



A NEW Focus

February, 2023 | Issue 11

THE PASTOR'S CORNER

WE ARE FAMILY (🎵) - CONGREGATIONS APPROVE A MERGER

What does a post-pandemic future for United Methodists in downtown Charlottesville? Well, it might look a little like two congregations dancing in the aisles to the tune of "We Are Family." Which is what we did on February 12 following the simultaneous church conferences in which Hinton Avenue UMC, (by a vote of 18-0), and First UMC (by a vote of 73-0), approved a merger agreement. The first hint of what Charlottesville First UMC will be came with that dance and the singing of "This is a Day of New Beginnings."



What we have discovered, in the last eight months, is that those dreams and the future of God's people take new forms in new places. As we have sung together, worshipped together, and as we sat around the table to eat together, we have started to feel that God can do something new with us.



Hinton Avenue
United Methodist Church
Charlottesville, Virginia

The effective merger date was set for March 1 and we are beginning the process of melding our structure and finances. The leadership groups of both congregations will meet together for the remainder of 2023 to form a combined Church Council. And we will be making ongoing decisions about the future of the Hinton Avenue church building and parsonage, while also planning some appropriate remembrances and celebrations.

The decision was not taken lightly. When the two congregations began meeting together for worship in July of 2021, it was not clear then what we would be. The congregation of HAUMC has a lot of history and a lot of memories bound up with the building on 750 Hinton Avenue. It is not easy to think about leaving. And the dreams of new ministries, like Rachel's Haven, are still important.

More than anything, we will be focusing on a central question—how do we live out God's love for the whole city here? It started with dancing. Now it moves into shared ministry and vital outreach. It is a day for new beginnings.



WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!

On February 12 our church family grew! We welcome the following into our community and look forward to working side by side as we worship, fellowship and reach out to love the whole city, love the city whole, starting right here!

- ◇ Karla Kincannon and Jim Noseworthy
- ◇ Cathy and Jon Scheumann
- ◇ Mary Jones
- ◇ Danny and Beth Reitz
- ◇ Ron Histan
- ◇ John Conway
- ◇ Shelly Miller
- ◇ Lina Lopez
- ◇ James Byers
- ◇ Mike and Sharon Carpenter
- ◇ Richard and Cheryl Carroll



LENTEN CALENDAR

- ◇ **Wednesday, February 22nd, 12:00 – 1:00pm** – imposition of ashes at Central Place on the Downtown Mall
- ◇ **Wednesday, February 22nd, 6:30 pm** - Ash Wednesday Service in the Chapel at Charlottesville First United Methodist Church
- ◇ **Starting Wednesday, February 22**, One Thing Ministry will be COINS FOR LENT (to benefit Rise Against Hunger) – pick up your activity calendar at the church or online.
- ◇ **Starting Wednesday, February 22**, Lenten Prayers in the Park, (sign up online)
- ◇ **Sunday, February 26, 11:15 – 12:15**, Walking with Grief, a small group Lenten Study, meets at FUMC
- ◇ **Thursday, March 2**, Seven Last Words, Listening to Christ from the cross, by Susan Robb. The Women at the Well small group Lenten Study
- ◇ **Sunday, April 2, Palm Sunday, 10:00am** Worship, Magnify Choir to present “Who is This King?”
- ◇ **Sunday, April 2**, 1st Sunday Lunch, “Kids and Youth Lunch” 11:30-1:00 in Fellowship Hall. Followed by an Easter Egg hunt.
- ◇ **Thursday, April 6, 7:00pm**, Maundy Thursday Service
- ◇ **Friday, April 7, 7:00pm**, Good Friday Service, FUMC Sanctuary
- ◇ **Saturday, April 8, 4:30pm** Holy Saturday Service, FUMC Fellowship Hall
- ◇ **Sunday, April 9, 6:30am**, Easter Sunrise Service, Market Street Park
10:00am, Easter Worship. FUMC Sanctuary



LENTEN PRAYERS IN THE PARK



Last year we introduced a new Lenten Discipline we called ‘Prayers in the Park’ whereby one or more of us signed up to spend 20 minutes or so in Market Street Park each day during Lent reading scripture, praying, listening for God’s voice in the sounds of the city, and then jotting down our reflections about the experience. We will renew that discipline during Lent this year – but with a twist. While Market Street Park will remain our default location, some will be encouraged to “love the whole city” by taking this ministry of witness to alternate locations like Hinton Ave UMC,

Downtown Mall, Belmont Park, Washington Park, and Ix Park. To sign up, go to the church website www.cvillefirstumc.org and determine which date or dates will work for you and fill out the sign-up genius. There will be a space for reflection on your experience if you so wish to share. Go by yourself or take some friends! Questions? revharry@aol.com



FIRST PANCAKE SUPPER SINCE 2017!

The Revival of the Shrove Tuesday (on Sunday!) Pancake Supper was a success! The funds donated will go to ‘Rise Against Hunger’.



NOTES FROM THE MUSIC MINISTRY

The vibrant and active music ministry at First United Methodist is an important part of our worship by bringing diverse styles to worship, engaging the talents of many of our church family. This ministry provides opportunities to learn, grow and serve in worship as we profess the transformational life and message of Jesus Christ.

Anyone is invited to participate in our Choirs, Praise Band, Hand Bell choirs and small group ensembles. Worried about your skill level? No auditions are necessary! Just come and enjoy the fellowship of other musicians as you sing or play music to the glory to God. For more info contact kevinwhite@cvillefirstumc.org

Choir – Tuesdays – 6:00-7:00pm

Praise Band - Thursdays – 6:30-7:30pm

Magnify Choir (special Lenten Choir) – Tuesdays – 7:00-8:00pm

Hand Bell Choir – Sundays – 6:00-7:30pm



GREAT CHORAL WORKSHOP IN THE BOOKS!

On February 18, forty vocalists from our CFUMC community and beyond gathered in the sanctuary to work with director, Will Cooke, musician extraordinaire (!) It was a wonderful experience and everyone went home looking forward to raising our voices together in song as often as possible!



FUMP NEWS!

In our little corner of the world, we have had a busy, but fun last few months! Did you know we use what is called the High Scope curriculum for ages two and three and Pre-K and the Creative Curriculum for our new Transitional Kindergarten. The students are learning letters, numbers, listening and reading books, playing with various types of sensory objects, learning how to be a friend and share with others, and so much more. As a group we were able to go to the Paramount Theatre to see Llama Llama, we celebrated Valentine's Day, and continue to have music with the famous Mr. Theo from the Front Porch!

Let your friends with littles know that we are currently enrolling for the 2023-2024 school year. We have just a few spots left in the three year old class, Pre-K (four year olds) and our Transitional Kindergarten. This was the inaugural year for our Transitional Kindergarten, if you know of anyone that would like to learn more about this innovative and sweet class, please have them contact Kristen at fump@cvillefirstumc.org.



NEW BOARD CHAIR FOR FUMP (FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH PRESCHOOL)



Meet the new chair of our preschool board of directors, Marilyn Comfort. Marilyn is grateful for the interesting life she has led as the daughter of a foreign service officer. She spent her elementary school years attending the Anglo-American School in Moscow which was in the Soviet Union at the time. After returning to the States for five years, her family was stationed in Beirut, Lebanon. Marilyn graduated high school from the American Community School, Beirut.

After doing summer volunteer work with the Head Start Program while still in the States, she knew that the education of young children was the direction she wanted to go. She graduated from Chatham University in Pittsburgh with a degree in Elementary Education and spent five years teaching Kindergarten in the Fairfax County Public Schools. Desiring to dig deeper, she came to the University of Virginia for her Masters and Doctorate degrees in Early Childhood Education.

As Marilyn was completing her dissertation, First United Methodist Church was looking for someone who could start a preschool program under the direction of the church. This was during the time that Rev. Bob McAden was the preacher at First Church. Shelby, his wife and Peggy Lassiter were heading up the effort to not only provide preschool education for the community, but also to sponsor at least six children from disadvantaged environments to attend. Scholarships and transportation were provided by the members of the congregation. Marilyn was hired to put the program together and was the director/teacher of the four-year-old class. Having been a graduate student, she didn't really have a home church at that time and felt it was important that the director be a member. She and Ron Comfort, her husband, joined our church in 1984 as she began her job here. After ten years, she moved on to teach Kindergarten at Jackson-Via Elementary School for seven years and at The Covenant School for nine years before retiring.



PANERA DONATES \$175 TO FUMP

Thanks to all that came out to dine to support our sweet Preschool! Spread the word about our Transitional Kindergarten Program. 2023-24 spots are filling up quickly for all classes!



Come in your PJ day at FUMP!

DID YOU KNOW... (TELL YOUR FRIENDS WITH CHILDREN!)

The Nursery is open now! – Sundays from 9:30-11:30.

THERE IS A 'JUST FOR KIDS' SNACK TABLE – Every Sunday Following the Service – (except on the first Sunday when we will meet in the Fellowship hall for kids lunch!)

KIDS LUNCH - 1ST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH – Right after worship in the Fellowship Hall! Good food, fun fellowship, and a craft! For children, youth, and their adults!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL – JULY 31 - AUG 4!



PASTOR ALEX ON THE RUN

Charlottesville is a great town for runners and two long-standing races go right past Charlottesville FUMC—the Charlottesville Ten-Miler on March 25 and the Charlottesville Marathon on April 1.

Pastor Alex is training for the Ten-Miler and he's happy to have company! Runners of all paces and walkers are welcomed to get out on the roads and trails each Saturday. If you'd like to be included in the weekly email about the runs, contact Pastor Alex or email office@cvillefirstumc.org.





RISE AGAINST HUNGER IS BACK!

OUR LENTEN OFFERING WILL SUPPORT THIS WORTHY MINISTRY

The Gong is coming back on April 15!! (what does THAT mean?) Yes, the Rise Against Hunger food packaging event returns after three years of absence due to pandemic restrictions, and the gong is a big draw for our younger participants.



This multigenerational activity is loaded with fun, excitement, energy, and purpose! Everyone from small children to older adults can find a place to participate as we package 20,000 meals that will go to developing countries.

Hunger impacts everything.

Almost half of all childhood deaths worldwide occur in children with malnutrition.

Hope thrives alongside nutrition.

Without the right nutrients, the brain cannot develop properly, resulting in long term effects on learning abilities.

Learning increases with stability.

As many as 828 million people across the world don't receive enough nutrition to lead an active, healthy life, or provide for themselves and their families.

Self-sufficiency leads to economic growth.

From the implementation of sustainable community development projects to the meal packaging program that harnesses the passion of local volunteers, Rise Against Hunger strives to make an impact on hunger. Rise targets remote, last-mile communities within hunger pockets worldwide and works through local leaders to build resilience, self-sufficiency, and empowerment.

Mark your calendars for April 15, and stay tuned for details as the day approaches.



Youth in our church family spent their day off from school helping at 'Bread and Blessings' (Soup Kitchen) on Presidents Day!

YOUTH PROGRAM ROLLS INTO 2023!

Our middle and high school students are busy with sports, scouts, school plays, and other outside activities. The FUMC Youth Program is designed to give our 6th-12th graders the opportunity to explore their faith in a safe, fun environment.

The FUMC Youth ended 2022 on a high note with the annual White Elephant Christmas Party on December 24th. A good time was had by all as the teens enjoyed food, fellowship, and exchanged gifts.

Rolling into 2023, the youth are ready for their best year ever. Youth Group meetings on Sunday are drawing record numbers as we are diving into the Psalms and having a great time doing it. ZOOM Bible studies every other Wednesday evenings are available for those who want to dive deeper into the Word. Also available this winter will be opportunities to serve at the church's soup kitchen in February, and plans are underway to bring back a FUMC Youth tradition, a full activity night that will mirror lock-ins from past years. To top off the winter season, Confirmation 2023 kicks off with this year's class starting on March 8th.

As the program continues to grow, we need your help! We need several caring adults that are willing to join Dave for several activities per month. If interested, please contact Dave (davebreslin@cvillefirstumc.org).



"TWEENS AND FRIENDS" EVENT FRIDAY, MARCH 24TH, 5:30 PM-7:30 PM

Location: Meghan Eddy's house
3425 Steamer Drive, Keswick, VA 22947



Please join us for an evening of fun together! Tweens (4th and 5th graders) are invited to bring their friends, their adults, and their siblings over to Meghan Eddy's house for a board game night. We will have pizza together, and then divide up to use the downstairs recreation area for our "Tween Zone" with tweens and older siblings, supervised by Meghan and Lara. Upstairs, on the main floor, we will have space for their adults, and their younger siblings to play some games and get to know each other better.

We will provide the pizza, drinks, and board games. You bring the fun!! If you'd like to bring a side dish, dessert or snack to share, let us know.

Please RSVP to children@cvillefirstumc.org so we know how much pizza to get.



UPDATE ON OUR 2022 CONSECRATION SUNDAY PROGRAM

We received \$467,960 in pledges toward our 2023 Operating Budget. This was an increase of \$119,305 or 34% over our 2022 Pledges which increased \$38,000 or 12% over 2021. This only includes FUMC totals, Hinton Avenue UMC Pledges are not included in these totals and will be merged into our 2023 Operating Budget now that the Merger has been approved. This was the first time, post Covid, that we have conducted full Consecration activities. We want to congratulate Gary Jones and his whole Consecration Sunday Team for a well-run campaign, including the wonderful celebration luncheon for 150 people.

Just a reminder that if you wish to contribute online, please go to the church website's giving section. You can use a credit card (which incurs a 2.84% fee to the church) or a bank withdrawal (which incurs a 1% fee to the church). You have the option of adding to your contribution to cover these fees. Another option is to set up a direct payment through your bank to the church address. Your bank will send a check through the mail, without any fees charged to the church. You can speak to the financial secretary Dana Palmer financialsect@cvillefirstumc.org with any questions.

DECEMBER FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

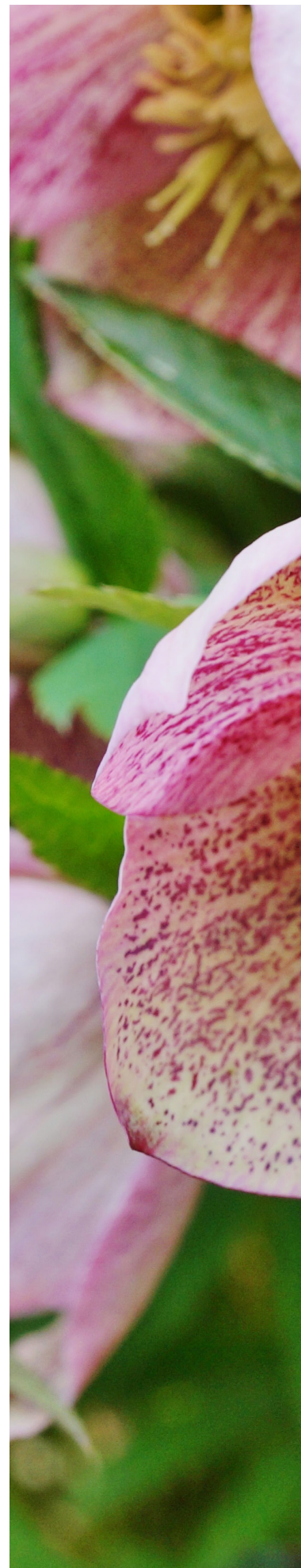
HINTON AVENUE UMC FINANCIAL BOX SCORE

	December 2022 YTD Actual	December 2022 YTD Budget	Amt Over (Under) Budget	December 2021 YTD Actual
Total Income	\$180,284	---	---	\$208,991
Operating Expenses	\$171,662	\$220,997	(\$49,335)	\$210,965
Net Income (Deficit)	\$8,623	---	---	\$9,129

FUMC DECEMBER FINANCIAL STATEMENT

	December 2022 YTD Actual	December 2022 YTD Budget	Amt Over (Under) Budget	December 2021 YTD Actual	December YTD Actual \$ Change from 2021	FUMC Approved Budget 2023
Contributions	\$568,441	\$606,100	(\$37,659)	\$521,999	\$46,442	\$602,000
Other Income	\$86,451	\$35,000	\$51,451	\$124,424	(\$37,973)	\$55,000
Total Income	\$654,892	\$641,100	\$13,792	\$646,423	\$8,469	\$657,000
Operating Expenses	\$641,915	\$641,009	\$906	\$621,203	\$20,712	\$662,704
Net Income (Deficit)	\$12,977	\$91	\$12,886	\$25,220	(\$12,243)	(\$5,704)

In addition to the \$568,441 in Contributions to our Operating Budget in 2022 shown above, our members contributed \$48,815 in Restricted Contributions and we sent out \$72,893 in Restricted Spending above and beyond the Operating Expenses as shown above. Some of the largest recipients of this Restricted Spending included our FUMC Preschool - \$21,025, UMCOR - \$13,381, our Refugee Resettlement Program - \$4,325, Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry - \$4,312, our Bread and Blessings Soup Kitchen - \$2,765, our Lithuanian Partner Church - \$2,160 and many other FUMC supported ministries and programs. This spending would not be possible without the very generous contributions of our members to these programs.





FIRST EVER PLANT SALE!

Start your seedlings, any plants in the garden you can share? Grow them...bring them in....all funds will benefit the Nurture Ministries of Charlottesville FUMC! Let's fellowship and have lunch together too! April 29, 10am – 1pm.



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WORKDAYS

In addition to the monthly United Methodist Habitat for Humanity work days, always the second Friday of the month, new Saturday dates have been added. Future dates have been set for May 27, August 26 and November 18. For more information contact charleslkidd@yahoo.com.



GENTLE YOGA IS NOW 2 DAYS PER WEEK!

Mondays and Wednesdays at 2:30 in the gathering space. Reservations are required to attend these classes - \$10 per class. Please reach out to Lara Upton to reserve your space.



NEED A NAMETAG? CONTACT CAROLYNMCGEE@CVILLEFIRSTUMC.ORG

IF YOU PREFER TO NOT RECEIVE *THE NEW FOCUS* NEWSLETTER, PLEASE CONTACT CAROLYNMCGEE@CVILLEFIRSTUMC.ORG TO CANCEL YOUR SUBSCRIPTION.



ST. PADDY'S DAY POTLUCK & FIRST ANNUAL CAKE AUCTION!

Put March 19, 5:00pm on your calendar for a St.Paddy's Day Potluck Dinner and Cake Auction! If you are interested in baking a cake or plate of cupcakes for donation to the event, make it fun and yummy! Monies from this event will benefit RISE AGAINST HUNGER (April 15 in the Fellowship Hall).



ONE THING MINISTRY AND LENTEN OFFERING COINS FOR LENT

Pick up an activity calendar in the Welcome Center at church and follow the activities daily (makes a fun family experience). Bring your coins (or dollars!) to church and let's support RISE AGAINST HUNGER.

One Thing Ministry for the month of December was to benefit CVILLE SOCKLOVE and our combined churches donated 586 pairs!



WALKING WITH GRIEF: A SMALL GROUP LENTEN STUDY

Starting February 26 and running through Lent, all of our sessions will be Sundays, after service, from 11:15-12:15. Join Rev. John Conway for a Lenten study of how, through God's mercy, we come to experience grief. During our time together we will draw on Scripture, our United Methodist heritage, and on our experiences to learn from each other how to walk with grief.

