

# Crossville First

## United Methodist Church

The Church With the Window on the Heart of Our Town

### THEN AND NOW

Reverend Ron Pulley

Serving together, my wife, Joan, and I are the historians for Crossville First United Methodist Church. During the past week, we spent two days trying to better organize the many documents that tell the story of our church's history. In doing this, I began to think about the personal history we have with this congregation and changes that have taken place during the period of almost forty years.

In 1980 I was assigned by the Tennessee Annual Conference to organize a new congregation in the Fairfield Glade community. Since no congregation existed there for my family to attend and worship, we chose Crossville First as our home church until the new congregation in Fairfield Glade began to worship in October of that year. Not only did we worship in Crossville, but the congregation was very supportive and helpful as I began building a new congregation. When I retired from the appointive ministry in 1991, we returned to this congregation as our home church. We have spent more years in fellowship at this church than in any other.

As I look back over almost four decades, I am reminded of the changes that have taken place in our home church. We have seen many very special people go to their eternal home and many others join to add their special grace and talent to the ever-changing fellowship. I thought it might be interesting to note some changes that have taken place in profiling our church, relying on 1980 information as a baseline.

In 1980, Jerry Mayo began his first year as pastor at Crossville FUMC. Now, as a retired United Methodist Minister, he and his wife Patricia worship again with this congregation. We found in his first report to the Tennessee Annual Conference some descriptive details for present day comparisons.

- The membership was 603, and during that year the number increased to 650. Our present membership is approximately 1,332, which is an ever-changing number.
- The average attendance at worship was 260, and today that average is 428.
- Sunday School attendance was an average of 200, and today the average is 150.
- The value of the church property was listed at \$355,000, and today the total property is estimated at a value of approximately \$10,000,000.
- Budget figures for 1980 were \$144,355, and our current 2019 budget is approximately \$1,200,000.

These figures offer a glimpse about certain changes that have taken place over the last four decades. Such changes came through the actions of many dedicated Christians who have walked along with us. Most of these numbers can give us a feeling of accomplishment and should cause us to be thankful for those saints who have given us the blessings we share today.

What will the report be forty years from now?

### Wednesday Night Live Schedule

Notification from Crossville First United Methodist Church

Hello Everyone,

It's that time again! Our mid-week Discipleship Pathway event, Wednesday Night Live, restarts February 6, 2019 and runs through May 8, 2019. As always, we have incredible opportunities for children and youth, and two very special experiences for adults seeking to grow in their faith. The Discipleship Formation Team is pleased to announce we now have the first and second steps of our Discipleship Pathway ready to go!

If you haven't had a chance to experience ALPHA, the first step, you may sign up for a Wednesday Night ALPHA experience that promises to be meaningful. If you've done ALPHA and are ready for the next step, "Becoming a Disciple," just let us know. Several small groups have already organized, and others will be forming. You may sign up with your current group or class; or if signing as an individual, we will find a group for you.

Means for sign-up are possible through email notices exchanged with members who communicate that way, or by phone call, or in the church office. Responses are encouraged for adults, children, youth.

## Doing Santa Service

Doug Hensley, Next Generation Ministry

If you think playing Santa Claus for kids is an easy job, then you've probably never actually talked to someone who has. It is the most fun and the most heartbreaking experience you can have. I want to share some stories with you.

I played Santa when our youth rang the Salvation Army bells outside the front of Wal-Mart before Christmas. Many people of different ages came to me and asked me to be in a snap shot with them. One lady of a senior age seemed to believe that her friendly, neighborhood Santa Claus could work a romantic spell on her beau. She implored me to make her boyfriend propose to her. I just smiled and told her I could not do that, but I would be hoping and praying he would ask her this year.

The woman's request was the start of a recurring theme I heard from children and adults. It was to be loved and to be happy. During the Christmas season we sometime lose the true meaning of the season and the message saying, "God so LOVED the world that he sent his only Son."



If you are going to take on the role of Santa Claus, you are going to have to steel yourself for some heartbreaking stories. In doing my Santa service in December 2018, I visited a gathering of inner-city children who were socializing and doing free-style crafts. A little girl about 5 came to me and whispered in my ear that all she wanted for Christmas was for her family to be happy. I sat there trying to fight back my tears, and I told her I would do my best. Most of us think we want stuff, but stuff is not what is important.

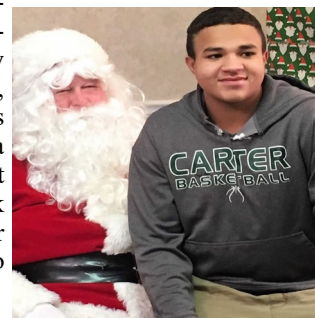
While I was being Santa for their occasion, the kids were



busy being creative. Another little girl came over to have her picture made with me along with her sisters and brothers. She showed me the craft item she had made. I told her it was beautiful. She turned to tell me she hoped her grandmother was proud of her. She continued to explain how her grandmother had passed away a few months ago. Again, with tears in my eyes, I told her that Grandmother was very proud of her.

So, Christmas came as scheduled, and I look back on the people and stories I heard. We think Christmas is in the gifts under the tree, lights in the windows, cards in the mail, turkey dinners with family and friends, snow in the yard, stockings hanging in the living room, and shouts of "Merry Christmas" to those who pass us in the streets. *Is this really Christmas?*

I learned from many people that Christmas is a time of sorrow. They don't have extra money to buy presents for their children, family, and friends. Turkey dinners would be only a wish and not a reality. Many are saddened at Christmastime when they think about their loved ones, who for various reasons will not be able to come home.



The one true gift that everyone wants is to be loved and to be happy. I am thankful we can truly be happy at Christmas knowing we are God's children, no matter what may be happening. We are sons and daughters of God, and Heaven will be our home one day.

## LAS POSADAS

Service of Shelter for the Holy Family  
Rev. Janet Martinez, Hispanic Ministry

In the Latin American tradition, especially in Mexico, one of the oldest celebrations is Las Posadas, created by an Augustinian priest about 1587 to introduce Christianity to the New World. Revised by Latino/Latina United Methodists leaders, this celebration takes place during Advent, from December 16 through December 24, with a special service on December 24. In anticipation of the birth of the Savior, it commemorates three aspects of Christian understanding: (1) the nine months when Mary carried the infant Jesus in her womb; (2) the emphasis on Christ's coming again; and (3) the need for all persons to repent and receive God's mercy. Las Posadas is a Christian, biblical, and evangelistic service out of the Hispanic culture.

In preparation, eight homes of church members who live in different areas are chosen for the eight nights prior to Christmas Eve. The hosts visit neighbors and invite them to celebrate. Typically offered are refreshments such as hot chocolate, coffee, apple cider, or punch; buñuelos (thin, fried pastry), tamales, hot doughnuts,

sweet rolls, and many kinds of avocado and other dips. They should be willing to have a house party, including a piñata.

The piñata represents the devil, who cannot be recognized but must be defeated. A child is blindfolded and fights against evil with the rod of virtue,



symbolized in the stick used to break the piñata. When the child perseveres, the glory of God will rain on everyone, as shown by the spilling of candy once hidden within the piñata.

On each appointed day, people meet

near the home to be visited. In small communities this procession walks from homes but might rely on a car caravan otherwise. Traditionally, persons carry lighted candles and sing as they walk. In the lead might be persons characterizing Mary, seated on a donkey, accompanied by Joseph and children, possibly dressed as shepherds and the magi. The pilgrims approach the darkened house and ask to be let in. What follows is a service acknowledging the biblical request by the Holy Family for entry to rest and to eat as they await the Christ child.

Las Posadas was joyfully experienced by the local Hispanic community at Crossville First United Methodist Church just before Christmas 2018. Families came for the rituals, the merriment, and the sharing of an abundant meal. Children learned spiritual lessons by acting in roles appropriate for the Nativity as well as by those symbolized in breaking the piñata.





## What Did ALPHA Do for Me?

Karen Boyd

I walked into the Alpha Class, and within my soul I said, "What do I have to share with everyone here tonight?"

After dinner, our study guides for Alpha were handed out, spiral booklets in large Red and White print. "WHY AM I HERE?" was the title. I said to myself, "Am I in the right class?" (smile)

So, we started our intimate class, sharing dinner, and watching Alpha Videos with classmates. Awesome!

WHY AM I HERE? I signed my Alpha guide, and the only comment I wrote down from one of the videos was SOMETHING MISSING!

WHY AM I HERE? Is it enough to

remember and realize that God loves me JUST as I am? To not be afraid to express myself my WAY? I consider myself such a regular person, no high flags attached to me. Is that enough and okay? God reminded me, "Yes, Karen it is."

WHY AM I HERE? Alpha assured me there are many ways I can share scriptures with others. I should not hold myself back in silence because I cannot recite every Bible verse. God has provided me a



Karen Boyd

unique way to share his loving spirit with others, and I truly thank Him. Show yourself so that others may see who you are. How sweet and simple is that?

WHY AM I HERE? To be a part of the goodness that only we can give to each other: to worship, smile, laugh, cry, touch, mentor, and be example for each other in the name of our Heavenly Father.

WHY I AM HERE? The reason I attended this class was because a dear church friend shared it with me. Thank you, and much love and care to my church family and friends.

My spirit is filled with Joy and Peace. Happy 2019!

## Nursery, Children, and Confirmation Class

Donna King, Next Generation Ministry

### Confirmation Class News

The Confirmation Class had a kidnap breakfast at the Shelley's home on Saturday morning, December 15 where Annabelle and her parents, Shannon and Drew, sheltered the "victims" as well as the "rogue nappers." Faith Friends kidnapped the children and brought them to the parsonage in their pajamas without telling them where they were going.

Alex Stryker arrived with the note "Ransom of Red Chief" pinned to his shirt. In the middle of the party, his brother, Mason, brought a back pack with extra clothes just in case he couldn't pay enough to persuade the kidnappers to let him return. Alex was sent home with some of Shannon's delicious, homemade blueberry muffins, hoping that they would be enough to ransom his release. The strategy was the biggest laugh of the day!

Lots of fun, laughter, silly pajamas, Christmas carols, and yummy food were spirited ways to celebrate the season. Be-

ing in character, Pastor Drew wore his Christmas jammies and was the star of the sing-along while displaying his reindeer antlers and blinking red nose.

### Wednesday Night Live Alpha Celebration

The fall semester ended on a high note as the children enjoyed making individual gingerbread houses and savoring a pizza party. Ellen Rosenfeldt surprised them with homemade ice cream sundaes to say "Thank You" for the seasonal door decorations which they made for WyndRidge Rehabilitation Center as one of their mission projects.

Miss Shana announced the winners of the Thanksgiving Food Drive for the Bread of Life Rescue Mission. In her book, all were winners, so everyone went home with festive Christmas hats or reindeer antlers. Each child also received a gift bag filled with treats and their very own pocket size New Testament.

The nursery was all abuzz that same night as the smallest ones received their very own gift bags from the nursery workers. For such tiny ones, Miss Shirley had crocheted tiny pairs of slippers!

### Acolyte Training

We will begin training additional acolytes after the first of the year. This role is a great way for our children to become involved in worship. Along with training for the ritual, some behind the scenes fun is always found. For more information or to sign up your child to become an acolyte, contact Donna King at [donna@crossvillefumc.com](mailto:donna@crossvillefumc.com) or call 731-412-7393.



Who could possibly resist joining these Playmates? They are brimming with fun and frolic.

## Music Matters

Kimberly White, Director of Music

In our current sermon series about discipleship, we address the ways we grow by serving through our giftedness in the church and the world. One dynamic and fundamental opportunity to serve in our church is through our music ministries.

If you are interested in singing in

the choir, playing handbells, or sharing your solo vocal or instrumental gifts, please offer your service, bring your gifts, and join us. Continuing through January, the Chancel Choir rehearses in the sanctuary at 5:30 pm on Wednesdays.

Beginning Wednesday, February 6, schedules for the existing music groups will be adjusted to accommodate the Wednesday Night Live program.

**4:00 pm Children's Bells** (grade 4-6) rehearses in the choir room.

**4:30 pm Children's Choir** (grade K-6) rehearses in the choir room.

**5:45 pm Chancel Choir** rehearses in the sanctuary.

For questions you might have, please contact me at [kimberly@crossvillefumc.com](mailto:kimberly@crossvillefumc.com) or 931-484-3537. Many blessings to each of you this new year,

## Family Support from Ministry for Veterans

Robin Piacini, Coordinator

The Ministry for Veterans contributed to the December gala arranged for the children of the now deployed members of the 278th National Guard. A Christmas Party was held on Saturday, December 8th at the Central Baptist Church in Crossville. A complete holiday dinner, featuring a large selection of desserts, was provided for the 100 family members. Children received individual Christmas presents presented by Santa and his helpers. In real time through Skype, the children were able to see and speak to their military family members, making this opportunity very special for those enabled.

The Children's Christmas party was truly a community event. This was accomplished by the coordination among three local churches and the amazing generosity of one local bank. Crossville First United Methodist Church, Simple Life Church, Central Baptist Church, and First National Bank of Crossville merged substantial resources in people, place, and purse to provide the meaningful celebration of Christmas Joy and Peace on Earth.

Thank you, Crossville FUMC, for your special contributions which made this happy occasion possible!



Every child received a gift from Santa Claus at the party arranged for families of the 278th National Guard.

Talk between parent and child via Skype.



LAS POSADAS 2018



Pray, Believe, and Receive, or  
Pray, Doubt, and Do Without.

### Email for Clergy and Staff

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Dear Church Family,

The staff wishes to thank you for the many thoughtful Christmas gifts and goodies throughout the holiday season. We love you all!

*Donna King*  
*Jill Kemmer*  
*Carol Bond*  
*Eluid Martinez*  
*Kimberly White*  
*Doug Hensley*  
*Scott Looney*  
*Donna King*  
*Jill Kemmer*  
*Carol Bond*  
*Eluid Martinez*  
*Kimberly White*  
*Doug Hensley*  
*Scott Looney*