



THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

200 E Third Street

Lewistown, PA 17044

717-248-4618 -- www.fumclewistown.org

Rev. Randy S. Hughes

Rev. Karen McCachren, Deacon of Caring Ministries

Crystal Ferencz, Director of Christian Education

Rob Hagenberger, Office Manager

November 20, 2020

Dear Church,

While many of us are awaiting 2020's unceremonious departure, your church leadership continues to pray and plan our faith journey here at First church.

As we live into God's 2020 vision for His church and live in tension with pandemic conditions, we offer the following adjusted schedule for Christmas Eve services.

Our plan is to hold 6 worship services over 2 days beginning on Wednesday, December 23rd and culminating Thursday, December 24th. *(Please see the attached schedule for details)*

Why six (6) services? In offering this collection of worship options we hope to keep attendance at each service to no more than 50 worshippers. Our Resident Bishop Jeremiah Park continues to be a shepherd of the pastors and churches within the Susquehanna Conference and we adhere to his prayerful life and leadership. He continues to offer caution and godly guidance and is asking us to maintain reduced service attendance in order to keep safe distancing within the sanctuary. We believe his advice is prudent and we seek to be faithful to our call and his authority.

The one service that needs no reservation is a self-guided time of prayer, communion, and candle-lighting on Thursday, December 24th anytime between 12 noon and 3 PM. This service is designed for those who cannot risk being in large crowds and it affords a time of connection with a pastor and their church.

A Blue Christmas Service-When Christmas Hurts will be held on Sunday, December 20th at 3:30 pm. This is a gentle, contemplative service for those who are carrying pain or loss during this season of celebration. Your pain will be honored as we light candles of remembrance. You will hear messages of comfort and hope in the midst of the darkness through word, song and in the Sacrament of Communion as we acknowledge the presence of Emmanuel- God With Us.

There are some children of our church who will receive Christmas gifts this year from church members through the giving tree project. If you would like to participate by shopping for clothes or gifts for a child contact Jen Lynch 717-437-1593 or Karen McCachren 717-248-1011. Donations of money will also be accepted in place of shopping.

Please know that much thought and prayer has been poured into this offering of service options and we seek your grace and patience in all things.

The church will be sanitized between all services and CDC guidelines are always followed. Also, the five (5) in-house worship services will be streamed on Facebook Live as well.

We ask that masks be worn during all services. Thank you for following these guidelines and for your understanding.

In the uncertainty of covid-19 and its ability to spread quickly, if conditions deteriorate significantly leading up to these services we will alter the schedule to go fully virtual. Please monitor our church website www.fumclewistown.org and or the Church Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/LewistownFUMC> for schedules changes. Thanks.

Pastor Karen is the point person for all worship services and your reservations. She can be reached at (717) 248-1011 or kmccachren@susumc.org

**Christmas Eve Worship Opportunities
(50 Total Worshippers per service)
Sign-ups are required.**

Wednesday December 23, 2020

6 PM – Candlelight and Communion – Doug Pierce leading
(50 Total Worshippers per service)

8:30 PM -- Candlelight and Communion – Pastor Randy, Pastor Karen
(50 Total Worshippers per service)

Thursday December 24, 2020

12- 3 PM – Sanctuary Open for prayer, Communion, and Candle lighting
(Self-guided time in the Sanctuary and a pastor will be available for prayer.)

5 PM -- Candlelight and Communion – Doug Pierce leading
(50 Total Worshippers per service)

7 PM -- Candlelight and Communion – Pastor Randy, Pastor Karen
(50 Total Worshippers per service)

11 PM -- Candlelight and Communion – Pastor Randy, Pastor Karen
(50 Total Worshippers per service)

Our warmest Christmas blessings are offered to you and your families and we continue to walk faithfully with Jesus who is the reason we have life and hope.

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Randy S. Hughes

Rev. Karen McCachren