Northeastern, Southeastern, North Central, South Central, and Western. These wide-area conferences meet every four years. Along with business and other responsibilities, bishops, like Rev. McAlilly, are elected at Jurisdictional Conferences.

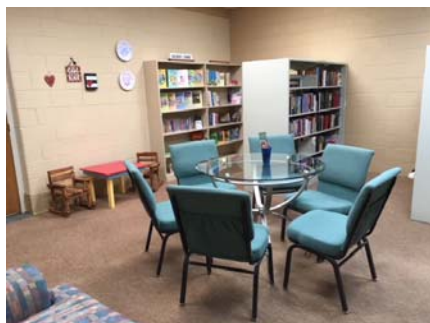
The largest assembly for governance of the United Methodist Church is called General Conference and brings together 1,000 delegates from around the world. This body meets every four years where again the voting delegates are an equal number of clergy and laity. Delegates who attend General and Jurisdictional Conferences are elected at Annual Conferences.

The General Conference is the only body that sets policy and speaks for the denomination. Actions by the General Conference become final decisions on issues that hold us together in common ministry worldwide. As United Methodists we stand together globally with like-minded people who seek to do the will of Christ by preserving His church and making disciples for Him.

## Our Church Library

The Library Mouse, Reporter

The church has a library! Have you been there? WE have books—lots and lots



of books and DVDs. Because of many donations, our library is filled with varied resources suitable for ages and stages, beginning with toddlers, children, youth, and adults. Parents, singles, retirees, and ageless seniors can be satisfied with inspiring literature in media of choice.

Subjects available range from novels, growth, family, marriage, aging, humor, and spiritual searching. Selections for children, in addition to books and DVDs, include puzzles, ABCs, and 123 games. While parents, grandparents, and keepers search for items on shelves, children can be quietly entertained at tasks on tables.

As new books and DVDs are acquired, the titles will be listed in the Sunday bulletin and also noticed elsewhere. The newest books by category are sketched here.

**Growth:** (1) “One Thousand Gifts” by Ann Voskamp. Voskamp invites you into her moments of grace, which intentionally embrace a lifestyle of radical gratitude, and to slow down and catch God in the moment. (2) “100 Things God Loves About You” by Zondervan press is filled with wonderful promises from scripture, i.e. turn bad days into God-filled days.

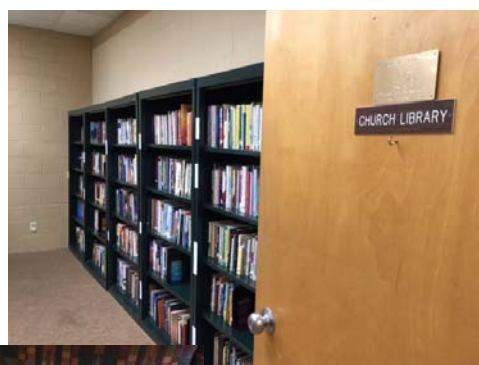
**Family:** “Raising Kingdom Kids” by Tony Evans. Parenting is tough, and life today is busy, but by starting small and starting today, you can create benefits that last a lifetime.

The newest DVDs are “Daniel, Do You Believe,” “Fireproof,” and “The Book of Ruth.”

The procedure for checking out any of the items is quite simple. You select a book or DVD and take it with you, keeping it long enough to enjoy the messages. When you return the item, you put it into the labeled Return

Box on the floor at the left of the entry to the library.

The Church Library is almost always open when church sessions are scheduled. Otherwise, access is available by arrangement. So, enjoy the gifts of



discovery with books and other media which are housed for your enlightenment and entertainment. Enjoy and God Bless.

## Partnership with Martin Elementary School

### MES Volunteer Initiative

Barbara Duncan, Volunteer Coordinator

Our partnership with Martin Elementary School places volunteers inside classrooms, library, selected activities, and special situations. It began in 2015, and from our first inputs, our services have grown and become broadly successful.

Fourteen volunteers currently assist teachers, especially in reading where the need is greatest. They read with the children and assist them with their AR Test (taken on the computer). In December 2017, the school staff compared benchmark testing scores to prior results. A direct correlation of students' growth in performance was achieved in classrooms utilizing our volunteers.

Teachers who did not utilize FUMC volunteers beforehand became aware of the benefits in having such classroom assistance. The principal is encouraging those teachers to call on us for help since we are making a difference.

Our volunteers find other ways to support the school. We have assisted in hearing and eye checks, served cookies and punch at the September Open House, and set up a winter coat/clothing closet at the school for children in need (much of which came from our Clothing Closet ministry).

Several classroom volunteers joined other church members in spreading mulch in the play area prior to school opening. Likewise, they participated in assembling snack packs and personal care packs, activities which are reported from the Mission Committee.

While many people in our church have stepped up to help with this partnership, whether being in the classroom with children or working behind the scenes, more volunteers are needed to continue the reported gains. To address the anticipated requests for direct assistance, as well as to increase the total number of contact hours, we extend an open call.

The call is directed to former teachers, persons with dormant degrees in education, retirees with stores of wisdom, wannabes who love children, and aspiring teachers. Backgrounds and personal interests can be matched to teachers and children. According to Board of Education policy, volunteers are required to be finger printed. When our people are on duty, they are privileged to wear their Crossville FUMC nametags. Details are available for becoming a volunteer.

We are making a difference in the lives of children in Crossville, true to our mission statement.

### Partnership Shows Positive Measures

Tim Vandagriff, Mission Committee Chair

anticipate another packing opportunity in late April when volunteers can again report for duty.



FUMC is making a difference! Adopting Martin Elementary School (MES) has been an absolute blessing for our congregation. Our relationship with MES continues to grow through direct class room support, gift certificates, personal care packs, cards of encouragement, and weekend snack packs.

We learned recently our classroom support has positively improved reading test scores and deserves the big "Wow" factor. Teachers and staff members receive \$50 gift certificates twice during the school year to help with miscellaneous classroom supplies. This gesture is a neat and personal way to show our appreciation for their tireless efforts. For the second year we provided personal care packs to every student at MES. The personal care packs provide items to help students understand and kick start the importance of hygiene.

Special thanks go to Dr. Don Hooie who provided tooth brushes, paste, and floss again. The purchase, sort, and pack steps for these many small items is a logistical feat, but once organized, the work gives the entire congregation an opportunity to participate in the assembly process. The feedback messages from MES about our focused efforts are heartwarming, and our efforts are duly recognized time and again.

Every couple of months during the school year you will see a request from our communication and social media outlets for an all hands support to sort and pack items for the weekend snack packs. An assembly line process has been refined over the last three years and is quite productive. On February 8, 2018, the group packed 440 weekend snack packs in 27 minutes, setting a record! While speed is not essential, it has become a fun benchmark for achievement. We

Many hands pack snack boxes for MES children.



### Email for Clergy and Staff

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