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THE FLAME

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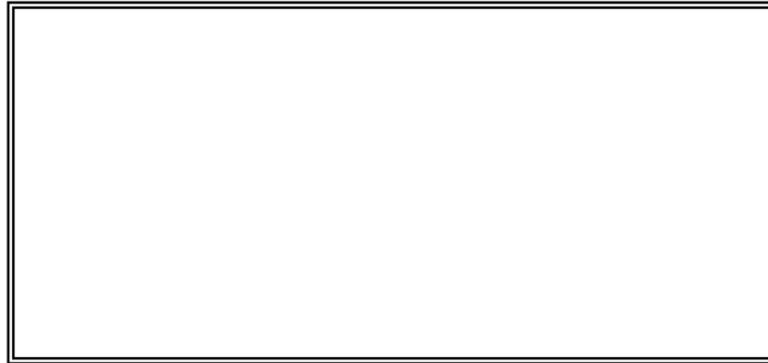
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New Year's Resolution



Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV)

Children's/Youth Musical



Shepherds, Sheep, and Wisemen all got the message, something wonderful happened on Christmas Eve!



The amazing generosity and love you share with the staff at Christmas and throughout the year is deeply appreciated.



Pastor Don Joycelynn Davidson Cynthia Wilson
 Lindsey McGee Larry Davidson Sue Lippert
 Ruth Harbeson Cathie Gilliland Dianne Clark



HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Pastor Don Griffin

This morning, as I was trying to bring up my Word program to write this newsletter article, something interesting happened. I couldn't get to the Start menu to open Word. For you that are not computer literate let me put it more simply, the computer would not do what I needed it to do. After trying several options, I rebooted the system: turning off the computer to shut everything down and then turning it on again to reload all the programs and applications so I could use it. You see, sometimes the system gets corrupted and needs to just start over in a new place.

How many have thought of a New Year resolution(s) for yourself. What is it this year? Lose 20 pounds? Start an exercise routine? Start a new savings account? Make a trip to someplace you've always wanted to visit? We all have areas of our lives that we feel can be improved or goals we wish to accomplish. Be careful about leaving your lists around because sometimes what makes sense to us may not to someone reading our list. Early in my ministry I had a youth tell me about coming across his mom's resolution list and being concerned

about it. She had written, "No ODs this year". His mom was resolving to not "overdose" in the New Year? He confronted his mom with the list, and she explained that it did not mean "overdoses" as he had assumed but instead "overdrafts" on her checking account. According to Inc. Magazine the top ten New Year's Resolutions for 2017 were:

- * Lose Weight/Healthier Eating
- * Life/Self Improvement
- * Better Financial Decisions
- * Quit Smoking
- * Do More Exciting Things
- * Spend More Time with Family/Close Friends
- * Work Out More Often
- * Learn Something New on My Own
- * Do More Good Deeds for Others
- * Find the Love Of My Life

According to Google, 90% of all resolutions fail by February. I'd say that's a pretty high failure rate. Often it is because we overreach and when we experience setbacks, we quit trying. But like my computer story at the beginning of this article, sometimes humans need to take time to reboot...to start over in a new place. I think the beginning of a New Year gives us that fixed point to start something new. When considering resolutions most immediately think about their physical bodies or financial well being or our need for other people, but what about our Spiritual well-being? How often do you consider your relationship with God?

We were created to be in a relationship with God. When that relationship is absent, we often try to fill the void with other things. I encourage you to evaluate where you are in your personal walk with God and if there are voids, to plan

to address your spiritual needs. How is your prayer life? How is your study and meditation upon the Scripture? How is your sacrificial life? How is your worship life? I had a lady once tell me her resolution was not to miss a Sunday of worship that year. I cringed when she said it because soon, she missed a Sunday...then another...then another. I don't think I saw her again that year. Instead of big goals, why not set little steps to improve the spiritual aspects of your life.

We are just days away from 2020. A brand-new year and an opportunity to reboot our lives and look to improve ourselves. I encourage you to consider your spiritual well being this year. Look for ways you can grow closer to God and you'll discover that it flows into other aspects of your life as well. Be it a spiritual resolution or a goal to lose weight, plan to take small steps toward your goal. If you mess up, do not give up, but instead start new the next day. Remember, sometimes we have to re-boot the computer more than once.

Thank you for accepting Seth and me into your spiritual family. I believe God has big plans for First Church in 2020 and beyond and I'm excited to have a small part in those plans.

Pastor Don and Seth



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1 OFFICE CLOSED 	2	3	4
5 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Food Sack Sunday 6:00 TYT	6	7 8:45 Intercessory Prayer 5:30 Care Team	8 7:00 Chancel Choir	9	10	11 9:00 UMW Unit Meeting
12 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Communion Children's Church 6:00 TYT	13 5:15 Carillon Bells	14 8:45 Intercessory Prayer 6:00 Trustees	15 7:00 Chancel Choir	16	17	18
19 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 3:30 MTC Rehearsal 6:00 TYT	20 5:15 Carillon Bells 5:30 Friendship Feast	21 8:45 Intercessory Prayer 6:30 Novels at Night	22 7:00 Chancel Choir	23	24	25
26 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 3:30 MTC Rehearsal Children's Church 6:00 TYT	27 5:15 Carillon Bells 5:30 PM Patches	28 8:45 Intercessory Prayer	29 7:00 Chancel Choir	30	31 	

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Enloe Baumert	01/01	Mary Mason	01/13	John Counter	01/30
Gerry McFadden	01/01	Keni Ray	01/13	Larry Murphy	01/30
Deanna Varner	01/04	Carl Renfro	01/15		
Valinda Goeppinger	01/06	Deb Layton	01/22		
Thomasine Rhodd	01/06	Lee Evans	01/24		
Sheila Foxworthy	01/08	Linda Gray	01/24		
Cole Wells	01/10	Nolan Overman	01/24		
Carolyn Hopkins	01/11	Donna Walker	01/25		
Joyce Shreffler	01/12	Scott Jackson	01/29		





May the Lord make my New Year a happy one...

Not by shielding me from sorrow and pain, but by strengthening me to bear it if it comes.

Not by making my path easy, but by making me sturdy enough to tread any path.

Not by taking hardship from me, but by taking all cowardice and fear from my heart as I meet hardships.

Not by granting me unbroken sunshine, but by keeping my face bright even in the shadows.

Not by making my life always pleasant, but by showing me where people and God's cause need me most and by making me zealous to be there and to help.

God, make my year a happy one.
—Guideposts magazine (January 1973)



FROM ONE GRATEFUL MOUTH!

Thanks to those of you who dared to pitch in on my CD that I recorded 26 years ago when I had hands that really worked! I made it as a "Sing along" for my family, but the CD is just as much fun to listen to at any time. Anyway, this old mouth was able to turn over the funds to Quint Whitefield and I won't have to spend the Holidays behind bars! All I can say is a huge "thank you" for your continued support of me over these 32 years.

Love all you guys at FUMC.
The Pest. (a.k.a. Sue L.)

UMW News

Saturday, January 11 at 9:00 AM will be the UMW planning meeting for 2020. All officers and members are encouraged to attend so meaningful activities can be planned for all members.

For more than 150 years, Methodist women, organized for mission, have worked in the name of Jesus to take positions on social justice issues and change legislation, systems, structures and practices considered unjust and oppressive. Today, we continue to build on this foundation as we work to end maternal mortality, attain a living wage for all, interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and ensure energy that is just for all. As United Methodist Women of the 21st century, we are called to be bold in our witness, working to dismantle systems of oppression and build, together, a better world. The Bible teaches us that all creation is God's and "very good" in and of itself (Genesis 1:31). It teaches that God created humankind in God's image—all humankind (Genesis 1:27). We don't yet live in a society that treats God's creation with dignity and respect. We still live in a world where institutional structures and social relations oppress people and defy the will of God. Yet the Bible tells the story of God always and everywhere at work for liberation and healing, justice and peace. When asked what the greatest commandment was, Jesus answered: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39) To love our neighbor—and ourselves—means more than just providing care and comfort in times of suffering; to love our neighbor as ourselves we must change the systems that do harm in the first place. This was a vital message of Jesus' ministry,

challenging the existing social order, proclaiming God's reign: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19) The early Christian community recognized the vitality of this call. Christianity is not just something we believe, it is also something we practice. We are called to be "doers of the word, and not merely hearers" (James 1:22). We are called to a living faith—a faith that makes itself known by its fruits. Indeed, God is always at work to make change in the world, appearing in unexpected ways and reversing the norms of "polite" society to ensure abundant life and wholeness for all.

Please consider being a part of UMW as we make plans to carry on God's work.



NOVELS AT NIGHT

We will meet on January 21st at 6:30 to discuss *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens.

Perfect for fans of Barbara Kingsolver and Karen Russell, *Where the Crawdads Sing* is at once an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heart-breaking coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are forever shaped by the children we once were, and that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.

This is a totally different book for us and I know you will like it. Once you start, it is hard to put down.

Enjoy,
Gineta



Music Notes by Joycelynn Davidson



Singers
Wanted

For the
Meet the Composer
Weekend

February 22—23, 2020

First United Methodist Church, Ponca City

REHEARSALS BEGIN JANUARY 19—3:30 PM

I am excited to introduce our next guest composer. Jay Rouse is one of the premier choral arrangers in Christian music. He has over 350 compositions and arrangements published. Mr. Rouse is a Dove Award winning producer and has logged many hours on the road traveling in music ministry. He spent 10 plus years as musical director and accompanist for Sandi Patty. In addition to his work as a keyboard artist, composer and arranger he has been the primary producer and conductor for all of the choral and instrumental publications from PraiseGathering Music Group and Gaither Music Company over the last two decades. Jay Rouse continues to make a major impact on music for the church musician across the nation. Along with his wife Amy and two children, Londyn & Thatcher, Jay resides in Anderson, Indiana.

Happy New Year!

I hope everyone has enjoyed the holiday season. The choirs have enjoyed a little break after wonderful worship services in December. Now it is time to get back on track with rehearsals.

Chancel Choir rehearsals begin Wednesday, January 8th at 7:00 pm and will continue each Wednesday unless bad weather intervenes. We will be working hard this spring on our February Concert with Jay Rouse and spring and Easter music.

Carillon Bells will be back in the swing of things January 13th at 5:15 pm. We have room for more ringers, so come check it out. It's great therapy!

Youth Music will be on break until February 5th at 4:45 pm. We will be working on some contemporary praise songs to introduce to the congregation. Handbells will continue to be on break until later notice.



Kids' M & Ms

We are looking forward to a great spring with your children! Here's the schedule:

February 5 3:30—5:30 First session

February 26 Ash Wednesday

(Plan to stay for Prayer & Praise)

March 8 Kids sing in worship

March 18 Off for Spring Break

April 5 Kids Sing/Ring in worship

April 8 Last session, field trip to the park



Hey Youth and Youth parents, this last month was full of Christmas spirit and fun activities!

Looking into January we will have our annual New Year's Eve lock-in on December 31st to January 1st. Thanks to all the adults who signed up to help; I will send out a text to remind you what time you are assigned.

We will have YSS every Sunday morning at 9 am, and TYT every Sunday night at 6 pm. Hope everyone has a great winter break and happy New Year! I can't wait to see what this new year will bring the Overcomers!

Thank you to everyone who has helped this past year, I really appreciate it!

Blessings to all,

Lindsey

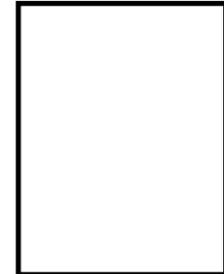
Youth Calendar
Youth Sunday School
Every Sunday 9:00 AM
TYT
Every Sunday Evening
6:00 PM
WOW
will resume in February!



*Thank you so much for the treats. As you can see they were a huge hit!
Have a very Merry Christmas from us all at Ponca City Fire!*



HANGING OF THE GREENS



This years Church-wide Christmas Party brought together a wonderful crowd. We had a time of great fellowship, great food and fun making candy trains.



Church-Wide Christmas Party

