

Good News

Quarterly Newsletter of the
First United Methodist Church of Blirstown
Summer 2017

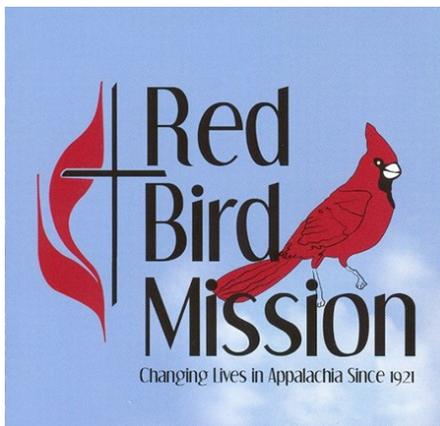
FUMC Is Kentucky Bound!

Group of 8 Joins Skylands District Mission Trip to Red Bird

This July, 8 people from the Blirstown, Walnut Valley, and Drakestown UMCs will be embarking on a life-changing adventure that will take them to the heart of Appalachia to serve at the Red Bird Mission. They will be joining a group of 140 people from the northwestern part of New Jersey who are giving a week of their time to make a lifetime of difference in the lives of people who struggle to make ends meet and keep shelter over their heads.

The Red Bird Mission has been serving the people of southeastern Kentucky with ministries of education, health care, evangelism, senior care, and home maintenance since 1921. The people they serve represent 4 of the 10 poorest counties in the United States. Their ministries are supported by private donations, and volunteers from churches like ours around the country.

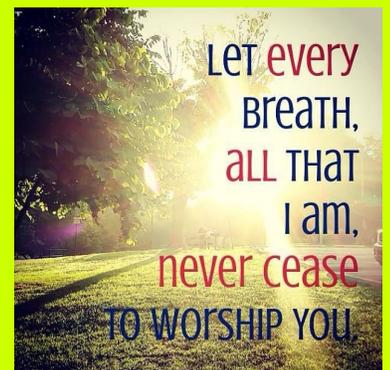
Our missionaries will join a caravan from region and travel to our first stop in Virginia on Saturday, July 15. After an overnight stay with breakfast and worship at a church, we will continue to our final destination in Beverly, Kentucky. Once there, our group will be divided into work teams based on our skills and abilities. Each day we are there will begin with breakfast and devotion, followed by a full day of work. In the evenings, we will gather for a community dinner



(Continued on page 2)

Upcoming Events

- Book of Ruth Bible Study Wednesdays in June
- UMW Pastie Sale June 18
- 63rd Annual Ocean Grove Choir Festival July 9
- UMW Yard Sale July 14 & 14
- Red Bird Mission Trip July 15-22
- Frank's Pizza Day July 24
- Maker Fun Factory Vacation Bible School August 14-18
- Ignite Youth Conference Sept 30-Oct 1





(Continued from page 1)

and singing. On Thursday, we will even enjoy a talent show!

This trip has already begun to change lives and enliven our ministries here in New Jersey. 7 of the 8 people going have never gone on a mission trip before! How blessed we are to have a team of faithful people willing to go where God leads them! In addition, our trip has already been blessed by a generous outpouring of financial support from individuals and groups in our churches and in our community totaling over \$2,500. In addition, the Drakestown UMC is allowing us to use their church van, which was purchased to be used for mission trips such as this!

As we prepare for this grand adventure, we ask that you be in prayer for this ministry as well as each of the individuals going on this trip: Debbie Stiefel, Jonathan Stiefel, Anna Tillisch, Noah Lockie, Dot Quick, Aiden Bende, Wen-Ling Lai, and David Tillisch. We look forward to sharing how God has touched our lives when we return to worship on Sunday, July 23!



Pastie Sale Fundraiser

UM Women's Pastie Sale

It's time to order your delicious homemade pasties!

Choose with or without onions for only \$5.50 each.

Orders are due by **June 18** with pickup on **June 23** from 4-6.

See signup sheet in fellowship hall.

Ignite 2017 – "Fired Up"

Youth Conference Set For Sept 29 – Oct 1

This September, youth in grades 6-12 will once again gather in Wildwood, New Jersey for an engaging and inspirational weekend of music, worship, and fellowship as they get Fired Up for Christ. This year's lineup includes Meredith Andrews, Reggie Dabbs, Tedashii, Leonor Ortega Till, and Preston Centuolo.

As in the past, we will be organizing a group of youth from our area to attend this event, and we hope that you will encourage your youth to join us! For more information on the event, registering your child, or being a chaperone, visit ignitenj.org or contact Pastor Dave.



Maker Fun Factory Comes to Blirstown!

Vacation Bible School August 14-18

We're excited to announce this year's Vacation Bible School program! **Maker Fun Factory** is a 5-day Vacation Bible school where kids will build, explore, and discover that they were made by the Ultimate Creator!

Each day will begin at **Sound Wave Sing & Play**, where kids will sing, shout, praise, pray, and be introduced to a Bible story and the daily theme. Then after kids experience the other activities of the day, they gather at **Funshop Finale** to experience an exciting review of the day's lesson and share their **God Sightings!**



and the truth that God *purposefully* made each of us the way we are and loves us!

Maker Fun Factory will take place **August 14-18 from 9a-12p** at the First United Methodist Church of Blirstown, 10 Stillwater Road, Blirstown, NJ 07825. It's open to children ages 3 (potty trained) to 11 (entering 6th grade). Registration is \$10/child or \$15/ family.

Volunteers and donations are needed and welcome. Youth ages 12-18 can serve as crew leaders for our groups of children, and adults are needed to staff the various areas, help decorate and gather supplies, and coordinate the activities for the week. If you are interested in joining the fun, contact VBS Director, Danielle Miller at NorthWarrenVBS@firstumcblirstown.com.

The staff is waiting for some creative, fun-loving makers to join them in serving God and having fun! Register online today and invite your friends!

Other sites at Maker Fun Factory include:

- ◆ **Imagination Station**, where kids can experiment, play, and discover as they use amazing Sciency-fun Gizmos!
- ◆ **KidVid Cinema**, where kids watch a daily video of *real* kids sharing and exploring the unique ways God made them;
- ◆ **Game Makers**, where kids play fun, cooperative, team-building games;
- ◆ **Bible Discovery**, where kids experience the Bible story and share their own discoveries and God Sightings;



Sunday School – Teaching Tomorrow’s Disciples

Our Sunday School program continues to develop tomorrow’s disciples by teaching them the stories of our faith and committing scriptures to their hearts. We would like to thank our Sunday School Coordinator, Debbie Stiefel, as well as the following people who have volunteered their time and taught our classes this year: Suzie Baldwin, Kathy Chambarry, Joan McNinch, Tina Rosenkrans, and Gene Taylor. In addition, we would like to thank all the parents who made an effort to bring their children on a regular basis – you are making an important investment in your child’s future and showing that care for your child’s spirit is as important as educating their mind and strengthening their body.

Sunday School will run through Father’s Day, and resume on September 10.

Here are some pictures from the past year:





Compassion in Action

stephen
MINISTRY

Stephen Ministers: The After People

People often ask, “What exactly is a Stephen Minister?” One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the *After People*.

Stephen Ministers are there:

- . . . *after* the phone call you hoped you’d never get.
- . . . *after* the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you’ve held at bay come crashing in on you.
- . . . *after* the relationship falls apart and the bottom falls out of your life.
- . . . *after* the doctor says, “I’m sorry, but there’s nothing more we can do.”
- . . . *after* the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, “Welcome to your new home.”
- . . . *after* the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away—and the house suddenly seems empty.
- . . . *after* the gavel comes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
- . . . *after* the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.
- . . . *after* you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.
- . . . *after* your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the After People. They are ready to come alongside you—or your friends, neighbors, coworkers, or relatives—and provide comfort and support for as long *after* as needed.

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Stephen Ministry Alive and Well

Recently, some people have been wondering, “is our Stephen Ministry still running?” The answer is, “YES!” Our team of four devoted, compassionate, and well-trained compassionate Christian care-givers have been working hard behind the scenes to provide care, continue in their training, and support one another. In fact in the past year, we have logged 100 hours of training, and made over 50 visits to people who requested care.

Perhaps the fact that people are wondering if the program is still available speaks to our commitment to confidentiality. Many in our congregation have taken advantage of this ministry, and received support as they journey through challenging times in their lives, without others knowing about it. So if you have ever considered having a caregiver walk with you through a difficult time in your life, know that your privacy will be honored.

We would also like to extend an invitation to people who would like to offer care to others through this program. No prior experience is needed. All that we require is a desire to serve God by offering your presence and care to others. Training will be offered, and we ask for a two year commitment to the program.

If you are interested in learning more about receiving care from a Stephen Minister, or offering care to others through this ministry, please contact Stephen Leader, Pastor Dave.



Church Offices Remodeled

The next time you stop by our church offices, you'll notice something has changed! Our church office, pastor's study, and sitting room have been moved and redecorated thanks to the hard work and dedication of Eric Skuropacki and the members of Boy Scout Troop 140.

The reasons for the changes were many, but essentially, we wanted to allow the church secretary to see who was coming in and out of the church parking lot, and make it easier for Cath and Pastor Dave to communicate while they were working in their offices, and moving the offices accomplishes all of that.

As part of the project, Eric Skuropacki and team moved the furniture, took down and rebuilt the office storage closet, painted the walls, installed carpeting, and reconfigured the church's computer network. This was truly a remarkable endeavor, and we are grateful for all of the Boy Scout's efforts!

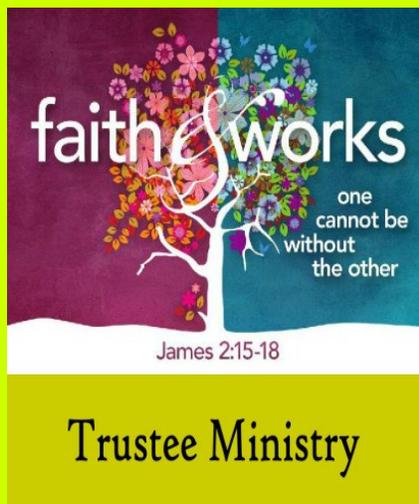


Trustees Update

Maintaining our ministry is a sacred trust

Our church's Board of Trustees have continued their ministry of keeping our facilities prepared for today's ministry while looking to the needs of tomorrow. Our biggest accomplishment was the completion of our window replacement project that was begun about 5 years ago. Thanks to generous donations from people in our congregation, we were able to install new energy efficient windows throughout our church building without incurring any debt or depleting our savings. We want to thank everyone who contributed to this project – your donations will serve this ministry for decades to come!

In addition, many replacement and repair projects have been done in the church and at the parsonage, including cutting down a large tree that fell onto an adjacent property during one of this winter's wind storms. This work is done with a group of great volunteers who are always willing to step up to the plate



and take care of most concerns that arise.

Over the next few months, we will be tackling a number of maintenance and improvement projects, including chipping some trees and dead wood around the border of the property, and cleaning up the parking lot and gardens. We are also in the process of removing our underground oil tank, and replacing it with a new above ground unit. This project is estimated to cost \$7,000, and will be paid for with funds that have been donated to our capital improvement fund from individual donors and the Schuster Fund.

We want to thank everyone for their generous financial support of our ministry and improvement projects. Your giving has made it possible for us to keep the maintenance up, which allows our church to be a building that appeals to new people and reach them with the love and Gospel of Jesus.

Finance Matters

Finances are never something we want to talk about, and yet, they are necessary to our vitality as a ministry. With that in mind, our finance team continues to work hard to oversee our ministry's financial assets, and ensure that we have the funds needed to meet our needs.

Through the first quarter of the year, our income was \$34,825 vs a budget of \$36,425, and our expenses were 35,877 vs a budget of 46,041. While the expense side of things shows a savings of \$10,000, it should be noted that we owe about \$4,600 in conference shared ministries. This is not a concern at this time, as our payments fluctuate with the fluctuations in our income.

One of the initiatives that we are working on this year is a mailing to our community to share ways that our ministry supports the community and ask for their financial support. If you would like to help with this endeavor, please contact Finance Chair Bob McNinch or Pastor Dave.

We would like to thank everyone that came out to support our second annual Mother's Day plant and bake sale. We are pleased to share that every plant sold, and we earned a over \$1000 for our ministry! Our next fundraiser will be a Frank's Pizza day on July 24. On this date, Franks will donate 10% of their proceeds to our ministry. Please be sure to put this date on your calendar, and invite your friends to take the night off from cooking while supporting our ministry. In addition, we continue to partner with Amazon Smile. Simply go to smile.amazon.com, and set up the church as your designated charity. Then continue to go to the same site, and shop as you would on amazon.com, and a portion of your purchases will be donated to the church.

Lastly, we encourage everyone to please keep current with your pledges and offerings, so that we can continue to fulfill our mission of sharing Christ with our community. If you have trouble remembering your offering on Sunday mornings, or are not able to make it to church on a regular basis, we recommend using our electronic giving option. It's quick and easy to set up, and you'll never have to worry about remembering your envelopes or checks on Sunday mornings. Simply visit us online at firstumclairstown.com, click on "Donate Online", and fill out the form to set up you donation from your bank account or credit card. You can choose a one-time donation, weekly donation, or monthly donation.

Thank you all for your faithful giving. Your faithful stewardship of God's gifts is making a difference in the lives of the people in our community, and enabling us to share the Good News of God's love and grace with a hurting world.



Frank's Pizza Fundraiser

*Enjoy a great Italian meal
for the entire family and
support our ministry!*

July 24th

Eat In or Take Out

Bring your friends, family,
or favorite team!

152 NJ-94, Blairstown

908-362-1588

Open from 11a-10p.



Church Sexton Opening

We're
HIRING

Our church has an opening for a part-time sexton to handle cleaning and janitorial duties, as well as minor maintenance tasks. Candidate must be able to work independently and represent the values of our congregation. Interested candidates should submit resume and cover letter to Michele Peterson at info@firstumclairstown.com.



United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

The United Methodist Women have been very busy having a successful bake sale at the Mother's Day weekend plant sale. We would like to thank all those that donated and purchased items. The \$521.50 raised is being donated to the Red Bird Mission Trip.

- On Father's Day, we will be providing food for the coffee hour to celebrate All Men of the church.
- Our quarterly Pastie (meat pie) sale will take place on June 23, with pick up from 4-6pm. The cost is \$5.50 each and come with or without onions. The deadline for ordering is June 18 and you can sign up on the sheet in the fellowship hall. Mark your calendar for the next sales, September 15 and December 8.
- The UMW are also planning for our yearly yard sale to be held on July 14 & 15 at the home of Claire Smith, 109 Mt. Hermon Road. We will accept any donations of household, holiday, bedding, children's items, clothing and furniture. Please save your items and contact Claire the week of the sale to drop off your donations.
- The UMW and UMM will be giving out scholarships to 3 graduating high school students on June 18. They are: Sophia Hinchman, Rachel Kim and Jack Tironi.
- The women purchased blankets and had them blessed by Pastor Dave and will be given to sick church members.
- The women have their annual luncheon scheduled for August 3 at the Stroudsmore.

The UMW meet on the second Sunday of the month after coffee hour and all women are welcome to join the fun.

Food Pantry Ministry

Our food pantry ministry continues to be a vital source of nutritional support for families in our areas. In the past three months, we served the following numbers of families:

March - 25; April - 25; May - 26

Our pantry continues to be supported by our community. The Blair Women's Club donated a shopping bag of items, and on June 6th the Blairstown Elementary School will be donating items the children have collected. Jean and Tom Charles will be helping with the pick-up for our pantry.

Foodshed Alliance will have a tent at the Blairstown Farmers' Market. Snap EBT users can double their money. You will need to swipe your snap ebt card to get tokens to spend on Snap-eligible market foods. They will match your tokens with good food bucks, up to \$10 each week. For each \$10, you will receive \$20 to spend at the farmers' market for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Also noteworthy, Norwescap food bank had their mandatory meeting in May with Odessa Kise and Claire Smith attending. We will not receive eggs this summer, and rice will be limited. We must service clients outside of Warren County and may not refuse them.

Phillipsburg police department spoke on safety for the pantries:

- Workers at the pantries must be careful not to serve clients by themselves.
- Problems at the pantries should be handled by police, if needed.

Finally, all food pantries will have an inspection this summer.

Thank you everyone for helping with our food pantry by serving clients, donating food, and preparing our pantry to be open the first Saturday of the month.



Food
Pantry

Rejoice

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017
1 THESSALONIANS 5:16



United Methodists in Greater New Jersey gathered together to rejoice in God's faithfulness at the 2017 Annual Conference in Wildwood, N.J., May 21-23 with more than 1,400 people in attendance. Bold, forward-thinking visions were shared as we were called to step out on the edges of faith with joyful hearts and the Conference responded with bold actions.

Key Actions That Will Shape GNJAC Future

1. Approved a \$900,000 budget cut and a new Shared Ministry formula that will save money for congregations for years to come. The Shared Ministry formula uses a fixed percentage that will require the Conference to budget and spend Shared Ministry dollars based on the health and vitality of the congregations.
2. Approved rebranding the GNJAC Camping and Retreats Board into *Next Generation* Student Ministries and expanding its oversight to include all youth and young adult ministries including IGNITE and Campus Ministries.
3. Approved a 10-year intercultural competency plan that will develop laity and clergy to be more culturally competent so that we strengthen and grow diversity, inclusion and collaboration

Approved work to begin on a 2019-2023 strategic ministry plan

Commissioning, Ordination and Retirement

This year's Annual Conference session opened with a service to commission and ordain 22 clergy on Sunday evening, including Reverend David Tillisch and Reverend Wen-Ling Lai. Bishop John Schol's powerful message invited leadership to choose joy over happiness, to move to the margins of faith and practice real life joy and hope in one's leadership.

Leadership Addresses

Bishop Schol challenged Greater New Jersey to rejoice in our progress and our trials. He outlined the key challenges disciples face in the world, denomination, communities and congregations, and presented a path forward that includes four pillars: passionate faith, transformational leadership, vital mission partners and money. He encouraged GNJAC to lead the way for the denomination to move to the edges of faith where hope and joy live.

Conference Workshops

More than 1,100 people attended five workshops inspiring spiritual leaders with creative strategies to think big and pursue excellence in the church. The workshops included a creative session on discovering the power of the narrative experience, creating new spaces and engaging vitality, developing a diverse community, leading congregations through change, and financial security.

Rise Against Hunger

More than 200 volunteers working in unison systematically and excitedly helped pack 30,000 meals in just an hour and a half to support Rise Against Hunger's effort to feed people around the world with a bold mission to end world hunger by 2030.

Annual Conference Firsts

- First GNJAC to break the 1,400 registration barrier
- First GNJAC to pack 30,000 meals in 90 minutes
- First GNJAC to have a NJ Supreme Court Justice speak (retired Justice Gary Stein)
- First GNJAC to have over 1000 participants in workshops
- First GNJAC to ordain a Hattian Woman
- First GNJAC to commission a Chinese Woman

Mark Your Calendar

June

1 – Study & Sing 10a
3 – Community Breakfast 8:30-9:30;
Food Pantry 9:30-11:30;
4 – Pentecost Sunday
5 – Stephen Ministers 7p
7 – Ruth Study Ch 1 7p
8 – Study & Sing 10a
11 – UM Women 11:45a
11 – Youth Group 12:30p
13 – Staff Parish Relations 7:00
14 – Ruth Study Ch 2&3 7p
15 – Study & Sing 10a
16 – Men's Group 6:30p
18 – Happy Father's Day
18 – Pastie Orders Due
18 – Forest Manor 2:30p
20 – Stephen Ministers 7p
21 – Ruth Study Ch 4 7p
22 – Men's Group 6:45p
23 – Pastie Pickup 4-6p
25 – Youth Group 12:30p
27 – Nominations & Lay Leadership 7p
28 – Church Council Discipleship 7p

July

1 – Community Breakfast 8:30-9:30;
Food Pantry 9:30-11:30;
3 – Stephen Ministers 7p
4 – Independence Day
5 – Church Council Discipleship 7p
9 – UM Women 11:45;
11 – Trustees 7p
12 – Church Council Discipleship 7p
14 & 15 – UM Women Yard Sale
15 – 22 – Red Bird Mission Trip
16 – Forest Manor 2:30p
20 – Men's Group 6:45p
24 – Frank's Pizza Fundraiser

August

2 – Church Council Discipleship 7p
5 – Community Breakfast 8-9:30;
Food Pantry 9:30-11:30;
7 – Stephen Ministers 7p
8 – Finance Team 6:30p
8 – Church Council 7p
13 – UM Women 11:45a
14-18 – Maker Fun Factory VBS 9-12
16 – Church Council Discipleship 7p



Celebrate!

June Birthdays/Anniversaries

8 Joey Celentano
18 Lois Bedell
22 Elizabeth Shotwell
26 Jill Butcher
26 Hannah Moyna
27 Mary Ann Ropek

4 Eloise & Charles Raymond
7 Jean & Tom Charles
17 Debra & Richard Stiefel
23 Carol & Gary Arvary

July Birthdays

7 Lorrie Koonz
14 Kathy Chambarry
15 Patti Tironi
16 Jerry Moog
21 Emily Peterson
25 Karen Hinchman
26 Paul Arvary
29 Judy Butcher

August Birthdays/Anniversaries

1 Odessa Kise
3 David Dwiggins
5 Tom Charles
9 Erica Jones
14 Elizabeth Moyna
14 Shaelyn Moog
17 Alexa Tironi
23 Patrick Moog
24 Mark Ropek
25 Lester Shotwell
29 Andre Hinchman

15 Fred & Carol Cook
20 Joanna & David Stoner

Our Ministry Needs You

Is God calling you to take a leadership role in our ministry? If so, we have two opportunities for you to prayerfully consider! We are looking for people to fill two key roles in our ministry: Youth Group Leader, and Stephen Ministry Leader.

As a **Youth Group Leader**, you will need to be passionate about helping our youth build a strong foundation in their faith as they prepare to transition into adulthood. The youth leader should enjoy working with young people, have a willingness to engage the youth in exploring the Gospel of Jesus Christ and applying it to their lives in creative and fun ways, and have a desire to build a ministry that reaches out to the youth of our community and offers them a positive way to spend their time.

As a **Stephen Leader**, you will be focusing on our Stephen Ministry and helping our caregivers connect with care receivers who need compassionate Christian care. Stephen Leaders oversee the support of our Stephen Ministers, recruit and train new Stephen Ministers, and work with the pastor to support people going through difficult times in their lives. The Stephen Leader will need to attend a one-week training in Pittsburgh, PA, (expenses paid by church) at which they will receive all the information they need to lead this program.

If you would like to learn more about any of these ministry opportunities, please contact Pastor Dave, or any member of our Nominations and Leadership Development Committee.



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908-632-6693

Stay in touch:

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