



# A NEW Focus

May, 2023 | Issue 12

## NOTES FROM PASTOR ALEX

### WOULD YOU, COULD YOU IN A TREE? FRESH EXPRESSIONS OF THE GOSPEL

Campus ministry taught me a lot about third places. Back in the Aughts when I was director of the Wesley Foundation at UVA, I didn't know to call them 'third places.' But we did a whole lot of ministry in those spaces that weren't 'home' or 'work/class' space. It even got me to worship in a tree!

Sociologists talk about third places as vital to building communities. Parks, gyms, coffee houses, and fast-food restaurants all provide space for people to meet on different turf than their homes and work places. As they do, new things can happen.

This is particularly important for churches to understand since we live in a society in which the majority of people now do not have significant experiences inside church buildings. For non-churched people, the intimidation factor of crossing the threshold of a church, no matter how welcoming it may be, is high. They are much more likely to express their curiosity if church people are doing their church thing in other places.

This is what I learned in campus ministry. We had a regular Sunday night worship service and many of our regulars were involved in church life. But through the week I met students over lunch at Newcomb Hall, at late-night Bible studies at the coffee shop, and even at midday pop-up worship that could take place anywhere, including trees like the big-limbed

beauty in the courtyard of the Engineering School. (See paragraph 1.)

Our current Wesley Foundation director at UVA, the Rev. Devon Earle, is still doing creative things with students in new places. And here at Charlottesville First we're branching out to do hymn sings at pubs, fellowship while hiking the trails, spiritual formation at the salad spot, and vision sessions over tacos.

The Fresh Expressions movement, which began in Great Britain and has now grown to many US locales has embraced this concept. According to the promoters, Fresh Expressions are "a form of church for our changing culture established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet part of any church." A church that decides to support a Fresh Expression commits to doing small-scale ministry within an "affinity group" - a group of people who share a common interest, hobby, or meeting place.

If you know a place (or a tree) or a group of people where you'd like to try a new kind of ministry, talk to me or one of our great staff members. And let's meet God out in this big, beautiful world among the people God loves!

Stand firm,

Alex



## RISE AGAINST HUNGER

On April 15 over 100 folks came together in the Fellowship Hall to pack 20,000 meals to be delivered to our brothers and sisters in under developed areas of our world. Thanks to everyone for their hard work and dedication to this project!





## PLANT SALE WAS A BLOOMIN' SUCCESS!

By Nurture Lead, Patty Taylor

Thank you to everyone that started seedlings, donated plants/garden art/equipment for our first annual plant sale! Over \$1700 was raised for the Nurture Ministries here at CFUMC!



## THANK YOU FOR A GREAT DAY! FROM THE ESPINOZA CUISINE TEAM



From all of us at Espinoza Cuisine, we want to extend our gratitude to Pastor Alex, and Charlottesville First United Methodist Church, more specifically Joey Clark, Carolyn McGee, Cindy Remington, and Patty Taylor for going above and beyond to organize and advertise this event. We are

delighted to receive continued support and rave reviews from the Charlottesville Community. We love to create dishes that ignite love, laughter, and fellowship. We are so thankful to Charlottesville FUMC for hosting us and we truly look forward to the next event! - *With love from the team at Espinoza Cuisine*



## ONE THING MINISTRY ALL GOD'S CHILDREN CAMP

A weeklong overnight camp for children ages 7 to 12, with an incarcerated parent. Campers have an opportunity to participate in all the physical activities the camp has to offer such as boating, swimming, hiking, archery, music, crafts, and Bible study, along with a conflict resolution/self-esteem-building class. All God's Children Camp provides a week of sanctuary for children who face so many challenges in their lives such as economic poverty, temporary living conditions, loneliness, low self-esteem, violence and drugs while working to break the cycle of incarceration. All God's Children Camp is a place where children learn they are fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God and they are truly 'somebody'! This is a wonderful way to honor the children whose mothers are incarcerated and to give the incarcerated mothers the gift of knowing their children are loved.

*(See supplies list for needed items, back page)*

For the month of June our ministry will benefit our own VBS! Stay tuned!



## COMPOSTING, RECYCLING & TRASH AT CFUMC

By Bread and Blessings Lead, Chris Roehl

Composting is the process of returning organic materials to soil or mulch through natural decomposition. Sounds simple doesn't it? Everything that we compost returns to a usable form while producing CO2. If we send these same things to the landfill, they take up space in a sealed environment - "forever" - while producing harmful methane gas.



At CFUMC we are trying to compost as much as we possibly can. The church is buying compostable products such as plates, napkins, silverware, cups, glasses & bags. We have green compostable bags to put these items in. So, if you are eating in the church, please look for a green composting bin for your leftover food (including bones), cup, plate, napkin & even your fork or spoon. Unfortunately, some things are still trash & have to be thrown away, such as a plastic coffee stirrers. It's very important that trash is not combined with the compost. No one wants to dig through to separate out the trash.

If you do not feel comfortable drinking directly from the water fountain, we have provided compostable cups & a green can to put your cup in after you're done.

Generally, the compost is brought to the McIntire Recycling Center (MRC). The MRC currently sends the composting to a local commercial composting facility in Waverly, Virginia.

Recycling is also done at CFUMC (look for blue bins or cans). We recycle cardboard, various types of paper (like bulletins), some plastics (like water bottles), and various metals (like aluminum cans). This is often done after the Bread and Blessings meal on Mondays. The recycling is also brought to the McIntire Recycling Center. Again, some things still have to be thrown away. For example, aluminum pans with stuck on food have to be thrown out.

Pizza boxes are an issue. If they are relatively clean, they can be recycled. If they are not clean, they can be composted.

### How can you help?

- ◇ Look for green composting cans for compostable items.
- ◇ Look for blue bins or cans for recycled items.
- ◇ If there is no can or bin, please ask for one. There are always some in the kitchen, if you can go get one.
- ◇ If you are in charge of any type of food offering, make sure you put out a green composting can, blue recycling bin & a trash can.
- ◇ Consider composting & recycling at home.

For more information go to: <https://charlottesville.org/DocumentCenter/View/1600>





**MEET KARLA BERGER**  
**DIVER, PHOTOGRAPHER, INVENTOR,**  
**CFUMC CHOIR MEMBER, AND FRIEND!**

Karla will tell you that she has lived 3 lives and that is only since she became a senior citizen! She moved to C'ville from Marietta, GA and raised her 3 sons here (all born within 21 months!) She had been a professional photographer and darkroom printer before her boys came along. Later she lovingly cared for her parents as they aged. During this time she invented a plastic wheelchair headrest for her mother. A few years later and after quite a battle she was finally issued a US patent!

Karla has quite an outstanding diving and swimming history. She states that the most memorable experience she's had was being the first woman in the world to use a 3 1/2 in competition! All of this is impressive, but listen to this..... during Karla's college years she was 3rd in the 1960 Rome Olympic Trials and 2nd in the 1961 Summer Nationals for diving.

Karla has been teaching swimming to Adult Beginners (the class was previously called "The Terrified Adults" swimming class) for 26 years. She also teaches at ACAC.

All her life it seems that when Karla sees a need, she runs to the call! For several years she was a "seeing-eye person" for her older dog!

Get to know Karla, she is an amazing woman with an amazing spirit. You will see her in the choir singing praises to the God that graced her with so many gifts!



**THE QUIET CENTER**

An after-church gathering of, and for, those walking with grief who wish to share with each other their time and their presence and their prayers.

Come any Sunday at 11:15 am in the Chapel or contact Rev. John at 703-887-7305 or by email at johnconway@vaumc.org.



**HITTIN' THE TRAIL!**

Folks of all ages and abilities have met several times recently to hike some of the fabulous trails and parks in our Central Virginia area! If you are interested in the schedule of times and trails contact: Lara at children@cvillefirstumc.org or Dave at wheat1506@gmail.com.



**CFUMC SOFTBALL LEAGUE!**  
**THE CHARLOTTESVILLE CHURCH SOFTBALL**  
**LEAGUE IS BACK IN FULL SWING THIS SPRING WITH**  
**NO COVID RESTRICTIONS.**



Season started May 6 (still not too late to join!) and runs thru July. Games are played on Friday evenings at Darden Towe Park. The slow pitch league is open to men and women 14 years old or older. Anyone interested in playing on the CFUMC

team can contact Bill Owens at wlo3aia@gmail.com for more information.



**CHURCH@CHOPT**

Join us for some fellowship out in our community on the second Wednesday of every month from 6:00-7:30pm at Church@Chopt! If you have any questions reach out to Meghan Eddy (meghaneddy@yahoo.com), Lara Upton (children@cvillefirstumc.org), or Carolyn McGee (carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org).

Everyone is welcome. Hope to see you there!



## FINISHING STRONG AND MOVING AHEAD: YOUTH GEARING UP FOR SUMMER

By Youth Director, Dave Breslin

Our youth (grades 6-12) have had a busy spring! From school sponsored drama programs, band and Chorus concerts, and athletic team commitments to youth group, our teens have done a terrific job. At FUMC, our teens attend youth group on Sunday mornings and also have the opportunity to take part in evening activities, such as monthly Pen Park Fellowship Nights and youth dinners. Our youth group also are involved in local and regional service projects. Teens have been active with the church's soup kitchen and are presently gearing up for this summer's edition of the Appalachian Service Project in West Virginia.



This spring, the youth group has studied selected Psalms and the book of James. The conversations in the youth room have been rich and plentiful as the teens continue to explore their faith and how it fits into their lives.

We are also teaming up with youth groups throughout the Charlottesville District for activities and events. On May 7th, we attended the spring Youth Night of Worship at Aldersgate United Methodist Church. The evening was spent fellowshiping over a meal, playing games, getting to know teens from other youth groups, and our time ended with a praise and worship celebration. We look forward to getting together with district youth groups throughout the summer and fall for times of fellowship and spiritual growth.

Looking ahead, we will end the 2023 school year with our annual family pool party. The summer will be filled with youth group gatherings, Pen Park Fellowship Nights, the ASP Missions trip, and service at the soup kitchen. Planning is already underway for the fall of 2023.

Are you interested in volunteering your time with our youth program this summer? We will need awesome adults who can teach Sunday School when Dave is out of town. In the fall, we will be looking for youth group helpers, trip chaperones, and mentors that can help our teens grow in Christ. Please contact Dave (davebreslin@cvillefirstumc.org) for more information.



### NEW MINISTRY INTERN: MARIA PLANTZ JOINS CFUMC

Let's all welcome Maria Plantz to our team! She has dived into the position with both feet as she begins work in the role of Ministry Intern with a focus in Children's Ministry. She will be with us for the next 15 weeks working an average of 10-15 hours that will flex up and down based on the programming for this spring/summer. Welcome aboard Maria!



**WE NEED YOU!! ARE YOU AVAILABLE TO HELP OUT THIS SUMMER WITH VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL?** We are looking for volunteers as we get ready for VBS the week of July 31- Aug 4th from 9am-12pm. The number of kids we can host here, at Charlottesville First UMC, is all dependent on how many volunteers we have!



## FUMP (FIRST UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL)

By Preschool Director, Kristen Breslin

Tell your neighbors, co-workers, and the people standing in line with you at Target that we will be adding KINDERGARTEN to our FUMP program! We are using the Creative Curriculum, which goes along with our very successful High Scope approach to teaching. The program will cover the Virginia Standards of Learning so your child will go right into first grade.



As we move forward, families will be able to be part of the FUMP family for 4 years! Children thrive off of consistency and with our small class sizes, we are able to teach children at their specific level of learning. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kristen Breslin at [fump@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:fump@cvillefirstumc.org).



## THE CHILDREN'S & TWEEN'S PROGRAM IS BURSTING AT THE SEAMS!

By Children's Director, Lara Upton

Thank you to all of the volunteers that make our many programs, new and old, come alive! We could NOT do this without you! From our "Parent's Night Out" to "Sunday morning classes" and the "Just for Kids" Portico Café events, to Sunday evening "Picnics in the Park" and don't forget the Plant Sale "Pot Painting!" How could we not mention our first Sunday of the month Kids/ Youth luncheon.....PHEW! So many offerings and so much fun! Be in touch with Lara [children@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:children@cvillefirstumc.org) for info on ANY of our adventures and don't forget VBS!





## NOTES FROM THE MUSIC MINISTRY A HOLY WEEK REVIEW

By Kevin White

Holy Week was a special time at CFUMC starting with the Magnify Choir's musical offering of "Who is This King" on Palm Sunday. The week progressed into a somber, but beautiful Maundy Thursday service remembering Christ's final supper with his disciples. As we communed together, the choir sang "Wash Their Feet." Good Friday offered us a time to gather again in a candle light service of scripture readings that told the story of Christ's crucifixion. Holy Saturday brought our congregation into a time of grief and remembrance. However, a lot can happen in three days and Easter Sunday dawned with joy in our Easter Sunrise service (followed by a yummy breakfast!) and then.....the organ, handbells, trumpet and choir celebrated with the triumphant anthem, "Our Redeemer Lives!" The Easter service concluded with the choir and congregation singing Handel's "The Hallelujah



Chorus!" Our Savior is risen and the music ministry at CFUMC is here to tell you about it! After our successful choral workshop in February under the direction of Will Cooke, the choir is excited to sing as often as they are able! But wait, there's more! Handbell Choir director Lisa Rogers says.... "if you are curious about handbells or have always wanted to explore music, come join us!" Just email Lisa Rogers to get connected: lisarogers229091@gmail.com.

We can all look forward to musical offerings by the Band, the Handbells, small group ensembles, solos, and much more! All of our musical ensembles are always open to new members!



## FINANCIAL BOX SCORE

### PRELIMINARY CFUMC APRIL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (INCLUDING HAUMC)

	Combined April 2023 YTD Actual	Combined April 2023 YTD Budget	Amt Over (Under) Budget	April 2022 YTD Actual (FUMC only)	April YTD Actual \$ Change from 2022	Combined Full Year Proposed Budget 2023
Contributions	\$251,289	\$233,333	\$17,956	\$214,347	\$36,942	\$700,000
Other Income	\$9,021	\$17,133	(\$8,112)	\$1,329	\$7,692	\$51,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$260,310</b>	<b>\$250,466</b>	<b>\$9,844</b>	<b>\$215,676</b>	<b>\$44,634</b>	<b>\$751,400</b>
<b>Operating Expenses*</b>	<b>\$226,365</b>	<b>\$252,323</b>	<b>(\$25,958)</b>	<b>\$198,271</b>	<b>\$28,094</b>	<b>\$756,970</b>
<b>Net Income (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$33,945</b>	<b>(\$1,857)</b>	<b>\$35,802</b>	<b>\$17,405</b>	<b>\$16,540</b>	<b>(\$5,570)</b>

\* The significant Operating Expenses variance to budget reflects primarily timing on payment of amounts for obligations such as HAUMC Apportionments and independent ministries.



## MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS!

JOHN AND DEBBIE PHILLIPS  
MARK AND LINDA FITZPATRICK  
GRAYSON AND LAURA HOLMES  
JENETTE PARKER  
BARBA AND REX HICKMAN  
SUSAN AND TY GALLENDER  
MAGGIE MCCOMBS  
ANDREW BLASCOVICH  
ALLISON CORRELL

We look forward to getting to know our new friends better and doing God's work for His Kingdom together! Welcome to all!



## WELCOME TO ROBERT LEWIS OUR NEW COMMUNICATIONS AND IT DIRECTOR!



Robert Lewis has been fascinated by the ways technology can help share the Gospel since he was ten years old. The son of a United Methodist pastor, he finally convinced his parents let him set up their first church computer in 1985. By age fourteen, he was working with Virginia United Methodist Communications to film Annual Conference and then distribute audio and video tapes of Conference worship and bible studies. He helped design the first Virginia Conference website and launch the “Sunday Advocate,” an e-mailed bulletin insert that brought Conference-wide news and mission stories to congregations each week.

Robert studied physics at Randolph-Macon College, where he met his first wife, Rachel. Together, they attended Duke Divinity School and served churches in South Boston and Buckingham County. In 2003, Robert and Rachel moved to Sheffield, England to serve British Methodist Churches, and they were ordained in the Methodist Church of Great Britain in 2005. In 2012, they returned to Virginia and Robert was appointed pastor of Hinton Avenue UMC in Charlottesville. Rachel died of breast cancer in 2016, but her ministry among those with intellectual disabilities helped shape the vision for developing safe, affordable, supportive housing at Hinton Avenue. The effort to build Rachel’s Haven continues to be underway.

In April 2020, Robert married Bex Simmerman. Due to the pandemic, no one was invited. Bex also grew up in a parsonage, but she agreed to go out with Robert anyway. For six years, Bex served as a missionary in Sudan and was part of the Holston Conference’s Muslim Outreach Team. After returning to the States, she earned an MA in Conflict Transformation at Eastern Mennonite University. Together, Bex and Robert have a dog, Sassy, and four cats: Sketti, Kala, Shuri, and Steve. (Sketti is the only one who likes them, but it took four cats to find a good one.) When she is not caring for children with special needs, Bex loves photography, crafting, treasure hunting in thrift stores, and cat videos.

Since taking a leave of absence from pastoral ministry, Robert has become Chaplain and Bereavement Support Coordinator with Hill and Wood Funeral Home. He now loves also being part of Charlottesville First UMC as Communications and Technology Coordinator. When not working on a computer, he’s often taking one apart. Otherwise, you’ll find him snapping photos, watching science fiction, reading comic books, or taking a nap with his wife and cats.



## MEET CHERYL FEE THE NEW ARTIST IN THE GALLERY

Cheryl focuses fulltime on her passion for art. Inspired by nature, she is a color enthusiast, drawing on a bright palette. Cheryl works with water colors, acrylic mixed media, and oils. Her works include landscapes, florals, still life, animals and architecture.

Cheryl is a member of the Beverley Street School of Art, and numerous online painting groups. Her work can be found locally at a number of venues and via [facebook.com\gratitudeartstudio](https://www.facebook.com/gratitudeartstudio).

Cheryl was born in San Francisco and grew up in Idaho. She was encouraged to draw and paint at an early age by her mother who was a talented landscape artist, and has maintained her love of art throughout her life. After attending the University of Northern Colorado, Cheryl lived in Colorado for a number of years. Traveling extensively, she currently resides in Augusta County, VA. Her paintings are displayed in private residences and businesses throughout Virginia and the U.S.



### ONE THING MINISTRY: ITEMS NEEDED FOR ONE CAMPER AT “ALL GOD’S CHILDREN CAMP” LET’S SEE HOW MANY CAMPERS WE CAN SUPPORT!

- |                                 |                 |                       |                      |                                          |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| ◇ 1 fleece/micro-fiber blankets | ◇ 2 towels      | ◇ 1 mesh laundry bags | ◇ 1 washcloth / puff | ◇ \$5 to help cover water/<br>pool shoes |
| ◇ 1 pillow                      | ◇ 1 beach towel | ◇ 1 toothbrush        | ◇ 1 comb             |                                          |
| ◇ 1 twin sheet set              | ◇ 1 poncho      | ◇ 1 toothpaste        | ◇ 1 deodorant        | (Camp info on pg 2)                      |



**EVERYONE WILL RECEIVE A NEW NAME TAG ONCE OUR NEW LOGO IS APPROVED!**  
**IF YOU PREFER TO NOT RECEIVE THE NEW FOCUS NEWSLETTER, PLEASE CONTACT  
CAROLYNMCGEE@CVILLEFIRSTUMC.ORG TO CANCEL YOUR SUBSCRIPTION.**