

Gathering with thankful hearts as God's people to be inspired to live as a community of Christ
 + Those who are able are invited to stand.
 You are invited to respond with the **Bold** responses.

THE CHURCH GATHERS TO WORSHIP

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. I want you to trust in My protective Presence even while deep waters of affliction are rising around you. Remember that you are precious in My sight and I love you. I will never, ever abandon you! Though you may lose sight of Me, I am constantly aware of you and your circumstances. When you cry out to Me for help, I am already fully apprised of your situation. So you don't need to take time telling Me what is happening or what you think I should do. In the midst of emergencies, short, pithy prayers are extremely effective: "Help me, Jesus!" "Show me Your way." "Your will be done."
 Do not be overly concerned about your feelings during emergencies. The most important thing is that you turn to Me, trusting that I am indeed with you. When you cannot sense My Presence, it is enough to know that I love you with compassionate, unfailing Love. If your heart is sinking under waves of panic, don't focus on those feelings. Instead, look up to Me! As your soul clings to Me, My right hand will uphold you—keeping you safe in turbulent waters.

-Jesus Lives, p. 110.

Thanks Be to God! Welcome to Worship!

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC *Renee Warner*
 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HOSPITALITY
 PRELUDE *Sophia Heath*
 SERVICE OF LIGHT *The Acolytes*
Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world."

+CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP *UMH 174*
His Name Is Wonderful

His name is wonderful, his name is wonderful, his name is wonderful, Jesus, my Lord. He is the mighty King, Master of everything; his name is wonderful, Jesus, my Lord. He's the great Shepherd, the Rock of all ages, almighty God is he; bow down before him, love and adore him, his name is wonderful, Jesus, my Lord.

+CALL TO WORSHIP *Renee Warner*
 Once you lived in darkness.

Now the light of God has shone upon us.
 Find what is pleasing to God and follow God's ways.
The acts of darkness are left behind as we journey to God's light.

Thanks be to God who gives us the light.
Open our eyes and our hearts to receive your light of salvation.

+OPENING PRAYER *Leader*
 Gracious God, who created us in God's own image, we are grateful for all that you have done for us, for all that you are doing in us, and for all that you will do through us.

Open our eyes to see your presence among us, moving in powerful ways at all times and in all places.
 Open our ears to hear familiar words in new ways—ways that will change us and challenge us to become the people you created us to be. Grant us the power and the courage to come out of the darkness and into the light of Jesus Christ, that we may serve you by

serving others. We love you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. **Amen.**

+HYMN OF PRAISE *UMH 577*
God of Grace and God of Glory

THE CHURCH IN MOMENTS OF CONFESSION

CALL TO CONFESSION
 Our times are in God's hands; let us confess our sin and ask God to deliver us from the time of trial.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *Responsively*
 O God, our rock of refuge and our strong fortress, lead us to your mercy; guide us as we confess to you our sin. You know our limitations and failures; you have offered to cleanse us by your word:

Keep us from hurting others, causing needless conflict, being impatient, making hasty judgments, and forgetting those who are hungry; cleanse us from all envy and false pride. Let your face shine on us, O God; save us in your steadfast love, for Jesus' sake.

PERSONAL PRAYER OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE
 "Once we were not a people, but now we are God's people; once we had not received mercy, but now we have received mercy." Through Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone, we are forgiven, given life, and created a new people.

THE LORD'S PRAYER *Unison*
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.

RESPONSE

UMH 454

Open My Eyes, That I May See, v. 3

Open my mouth, and let me bear gladly the warm truth everywhere; open my heart and let me prepare love with thy children thus to share.

Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see. Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

THE CHURCH LISTENS

WIGGLETIME

Following Wiggletime, the Children are invited to join the Leaders in Linger Hall for **CHILDREN'S CHURCH**

WORD IN MUSIC

*Chancel Choir
Sophia Heath, violin*

THE WORD

SERMON

Rev. M. Steven Meadows

THE CHURCH SCATTERS SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

+ HYMN OF DEDICATION

UMH 128

He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought

+ SERVICE OF LIGHT

The Acolytes

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world."

+BENEDICTION

Pastor

Go into the world, with hearts full and carrying the light of Christ into the darkness!

Receive God's love and care, and share that love and care with everyone!

Go with eyes reflecting God's Light and with hands open to share the Light!

Follow Jesus wherever He leads you and may you always walk in the light of Christ!

Amen!

+POSTLUDE

Dan Martin

...the worship continues.



Bean Soup Kits Sale thru March

United Women in Faith

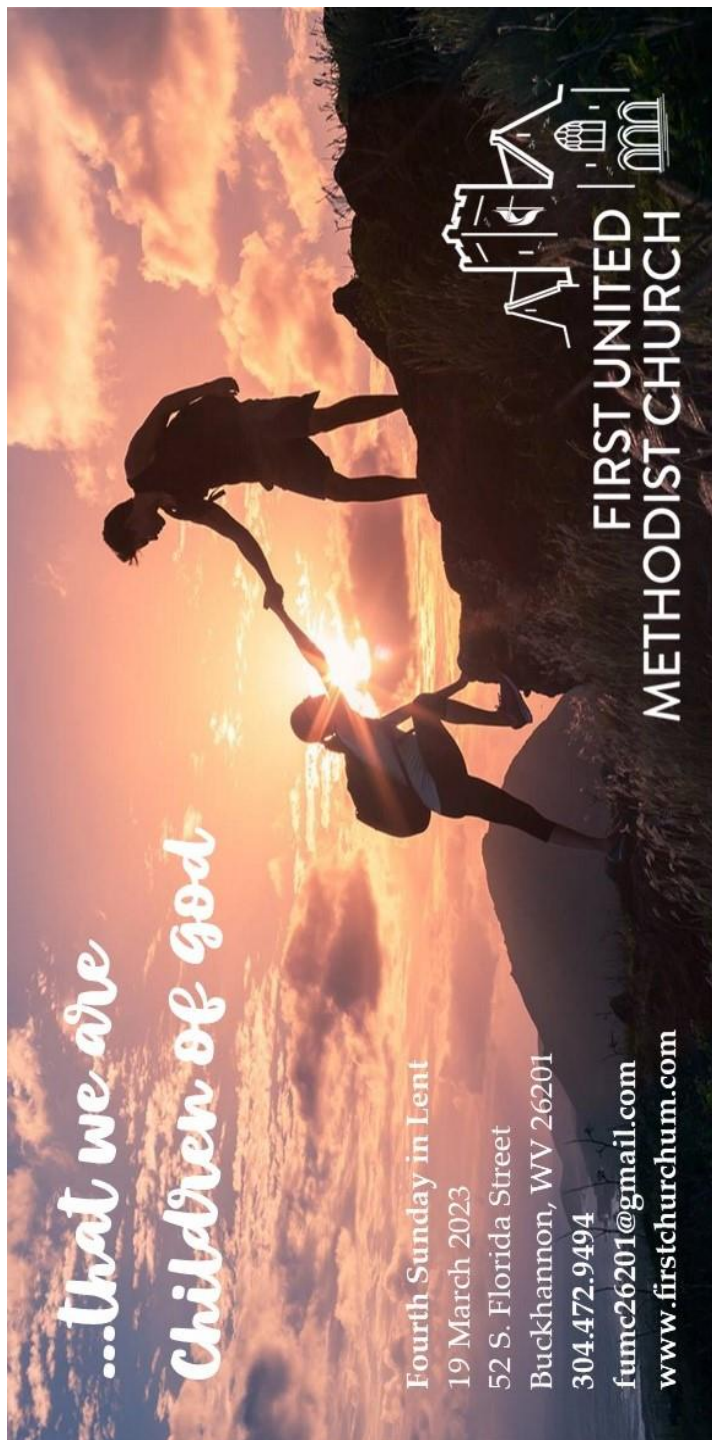
After Worship in Linger Hall, \$6 per Kit



WITNESS MINISTRY TEAM INVITES YOU... to join in Welcoming First UMC Guests.

If you would care to be a "baker" or a "baker and deliverer," call the Office: 304-472-9494 or email: stevowvu@gmail.com.

Help First Church make a good "First" Church impression with a warm WELCOME!



*...that we are
Children of God*

**FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

Fourth Sunday in Lent
19 March 2023
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