

J U N E 2 0 2 6

The Messenger

“DO GOOD,
DO NO HARM, &
STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD”

Wellness in Body, Mind, and Spirit

As the warmth of summer approaches and many of us prepare to embark on new chapters through travel, rest, service, and renewed commitments, I am reminded how very precious the gift of wellness is; true wellness that flows from our Creator’s design for whole, thriving lives.

Recent studies by leading health institutions remind us just how critical it is to care for ourselves on every level. For example, the World Health Organization reports that worldwide, nearly one in eight people lives with a mental health condition and many more silently wrestle with stress, anxiety, and emotional unrest that profoundly affect physical health. These realities are sobering, but not without hope.

Our faith calls us into a deeper understanding of wellness, not just the absence of illness, but a vibrant, rich wholeness rooted in God’s grace. Scripture beautifully guides us here. In Psalm 46, we hear God’s gentle invitation, “Be still, and know that I am God.” In these words are a sacred call to slow down amidst the noise of our lives, to listen deeply, and to find peace.

That’s why this June, in our sermon series SACRED GRIT: The Art and Discipline of a Whole Life, we will explore spiritual self-care as the foundation of wellness. This series opens a path toward cultivating sacred disciplines—intentional practices that nurture our souls and align us with God’s sustaining love. Whether learning the power of stillness, embracing presence in community, or forming sacred habits of hope and perseverance, we are invited to live fully into the abundant life God desires for us.

Wellness is holistic. It invites us into connection with God, with one another, and with ourselves. As a multi-generational congregation, our diversity reflects God’s masterpiece. Each of us carries unique gifts and challenges, yet we share the call to cultivate spaces where all voices are heard and all hearts belong. Our mission to make disciples for the transformation of the world is deeply tied to creating healing spaces where wholeness grows, and where mental health is honored alongside spiritual and physical care.

This summer, as you travel, rest, or step into new rhythms, I invite you to journey with sacred grit: to wrestle with silence, to practice presence, to form hopeful habits, and to live fully embraced by the wild, tender grace of God’s love.

May this season be one where you find rest for your body, peace for your mind, and nourishment for your spirit. Let us hold one another in prayer and support, that we may flourish together as one healthy, vibrant community that is becoming a true masterpiece of God’s grace.



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Sunday Services

8:30 Grace Life
11:00 Traditional

Church Office

(318) 443-5696
Mon-Thur 9:00-3:00
Friday- 9:00-12:00



**VBS REGISTRATION
IS NOW OPEN!**

**Friday Nights
in July
5:30-8:00PM**

**Fri 7/10
Fri 7/17
Fri 7/24
Fri 7/31**

**REGISTER
HERE**



Want to volunteer? Above link registers children AND volunteers alike!

VBS VOLUNTEER MEETING

**Sunday June 7th at noon!
ALL Volunteers must attend
to receive annual Safe Sanctuary training!**

Volunteers Needed for VBS!

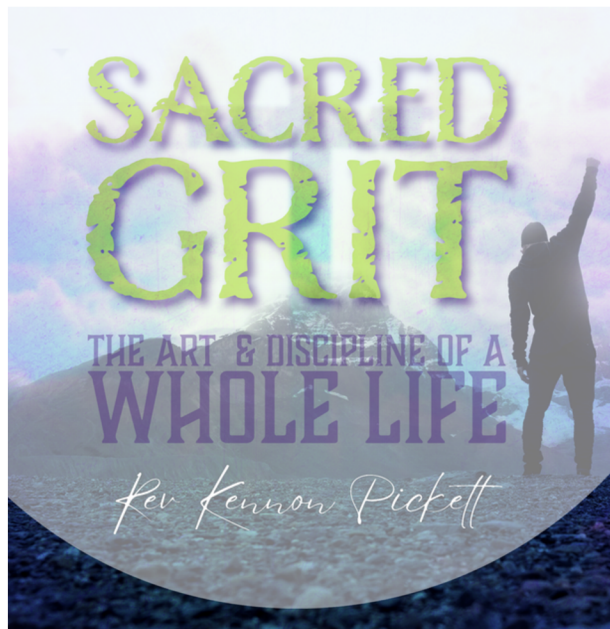
**FREE POP UP
ART PARTY**

**DRAW YOURSELF
CALM
W/ REV. JEAN**

**THURSDAY
JUNE 4 • 5PM
IN THE
STUDIO**

**R.S.V.P.
TO REV
JEAN
318-347-9708
OR EMAIL
JHANDERS@FUMCA.ORG**

Upcoming Sermon Series



Get ready for an epic spiritual quest into the heart of faith, resilience, and wild grace.

This summer, we travel together into a powerful series that challenges everything you think you know about spiritual growth. Sacred Grit is not just about faith; it's about wrestling with silence, standing firm in presence, and forging sacred habits that transform ordinary lives into legendary stories of hope and bold belonging.

Experience worship that stills the noise, practices that anchor your soul, and grace that fuels relentless courage. This is your invitation to walk a path where love, faith, and purpose collide with unshakable grit. Will you answer the call to live fully formed—fearless, free, and fiercely authentic?

Join us for Sacred Grit—where spiritual formation becomes an adventure of a lifetime. Are you ready to be transformed?

**OUR NEW WEBSITE
IS LIVE!**

**VISIT & BOOKMARK
FUMCA.ORG**

CHILDREN'S MOVIE MATINEE

**IN THE MEDIA
CENTER
JUNE 25TH 1:00- 2:30**

**MOVIE: A BUG'S LIFE
(RATED G)**



Urban Sketching: Our first Urban Sketching in the Garden District this year. On June 13th at 10:00 a.m., we will meet at the end of the church parking lot (closest to Constant Street) where we will park cars and walk through my back gate and through the back yard to my front yard. (Anyone with walking issues may park in my driveway at 2816 Hill Street.) We will sketch houses on the 2800 block of Hill Street. ‘Throw-down’ afterwards will be at my house over lunch.

Pop-Up Art Party: Thursday June 4, at 5:00pm in The Studio: Draw Yourself Calm, using a book by the same name. We will experience a meditational type of drawing, one that will calm and relax us. You have to try it to believe it! Come spend time with me and some incredible people in two of my favorite places.. in the chapel and The Studio!

Creatively and prayerfully yours,
Rev. Jean Sanders
Pastor and Artist in Residence



Music Ministry

We’ve all heard the saying “when you sing you pray twice.” I’ve always liked it for obvious reasons. Singing is an integral part of our worship experiences at FUMCA, but it’s also scientifically proven to have both cognitive and physical health benefits. Like breathing in yoga, breathing while singing relaxes the nervous system, slows down our heart rate, and floods our body with oxygen.

Learning to read music, as well as learning to sing, forms new pathways in the brain that can even withstand dementia. I have met people who couldn’t remember their own name but could still sing every word of their favorite hymns with a smile.

The human voice is an extremely complex instrument, and we’re all born with one. Here are some of the ways you can use your voice at FUMCA.

Chancel Choir: Wednesday nights at 6-7pm all summer! -We learn how to sing, blend as a choir, and read music as we prepare for upcoming church services & events.

Tenor/Bass Sectional”: The 1st Tuesday of the month from 6:30-8:00pm. This serves as both a bonus sectional for the men of the Chancel Choir, AND a fun evening for any guys who can’t make Wednesday nights. This monthly rehearsal will review hymns for the upcoming month so the tenors and basses of the choir (and congregation) can sing with more confidence. This is not limited to men and is open to anyone with a “low” voice. Please plan to join us June 2nd, July 7th, and August 4th. Bring a friend.

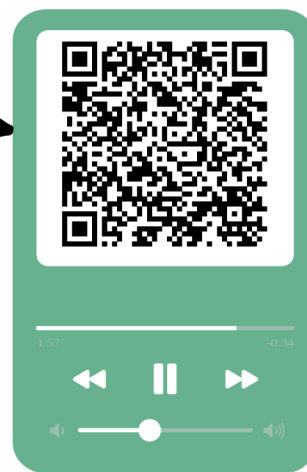
Healing Voices of Alexandria: This community choir for women sings on the 1st Thursday of the month at 6pm in the choir room, and on the 3rd Saturday of the month at various nursing homes and hospitals. This group is just as relaxing and healing to participate in as it is to listen to.

Grace Life Playlist: Our Grace Life Band is always learning new songs for our 8:30 Grace Life Service. Jam out to the songs we have worshipped to and keep yourself singing all week long! We love putting our own fresh spin on popular worship songs. Listen to what inspires us.

Happy Singing!
Elizabeth Nix
Director of Worship and Music Ministries



Grace
 Life
 Music



JUNE MISSION
QUENCH THIRST, STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY.

SUMMER CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR MANY MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY WHO ARE UNHOUSED.

DURING THE MONTH OF JUNE, FUMCA WILL COLLECT BOTTLED WATER AND/OR ELECTROLYTE PACKETS.

THESE WILL BE GIVEN TO SEVERAL LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN NEED OF HYDRATION.

Youth and Children Programming

The school year has officially come to a close! On behalf of the youth group, I'd like to give a very special "Thank you" to each and every person who helped provide the delicious meals for our fellowship time during Youth on Sunday evenings. You've all made this school year so welcoming and memorable for our youth, and the fellowship time shared over a warm meal always brings us together. Your participation sows lifelong memories for our youth of the love and hospitality our church gives!

With the end of the school year comes summer beginnings! Our Grill and Chill nights begin Tuesday June 9 and repeat biweekly at 5:30-7pm! We grill out on the patio by the pool and then have free swim for all ages (lifeguard present).

Please join us! Our youth group embarks on their annual summer mission trip, this year to the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee! We leave on Sunday, May 31 following a commissioning during the combined 5th Sunday service and return Saturday, June 6th. Please pray for our youth as they embark on this service trip! Vacation Bible School is also right around the corner: Fridays in July from 5:30pm-8:00pm (Friday July 10, July 17, July 24, and July 31). On Sunday June 7th after the 11:00 service we will hold a VBS volunteers' training/meeting! Looking forward to a great summer!

-Carly Bratcher
Program Director

If you are interested in volunteering as a VBS chaperone, please reach out to me at cbratcher@fumca.org or (318) 443-5696 ext. 1204.

Weekly Events

Monday

10:30am Staff Meeting
in Transitions Room

Tuesday

9:30am Centering Prayer
in Crowell Chapel
10:30am Art Class
in Art Studio
3pm Farmers Market in the parking
lot across the street

Wednesday

The Gathering is taking a summer break, and will resume in Sept.

Thursday

5:30pm Pickleball
in Johnson Center

Friday

1pm Mahjong
in 50/50 room

Monthly Events

United Methodist Men's Breakfast

Thursday June 4th 9am at Atwood's Bakery

United Women in Faith Meeting

Taking a summer break, and will resume in Sept.

Pre-school

Any day you walk the halls of First United Methodist Preschool, we are actively learning through play, thought out lesson plans, planned events, or even on-the-fly teachable moments. But a lot of times our favorite time of day is nap time. "Nap time in the valley" as my own parent would call this restful time of day. And it is just that, even when I'm working at my desk, or taking a call, or giving a tour to prospective families, the quiet hallways and classrooms echoing white noise and gentle lullabies from the Alexa device in the room puts everyone at ease and allows those of us who are not on a break to rejuvenate as we quiet our mind and slow our heartbeats. Even the bible talks about napping. The book of Mark 4:38 talks about Jesus peacefully asleep in the stern of the boat amidst a storm. I suppose He was showing trust in God and proving that rest is necessary, even during life's chaotic moments.

-Catherine Lytle
Pre-school Director



Art Ministry

Welcome to June, 2026!

I've written before on the connection between art, particularly visual art-making and wellness. There is a strong connection. Likewise there is also an undeniable link between prayer and wellness. There are so many types of meditation that lead to better physical health, emotional health, and spiritual health. When it comes to our overall wellness, silence is golden, in art and in prayer. Art and certain types of prayer help to center you in your body, turn off the overactive mind, and switch from left brain to right brain – hint: there's a reason we have both!

So... I offer four opportunities for increased wellness this month:

Centering Prayer: Every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. in the Crowell Chapel

Art Class: Every Tuesday at 10:30 in The Studio.