

# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

117 N. 2nd Street, Clarksburg, WV 26301

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Rev. Michael Q. Atkinson, Lead Pastor

Rev. Harry Jenkins, Associate Pastor

Brett Miller, Director of Music

*"A Holy, Healthy, and Loving Community Striving to Know Christ and to Make Christ Known"*



March 5, 2023

10:45 a.m.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

WORDS OF WELCOME ----- Pastor Michael Atkinson

PRELUDE - "Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen" /Walcha - Dr. Jessica Scott

\*CALL TO WORSHIP ----- Rev. Harry Jenkins

Leader: Come, people of God, to know again who you are,  
return to the One who gives you life.

People: We come as children of God, longing for a closer walk with our Creator.

Leader: We are called to lay aside previous assumptions,  
to give up our advantages and security.

People: It is frightening to venture into the unknown,  
to live by faith rather than by sight.

Leader: The God who has given us life offers us a new birth – a new way.

People: We are both attracted and repelled by newness,  
by the promises and challenges of a life of faith.

Leader: Let us venture together, daring to feel the winds of God's Spirit.

People: We will join in exploring God's purposes  
and open ourselves to God's leading.

## \*OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and glorious Lord, we come, as did Nicodemus, with questions on our hearts and in our lives. We come hoping someone can help us find answers and healing. But we are also hardened with doubts about self, others, and even you. Grant us healing and openness to your spirit that we may be better servants of your Word, your Will, and your Way. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

\*HYMN #605-----"Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters"

## CHILDREN'S MOMENTS WITH THE PASTOR

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON -----Genesis 12:1-4a

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people, and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.

OFFERTORY MUSIC ----- First Church Handbells

*"Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee" / arr. McChesney*

GOSPEL LESSON ----- John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

SERMON-----”A New You”----- Pastor Atkinson  
*(you are encouraged to use this space for notes)*

## INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, we are such stubborn people. We want to know all the answers. We find it hard to place our trust even in your Son. When Jesus proclaims that we can have a new life, we want to know how this is possible.

How can we get rid of the old burdens and difficulties and start over again? Wouldn't it be just like climbing back into the womb to make a fresh start? How we have misunderstood what Jesus has said?

New life is possible. We can place our trust in God's healing care. Forgive us, and help us, gracious Lord. For we ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

*(Silent Prayers of Confession Offered)*

### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

New life is given to you. You can place your trust in God and follow God's way. God is with you. AMEN.

### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thank to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. . . .

...and so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

ALL: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

Leader: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. By the baptism of his suffering, death and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. . .

...and so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**ALL: Christ has died; Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Leader: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, strengthen us to run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. **Amen.**

## SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

\*HYMN #629 -----"You Satisfy the Hungry Heart"

POSTLUDE - - - - "Excerpts from Wondrous Love" /arr/ Harrison - - Dr. Scott



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### UPCOMING EVENTS AT FIRST CHURCH

Tuesday, March 7th -- Monastic Meal at 12:15 p.m.  
Tuesday, March 7th -- Staff-Parish Relations Committee at 6:00 p.m.  
Thursday, March 9th -- Prayer Shawl at 5:00 p.m.

#### Family Choir Rehearsal Schedule

March 12th - 9:45 a.m. rehearsal in the parlor  
March 19th - 9:45 a.m. rehearsal in the parlor; 10:45 a.m. sing in worship

#### Bell Choir Rehearsal Schedule

March 26th - 9:30 a.m. rehearsal in bell room 10:45 a.m. play in worship  
April 2nd - 9:30 a.m. rehearsal in bell room 10:45 a.m. play in worship



All are welcome to join! Contact Brett Miller for more details.

Twelve-Step Meetings (7 sessions each week) -- Monday through Thursday -- Library  
Winter Shelter -- nightly from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

### WINTER SHELTER MINISTRY RECOGNITION



Through March 17th, First Church is providing a safe and warm space to sleep for the homeless in our community thanks to Diana Higginbotham, Shelley Spellman and a host of volunteers and staff! During morning worship on March 19th, we will celebrate this ministry!

Contact Tammy Matheny at 304-476-2015  
if you would like information about our Prayer Chain.

