

First Church **FOCUS**

2020

YEARLY REPORT

INSIDE:

A Letter from the Senior Pastor

Mission & Method Statements

2020 Budget Summary

Lay Leadership on Committees

Grow Groups Update

Children's Ministry Update

Youth Ministry Update

Mission & Outreach Update

Music Ministry Update

Agape Fellowship Update

FIRST
CHURCH
United Methodist

"USE YOUR GIFT..."

1 Peter 4:10

Dear First Church family,

The First Church Focus is our church's yearly report which I asked our staff to begin developing last year. It is a way to supply our congregation with vital information in an easy-to-use format, and it includes everything from budget statistics to committee membership to summaries of our various ministry areas. We often get requests for information of this type in the church office, so the First Church Focus is a way to put all of that together in a report that church members can use throughout the year.

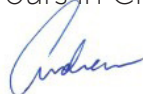
As I have thought about our life together as a church family during 2020, this is a verse that I have been reflecting upon: **"Each of you has been blessed with one of God's many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gift well."** —1 Peter 4:10. That passage is talking about spiritual gifts, which God gives to every believer in Jesus Christ. As Peter tells us, the important thing is that we use our gifts in service to others. The Holy Spirit has given us those gifts exactly so that we can use them to fulfill the two great commandments to love God and love our neighbor.

I believe that a focus on spiritual gifts may hold the key to what God has in store for us this year. The truth is that Jesus has a kingdom to build, and he wants to use us as his kingdom builders! In order for that to happen, we need to be bold about identifying the ways that God has gifted us and then using those gifts for his purposes. Just think about our mission statement, which calls us to connect people to one another by gathering, growing, and going in discipleship to Jesus Christ. That's a challenging calling for us, and we will need powerful and developed spiritual gifts in order to be successful at it.

So what are your spiritual gifts? How is God calling you? How do you intend to use your gifts well in the service of others in 2020? What are you going to do in your own life to be a kingdom builder for Jesus?

I want the First Church Focus report to serve as a resource for us throughout 2020. So please be sure to refer to it for important information about the church, and share it with others who might be interested in seeing it. May God bless you and your family during this new year!

Yours in Christ,



Rev. Andrew C. Thompson
Senior Pastor



MISSION & METHOD STATEMENTS



**"CONNECTING
PEOPLE
TO GOD AND ONE
ANOTHER"**

MISSION STATEMENT



**Gathering together
in worship; Growing
together in spiritual
maturity; Going
together in mission**

METHOD STATEMENT

2020 BUDGET SUMMARY



Ministry & Missions	\$260,803
Salaries & Benefits	\$1,267,046
Administration	\$285,800
Maintenance	\$72,225
Apportionments	\$129,764
	<hr/>
	\$2,015,638





COMMITTEES

CHURCH COUNCIL

2020

Don Harris, Chair
Debby Weiser
Josh Worthy
Ryan Ritchie

2021

Pete Franks
Kathy McFetridge, Vice Chair
Pat Marcy
Steffi Teo

2022

Monty Henderson, Lay Leader
Sue Richardson
Melanie Raymond
Herb Crum
EXOFFICIO:
Cindy Switzer, Chair of Trustees
Bill Welsh, Chair of Finance
Janet Harris, Chair Pastor/Parish Relations
Allison Lind, Youth Representative
Paula Irwin, UMW Representative
PASTORS:
Rev. Andrew Thompson
Rev. Todd Lovell
Rev. Jen Ryerson
Rev. Rob Williams

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2020

Cindy Switzer, Chair
Ken Sluyter
David Powers

2021

Brad Baldwin
Joe Herriman
Don Rutledge

2022

Theresa Moore
Don Gibson
Margaret Barber
EXOFFICIO:
Lay Leader
STAFF REP:
Rev. Andrew Thompson

FINANCE COMMITTEE

2020

Derek Gibson
Jason Lind
Shaun Penny

2021

Kellie Knight
Stephen Whatley
Bill Welsh, Chair

2022

Dorothy Hanby
Jeff Williams
Susan White
EXOFFICIO:
Chair of Board of Trustees
Lay Leader
Chair of Church Council
STAFF REPS:
Rev. Andrew Thompson
Summer Boyd

NOMINATIONS

LAY LEADERSHIP

2020

Daniel Worthy
Dyann Dunn
Larry Wright

2021

Biddy Williamson
Evelyn Shaw
George Charles

2022

Jan Struebing
Janet Huntsman
Dennis Martin
EXOFFICIO:
Lay Leader
STAFF REP:
Rev. Andrew Thompson, Chair

PASTOR/PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

2020

Ken Hatfield
Clark Woods
Janet Harris, Chair

2021

Steve Smith
Terry Quast
Martha Ellen Myers

2022

Carol Altom
Chris Dodson
Chris Weiser
EXOFFICIO:
Lay Leader
STAFF REPS:
Rev. Andrew Thompson



CHILDCARE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2020

Andee Ingram, Chair
Jen Simmons

2021

Laurie Gibbs
Nancy Bostian

2022

Julie Wagner
JoAnne Herriman
STAFF REP:
Rev. Jen Ryerson

RETIREE COUNCIL

Janet Huntsman
Don Rutledge, Chair
Artis Williamson
Biddy Williamson
Bob Reynolds
Barb Reynolds
Jan Struebing
Don Struebing
Russ Rhodes
Betty Rhodes
Carl Campbell
Molly Campbell
Betsy Penix
STAFF REP:
Rev. Jen Ryerson

BREAD OF LIFE ADVISORY BOARD

2020

Steve Crow
Karen Smoyer
Russ Rhodes

2021

Jackie Guist
Bob Chambers
Ralph Jensen, Chair

2022

Paula Jackson
Patricia Vanderbush
Pat Marcy
STAFF REP:
Joshua Bland

CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE STEERING COMMITTEE

Craig Lile
Stacy Waller Lile
Renee Morris
Rich Morris
Jessica Ritchie
Ryan Ritchie
Neal McAlister
Kelly McAlister
STAFF REP:
Joshua Bland

FUMC FOUNDATION BOARD

2020

Paul Lawrence, Chair
Karen Thompson

2021

Larry Wright
Debby Weiser
David Van Bebber

2022

Susan White
Larry Wilkins

2023

Jeff Williams
Cyndy Spencer
EX-OFFICIO:
Rev. Andrew Thompson
FOUNDATION STAFF:
Mary McKinney, Director



GROW GROUPS

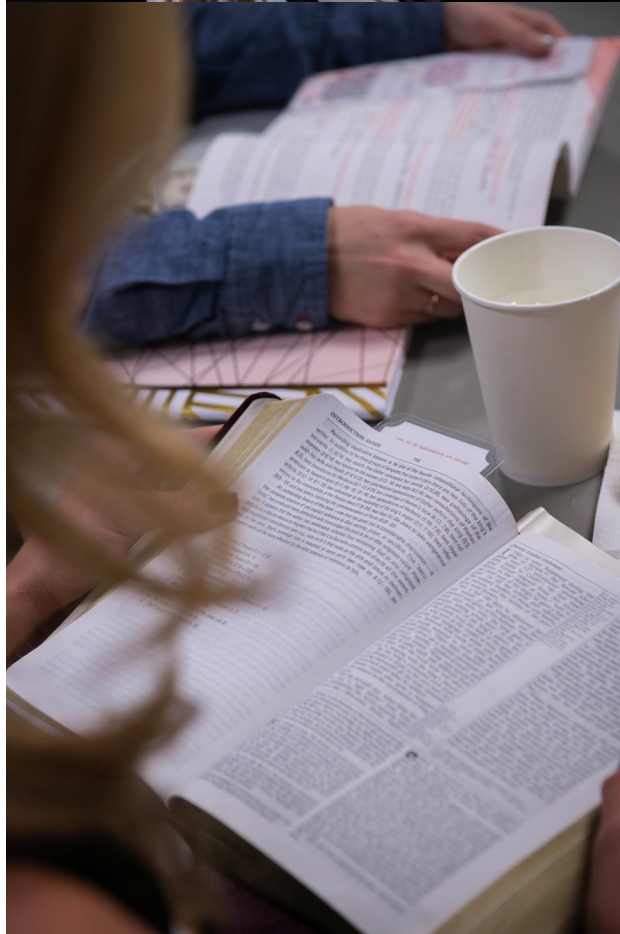
Rev. Todd Lovell

At First Church, we believe that people become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ when they spend time growing together in small group settings. As they grow, we want every person in our congregation to recognize two things: 1) God has equipped every single person in our congregation with spiritual gifts and 2) God has called every single person to use those gifts for vital ministry at First Church and throughout Northwest Arkansas.

We recognize that people are at different points on their spiritual journey. For example, some people may be new to the faith or new to the church, while others may have a very mature faith. Some people may have very limited time because of their stage of life, while others may have more time to spend in study and fellowship.

Regardless of your availability, our discipleship ministry strives to provide everyone in our congregation an opportunity for spiritual growth. Our Grow Opportunities fall into three main categories: Learn - Live - Lead. Learn Opportunities are short-term studies like our weekly bible studies and midweek Grow First program that focus on learning the content of the Christian faith. Live Opportunities are ongoing small groups like our Grow Groups and Sunday School classes that focus on living out the faith in a community setting. And Lead Opportunities involve serving in an existing ministry setting or creating a new short-term or ongoing Grow Opportunity. We want every single person at First Church to commit to grow with us by learning, living, or leading!

In addition to our existing small groups, we have added five new small group gatherings in 2019, and even now we have new groups ready to start in early 2020. If you're not currently in a group, we want to make finding a group as easy as possible. In January, we will begin hosting Grow Gatherings on Sunday evenings in the chapel. Grow Gatherings are six-week sessions designed to allow people to experience our small group format before they make an ongoing commitment. These sessions will explore the nuts and bolts of small group formation, and will show how small groups are one of the many ways at First Church for people to use their gifts to connect people to God and one another.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Amanda Worthy

Our hope for Spark Kids is to connect our children to God and one another by gathering, growing, and going together. In Spark Kids, our committed volunteers use their gifts each week to teach our children about Jesus and help them grow in their relationship with Him in a safe, fun, and engaging learning environment.

As we enter 2020, Spark Kids is excited about the opportunities we have to share our ministry with the community. We will be hosting our Wonderfully Made Easter Egg Hunt again for the 4th year in a row. This egg hunt gives our church family the opportunity to gather together with the community and provide a fun, family-friendly event for children of all abilities. Vacation Bible School is held each year in June and will be here before we know it. This year's VBS will challenge our children to "armor up" and discover God's strength and love at work in their lives. And finally, Spark's annual Trunk-or-Treat will be a wonderful, fun-filled fellowship time with our church family. It is a wonderful opportunity to share our gift of creativity with our friends, families and neighbors.

Spark Kids, as always, will continue to gather together on Sundays. Children meet each Sunday morning for Spark Kids, where they spend time learning how to apply the truths of God's word to their own lives. Spark Go, our Sunday evening programming, offers a time to gather together for a meal followed by a time of learning and growing. In 2020, we plan to spend our Sunday evenings learning about our mission and outreach here at First Church and ways we can share the love of Jesus with others. We are excited about the chance to use our unique, individual gifts in order to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community this year.



YOUTH MINISTRY

Josh DePree

First Youth's desire is to connect students to God and one another by Gathering, Growing, and Going. Our youth ministry is centered around creating opportunities for our students use their gifts as they walk out the text well in their lives. As we look back on an amazing 2019 season, we are grateful for all the incredible ways that God moved in the youth ministry and cannot wait to see how the Spirit leads in 2020.

At 9:45 on Sunday Mornings if you walk through the North Entrance you may hear our amazing Youth Band leading worship upstairs. Over the last year it has been inspiring to watch them grow in their ability to lead worship and grow physically as more students have joined the band. Crossroads provides an awesome opportunity for our students to lead, to gather, to grow, and to discuss topics that are relevant to them in their walk with Christ. I am excited for what we have coming up this year. During January and February, students will be leading and giving the teachings at Crossroads! God has blessed all of us with unique gifts and we want to provide an opportunity for students to showcase their spiritual gifts. We hope you will worship with us one of these months and support our students.

One of our biggest joys at First Church is the relationships that we make as we gather and grow with one another. Wednesday and Sunday evenings this year have focused on building small group relationships and Christian community that does life together. It has been amazing to witness our older students use their gifts to lead small groups for the younger students on Wednesday nights. In addition we are incredibly thankful for our adult small group leaders who use their gifts to pour into the lives of students on Sunday evenings. I am excited to witness these relationships continue to grow in 2020. This year our studies will focus on learning how to study the Bible in its context and how that teaches us to use our gifts in our world today.

On top of our weekly programming, we had some amazing special programs that took place this year including Denver Mission Trip, 18th annual Local Mission Project, Fall Retreat, and many more. Each of these special programs cannot take place without our congregation joining us as volunteers and using their gifts. We are so thankful for each of you and how the Spirit moved in these programs. At LMP alone we had 120 students join us to Grow closer to God, Gather together in Christian community, and Go build 10 wheelchair ramps in the community. We love these special programs, because they provide opportunities for us to use the gifts God has blessed us with as we spread the kingdom for all to see.

This year has been absolutely incredible, but we are excited for what is on the horizon. We know it will be a fun, Christ filled year with plenty of opportunities for us to put our faith into action and to use our gifts. We hope that you will join us!





MISSIONS & OUTREACH

Joshua Bland

Praise God for the work that He is doing in our community! His Spirit is moving and lives are being transformed! At First Church, we have incredible opportunities each week to join with the Holy Spirit in this work of renewal and transformation throughout our community.

During the late spring and early summer, Bread of Life took new steps to increase focus on being a community to our guests. We simplified the paperwork as part of our new check-in and database system, allowing our time with our guests to be freed up for deeper conversation. God has blessed these initiatives from their very beginning; the volume level is up in every aspect of our ministry as people are connecting to one another, sharing life and the hope of the Gospel. We are greatly blessed that through this season some of our guests have become part of our mission team; they want to serve others with the hope and joy that they found through the work of the Spirit at Bread of Life.

In July, we sent a mission team down to our sister church in Chinchá Alta, Peru. The team was able to explore the country while spending time in ministry and worship with our Peruvian brothers and sisters. We worked primarily on the outskirts of Chinchá in Ciudad Satélite, ministering to families, playing with children, and working with local craftsman on construction and improvement projects around the church building.

His Helping Hands continues to have a vibrant ministry, full of resources and encouragement for all our guests. In the fall, His Helping Hands joined with Bread of Life in our new database system. This broader perspective will be extended to Daily Bread at the beginning of 2020, allowing us to think even more strategically about the way forward. We are bathing these works in prayer as we strive to have an even greater Kingdom impact in our community.

To kick off the 2019-2020 school year, our Monitor Partnership was rebranded as the Scholastic Mission. Even as we celebrated the successes of our partnership with Monitor, we wanted to reach out to other schools and ask simply how we can minister to their students, teachers, and faculty. We are not out to replicate Monitor, but to meet schools where they are at. With the help of our partners at Kum & Go, we have started sending food each week to four additional schools. A group of students from Springdale High School comes weekly to Bread of Life to put together USDA bags as they learn about community service while acquiring job skills. We have also hosted a three-part workshop for the faculties of Monitor and Lee elementary schools.

We celebrate what God has done this year through each of these and all of our mission initiatives, including Christopher's House, the Agape Garden, and more. As this year draws to a close, we prayerfully look forward to the opportunities that the Lord will lead us to in 2020, eager to see His kingdom increase among and around us. Keep an eye on the GO section of the church website for new information and opportunities to engage in mission.

To everyone who is and will be a part of our mission teams: THANK YOU! The light of Christ shines through you! May the Lord bless you and keep you!

MUSIC MINISTRY UPDATE

Rev. Danny Reding



Music is one of God's most treasured gifts to us. The ability to sing and play instruments enriches the lives of people in every culture and in just about every situation of life. Whether in times of celebration or mourning, times of quiet reflection or exuberance, music provides the soundtrack for our lives. Here at First Church, music is heard just about every time we gather for worship. When we sing together, our voices are joined as one voice in praise to God.



We are led every Sunday by skilled and faithful musicians in each of our three services. While the styles may be different, the musicians who lead us share a common dedication to honor God and inspire the praise of God's people through music. Each of our music leaders, Patrick Hall in First Praise, Michael Cooper in Cornerstone, and Danny Reding and Ernest Whitmore in the Classic Service, invite you to offer your gift of worship through music by joining in the songs we all sing together, or perhaps, by speaking to them about being part of one of their musical groups. We would love for everyone who sings or plays an instrument to find a place to "use your gift well" in the music ministry of First Church.





AGAPE FELLOWSHIP

Rev. Rob Williams

"GATHER" This year has been so exciting to witness first hand here at Agape. We have experienced growth in many areas. Our attendance is increasing. We meet new people in service almost every week as the DNA of invitation is taking root. We gather together in small groups and home fellowships. And we gather at the Garden from spring until fall, serving shoulder to shoulder.



"GROW" Our growth in worship attendance has been mirrored in our growth in outreach and service. The Agape garden project has had more hands in the dirt and more produce going throughout our community than ever before. We give away much of the harvest as well as selling produce on Saturdays at our new Agape Market with proceeds benefitting our youth program. We are growing in our bible studies, learning to know God's word and put it into practice. We have leadership from Pete Franks for our local chapter of Walk to Emmaus, and he has sent many adults to this life-changing growth opportunity. We host outreach concerts and various local groups, seeking to be a part of the fabric of our community. Our small groups have tripled in size and are an integral part of our fellowship. We serve a full breakfast before service on Sundays and dinner each Wednesday night. The breakfasts on Sundays are provided by weekly rotating volunteers and the Wednesday night meal is provided by the downtown campus kitchen staff led by Janelle Sluyter. We have more volunteers working with our Sunday morning children's ministry than ever before. We have grown in what it means to practice our Baptismal covenant by upholding our church in prayer, and presence, our gifts and service and being a strong witness to our community.

"GO" We go into our community knowing that people need to know us first before they might consider attending our church. Our bus ministry is an essential part of our outreach. So many who wouldn't otherwise be able to find a ride to church are able to come because of our incredible bus ministry team. Our Youth Pastor, Regina Capps, is an evangelist and is growing our youth program in tremendous ways while helping lead overseas missions for both campuses. We send many at-risk children and youth to camp each year and have seen great rewards in that area, as Regina advocates for these children.

We have given our building a facelift by painting the outside, and inside we have worked on renewing the youth and children's areas to better meet the needs of the current growth and expected future growth. We have identified new members of our congregation who have gifts of teaching and preaching and frequently give them opportunities to utilize and practice their gifts. We're learning together what it means to sow in tears and reap with joy. I look forward to another year of Gathering, Growing and Going while lifting up Jesus and knowing He will build His Kingdom here.





First United Methodist Church
206 W. Johnson Ave.
Springdale, AR 72764
479-751-4610
FirstChurchSpringdale.org